



FINANCE AND RESOURCES SERVICE PLAN 2008/09



This service plan provides an overview of our department's work and how it fits into the council's priorities and objectives. More information can be found in an appendix document, which is available on the Finance and Resources intranet or website.

The appendix document contains:

- Detailed tables of activity by each of the department's divisions
- A summary of findings from consultation carried out in 2007/08
- A summary of the Value for Money priorities
- A summary of findings from benchmarking carried out in 2007/08
- An Equality Impact Assessment for the 2008/09 Service Plan
- Overview of risk management arrangements for high level risks in 2008/09
- An overview of learning and development in 2007/08 and key learning and development projects in 2008/09
- A Service Level Agreement register for the department's partnerships
- A summary of the department's work to reduce carbon emissions
- A list of the key strategies and inspections in 2008/09
- The department's growth and savings targets for the next three years

Contents



—	Foreword	1
—	The golden thread	2
—	The golden thread for Finance and Resources	3
—	Lambeth Council's promises	4
—	Finance and Resources' priorities	6
—	Lambeth Council's values	8
—	Lambeth Council's leadership priorities	10
—	Finance and Resources department overview	12
—	Achievements for the Finance and Resources dept 2007/08	13
—	Context in which the service operates	16
—	Departmental risk analysis	18
—	The Finance and Resources department budget 2008/09	22
—	Equalities	23
—	2007/08 research and consultation evaluation	24
—	Key activity summary by division	
—	Corporate Finance	26
—	Corporate Procurement Team	27
—	Customer Services	28
—	ICT Services	30
—	Internal Audit & Anti-Fraud	32
—	Legal and Democratic Services	34
—	Performance and Business Development	36
—	Revenues and Benefits	38



Foreword



This service plan provides an opportunity to focus on our performance and targets, and for everyone to see the impact of the work that they do in the context of colleagues' work particularly as Finance and Resources has recently grown as a department. Our new council structure has been put in place to meet the many new challenges that local government faces, and as the needs of our residents and partners change we must adapt to ensure we offer the best possible service to them - after all that is why we are here.



Jim Dickson

Cabinet Member
for Finance



Mike Suarez

Executive Director
of Finance and
Resources

So we are delighted to be building on the excellent work already being done and making full use of the good working relationships that we have established across the council. There are real synergies in our working:

- Corporate Finance and Legal and Democratic Services play an active role in advising and supporting members
- Revenues and Benefits and Customer Services are the largest front-facing services in the council
- ICT Services and Corporate Procurement play a vital role in achieving council-wide savings and improving our systems and processes for delivering services

Finance and Resources staff support and deliver all elements of our business. As a rule, the 'transformation' work that we do to support the council's rapid improvement are larger projects such as value for money and Benefits transformation. Delivery of these projects is managed by the council's theme boards.

However, transformational projects can only be delivered if the department and the council does not lose sight of the importance of 'Business As Usual'. Improvement can only be made if core

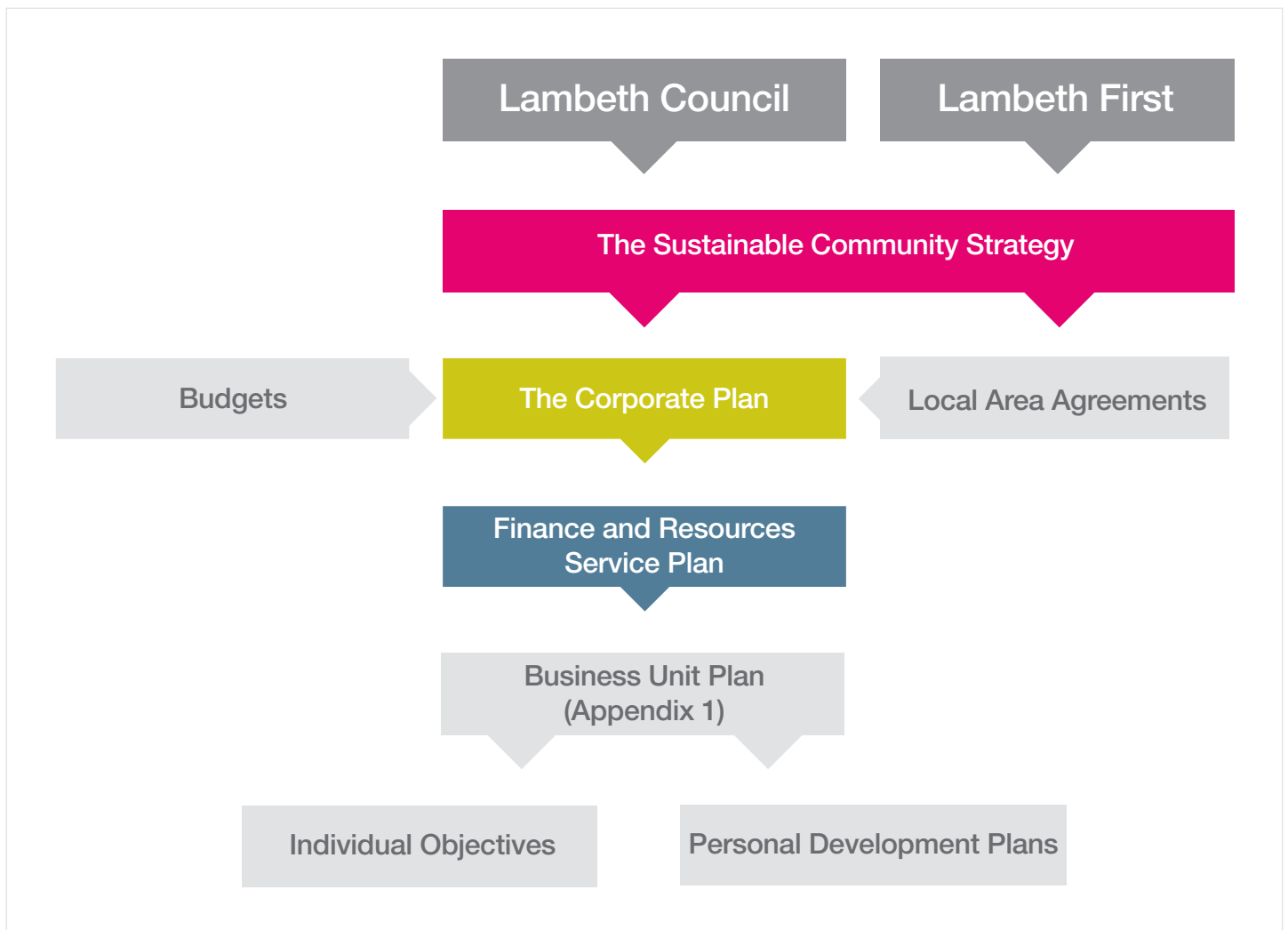
business functions well. Our activities are key to maintaining good financial practice, supporting the council as a whole and allowing the transformational project work to progress smoothly. Business as usual is monitored by staff and managers through departmental performance over the year, and is overseen by our Departmental Leadership Team and reported to members.

We have made fantastic improvements over the last year, moving up a star for use of resources and up two stars as a council, to three stars, making us the most improved council in London. We will need to work hard to sustain this performance. We can only do this through our staff, and this plan is our map to help you deliver our objectives for 2008/09. We are asking you to pick up this challenge and we are confident that we can make a real and positive contribution to the continuing impressive progress that we are seeing our council make. Our residents will only benefit from this.

The golden thread

All of the work that we do contributes to the council and its partners' overall priorities and vision for the borough. Sometimes it may be hard to see how everything fits together and the diagram below aims to show how all the strategic documents in the council interlink.

The Finance and Resources department helps to support and deliver elements within all areas of the diagram down the centre.



More information on the council's key documents, the main strategies within the Finance and Resources department and the key inspections that will take place in 2008/09 can be found in the appendix section.

The golden thread for Finance and Resources



The Sustainable Community Strategy

The Sustainable Community Strategy has four overarching goals for the borough:

- To dramatically increase the numbers of Lambeth residents in work to achieve a 70% employment rate across the borough
- To make Lambeth a great place to do business and prosper
- To make sure more young people get good quality education, training and jobs, and are supported in business in order to reduce their risk of exclusion and offending
- In the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, to create welcoming places where local people can access learning and skills, volunteering opportunities, parenting support and gain the confidence to play active roles in their communities.

This strategy will be delivered by working with partners to support the borough's residents, businesses and visitors. An example of working together from the top down to service delivery is the DWP in/out of work pilot, which will support the council's priority of 'personalising services so they meet individuals' needs' and the Sustainable Community Strategy goal to 'support young people into work'.

The Corporate Plan

The corporate plan sets out the high level priorities and outcomes for the council, grouped under the priorities set out by Lambeth's leader, Steve Reed. They are:

- A safer Lambeth with strong communities
- Respect for our environment
- More opportunities for children and young people
- Better housing and flourishing local economies
- Developing our approach to personalising care services
- Serving our customers well.

The work of the Finance and Resources department will continue to improve and sustain good performance, to help to deliver the Corporate Plan, whether the nature of our divisions means that we are delivering frontline services or working 'behind the scenes'. Our work provides the solid foundations to deliver these priorities.

The detailed divisional plans in appendix 1 show the transformational projects that each division is responsible for within the corporate plan. These are monitored at the council's theme boards.

Finance and Resources Service Plan

This service plan supports the delivery of the council's overall priorities.

This plan is intended to provide the fine detail of our day to day business so that we can monitor our progress and focus our work. This goes down to business unit level, which can be inserted in team plans and individual objectives and personal development plans.

The Service Plan is made up of a forty page summary, which gives you an overview of the department and its work and how this fits into the council. More detail is available in a series of appendices, which are printed separately and are available on the intranet.

We will...

**...deliver quality and value
for money**

**...tackle inequality and
social exclusion**

**...listen to and engage
our citizens.**

Lambeth Council's promises



When the administration was elected in May 2006, they set out the following promises to underpin our service delivery and help us to achieve our vision. These are to:

Deliver quality and value for money

We make sure we deliver the best services possible, whether directly or in partnership with others, within the resources that the public makes available to us.

Tackle inequality and social exclusion

We make sure that we narrow the gap between the haves and have-nots by generating a better quality of life for everyone and bringing people together.

Listen to and engage our citizens

We make sure that what matters to the people who live and work in Lambeth is heard loud and clear by us and our partners.

There are examples of these in all areas of our business. Just a few are:

Delivering quality and value for money

- Better commissioning and procurement of services.
- Benchmarking the work that we do with other organisations to make sure that we compare well on cost and performance.
- Working better with partners to reach our residents more effectively, gaining economies of scale.
- Using technology effectively to find innovative ways to provide our services at a lower cost.

Tackling inequality and social exclusion

- Providing opportunities for people who may find it hard to access our services so that they can contact us easily, receive benefits, join the electoral register, make and receive payments and take up opportunities to work for the council.
- Working closely with other departments in the council so that the customer can access the services they need without being passed from person to person.

Listening and engaging

- Entering into a dialogue with customers to understand their needs and wants and shape services.
- Consulting with residents, businesses, partners and staff to inform the decisions we make.

Finance and Resources' priorities

In support of the Corporate Plan's priority outcomes and in order to clarify in everyone's mind what we are working towards in Finance and Resources, the Executive Director has set out our top priorities. These are designed to focus our work and remind us how we fit into the council priorities and work to meet them, in order to deliver excellent services to residents. We are here to:

Enhance services to our customers and access to them

- Carrying out customer satisfaction surveys and acting on the findings
- Entering into a dialogue with customers to understand their needs and wants and shape services
- Consulting with residents, businesses, partners and staff to inform the decisions we make
- Performance management of our organisation so that we deliver a consistently good customer experience.

Improve the skills / abilities of staff

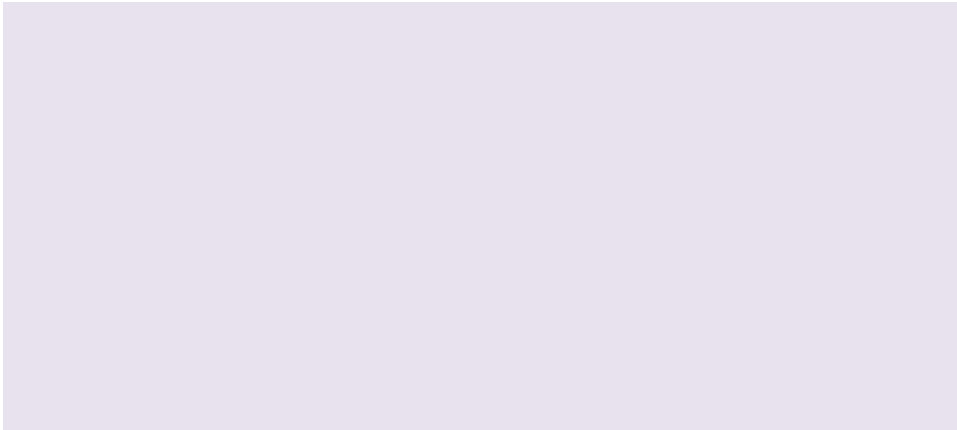
- Working to the investors in people standards and applying the council's FRESH values in our everyday working
- Continuing to deliver first line support, application support, core ICT infrastructure, application development and data services to agreed service standards
- Continuing to provide an excellent range of training and development opportunities including our customer service, CIPFA and benefits training programmes and professional qualification scheme
- Continuing to monitor and support good practice that will enable excellent equalities practice across the department.

Maintain and improve managerial control

- Maintaining and further developing effective financial control to underpin and maximise the council's use of resources
- Better commissioning and procurement of services
- Preventing and detecting fraud and abuse in the entitlement systems (housing benefits and property-related) and council assets and funds.

Optimise resources / improve value for money

- Promoting and providing evidence of value for money
- Promote and provide evidence of best practice with regard to benchmarking and performance management
- Improving all streams of council income collection, including council tax, business rates and sundry debt
- Using technology effectively to find innovative ways to provide our services at a lower cost.



Advise SLB / members

- Supporting the delivery of the council’s transformation and continuous improvement programme
- Using and targeting our resources across the council efficiently and effectively
- Providing appropriate advice and support to management to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of their services and functions
- Providing excellent cost effective legal services as required by the Council to achieve 4 stars.

Support and improve reputation management

- Taking opportunities to enter internal and external awards programmes to develop the reputation of the department’s work and boost staff morale
- Supporting residents with their financial management by facilitating and providing advice and support
- Supporting members with information to ensure transparent governance
- Communicating the work, achievements and priorities of the Finance and Resources department to all stakeholders both internally and externally.

These priorities supplement, but do not replace the department’s excellent core business policies and procedures and support mechanisms such as the Managers’ Charter.

Finance and Resources in the Community

The Finance and Resources department is committed to building closer relationships with Lambeth communities and citizens. In the past DLT members have joined partners in helping out in community projects, such as the Moorlands Estate Community Garden project (pictured). The department aims to continue to develop social capital within the borough with particular focus on promoting educational support, sustainability and social responsibility with all of Lambeth’s residents and partners. If you would like to suggest activities that staff in the department could do to help out, please contact Mandy Milburn on amilburn@lambeth.gov.uk.



Pictured from left to right: Mandy Milburn (PA to Mike Suarez), David Ashmore, Mike Suarez, Sally Leigh and Jonathan Williams.

Lambeth Council's values

In order to support staff to deliver high quality services to our residents, the council is committed to:

- Training and developing its staff
- Working to the Investors in People standards
- Carrying out regular staff surveys to ask and act on their views
- Valuing its staff through fair policies and procedures
- Asking managers and staff to embody the values of the council in the way we work. These values are fairness, respect, excellence, service and honesty, and are known as the council's FRESH values:

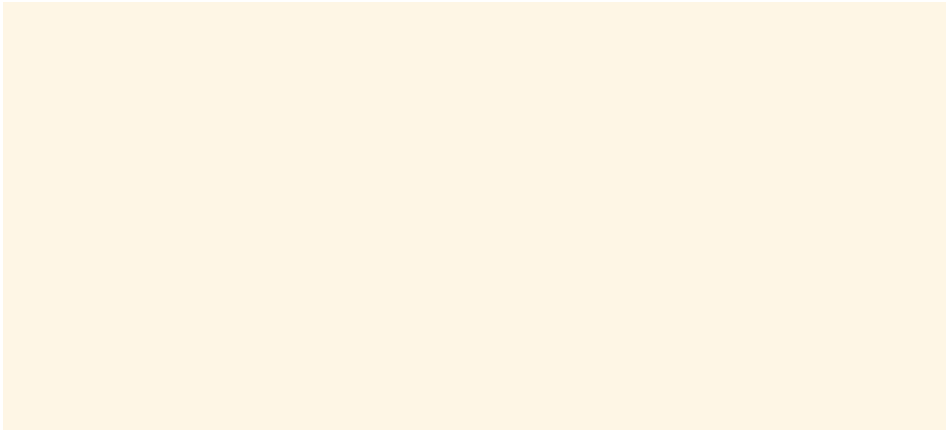
The examples to the right show what the FRESH values mean in every day life and were set out by Finance and Resources staff at the annual staff conference in July 2007.

Fairness

- Applying the same standards and expectations to everyone
- Challenge incorrect behaviour
- Making expectations clear
- Treating all in the same way and not acting on preconceptions
- Provide services and information that people can trust

Respect

- Treating everyone equally – whether they are staff or residents accessing services
- Recognising individuality
- Understanding the work pressures of your peers and helping them when needed
- Recognising and celebrating peoples' successes



Excellence

- Providing and taking opportunities to develop skills / knowledge
- Taking responsibility for making sure a piece of work is completed
- Share experience and good practice
- Set clear, achievable targets
- Having the right equipment, information and technology to do the job
- Keeping promises

Service

- Treating all staff and customers with courtesy
- Listening to staff and customer needs and acting on them
- Delivering services in a timely way
- Making sure communication is clear, and tells the right message
- Work across teams and departments to deliver services
- Getting it right first time
- Being clear about what we do and what others can expect from us, and what we don't do

Honesty

- Being consistent
- Leading by example
- Being transparent so people can understand the reasons behind decision making
- Providing constructive feedback
- Acknowledge when something has been done well
- Don't use jargon, make sure that everyone can understand
- Don't tell people what they want to hear if it is not truthful and cannot be delivered
- Clear communications

Lambeth Council's leadership priorities

The council works to a set of leadership principles to encourage and enable open and honest working, and an ongoing scrutiny of the work of the council. These are:

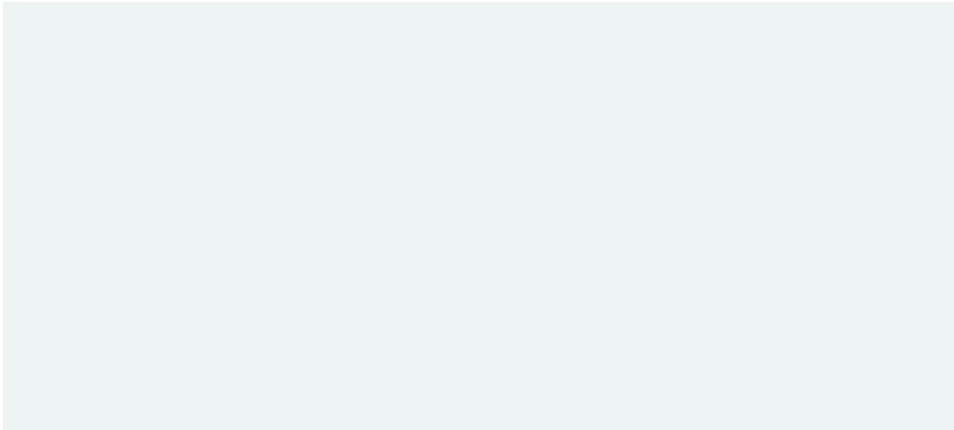
- Get connected
- Name the issue
- Take responsibility
- Be ambitious for Lambeth
- Step back and reflect
- Challenge and innovate

Get connected

- Working across the council to achieve efficiencies and economies in services for residents
- Look around you to see links in other people's work to your own
- Make the effort to connect personally with colleagues
- Make the most of networking opportunities
- Work together to manage and mitigate the council's risks

Name the issue

- Be honest about problems
- Give clear, actionable feedback to colleagues
- Treat your colleagues with respect and loyalty
- Be realistic about your colleagues and the organisation's strengths and weaknesses



Take responsibility

- Don't pass the buck, however hard it is to accept that something might have gone wrong
- We are all working as one council – and that is how our customers see us
- Action plan your work load as a team and know who is responsible
- Maximise appraisal and learning opportunities to develop yourself
- Identify and manage your risks

Be ambitious for Lambeth

- Take the time to see the improvements that Lambeth is making, and tell people about them
- Be positive about the impact that the council makes on people's lives
- Keep the council's vision in your mind, and remember where we want to be. This will help us get there!

Step back and reflect

- Take the time to look at your achievements
- Review your performance (yours, your team's, your department's and the organisation's)
- Actively seek customer satisfaction, and act on the findings!

Challenge and innovate

- Don't say 'no' to something just because it is new
- Learn from other organisations' good practice
- Use risk management to take opportunities
- Look at your day-to-day working. Are there ways that you could make what you do easier or better for customers?

Finance and Resources department overview

The council offers over 400 services to around 270,000 residents. Finance and Resources delivers some key frontline services such as customer services, council tax and benefits as well as supporting service delivery through operational support and good legal and financial management across the council.

The make-up of the Finance and Resources department

There are eight divisions within the Finance and Resources department. The division heads make up the Departmental Leadership Team, which leads and manages the department's business, and promotes and develops good working relationship with other senior managers around the council, particularly the Divisional Directors of Resources in the council's other departments.

The eight divisions are:

- Corporate Finance
- Corporate Procurement Team
- Customer Services
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Services
- Internal Audit & Corporate Anti-Fraud
- Legal and Democratic Services
- Performance and Business Development
- Revenues and Benefits

The department employs around 700 staff, based in Olive Morris House, Ivor House, the Town Hall and Gracefield Gardens Customer Centre in Streatham.

Achievements for the Finance and Resources department 2007/08



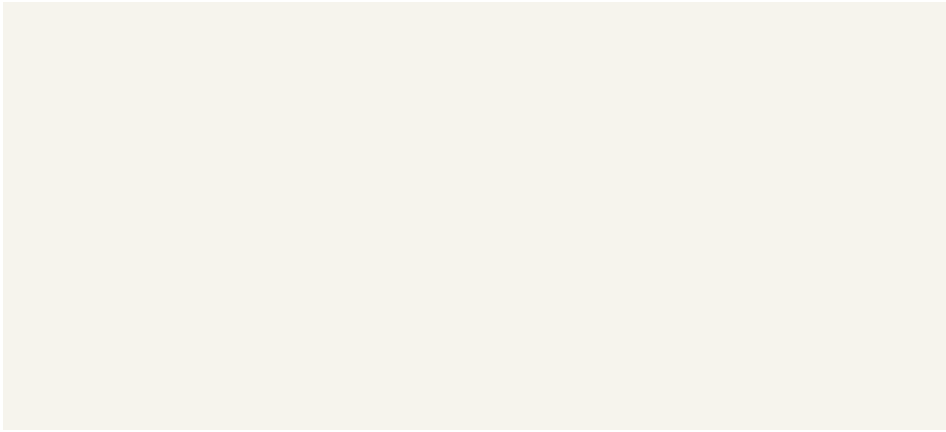
The year 2007/08 has seen a number of changes to the Finance and Resources department. Customer Services, ICT Services and Legal and Democratic Services joined the department in February and restructures took place in Corporate Finance and Revenues and Benefits. The Finance and Resources Departmental Leadership Team (DLT) pulled together during this time to cover not only a transitional period for the department but also at Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) level, making sure that the importance of sound management of the council's finances and resources was high on the agenda at all times.

The Finance and Resources department continues to make improvements:

- Council tax collection rate increased for the fifth year in a row
- Business rates (NNDR) collection increased for the eleventh consecutive year
- Sundry debt collection stands at 92%
- Use of Resources score moved up from two to three stars, improving its score in three out of five sub-categories, supporting Lambeth's move up from one stars to three as an organisation, and "improving strongly"
- The Benefits Service moved up a category to 'good' (3 stars), processing new claims in 25 days and changes of circumstances in 10 days
- Successful partnership working pilots held with the Benefits Service, DWP and HMRC
- Brixton and Gracefield Gardens Customer Centres opened to offer a range of council services in a welcoming environment
- The introduction of a new phone network was supported by ICT services to support new ways of working and customer service, including making savings of around £1m
- Two leading companies, PwC and KPMG appointed as Audit and Anti-fraud contractors
- Increased housing supply through retrieval of estimated 45 properties equivalent to £3.375m (Audit Commission estimate)
- Internal Audit, in partnership with the Metropolitan Police has introduced a highly successful police secondment, which has resulted in the detection of fraudulent activity and resulting action to recover council resources
- Submission of the accounts for 2006/07 in accordance with the statutory deadline
- Unqualified accounts for the last four years (the accounts have been qualified for decades prior to this)
- No section 11s (serious audit concerns) for the last five years (coming from a history of seven section 11s)

Achievements for the Finance and Resources department 2007/08 (continued)

- Embedded budgeting process
- The Corporate Procurement team have strengthened the commissioning and procurement process, supported and challenged departmental contracts and delivered new contracts resulting in savings of over £2m in 2007/8
- Lambeth played an active role as a founder member of the London Local Authority Insurance Mutual Limited (LAML) which went live on 1 April 2007, the first of its kind in over one hundred years, and Lambeth joined the mutual on 1 April 2008
- Lambeth Finance and Resources website recognised as the leading local government finance website in the UK
- New Ways of Working rolled out in Legal and Democratic Services, making savings at the same time as increasing staff satisfaction
- Lambeth Finance and Resources carried out the largest budget consultation programme of its kind in the UK, incorporating the findings into the 2008/09 budget. This pioneering work is part of an ongoing programme of engagement
- Customer satisfaction in the Lambeth Service Centre, ICT Services, Benefits and Council Tax services continue to improve
- The handling of complaints and member enquiries handling has been significantly improved, reducing backlogs and improving satisfaction
- The new contract repairs to Council office buildings resulted in improved performance with over 90% of reported faults cleared within the target times
- Benchmarking demonstrates that ICT services deliver a high value, low cost support to the council
- Improvement in the control environment of key financial systems
- Lambeth Finance and Resources leads the local government risk management joint benchmarking group and risk management has won and been commended in a number of national awards, and receives regular visits from other private and public organisations to share its good practice
- Twenty CIPFA graduate trainees are currently working in the Finance community, the largest number of any London borough, and a further five have taken on permanent jobs within the council
- The election of a Youth Mayor has helped ensure that a major section of our community now has an even stronger voice within the borough and through representation on the UK Youth Parliament. This further enhances the reputation of our highly regarded Youth Council
- A brand new social services legal team has delivered over £150k of savings during 2007/08.
- Legal and Democratic Services led nationally on the development of legal Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Association of Council Solicitors and Secretaries (ACSeS) and participated in pilot projects with the Standards Board for England around complaints against councillors at a local level.
- Facilitated visits from 15 organisations including the IDeA as part of sharing our best practice in relation to new ways of working. The Monitoring Officer chaired the Law Society's National Monitoring Officers Conference in 2007 and 2008.



- Contributed to the Council's Corporate Assessment preparations through sharing the best practice obtained by the Monitoring Officer undertaking the Corporate Assessment of Camden in December 2007
- Lambeth Service Centre and Customer Centres were awarded the Chartermark for excellent customer service
- The Revenues team supported the establishment of the Waterloo Quarter Business Alliance, Lambeth's only Business Improvement District (which commissions extra services to improve the environment in Waterloo)

The Finance and Resources department, once again, was recognised externally as a leader amongst local authorities, winning prestigious awards, beating competition from private and public sector organisations across the UK:

- Highly commended at the 2008 LGC awards in the Legal category
- Andrew Pavlou in Legal Services was runner up in the 2008 Law Society's Solicitors in Local Government 'Young Solicitor of the Year' Award.
- Won the Mainstream Buyer of the Year category at the Black Women in Business Awards 2007
- Shortlisted for Finance Director and Finance Team at the Accountancy Age 2007 Awards
- Runner up in the Quality of Financial Information to Residents and the Quality of Service (for Benefits) categories of the Local Government Chronicle Finance Awards 2007

- Won the innovation category of the Local Government Chronicle Finance Awards 2007 for entry submitted on behalf of LAML
- Shortlisted for the Most Improved Benefits Team at the IRRV awards 2007
- Richard Hay was highly commended in the risk category of the Credit Today awards

Context in which the service operates

Central government funds around 80% of local authority budgets. In the past, the funding allocation has increased year on year. From 2008/09, the increases will become lower, due to funding pressures across government. The government's priorities for future funding are education and health. In addition, local authorities are required to provide efficiency savings of 3% (as part of the Gershon review), so funding decreases in real terms. In order to release funding for service investment, Lambeth will make a combination of efficiency savings and hard choices, within its own budgets.

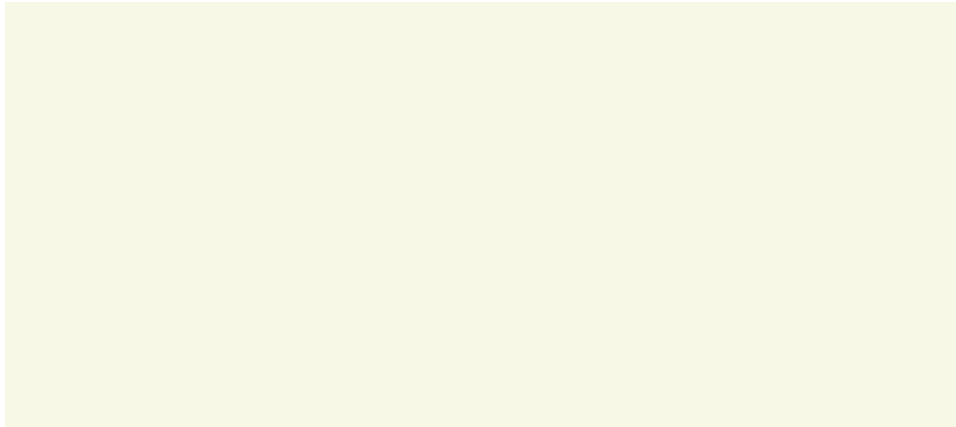
Lambeth as a borough, has a unique make-up, in that it has a transient population with an unusually high young and older population. The council must manage service demand and user needs and expectations to deliver high quality, value for money (VFM) services to those who need them. There are a number of changes to the external environment. Some are listed below, and our working over the next three years will need to anticipate and accommodate them.

1. Funding

- Balance of funding and Council Tax formula changes
- Three year fixed settlements - from 2008/09
- VFM Efficiency targets

2. Technology

- E-Government agenda
- E-procurement; monitor impact on small local businesses
- Link Oracle Financials to other systems – internal & external
- New Housing and Social Care IT systems
- System resilience and security
- Business continuity



3. New legislation & regulatory framework

- Business Improvement Districts
- Small business rate relief
- Local Area Agreements
- Move from housing benefit to LHA
- Changes to benefits legislation

4. Social factors

- Population changes – size & structure; people living longer
- Increased risk of social care litigants

5. Partnerships

- Local tax collection contract due to be retendered in 2009
- Change to more outward-looking approach to service provision
- Improving the way that we monitor and work with partners
- New Citizen Services Strategy for Lambeth based around working with partners to join up service outcomes for residents and sharing service infrastructure
- Moving towards shared partnership reporting and medium term financial planning

6. Service factors

- Supporting the achievement of council priorities and corporate plan outcomes
- Housing stock transfers – less rental income
- Impact of the ALMO for the organisation
- PFIs in CYPS, Regeneration and Housing and other departments
- Capital disposal – gain, but no more future income

Departmental risk analysis

Finance and Resources Departmental Leadership team have identified the following risks and opportunities which will be actively managed and mitigated over the next year:

The opportunities and threats shown below reflect only the highest level DLT risks. Operational risks are managed within each of the divisions and business units. The management of risks within the department is an ongoing process therefore this is a snap shot of the department's risk profile as at 1 April 2008.

Risks are categorised as red, amber or green (RAG) according to status

SLB risks: (all SLB risks for the department are owned by Mike Suarez)

Ref	Headline risk	RAG
CRR0003	<p>Housing revenue account: To improve the adequacy and level of the general fund and housing revenue account (HRA) reserves and balance. Setting a balanced risk assessed budget for revenue and capital (general fund and HRA)</p>	R
CRR0005	<p>Business continuity - IT resilience: Lambeth has one of the most developed IT infrastructures in local government but this level of automation increases the potential impact that a risk would have if it occurred</p>	A
CRR0019	<p>Economic down turn: Continue to prioritise problems caused by worklessness, and the risk of the local worklessness numbers rising, through business planning. Continue to recognise the impact on likely government grants and other centrally determined revenue streams through prudent financial modelling. Focus on debt collection, as individual debtors may rise as their ability to pay is constrained by economic circumstances. Implement Shared service centre for debt recovery, as part of Excellent Cash Management project</p>	A



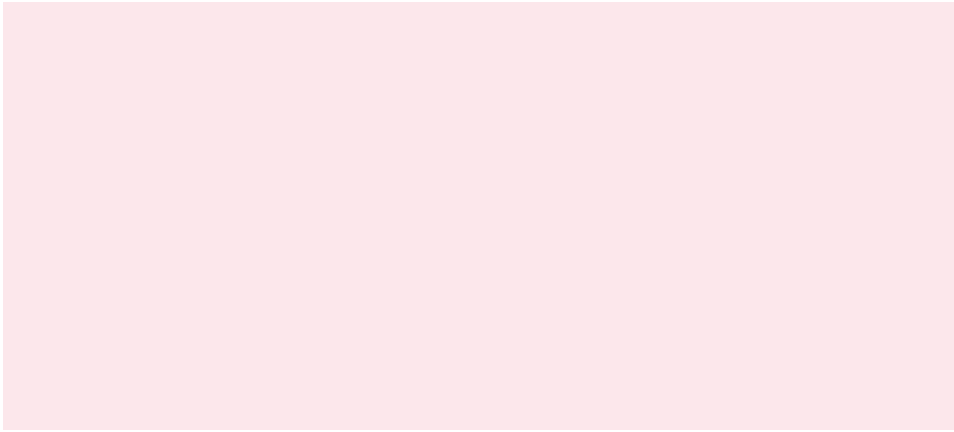
Opportunities for the department to maximise

Ref	Headline risk	RAG	Owned by
FN0050	<p>CPA Use of Resources (UOR): To achieve 3 and 4 stars for the CPA UOR assessment for 2007/08 and 2008/09, respectively including key focus on: financial standing, financial management; financial reporting, internal control and value for money</p>	A	Jonathan Williams
FN0052	<p>Lobbying and working with members: The risk of no 'real' growth for revenue support grant or increased in line with Lambeth's needs</p>	A	Mike Suarez
FN0056	<p>London Mutual: The creation of an insurance mutual gives LBL (and other London authorities) the opportunity to work more closely and should: i) create saving opportunities ii) better data collection which is more easily comparable iii) ensure that fraudulent claims are more easily identified and dealt with</p>	R	Jonathan Williams
FN0058	<p>VFM (including contract management): Progress made by LBL toward providing better value for money (VFM) will give rise to a number of opportunities including: i) Better use of resources for the council ii) Improved LBL reputation amongst residents, businesses and other key stakeholders iii) Save money iv) Encourage compliance against a number of key returns to statutory bodies (including CPA, etc)</p>	R	Jonathan Williams
FN0070	<p>Opportunity for changing policy decisions: Continue to embed scrutiny to impact positively on performance management/ policy development</p>	A	Mark Hynes
FN0072	<p>National Fraud investigations: Containing and recovering loss through working in partnership with the police, utilising NFI results and routine audit work</p>	A	Mohamed Khan

Departmental risk analysis (continued)

Opportunities for the department to maximise (continued)

Ref	Headline risk	RAG	Owned by
FN0073	Increasing the electoral register: Continue work to increase electoral registration including working in partnership with colleagues in revenues (council tax)	A	Mark Hynes
FN0075	New department structure: Identify and maximise further opportunities for improved service delivery through the new F&R structure	A	Mike Suarez
FN0076	New ways of working: Develop opportunities to the department through new ways of working and the accommodation strategy	A	Allan Drew
FN0077	IT opportunities:	A	Ed Garcez
FN0078	Sharing information through the LSP: To share information with partners across the LSP, and in so doing enhance service delivery to citizens and improve our customer knowledge and data.	G	Ed Garcez
FN0079	Maximising subsidy: The council can secure an additional £1m in benefit subsidy, if the value of local authority overpayments are less than 0.48% of the expected £220m annual expenditure	A	David Ashmore
FN0081	Data security: Implementation of a controlled process for removal of local data from desktop computers and to adopt an encryption standard for laptops to ensure data is secured on this platform.	G	Ed Garcez

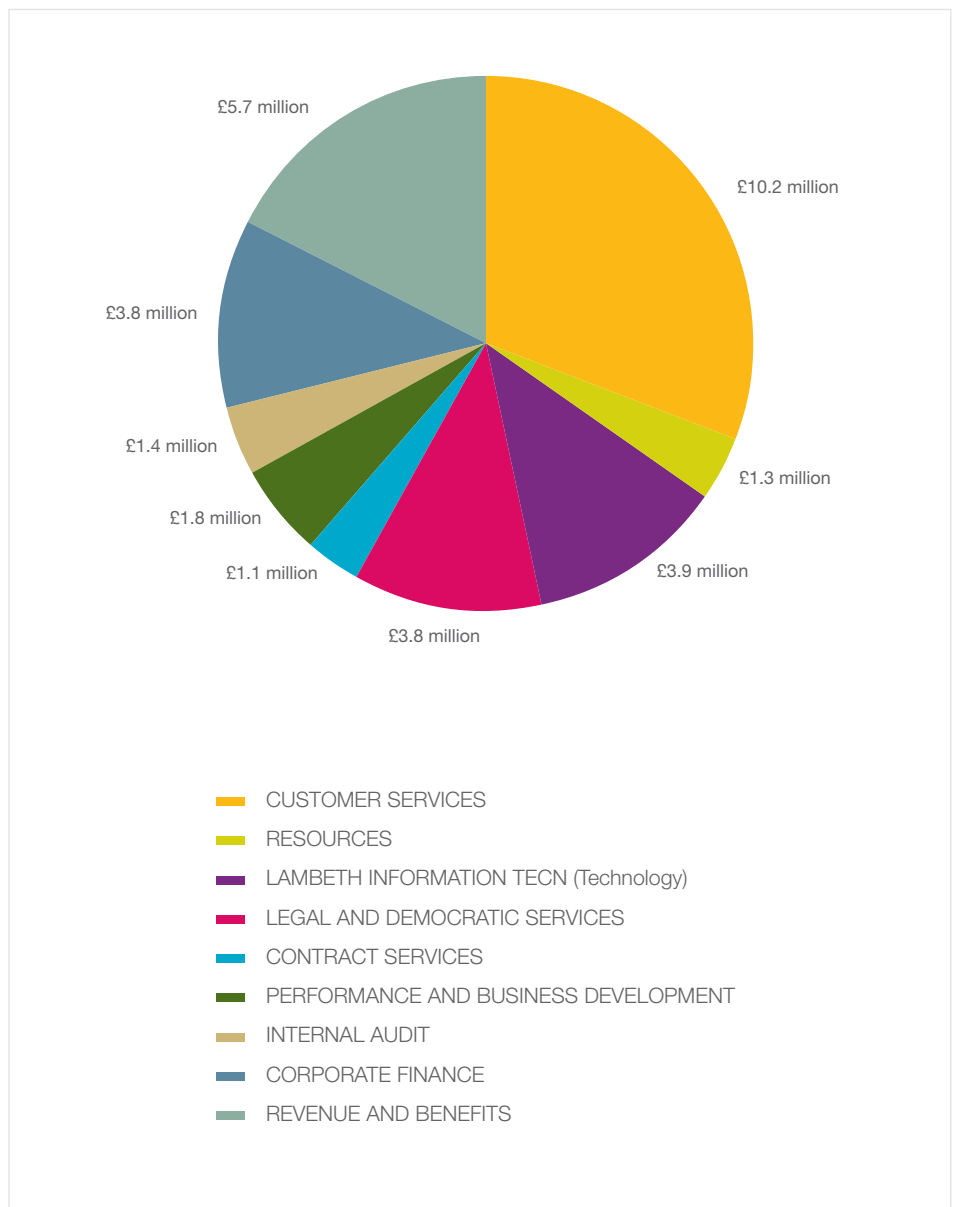


Threats for the department to minimise

Ref	Headline risk	RAG	Owned by
FN0042	Overspend occurring across the council: Risk that the budgets are set at unrealistic levels and/or not adhered to during the year	A	Conrad Hall
FN0049	Internal control (including fraud and governance): There is a risk that the Corporate (Audit) Committee and management do not have sufficient assurance over the effectiveness of the risk management and control framework	A	Mohamed Khan
FN0068	Reduced income through land charges: Financial threat of reduced income through land charges, particularly threatened by the current reduction in the property market	A	Mark Hynes
FN0080	Revenues and Benefits strategy and performance: There is potential for income collection across the revenues streams to deteriorate which could have an adverse effect on the general fund. There is also a risk that a downturn in performance in the benefits service could result in vulnerable customers put at risk of hardship, although both of these scenarios are unlikely	G	David Ashmore

The Finance and Resources department budget 2008/09

This budget breakdown does not include the special items budget which covers areas that do not fall into categories of service provision functions, such as corporate provisions for premature retirement voluntary severance; investment income; contributions to and from capital reserves; appropriations to insurance fund; contribution to reserves; contingencies, pension costs-back funding and licenses and levies.



Equalities



The equalities agenda remains a priority for the department. It is increasingly important for inspectors to be able to evidence our work to meet the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) and Use of Resources. The work over the last year provides a solid grounding, with more improvements anticipated.

Equality management capacity has been enhanced in 2007/08 in a number of ways including:

- Developing a clear and transparent governance structure
 - Systematically raising awareness of individual roles and responsibilities
 - Commissioning bespoke equality impact training for F&R managers and staff representatives
 - Engaging Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) to undertake an audit review of the equality impact assessment process across the department
 - Developing a programme of equality performance indicators and targets aligned to corporate, local and national priorities and objectives
 - Using the annual staff conference to engage and involve managers and staff in the design of our equality plan
 - Intelligence gathering activities such as the budget consultation to enable local communities to engage and participate in the financial and service planning
 - Research evidence base to identify inequality gaps
 - Carrying out equality impact assessments to identify and safeguard potential adverse impact on equality groups
- Using procurement and value for money to drive through good equality practices to other sectors
 - Monthly and quarterly performance monitoring reviews to measure our progress on equality targets.

Looking ahead

Building on our achievements to date we will continue to tackle inequality by setting robust SMART targets and outcomes that narrow the gap. For 2008/09 the focus will be on:

- Each division setting equality objectives, performance indicators and targets aligned to our customer and business needs
- Measuring progress against set targets effectively using information and monitoring systems
- Conducting effective impact assessments using recommendations from 2007/08 PWC equality impact assessment audit review
- Demonstrating significant equality improvements and outcomes for both service delivery and employment.

Research and consultation 2007/08

This provides an overview of the feedback gathered by the department and the council in 2007/08.

A full breakdown of 2007/08's research and consultation findings in the department and key activities for the council can be found in Appendix 2.

Budget Consultation

When asked about priorities in the budget, many residents reiterated the findings of the previous year's budget consultation and residents' surveys as they would like to see services focus on crime reduction and community safety as well as providing activities.

Alternative ways of accessing the council was considered the lowest priority as many people felt the level of provision to be adequate, or that other areas should be a focus. These were also the areas that most residents where residents who attended focus groups and workshops were willing to see savings made.

The research showed that the public's perception of Lambeth Council's financial management, performance and value for money had dropped considerably since the previous year, possibly reflecting the negative media coverage of the council regarding crime, CPA ratings and the rise in council tax.

Residents' Survey

Residents retain a positive image of the council in many areas. The research shows significantly positive change in the view that the council is "difficult" to get through to on the phone (-8%). The only area that the council is doing worse than in 2005 is that the council is doing a "better job now than a year ago" (-6%).

The results from the residents' survey found the major concern to be crime, with growing concern about rising prices/interest rates (+5%). Areas of less concern were the level of council tax (-9%) and standard of education (-9%).

Research and consultation plan for 2008/09

In 2008/09 we expect to conduct research and consultation that will help inform, evaluate and plan key strategies and policies that the department prepares. Here is a list of some of the key exercises that we expect to conduct in 2008/09:

- 2009/2010 Budget Consultation
- Customer centre consultation including cash payment research
- New ways of working
- Citizen services strategy research
- Staff survey
- Assessing equality and partnership outcomes
- Various satisfaction surveys (including technology and customer service, Capita)
- Customer services staff structure and deployment (staff consultation)
- Housing services accessibility (customer consultation)
- Customer Centre opening hours (customer / resident / staff consultation)

Our services – what customers have told us



Benefits Service

Improved total satisfaction (78% vs. 63% in 2003/04).

Major improvements in satisfaction:

- “the ways in which I can contact the local authority benefits office“ (increased 5% to 46%)
- “the experience of visiting the local authority benefits office” (increased 10% to 41%)
- “with the telephone service provided by my local authority benefits office” (increased 24% to 35%)
- “with the housing/council tax benefits claim form “ (increased 5% to 36%)

Council Tax – Capita

Strong improvements in satisfaction all Council Tax services provided by Capita:

- Personal visit (increased from 60% to 67%)
- Council Visit (increased from 61% to 82%)
- Written correspondence (increased from 41% to 56%)
- Telephone contact (increased from 70% to 76%)

Customer Services

Approximately 300 mystery shopping calls per quarter are made into the contact centre across all of the services. Scores from this monitoring are currently running at between 84% and 87%

Results over the past two years have seen rapid and steady improvements. Last year, in June 2007, a benchmarking report that now showed that we are in the 2nd highest quartile in terms of the quality of calls answered.

Customer satisfaction surveys are carried out every month for most services. The aim is to measure the customer satisfaction with the performance of the Lambeth Service Centre. Currently the satisfaction scores are between 85% and 90%

Key Activity summary by division:

Corporate Finance

Core business of the division

Corporate Finance sets the financial framework within which all of the Council's accounting activities take place, and advises officers and members of the financial position and consequences of decisions. The division produces and monitors the revenue and capital budgets, managing the council's payments, cash flow, long term borrowing and investments and pensions fund.

What the division will achieve during 2008/09

- To ensure the Fixed Asset Register (FAR) is populated with robust data, and to embed proper practice in development of the capital programme.
- To shorten cycle times to produce and report the Finance Monitor.
- To continue to manage an effective lobbying strategy
- To close accounts on time, together with group accounts, and have them audited by 30th September with no qualifications
- To implement new borrowing requirements for capital programme, combined with debt restructuring opportunities to lead to reduced average cost of borrowing.
- To drive forward a more efficient income to collections process and a procure to pay process
- To review the council's cash management and centralise the accounts receivable and payable functions within all business units

Key objectives targets and measures

Delivery quality and value for money

- To maintain and further develop effective financial control to underpin and maximise the council's use of resources
- To improve the planning, implementation, control and accounting of the capital programme taken as whole
- Manage the service and financial planning process
- Improve the quality of grant claims
- Improve pension fund management, enhancing and expanding the pension fund accounts to include an annual report, to improve accessibility to information
- Maintain appropriate controls and accounting arrangements for all Payments Processing.

Tackling inequality and social exclusion

- Support, shape and inform the budget consultation process, with emphasis on engaging with hard to reach groups

Listening and engaging

- To improve the quality of financial information in committee reports, and other decision-making
- To reflect the budget consultation's finding in the service and financial planning process across the council

Corporate Procurement Team



Core business of the division

The Corporate Procurement Team oversees and supports contracting, commissioning and procurement across the council to ensure that value for money is achieved.

The Head of Corporate Procurement is the head of profession for devolved procurement teams to ensure continuous improvement in procurement across the council. The team leads strategic corporate tender projects, offers advice and support, best practice and guidance, delivering training in procurement to procurement professionals, or council officers undertaking procurement activities.

What the division will achieve during 2008/09

- Embed new procurement processes to ensure Lambeth's procurement is fit for purpose and use the new contract register to improve planning, collaboration and visibility of decisions
- Successfully retender and implement council wide provisions for the agency staff and corporate Repairs and Maintenance contracts
- Contribute to evidencing and achieving VFM in Use of Resources
- To develop the procurement and commissioning process to take into account the whole procurement life cycle and wider organisational processes
- To implement a five year strategy for the council's energy management.

Key objectives targets and measures

Delivery quality and value for money

- Council wide procurement savings of £500k through tendering and/or improved contract coverage of existing or potential corporate contract arrangements.
- Procurement counter fraud initiative
- Promotion/provision of London Centre of Excellence (LCE) spend analysis to departments.

Tackling inequality and social exclusion

- Implement processes to enhance small to medium enterprise (SME) take up of Lambeth work through requiring local quotes for purchases below £25,000 and improve the awareness of opportunities.
- Introduce simpler Low value, Low Risk Business Questionnaire.

Listening and engaging

- Carry out Corporate Procurement Customer Survey and review.
- Collaborative and Partnership activity will be necessary to maximise opportunities.
- Improve Contract Management and hold the user at the heart of improvements.

Customer Services

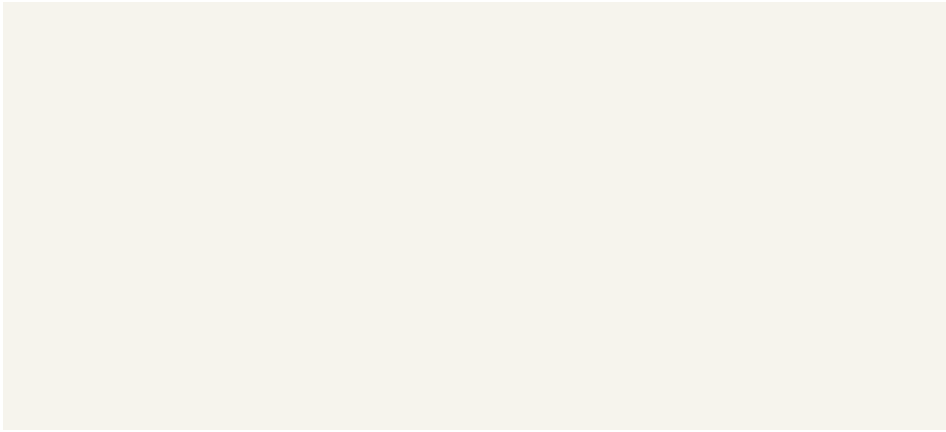
Core business of the division

The Customer Services division includes the following functions:

- The Lambeth Service Centre provides the primary point of contact by telephone and email for all services in: ECCS; ACS; CYPS; Housing Supply & Demand; Housing repairs, rents, leasehold and correspondence; the council switchboard and the face-to-face point of contact for Housing via the Housing Front Counters.
- Facilities management, which manages the council's administrative buildings
- Corporate Complaints Unit investigates stage 3 complaints, responds to Subject Access Requests and is the council's formal link to the Local Government Ombudsman, coordinating responses to all his enquiries
- The Brixton and Streatham Customer Centres provide a face-to-face environment where residents and others can access council services in one place.

What the division will achieve during 2008/09

- The creation of the Staff Support Centre for improved performance and operation of facilities, IT & HR helpdesk functions
- Letting of new Planned and Reactive maintenance contract for council buildings
- Delivering an accommodation strategy to provide better use of council buildings and new ways of working
- Improved quality of complaints and members' enquiry responses by analysing data from quality checking exercises
- Both Customer Centres will achieve performance targets relating to waiting and service delivery times and develop greater partnerships. Lambeth Service Centre will maintain or better the current levels of customer satisfaction
- A shared citizens' services strategy with our key partners to improve customer services.



Key objectives targets and measures

Delivery quality and value for money

- Setting up of Staff Support Centre for facilities, IT & HR and delivering customer service and customer satisfaction targets
- Placing of new contract for planned and reactive maintenance for Council buildings, providing enhanced levels of service and value for money
- To continue the improved delivery of core contracts including cleaning and security
- To achieve and maintain a consistently high performance in the LSC and Customer Centres over the next 3 years through lower resources
- Increase the use of automated services such as the web and voice recognition services.

Tackling inequality and social exclusion

- Work with the Equalities and Diversity Unit to improve the way racial incidents and other forms of hate crime are logged and monitored
- Re-launch and encourage wider use of the council's whistle-blowing policy
- Establish ongoing surgeries with the Lambeth Credit Union to provide money advice and encourage the establishment of personal savings accounts.

Listening and engaging

- Analyse satisfaction with complaints handling received through the on-line feedback form by ethnicity, age, gender and disability
- Work to reduce avoidable contact by resolving customer queries effectively and efficiently and taking a 'one and done' approach.

ICT Services

Core business of the division

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Services division provides technical support and development services for Lambeth's ICT systems and infrastructure. These range from managing networks and servers to developing and supporting the core line of business systems.

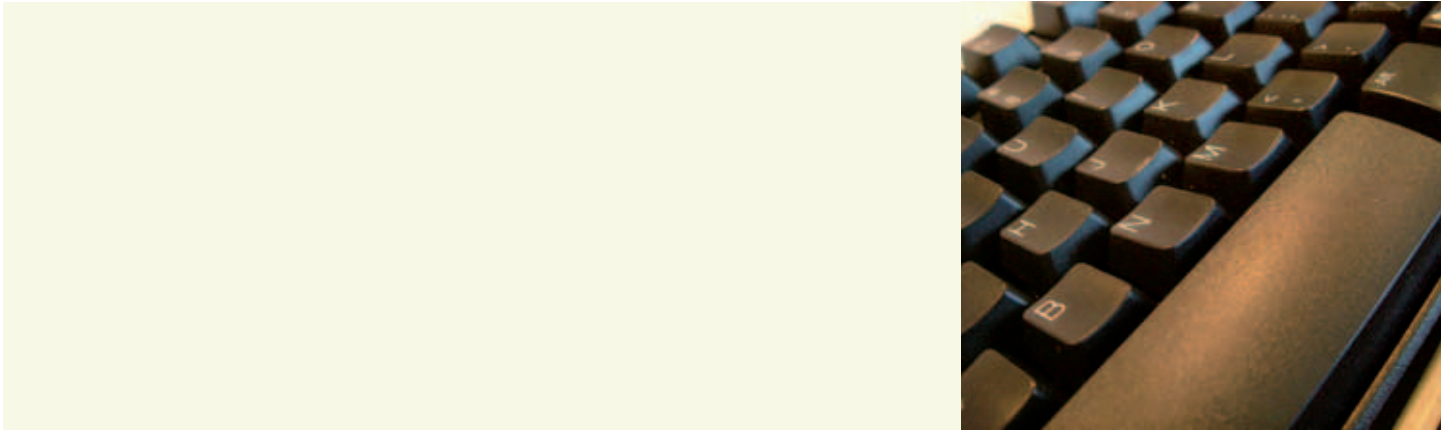
The team provides a single point of support, guidance and governance across all ICT operations within the council.

The unit also co-ordinates and supports the delivery of a number of statutory obligations under the Freedom of Information Act and the Data Protection Act, whilst ensuring that Information Management across the council is used to support and develop services proactively around the customer.

What the division will achieve during 2008/09

The ICT Services Division will continue to deliver the following services to the agreed service standards:

- 1st line support covering: Helpdesk, Desktop and Staff Services
- Application support for over 130 applications across the council's services
- The core ICT infrastructure across the council's voice and data networks and server provision including CNIP, the council's phone system
- Application development to deliver projects and continuous improvement enabled by technology
- Data Services, including Data Protection and Freedom of Information advice and Street Naming and Numbering.



Key objectives targets and measures

Delivery quality and value for money

- To continue to deliver 1st line support, application support, core ICT infrastructure, application development and data services to agreed service standards
- Deliver phase 2 of the council's PC refresh programme, replacing over 1100 PCs and enabling revenue savings of £800k over 4 years
- To continue to support the delivery of the council's transformation and continuous improvement programme, shaping and informing ICT initiatives.

Tackling inequality and social exclusion

- The division's user satisfaction monitoring programme will be further developed to ensure that we can evidence that all staff are equally happy with the service they receive.

Listening and engaging

- Review user group arrangements to establish a consistent user engagement framework for applications support across the council's frontline services
- Introduce application level customer surveys to inform improvements to service delivery and planning of continuous improvement work.

Internal Audit & Anti-Fraud

Core business of the division

The division is the focal point for the council's internal audit & anti-fraud functions. Internal Audit is a statutory service providing an independent and objective appraisal service on the adequacy and operational effectiveness of the Council's risk, control and governance processes. It also provides impartial advice and information.

The anti-fraud service undertakes investigations into suspicions of fraudulent activity committed against the Council by employees and customers covering internal fraud, Housing Benefit and property related fraud, and recommends appropriate sanctions.

The division also supervises and co-ordinates all anti fraud activities across the Council of a proactive and reactive nature, ultimately leading to reduced losses

What the division will achieve during 2008/09

In 2008/09, the team will continue to co-ordinate and integrate its working practices to improve its effectiveness. They will focus on measures that will improve the CPA score. They will also review those measures in line with the planned introduction of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) in 2010, taking on board the requirement on local authorities to develop an anti-fraud strategy that is based on local requirements as opposed to national targets. The team will respond to referrals and conduct investigations in fraud and abuse in the benefit and housing systems. They will refocus their efforts on identifying fraud prevention measures. They will test internal controls by undertaking proactive exercises and, where preventable losses are identified, ensure that appropriate action is taken to strengthen control processes.

Key objectives targets and measures

Delivery quality and value for money

- Utilise and target our resources efficiently and effectively
- Provide appropriate advice and support to management to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of their services and functions through compilation and completion of an annual risk based plan of reviews, and help them respond to new and emerging issues
- Execute a new professional approach to tackling fraud involving a number of work streams aimed at reducing fraud losses to an absolute minimum
- Prevent, detect, deter and remedy fraud and abuse in the Housing system, specifically in relation to the procurement, use and sale of council properties.

Tackling inequality and social exclusion

- To prevent, detect, deter and remedy fraud and abuse in the entitlement systems (housing benefits and property-related) and council assets and funds
- To deliver services in an open and fair manner.

Listening and engaging

- To maintain a 100% satisfaction rating in the feedback from customers.

Legal and Democratic Services

Core business of the division

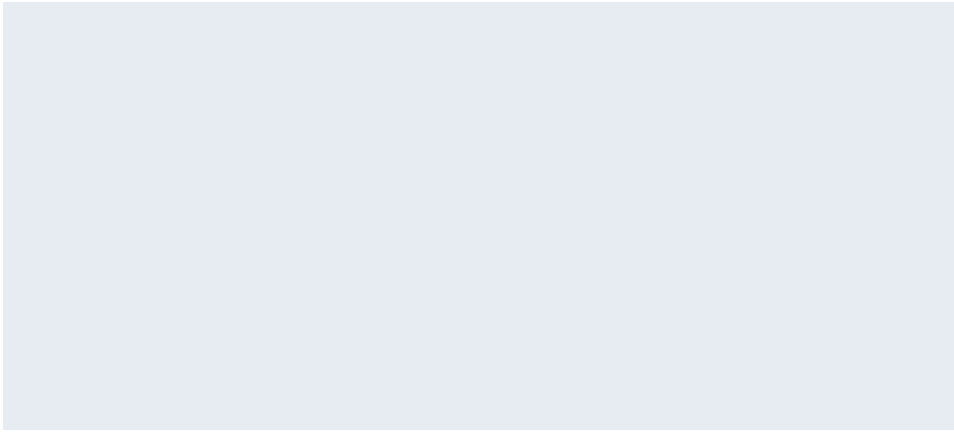
Legal Services provides accurate, effective, efficient and economic legal advice and services as required by the council to support officers and members. It also provides a statutory local land charges service to purchasers of property within the borough usually within one day of their request. The service is now fully e-enabled.

Democratic Services supports and manages committee support, electoral registration, the political group offices, the Mayor's Office, the Youth Council and Scrutiny. A key role of the business unit is to support the elected members of the Council to undertake their roles through the formal Committee process, including scrutiny.

What the division will achieve during 2008/09

Legal services will successfully retain external quality certification from, LEXCEL and ISO 9000 following formal inspections during May 2008; continue to grow internal legal capacity; make savings where in-house services replace external provision with a particular focus on social services and commercial property work and undertake a tendering exercise for the external legal contracts which expire in 2009, exploring opportunities for shared services. They will increase external income streams from section 106 work and work obtained from third party public sector bodies and voluntary organisations in the borough; lead on the changing governance and ethical framework as a result of the new statutory regime of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIH) coming into force and the management response to the IDeA ethical review while continuing to provide advice on the Council's key regeneration projects.

Democratic services will support governance arrangements for our partnerships; actively seek ways to enhance our reputation in light of CAA and customer feedback and test the robustness of our arrangements through scrutiny. They will implement 'Report Management Function' for all council formal decision making, ensure accredited sustainability programmes for Lambeth Youth Council in partnership with key stakeholders and focus on significantly improving electoral registration in the Borough. A community engagement strategy will be implemented.



Key objectives targets and measures

Delivery quality and value for money

- Provide excellent cost effective services as required by the Council to achieve 4 stars, reducing costs through the growth of internal legal services provision.

Tackling inequality and social exclusion

- To provide excellent legal services tailored to the needs of the ALMO
- To provide good practice in the wider roll out of new ways of working (NWW) to other areas of the council including equalities issues
- Increase comprehensive participation in democratic services within the black minority ethnic communities (BME) including young people, with a particular focus on electoral participation and the projects aimed at better engaging with these communities through the Lambeth Together Programme

Listening and engaging

- To benchmark costs and customer satisfaction of services with external providers and other London Boroughs, responding to changing customer needs.

Performance and Business Development

Core business of the division

Risk and Insurance produces and monitors the council's risk management strategy and makes sure that cost effective arrangements to provide protection of the council's resources and assets.

Training and development offers support for the finance community including a tailored training scheme, professional qualifications and graduate trainee scheme.

The Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement team writes and supports the production of strategy and inspection documents, co-ordinating consultation and research; equalities; events; communication and partnership working.

Group accountancy provides an integrated accountancy and performance information service for the department and value for money (VFM) support, and guidance for the council.

What the division will achieve during 2008/09

Risk and Insurance will implement a streamlined claims handling system eliminating the use of external claims handlers saving on external claims handling costs providing a faster, simpler service to claimants and update the existing risk management strategy. Training and Development will continue its key training interventions and introduce new training initiatives. Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement will support equalities, strategy and inspection work, provide a consistent consultation approach across the department and to partnership work. Group accountancy will roll out a Value for Money programme across the Council, and promote best practice in the areas of performance and benchmarking.

Key objectives targets and measures

Delivery quality and value for money

- Maximising the opportunities available through our participation in the London Insurance Mutual Limited (LAML)
- Undertake a Best Practice Benchmarking Exercise of Training & Development
- Promote, review and provide evidence of VfM across the council
- Promote and provide evidence of best practice with regard to financial management, benchmarking and performance management.

Tackling inequality and social exclusion

- Supporting the organisation in the move to a Comprehensive Area Assessment
- To increase recorded training opportunities for BME women
- To decrease the variance between male/female recorded Investment in training
- To continue to monitor and support good practice that will enable excellent equalities practice across the department
- To embed a consistent partnership approach for the department to support the VFM and LAA agendas and gain the best outcomes for residents.

Listening and engaging

- Improving customer service and value for money through the development of e-services in the Risk and Insurance department
- To support Finance and Resource divisions and teams to provide research, consultation and evaluation assistance to provide an evidence base upon which strategic decisions are made, and promote good practice across the council
- To communicate the work, achievements and priorities of the Finance and Resources department to all stakeholders both internally and externally
- To promote and integrate equalities into the monitoring activities of the department.

Revenues and Benefits

Core business of the division

Revenues & Benefits division consists of three service areas. The role of the Lambeth's 3 star benefits service is to assess and award housing benefit and/or council tax benefit to entitled Lambeth residents, complying with all statutory regulations, corporate and local policies.

The revenues team is responsible for the administration, collection and enforcement of the council tax and business rates. The credit control team aim to improve the financial standing of the Council, and the service provided to customers, through effective and timely management of debt.

What the division will achieve during 2008/09

- The Revenues & Benefits division will streamline processes to deliver excellent, value for money services to Lambeth residents, improving their customer experience
- The Benefits service will continue to provide fast and accurate financial assistance to the community, ensuring access for all and with particular focus on the anti-poverty agenda
- The Revenues & Credit Control services will continue its year on year improvement, and its increasing income collection, making a significant contribution to the financial health of the council and the universal services provided to residents.

Key objectives targets and measures

Delivery quality and value for money

- Sundry debt collection continues to move from strength to strength with 92% income collection figure in 2007/08. 2008/09 sees an ambitious target of 92.5% for the council, which equates to an income of £65m per year
- Council tax collection increased for the fourth year in a row. 2008/09 will see Lambeth collect 94% for the first time
- Business rates collection in Lambeth continues to impress and is comparable to excellent councils across the UK. 2008/09 will sustain this good performance
- Reducing the number of upheld complaints to 15% and learning how to improve as an organisation is central to the division's continuous improvement programme for our citizens
- Further reducing the average time to process new claims and change of circumstances for our customers is a critical part of our service and we are committed to be the best in London, in providing our residents and partners with an accessible and responsive service.

Tackling inequality and social exclusion

- A strong focus for this year is to raise the profile of housing/council tax benefit as an 'in-work' benefit and to ensure that Lambeth residents receive the financial and personal assistance to which they are entitled. We aim to increase the percentage of in-work benefit customers to 11.5% and increase the percentage of welfare benefits and credit awards to 27%.

Listening and engaging

- As a responsive and empathetic service one of our key objectives is to engage in by more constructive means with our customer, in addition, to an annual survey, there will be targeted forums and workshops to help shape the future delivery of the service.





For more information please go to:
www.lambeth.gov.uk/finance
<http://intranet/OurCouncil/Finance/>