Resources Business Centre Plan 2019/2020
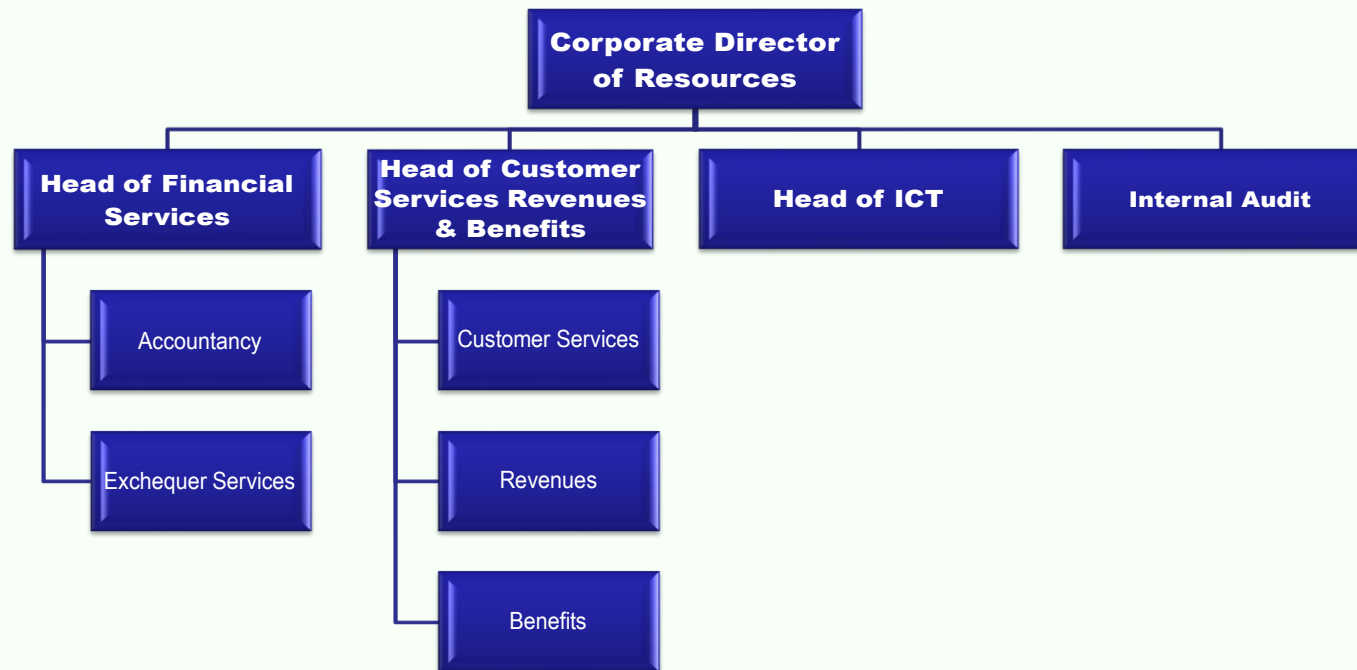
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Runnymede
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Contents

Section 1: Resources Business Centre structure:

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │ Corporate Director   │
                        │   of Resources       │
                        └─────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────┬──────────────────┬──────────────────┐
┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐
│ Head of       │  │ Head of       │  │               │  │               │
│ Financial     │  │ Customer      │  │ Head of ICT   │  │ Internal Audit│
│ Services      │  │ Services      │  │               │  │               │
│               │  │ Revenues      │  │               │  │               │
│               │  │ & Benefits    │  │               │  │               │
└───────────────┘  └───────────────┘  └───────────────┘  └───────────────┘
    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
    │ Accountancy  │    │ Customer     │
    │              │    │ Services     │
    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘
    ┌──────────────┐    ┌──────────────┐
    │ Exchequer    │    │ Revenues     │
    │ Services     │    │              │
    └──────────────┘    └──────────────┘
                        ┌──────────────┐
                        │ Benefits     │
                        └──────────────┘
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N.B. The above structure is in the process of a review.

Committee(s):
The Resources Business Centre is responsible for providing financial advice to all Council Committees and Working Groups

Section 2: Resources Business Centre overview

Resources Business Centre

The Resources Business centre is a division of the Council providing accounting and exchequer service functions, customer services, and ICT services to all areas of the Council's operations. The Internal Audit function also sits within the division.

Financial Services Function

The Financial Services function is managed by the Head of Financial Services (the Council's deputy section151 officer) and is split into two distinct teams – Accountancy and Exchequer Services.

Accountancy
The Accountancy function comprises (6.81 FTE – excluding the Corp Directorof Resources and Head of Financial Services) and carries out the following:
- Prepares the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy.
- Monitors and prepares the Council's Housing Revenue Account, General Fund and Capital budgets for the Council.
- Produces the final accounts for the Council in accordance with professional and statutory guidance and regulations
- Undertakes in excess of £200million of investments a year- which need careful investment and risk management – and maintains the Council's borrowing position (£525million).
- Provides financial planning and financial advice to staff
- Provides a full bookkeeping and accounting service to the Council's three companies

Exchequer Services:
The Exchequer Services function comprises (10.22 FTE) and carries out the following:
- Pay all of the Council's suppliers of goods and services, the majority of which are paid electronically (over 9,000 invoices processed a year)
- Undertakes the payroll for employees, Members , election staff & RBC companies (approximately 6,500 transactions per year)
- Arranges and manages the Council's insurance (approx. 75 claims a year)
- Collects all the Council's income, including issuing over 20,000 invoices a year amounting to over £22million a year
- Recovers Housing Benefit overpayments when the claimant comes off Benefits (issuing over 500 invoices a year)

- Receives, banks, allocates and reconciles all of the income received by the Council
- Carries out the Council's central purchasing function including envelopes, uniforms and cleaning products and negotiates/locates cheaper deals to save the Council money.
- Provides a full debtors and payroll service to the Council's three companies.

Customer Services

The aim of the service is to provide our customers with the information they require at first point of contact as much as possible, in a way that meets their needs and desires yet still being affordable to the Council. The Customer Services team is trained in a multi-disciplinary way to answer simple queries on a wide range of services whether the customer visit in person, contact us by telephone or e-mail. This will deliver a cost effective modern service which meets customer and corporate needs through the development and use of appropriate technologies whilst maintaining customer care and statutory responsibilities.

Revenues

The Revenues service arranges for the billing of all the domestic Council Tax due for the Borough and for Surrey County Council and the Police Service. It also bills all the business premises for the non-domestic (business) rates due. The division collects around 99% of all taxes due within the year and continues recovery action the following year. The division deals with 35,000 customers who pay over £100 million in tax. It is responsible for administering all discounts, exemptions and reductions of all aspects of Council Tax and Business Rates and is responsible for maintaining the local valuation list for both domestic and commercial properties. The section is also responsible for completing government returns and maximising the Council's tax base to ensure the Council remains financially stable

Housing Benefits

This section assesses entitlement and pays Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit to those residents on low incomes. The government are introducing a new benefits regime (Universal Credit) between 2013 and 2020 which will significantly change our operations. We pay around £26 million in various benefits to 5,500 customers. The section also administers Discretionary Housing Payments of approximately £170k to those residents who need more help with their housing costs.

Post and Document Management Services

This section deals with all incoming post to the Council and sorts the correspondence at a basic level for other services areas. It provides scanning and indexing facility as required by departments with a large part of their work back-scanning documents into Information@Work (I@W) once services have processed the paper copy. For some areas, the work is scanned directly into the I@W once the correspondence

has been categorised and referenced. Staff have a working knowledge of the Verification Framework Code of Practice for handling Housing Benefit documents.

ICT
The ICT team are responsible for all aspects of the ICT service i.e. network, infrastructure, security, applications, hardware, software and support. No aspect of the ICT service is out-sourced to a third party provider. The core objectives for the team are:

- To keep the network, all applications and systems operational at all times to support the delivery of services
- To maintain the network, applications, systems, security, hardware and software to the highest level
- To lead and advise the organisation in the choice, procurement and implementation of new applications, systems, software and hardware
- To provide the staff and councillors with the necessary training and advice to use the equipment and systems
- To keep up to date with the latest technologies and inform the Council how innovation can improve service delivery
- To maintain a working relationship with all other Surrey Districts, Boroughs, the County, third sector, suppliers and business partners
- To provide a means of ensuring that problems and issues are resolved as quickly as possible.
- To secure the network, data and information against external threats
- To ensure that applications and systems are fit for purpose and are operating both efficiently and effectively

Internal Audit

A service provided under contract by TIAA. A strategic Audit Plan is approved by the Standards and Audit Committee annually. All probity, systems and value for money audits, as well as governance audits, are reported to the Standards and Audit Committee.

Section 3: Key drivers/influences for the Resources Business Centre

Drivers and influences	
Internal drivers/influences	
Key corporate drivers/influences	**Key drivers/influences of any Business Centre/Team strategies/key documents**
- The Corporate Business Plan is trying to achieve against the following themes: - Supporting Local People - Enhancing Our Environment - Improving Our Economy - Organisational Development - Corporate Key Performance Indicators. - There is a need to increase income generation to offset growing costs and loss of government grants. 98.6% Collection of Council Tax 98.8% Collection of Business Rates 85% of calls answered within 5 rings - Administration of new benefit claims within 21 days - Administration of change in circumstances 7 days	- Corporate Business Plan - Medium Term Financial Strategy - Capital Strategy - Treasury Management Strategy - Housing Revenue Account Business Plan - Property Investment Strategy - Customer Services Strategy - IT Strategy - Procurement Strategy

External drivers/influences		
Key community/consultation drivers/influences	**Key partner's / supplier's drivers/influences**	**National key drivers/influences**
Each year the Leader of the Council supported by senior officers consult the	External Auditors Surrey Treasurers (& other spin off groups)	Main drivers are Government policy on Business Rates, Council Tax, and

community on the Council's budget and council tax rate proposals. Also attend other forums by invitation (Chertsey society etc.) External customer feedback through corporate complaints process ensures regular reviews of processes and procedures	Treasury Management Consultants Insurance Companies Surrey Revenues Managers Surrey Customer Services Surrey ICT Managers Account management meetings with third party suppliers Performance monitoring of Enforcement Agents to ensure each company is working within the regulations and contract specification	payment of Housing Benefits including Universal Credit and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP). The Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) who drive accounting, treasury and reporting changes International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Government departments principally: • MHCLG • HM Treasury • HMRC • DWP • Dept for Justice (Legal claims) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Payment Card Industry (PCI) Security Standards Council

Note:
Financial Services and ICT are support services to the Council, as such the effects of External drivers/influences from all the Council's service areas (as shown in each individual business plan) have an indirect effect on the Resources Business Centre.

Section 4: Planned work

Key: ▢ Project ▢ Review ▢ One-off Activity* ▢ New Business As Usual ▢ Business As Usual

▢ *Aspirational work area which cannot be delivered without further funding becoming available*

*N.B. One-off Activity refers to an activity that is needed as a one-off but is not a project or a review e.g. writing a new policy/strategy or undertaking recruitment.

Projects				
Ref.	**Project name** (*N.B. Detailed objectives, deliverables and risks can be found in Project Charters*)	**Team/section leading on the project**	**Outcome(s) i.e. the benefit(s) the project brings once delivered**	**Completion date or stage at the end of the year (March 2020)**
R1	Northgate system tender and procurement of following systems: • Revenues • Benefits • Housing • Planning • Land charges • Information @ work	ICT	To ensure we have cost effective and fit for purpose IT systems to support services.	By the end of March 2020
R2	Universal Credit Implementation	Housing Benefits	Legislative requirement and assists Runnymede's more vulnerable adult in applying for Housing benefit and Council Tax Support	TBC – Dependent on DWP

R3	Set up Assisted Digital (AD) and Personal Budgeting Support	Housing Benefits & ICT	Legislative requirement and assists Runnymede's more vulnerable adult in applying for Housing benefit and Council Tax Support	TBC – Dependent on DWP
R4	Web forms – hosting and recreating in Capita Information@Work	Communications Team and Customer Services	To make services more accessible through a greater range of access channels	By the end of March 2020
R5	E-form integration with Information@Work to improve back office work flows	Customer Services	To improve back office work flows.	By the end of March 2020
R6	SIP trunks replacement (telephone and data lines)	ICT	To enable staff to work remotely and deliver efficiency savings	By the end of March 2020
R7	Helpdesk software upgrade	ICT	To manage helpdesk calls in a more efficient manner and report on performance indicators	By the end of March 2020
R8	Office 365 implementation	ICT	To enable agile working and creates a collaborative work space that is up to date, secure, safe and delivers reliability and will replace Office 2010 which is de-supported from October 2020	By the end of March 2020 for all staff (some Councillors and senior managers will be migrated in an earlier phase)

R9	VDI implementation		To enable agile working and creates a more secure environment for data. Creates a more efficient way of dealing with upgrades and users can connect to their personal desktop even remotely	By the end of March 2020
R10	Set up new Payroll for RBC Companies and transfer employees from existing payroll. This will include, result in an additional payroll, Pension fund etc	Financial Services & Human Resources	To aid more effective working due to all staff being paid through one system.	By the end of April 2019
R11	Implementation of the Total Archiving module of the Financial management System	Financial Services & ICT & System suppliers	Assists with GDPR regulations and speeds up the response times of the current live data system	By the end of August 2019

Reviews				
Ref.	**Objective**	**Team/section leading on the review**	**Outcome(s) i.e. the benefit(s) the objective brings once delivered**	**Completion date or stage at the end of the year (March 2020)**
R12	Investigate Call Safe, continuous card payments, Paypal and other new payment innovations in order to encourage new ways for customers to pay the Council.	Financial Services	To increase number of payment methods available to the customer and to reduce the number of cheques being received – subsequently reducing bank charges.	By the end of March 2020

R13	A market review of fully integrated Financial Management Systems applicable to the unique local government sector to seek opportunities for potential cost savings and increased functionality with a view to retendering in 2020/21. Current integration includes: • General ledger • Purchase Ordering • Budgeting • Creditors • Debtors • Cashbook	Financial Services	Potential cost savings and increased functionality	By the end of March 2020
R14	A market review of BACS payment systems to assess current value for money and opportunities for improvements	Financial Services	Potential cost savings	By the end of December 2020
R15	Review of Corporate Fraud section to increase resources in 2019/20	Financial Services	Significant cost savings and income	By the end of Jan 2019

R16	Council Tax Support Scheme	Head of Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits	To ensure the scheme is up to date and relevant incorporating the rollout of Universal Credit to Runnymede's residents without impacting on Council Taxpayers and the tax base	By the end of April 2020
R17	Review of garden waste payment options including the possible introduction of Direct Debit for Garden waste subscribers	Financial Services, Customer Services & ICT	To increase take-up and income and reduce administration in annual renewal process	By the end of Feb 2020
R18	Review ICT Business Continuity and Disaster recovery contract to ensure best value and enable swift response to emergency activity	ICT/Applied Resilience	Ensure contract keeps pace with changes in ICT and enables RBC to react quickly and efficiently in case of emergency	By the end of Jan 2020
R19	Review of Telephone payments system to encourage more use, seek new service utilisation and rationalise existing service users.	Financial Services	Improve channel shift and increase efficiency	By the end of March 2020
R20	Review the market for a new Environmental Health software system	ICT	To support the process for acquiring a new cost effective and fit for purpose system to support service delivery.	By the end of December 2019

Ref.	Objective	Team/section	Outcome(s) i.e. the benefit(s) the objective brings once delivered	Completion date or stage at the end of the year (March 2020)
R21	*ICT review:* • *ICT strategy* • *ICT Procurement* • *ICT Project Management* • *Governance & Security* *ICT capability*	*ICT consultant*	*A modern efficient service able to meet the Council's corporate objectives and provide a customer first culture*	*TBD*

One-off Activity				
Ref.	**Objective**	**Team/section**	**Outcome(s) i.e. the benefit(s) the objective brings once delivered**	**Completion date or stage at the end of the year (March 2020)**
R22	Tender for the selection of new Insurance Brokers	Financial Services	To assist in ensuring the Council has fit for purpose insurance.	All contract preparation completed by the end of March 2020 to commence April 2020.
R23	Tender for the selection of a contract for the annual valuation of Fixed Assets. (May also include valuations for insurance purposes - see O3 below)	Financial Services	To aid the robustness of the Statement of Accounts through accurate and timely external valuation of the Council's asset portfolio.	All contract preparation completed by by April 2019 to commence October 2019
R24	Customer Satisfaction Surveys	Customer Services & ICT	To improve customer satisfaction	By the end of March 2020

R25	Introduction of Northgate Direct Debits for Housing Benefit Debtors Currently the Debtors team have to manually transfer debts from the Benefits system to the Debtors system in order for people to pay by direct debit. This is an avoidable manual exercise that is increasing in volume	Financial Services & Benefits	Direct Debit payments enabled in the Housing Benefits system which will save officer time in copying over data from one system to another.	By the end of September 2019
R26	Plan and implement new requirements of International Financial Reporting Standard 16: Leases. IFRS16: Leases is a major change in accounting affecting both Public and Private sector alike. It will bring all leases, contract hire and hire purchase agreements onto the Balance Sheet as if they were owned by the Leasee. This will include changing procurement practices to gather the required information at an early stage, agreeing parameters with external auditors and preparing other departments for an influx of information requests coming their way from assets we lease out	Financial Services	A robust list of agreements held by the Council, with all relevant details understood to allow for the complex accounting entries.	By the end of September 2019
R27	Set up Pension Auto-Enrolment for RBC employees	Financial Services	Auto enrol all RBC employees excluding those opted-out employees	By the end of November 2019
R28	Automation of ATLAS into Housing Benefits Northgate	Housing Benefits	Reduced administration within Housing Benefits	By the end of June 2020

R29	Set up of Virtual Earnings, Pensions and Savings (VEPS)	Housing Benefits	Improved efficiency within Housing Benefits and reduced fraud and overpayments	By the end of June 2020
R30	Windows 10 migration	ICT	To move software onto supported version	By the end of March 2020
R31	Windows 2008 server migration	ICT	To move software onto supported version	By the end of March 2020
R32	Network switch replacement	ICT	To replace defunct hardware and ensure system availability remains at 95%	By the end of June 2019
R33	GCX replacement mailboxes	ICT	To replace defunct mailboxes to engage securely with external government departments	By the end of April 2019
R34	Netscaler migration	ICT	Migrating e-mail services from TMG (defunct software) to more robust platform	By the end of April 2019
R35	Security Information Event management (SIEM) upgrade	ICT	Improve security alerts across the network and detect unusual activity to prevent cyber attacks	By the end of April 2019
R36	Update & Standardise Overtime and time sheet claim forms for staff	Financial Services	Aim for all staff throughout the Council to use the same forms – electronically if possible.	By the end of Nov 2019
R37	Implement and embed new procedures following the introduction of the new Lloyds internet banking system.	Financial Services	A seamless transition to the new Lloyds Banking platform	By the end of March 2020

Ref.	Objective	Team/section	Outcome(s) i.e. the benefit(s) the objective brings once delivered	Completion date or stage at the end of the year (March 2020)
R38	Tender for the selection of a cash receipting system. Civica have purchased the PARIS system and are migrating customers to their own product. This provides us with an opportunity to seek potential cost savings and increased functionality via a full market testing exercise.	Financial Services	The installation of a fully PCI compliant solution delivering an increased range of functions at a lower cost.	By the end of March 2020
R39	Tender for telephony system software	ICT	To ensure the telephone system is cost effective and fit for purpose.	By the end of March 2020

New Business As Usual				
Ref.	Objective	Team/section	Outcome(s) i.e. the benefit(s) the objective brings once delivered	Completion date or stage at the end of the year (March 2020)
R40	Take on all Insurance work and wind down the current insurance contract with Surrey County Council	Financial Services	Undertake the insurance function in house expanding & developing existing staff knowledge. Cessation of the contract with Surrey County Council, saving approximately £20,000 a year.	By the end of December 2019

R41	Review and maintain compliance to GDPR regulations	All teams	Safeguarding customer personal and sensitive data.	By the end of February 2020
R42	Cyber security audit	ICT	Safeguarding Council data	By the end of September 2019
R43	Data discovery tool	ICT	Safeguarding personal & sensitive data	By the end of September 2019
R44	Administer Personal Budgeting Support (PBS) on behalf of DWP	Housing Benefits	Assist vulnerable adults in managing their Universal Credit payments	Ongoing
R45	Business Rates National Fraud Initiative	Revenues	Reduce Business Rates avoidance and maximise income to the Council	TBC – Dependent on SCC
R46	Potential business opportunity to take on the Surrey Heath Community Services debtors	Financial Services	Potential income generation opportunity	From April 2019
R47	Create and maintain ICT contract register and system asset database to ensure contracts are monitored and reviewed in a timely manner	ICT	Ensure contracts are tendered for in a timely manner and are cost effective and deliver value for money	By the end of June 2019
R48	Create and maintain new occupier pack for new residents to be issued with all new Ctax bills	Comms, Elections, Revenues and ICT	Promote RBC to new residents encouraging self service and reducing cost	By the end of April 2019
R49	Microsoft home office for staff	ICT & HR	Staff benefits and morale boosting	By the end of June 2019
R50	Member devices and support	ICT	Cost effective and efficiency savings	May 2019

Ref.	Objective	Team/section	Outcome(s) i.e. the benefit(s) the objective brings once delivered	Completion date or stage at the end of the year (March 2020)
R51	Obtain and maintain PCI DSS compliance	ICT & Financial Services	To safeguard customer card numbers when they make payments to the Council.	By the end of September 2019

Business As Usual

Ref.	Objective	Team/section	Outcome(s) i.e. the benefit(s) the objective brings once delivered	Completion date or stage at the end of the year (March 2020)
R52	Production and publication of the Council's Statement of Accounts to a statutory deadline in accordance with relevant accounting regulations	Financial Services	Meets statutory duties.	By the end of May 2020
R53	Setting the Council's budget (including setting the council tax)and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Financial Services	To ensure there is a robust and prudent budget for the Council	By the end of Feb 2020
R54	Ongoing budget monitoring	Financial Services	To ensure variations are identified and the Council remains within budget	Monthly

R55	Production of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and ongoing management of the Council's treasury management portfolio in accordance with CIPFA and MHCLG regulations	Financial Services	Ensure compliance with regulations and the safeguarding of Council assets	Monthly reporting to Members (via Members Bulletin) and reports to committee three times a year.
R56	Assist Commercial Services to get their entire portfolio (& some other RBC owned properties) valued for insurance purposes (may be linked to Asset Valuations Tender)	Commercial Services & Financial Services	Correct insurance values known for every property, to enable re-evaluation of insurance premiums and recharge tenants accordingly	Ongoing
R57	Providing on-going financial advice to Members and officers at committee meetings, project groups, working parties, departmental team meetings and on a daily basis	Financial Services	Provision of robust financial advice to ensure adherence to the Council's Financial Regulations and Procedure and to ensure proper accounting treatment is maintained.	Ongoing
R58	Completion of, and advice on, grant claims and completion of statutory returns to government	Financial Services	Meeting statutory deadlines	Ongoing
R59	Creating new Internet Payment forms as and when requested	Financial Services	To maximise Channel Shift by providing the means for customers to pay via the internet	When required throughout the year.

R60	Recharging all insurance premiums to the ever increasing number of commercial tenants	Financial Services	Ensuring we maximise Council Income by recharging Commercial Property & Terrorism insurance to tenants	By the end of September 2019
R61	Administration of billing, collection and recovery of Council Tax and Business Rates	Revenues	Maximise income to the Council	Ongoing
R62	Administration and payment of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)	Housing Benefits	Support vulnerable residents	Ongoing
R63	Preparation of government returns including: NNDR1 NNDR3 QRC CTB1 NFI	Revenues	Meeting statutory deadlines	When required throughout the year
R64	Preparation of government returns including: Subsidy SHBE NFI	Housing Benefits	Meeting statutory deadlines	When required throughout the year

R65	Dealing with general high volume enquiries including: • Telephony • Reception • Payments • Council Tax • Housing maintenance • Tenancy management • Green waste	Customer Services	Improved customer satisfaction	Ongoing
R66	Expand CRM across Customer services to capture single view of customer	Customer Services	Cost effectiveness and improved customer satisfaction	Ongoing
R67	Expand number of Taxpayers signed up to e-billing	Revenues and Customer Services	Cost effectiveness and improved customer satisfaction	Ongoing
R68	Implement and expand number of landlords using landlord portal	Housing Benefits	Cost effectiveness	Ongoing
R69	Apply pay increases and tax code changes for all staff, members and employees of the three Runnymede owned companies	Financial Services	To make sure that that all staff have correct Tax Codes and any pay increases applied.	By the end of July 2019
R70	E-billing take up	Revenues	Reduce administration of Council Tax bills and encourage channel shift	Ongoing
R71	Review the Council Tax Recovery policy to increase collection rates	Revenues	To maximise collection rates	Ongoing

Section 5: Resources Business Centre's requests for growth

Please list below any requests for growth for the 2019/20 year.

Description	Linked objective/project	Amount requested	Business case completed? (Not always relevant – if unsure CE to determine. If yes – attach with this plan)
Additional staffing – Accountancy Section		£35,000	Yes
Enhancements to Corporate Fraud section	R15	Gross income of at least £250k in 2019/20 and beyond. This will be partially offset by additional resourcing requirements - £43,400	Yes
ICT staffing structure	R21	Approx £104k	To follow
Northgate system review	R1	Approx £250k	To follow
Member devices and Support		Approx £45k	To follow
ICT review	R21	Approx £30k	To follow
E-forms back office integration	R5	Approx £6k	To follow

Section 6: Resources Business Centre's performance indicators

Performance Indicator	Target					Actual					Current status	Trend
	Q1 (Apr-June)	Q2 (Jul-Sept)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 (Jan-Mar)	Full year (Apr-Mar)	Q1 (Apr-June)	Q2 (Jul-Sept)	Q3 (Oct-Dec)	Q4 (Jan-Mar)	Full year (Apr-Mar)		
Payment of invoices within 28 days	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%							
Council Tax collected within the financial year	31.4%	59.2%	87.4%	98%	98%							
Business Rates collected within the financial year	31.9%	59.9%	89.6%	98%	98%							
Average number of days taken to process change in circumstances and new benefit claims	12	12	12	12	12							

Section 7: Summary of the Resources Business Centre's contribution to Corporate Business Plan themes

This section should demonstrate how the Business Centre/Team is supporting the Corporate Business Plan by inserting the reference numbers in Section 4 under their most relevant Corporate Theme. If it supports more than one Corporate Theme but not all the Corporate Themes, it should be inserted under the PRIMARY Corporate Theme. If it supports all the themes e.g. areas with a corporate remit, the reference number should be added to the last row of the table.

Priority	Supporting Local People	Enhancing Our Environment	Improving Our Economy	Organisational development
Reference number	R2, R3, R4, R12, R16, R17, R19, R44, R48, R59, R62, and R65. Benefits and support schemes are offered via the Business Centre to help the most vulnerable customers in the Borough. Customer Services and ICT projects in 2019/20 are mainly focused on the improvements to the service we provide to residents.	Finance ensures sufficient resources are available, capital and revenue, to deliver the Council's environmental priorities (see Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme)		R1, R5, R6, R7, R8, R9, R10, R11, R13, R14, R15, R18, R20, R21, R22, R23, R25, R26, R27, R28, R29, R30, R31, R32, R33, R34, R35, R36, R37, R38, R39, R40, R42, R43, R45, R46, R47, R49, R50, R51, R58, R61, R63, R64, R66, R67, R68, R69, R70, and R71. ICT and Customer Services will continue to be developed for the Council's benefit
Supports all Corporate Themes				
Reference number	R24, R41, R52, R53, R54, R55, R56, R57, and R60. The work of the Resources Business Centre supports all the other Business Centres in the Council and thereby indirectly supports all the Corporate Themes.			

Section 8: Resources Business Centre's risk management (excluding project risks with separate Project Charter)

This section has been redacted