

Report title	Approval of Service Area Plans for Assets and Regeneration, Finance, Customer, Digital and Collection Services, HR, Legal and Governance and the CEX Office and the Corporate Action Plan 2024/25.
Report author	Sarah Hall, Head of Business Planning, Projects and Performance
Department	Chief Executive's Office
Exempt?	No

Purpose of report:

- To resolve

Synopsis of report:

This report provides a summary of the 2024/25 Service Area Plans for Assets and Regeneration, Finance, Customer, Digital and Collection Services, HR, Legal and Governance and the CEX Office for approval. The full proposed Service Area Plans for these areas can be found in Appendices 1-6.

The Council's Corporate Action Plan for 2024/25 is compiled from planned activity taken from all Service Area Plans – those presented here and those presented to other Service Committees for approval (Housing, Planning, Economy and Built Environment, Environmental Services, and Community Services). This is provided for approval at Appendix 7.

Items identified as requiring budget growth have been included in the Council's approved budget for 2024/25. Capital provision will require a further report to Committee to release the funds during the year as per the Financial Regulations.

Recommendation(s):

- i) Members approve the 2024/25 Service Area Plans for Assets and Regeneration, Finance, Customer, Digital and Collection Services, HR, Legal and Governance and the CEX Office
- ii) Members approve the collective Corporate Action Plan for delivery in 2024/25 collated from planned activity across all Service Area Plans.

1 Context and background of report

1.1 Service Area Plans (SAP) are an essential element in achieving delivery of the Council's Corporate Business Plan 2023-26 (CBP) and five related Corporate Strategies – Organisational Development, Empowering Communities, Climate Change, Economic Development and Health and Wellbeing.

- 1.2 The CBP describes the key priorities for the Council to deliver over the period of the plan. Annual SAP identify how the CBP will be achieved and is action-orientated, identifying resources required to deliver priorities and sets out where increasingly limited resources will be focused for the following financial year.
- 1.3 The annual business planning cycle for 2024/25 commenced with each Corporate Head of Service submitting any planned activity for the next Financial Year which requires revenue or capital growth for review.
- 1.4 Growth bids and associated business cases were taken to Corporate Management Committee as part of the MTFs report in December 2023. Subsequently these have been considered as part of the budget for 24/25 at Corporate Management Committee in January 2024 and Full Council in February 2024. Therefore, revenue growth presented in the report has been agreed as part of budget setting process for 2024/25. Capital growth requests approved as part of budget setting will be provisional in the budget for 24/25. Committee approval will be required to drawdown on provisional capital funds prior to a capital scheme proceeding.
- 1.5 When the CBP was set, a total of 194 actions and activities were identified from the associated 5 corporate strategies. Of these, SAPs for 2023/24 included 128 for delivery during the year. CBP activities are identified for delivery in 24/25 across all service areas. The remaining CBP activities are therefore a source of planned activities to be selected for delivery in 25/26.
- 1.6 Service Area Plans also include service-specific planned activity that does not require growth and may not be an activity identified as part of the CBP. For example, where legislation or the regulatory framework has been revised, in which the service operates and needs to be compliant with.
- 1.7 Activities that are required to be delivered as part of the Council's Savings Programme are also included in relevant Service Area Plans.
- 1.8 Service Area Plans also include a Mission Statement to document a narrative of the service area's current position and its direction of travel over the period of the Corporate Business Plan, and a summary of each of the teams that form the service area and the core tasks they deliver.
- 1.9 To ensure a 'golden thread' between Service Area Plans and team and individual plans, Corporate Heads of Service will use the planned activity to set team and individual objectives for 24/25.
- 1.10 Progress against delivery of activities detailed in Service Area Plans forms part of Corporate Performance reporting facilitated by the Project Management Office. Progress of delivery of activities is monitored through Quarterly review meetings with Corporate Heads of Service and subject to regular reporting.
- 1.11 Service Area Plans go to the relevant service committee for approval prior to final approval sought from Corporate Management Committee in March 2024 approving the Corporate Action Plan (which is an amalgamation of all the plans for the year).

2 Report

- 2.1 The service area plans for the corporate service areas of Finance, Customer, Digital and Collection Services, HR, Legal and Governance and the CEX Office are presented to CMC for approval.

2.2 The Service Area Plan documents can be found in Appendices 1-6. A summary is provided below for each corporate area presented to this Committee for approval.

Assets and Regeneration Service Area.

2.3 Service Area Narrative

2.3.1 The Assets and Regeneration Team undertake the day to day running and maintenance of the Council property portfolio which consists of operational and investment assets. The operational assets are used by our residents and the function of the team is to ensure a compliant and fit for purpose estate that delivers key services whether it be statutory function or non-statutory function.

2.3.2 We have focused on purchasing investment properties that create revenue generating opportunities and at present the property portfolio has a value of in excess of £675M and a rent roll of over £25M. This revenue goes towards providing key services for our residents. The business unit is effectively a property company in its entirety which requires expert resources namely qualified surveyors, lawyers, and accountants to ensure the portfolio can maximise its assets and at the same time comply with good practices along with ensuring all assets are compliant with health and safety legislation and most recently the Building Safety Act 2022. It is also essential that the business unit continues to provide a reasonable return for the Council.

2.3.3 In addition to the functionality of the team, the Council has 3 special purpose vehicles which are 100% owned by Runnymede Borough Council. They are RBCH Ltd, RBCI Ltd and RBCS Ltd. They perform separate functionality for the Council and have their own governance structure and articles of association.

2.3.4 There are some significant priorities facing the business unit - these include working with DHLUC in respect of the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act to work through capital borrowing along with our capital plans and looking at how we can reduce our borrowing which may mean commercial assets need to be sold to reduce the borrowing costs. In addition to this, we are in a period of economic downturn which has an underlying effect on economic growth on our portfolio. Energy costs whilst have reduced in the last year are still high and this will also affect the day to day running of the investment portfolio and the operational portfolio. The Building Safety Act 2022 has an impact on the running of all our assets and there are additional statutory responsibilities particularly with regard to the residential element of the portfolio with buildings over 11 meters which will need to address as part of running a mixed portfolio of operational and investment assets. In addition, construction inflation remains high and a reduced supply chain of materials and contractors will mean increased running costs. This will affect budgets both internally and our service charge budgets for our tenants. Any capital enhancement projects on our operational asset base will be subject to full viability and feasibility assessments.

2.3.5 Furthermore, work will be required to the asset base to ensure that we meet the carbon net zero aspiration. Work has been undertaken in respect to the carbon baseline for RBC and we have also declared a "climate emergency". Resulting from this will be additional budget pressures to ensure that all our operational assets achieve this target. With regard to our investment assets, all efforts will be made to engage with the tenants to ensure that they make the necessary improvements, however this is not at RBC gift so there will have to be a balanced view as to how we achieve this when tenancies come to an end and what our strategic position will be. All new developments recently completed have complied with sustainability requirements

through the planning process. Whilst the team went through complete "change management" in 2021 there is a need to undertake a further restructure to the Assets and Regeneration team within the next 6-9 months to ensure delivery of all the demands and changes that are required for a fit for purpose, compliant and sustainable estate.

2.4 Key achievements in 2023/24 include:

- Completion of works to remove and replace cladding from six residential blocks in Addlestone One complex
- Rental or sale of all apartments at Magna Square.
- Implementation of the property portfolio benchmarking software to support commercial portfolio performance monitoring and evidence-based decision-making

2.5 Key new areas of work in 2024/25 include:

- Significant input into the non-statutory Best Value notice response programme.
- Solution on the way forward for the Chertsey Depot
- Replacement of Civic Centre components

Finance Service Area:

2.6 Mission Statement

To ensure the Council carries out its financial affairs in a fair, proportionate, and professional manner, by providing clear financial and strategic advice to all stakeholders whilst adhering to statutory and professional regulations in the dealing and reporting of all financial transactions.

2.7 Service Area Narrative

2.7.1 A restructure of the finance team was undertaken in 2022/23 to help alleviate the loss of several key personnel and to try and solve ongoing recruitment issues. As of September 2023, the team were finally fully resourced with a mix of internal promotions and external recruitment, most of which have no, or limited, local government finance experience and one team member has been brought into the accountancy team with no prior accounting experience under a new "grow your own" ethos.

2.7.2 Whilst it will take time for these new team members to settle in, we are already beginning to see some tangible benefits with new ways of working and a replacement of an over-reliance on paper hard copy files. This will be further assisted by the implementation of the new joint HR/Payroll system due to go live in April 2024 followed by the tendering for a much-needed new Financial Management System (FMS).

2.7.3 As well as the day-to-day activities of a busy finance department, the team are very much embroiled in many of the various projects and initiatives set out in the CBP (Corporate Business Plan) from participating in service reviews, assessing benefits packages, and assisting in reviewing and developing new policy creation. Some team members will also become heavily involved in the non-statutory Best Value notice response programme. In all initiatives, the team ensure the financial consequences of decisions are planned, analysed and are robust and financial governance procedures are adhered to.

2.8 Key achievements in 2023/24 include:

- Completed insurance and treasury management system procurement exercises
- Review of bank reconciliation process undertaken and updated.
- Sourcing and implementing a new joint HR/Payroll system (to go live 1 April 2024)
- Implementation of Gov.Pay income collection system to partially replace current income management system.
- Updating corporate strategies for regulatory changes (e.g. Levelling Up and Regeneration Act, International Financial Reporting Standard 16: Leases, Proposed MRP changes etc)

2.9 Key new areas of work in 2024/25 for Finance include:

- Procurement of a new Financial Management System
- Procurement of a new council-wide banking contract
- Review and potential tender for the provision of BACS services
- Investigation into replacing income management system
- Significant input into the non-statutory Best Value notice response programme.
- Significant input into the Service Review and Savings and Efficiency programmes
- Dealing with the backlog of outstanding external audits

Customer, Digital and Collection Services:

2.10 Service Area Narrative

2.10.1 From April 2023, Customer Services still had vacancies across the service area which had a major impact in service delivery. A new Customer Services Team Leader was appointed in April 23 together with three other staff on the statutory team to try to create some resilience. Customer Services is an area with a high turnover of staff particularly on the statutory team which requires in depth legislative knowledge of both Council Tax and Housing. Housing repair work has transferred to MCP but unfortunately due to technical issues with interfaces, Customer Services have continued to log repair calls on behalf of MCP until November 23 which had a further impact on resources.

2.10.2 Work has continued with the website and customer relationship management system to enable customers to self-serve and reduce the need to contact the Council via more traditional methods such as telephone, letter, face to face and email. Call volumes have started to reduce and following a further vacancy in Customer Services, this post has been reviewed and a new role of Customer and Digital Engagement Officer has been created to sit across both the Customer Services Team and the Transformation Team to continue improving the on-line experience to enable more customers to self-serve.

2.10.3 Staff retention has been an issue across all areas within the division with vacancies carried across Revenues, Benefits, Infrastructure & Operations as well as the Transformation Team.

2.10.4 Revenues and Benefits continue to face legislative challenges with the cost-of-living crisis and continue to administer various grants from the Government in a relatively short period of time. The Business Rates Revaluation has been successfully implemented in April 23 along with the various Energy and Fuel grants. The Enforcement Agent contract is due for renewal in December 23 and the team have undertaken a procurement exercise to include all debt owed to the Council and create a corporate debt contract to facilitate collection of multiple debts. This new contract will commence from 1 April 2024.

- 2.10.5 The new CTS scheme for 23/24 was implemented on time and to budget and has simplified the process which has reduced the number of days to process new claims from 27 to 19 days. In addition, the Benefits Team continues to administer the various tranches of the Household Support Fund ensuring much needed support is targeted to those most in need. Housing Benefit Overpayment Recovery has also transferred to the Housing Benefit Team with £1m to review and collect.
- 2.10.6 The Homes for Ukrainian Team are responsible for the administration of the Government Homes for Ukraine initiative. The Team comprises of two resettlement co-ordinators and one translator. The team are responsible for supporting both host and refugees families, working with government agencies, voluntary sector and Surrey CC to ensure refugees are supported and assist them with integration into the community. Welfare checks are carried out every three months to minimise breakdowns in relationships and the need to re-match with other hosts. The scheme has been extended until March 24 to reduce the risk of homelessness albeit with a reduced budget per refugee which will bring challenges around how much support the team can offer with regards to housing costs.
- 2.10.7 On-street parking enforcement returned to Surrey CC on 1 April 2023 with a smooth transition to the new contractors. SCC have extended the agency agreement in relation to the collection and enforcement of residual PCN's which the team are continuing to recover. The new case management system for council owned car parks has gone live and the Environment and Sustainability have approved the capital expenditure to replace the pay and display machines with new updated machines across all car parks with Automated Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) installed in four car parks. The procurement of the new machines will commence during 2023/24 with implementation in 2024/25.
- 2.10.8 Both teams within Digital Services have been carrying vacancies whilst delivering 'The Getting Fit for the Future' Transformation Programme. The Transformation Team is fully staffed from November 23 and a new post of GIS and Address Officer will be transferred from Building Control team to create resilience and efficiencies around the Council's property data.
- 2.10.9 Several back-office systems will need replacing over the next four years and cyber security is becoming a high priority across the organisation with a need to protect personal data and ensure systems are safe and secure. A hardware refresh was successfully delivered to support the Hybrid Working Project where over 300 staff were moved to secure access through laptops and facilitated hot-desking by standardising kit across the Council. The team are now focusing on the IT member device refresh and other hardware replacement projects to ensure the Council's various operating systems remain secure.
- 2.10.10 The Corporate Business Plan focuses on five themes of which the Organisational Development Theme is the main focus of the division with the four strands; People; Process; Technology and Green will provide a clear framework which will provide effective governance across the division. Investing in both staff and technology, legacy systems will be replaced with modern technology that will support new and better ways of working.

2.11 Key achievements in 2023/24 include:

Projects:

- Install hybrid meeting equipment within meeting rooms across the Civic Centre

- HR & Payroll system procurement and implementation project progressing with go live date for Payroll 1 April 24
- Implementation of the online parking portal to digitise the parking service and increase the online offer within One Account
- Financial Inclusion Pilot approved by Corporate Management Committee Dec 23

Core activity statistics:

- Energy Fuel Grants
 - 642 Energy Grants of £400 totalling £256,800
 - 302 Alternative Fuel Grants of £200 totalling £60,400
- Reviewed policy for Household Support Fund Tranche 4
 - 1,600 payments have been made to 650 households totalling £219,673
- Review of Parking Fees and Charges approved by E&S Committee Nov 23
- Review of Council Tax Discounts approved by Full Council Feb 24
- Review of Council Tax Support Scheme for 24/25 approved by Full Council Dec 23
- Administered Flood Relief Grants following Storm Henk from February 24
- Homes for Ukraine:
 - 130 housing inspections
 - 227 DBS checks
 - 249 Ukrainian guests have arrived since April 22
 - 38 family groups still in sponsor accommodation
 - 41 guests transitioned to private rented sector
 - 0 groups presented as homeless

2.12 Key new areas of work in 2024/25 include:

A number of elements of digital services infrastructure are planned to move to cloud-based solutions and operating as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS). These are designated as business critical as essential to the running of services, business continuity and cyber security.

Revenue growth for the following is included in the MTFS and approved budget for 2024/25.

- SIEM upgrade to SaaS
- WAN replacement of Unicorn lines
- VOIP for remote sites
- UCS replacement
- SAN replacement
- Gazetteer software replacement
- O365 adoption
- Website improvements
- WCAG 2.2 Web accessibility
- Pay & Display machines installation
- ANPR installation
- Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery upgrades
- Finance System procurement

HR and OD Service Area:

2.13 Mission Statement

The Human Resources service is a support service whose primary role is to provide to lead on People Strategy and provide a comprehensive professional advisory service and HR support to the Council and Council-owned companies.

2.14 Service Area Narrative

- 2.14.1 The success of any organisation strongly co-relates to the skills, commitment, motivation, experience and contribution made by its workforce. HR has a major part to play in supporting managers to attract, develop, motivate and retain this workforce.
- 2.14.2 Our priorities for the next year will include improving our recruitment service by deploying a new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) that will allow us to manage vacancies more effectively, present a more professional face to the external market, gather useful management information and speed up the end-to-end process. The solution will empower managers to explore and use a wider range of tools and talent sourcing routes to attract the best candidates and to look at a range of measures to effectively induct them.
- 2.14.3 In addition, HR is a key partner in the deployment of a new HR/Payroll solution that will ensure efficient employee and Manager self-service and deliver high quality management information whilst avoiding the need for “double keying” of data. The new system will allow a more holistic approach to workforce planning to ensure we are developing the skills we need for the future.
- 2.14.4 Our current reward practice requires a fundamental review. We will need to decide if we are to continue to live with the inherent risks of a system that;
- Is not underpinned by job evaluation.
 - That lacks a job family approach to reflect widely different market conditions for key skill sets such as Legal, Environmental Health and Planning.
- 2.14.5 The review will include whether a flexible benefits package as well as employee well-being initiatives will appeal to different demographics. In addition, we have been looking at options to re-model the lower end of the pay structure to deal with the annual increases to the National Living Wage.
- 2.14.6 Having completed the Tier 3 training for Senior managers including Change Management, Emotional Intelligence and Political Awareness training. We have commenced the Tier 1 and 2 Management Development Training for first line supervisors (Tier 1) and Middle Managers (Tier 2). Leadership Development is one of the key strands to ensuring the most effective management and leadership of staff to achieve the best outcomes.
- 2.14.7 In terms of ongoing services to be delivered, HR has now embedded a Business Partnering model. We now have a Senior Business Partner and 2 Business Partners who each work with a group of service areas to ensure they get high quality advice to address their people issues and develop their staff. The Recruitment and Retention Manager supervises two HR Assistants who deal with recruitment and selection, onboarding and induction of new staff and all day-to-day operational HR issues including liaison with Payroll. One of the Business Partners also looks after employee health and safety. They regularly refresh our Health and Safety processes and train new staff on Fire Safety, First Aid etc., In addition they work with other staff with H&S responsibilities to ensure maximum synergies. Another Business Partner has been working with the Head of HR on re-tendering our OH contract with a new supplier commencing shortly. They are running a series of refresher sickness management training sessions for managers. In addition, they are working with other key stakeholders at other Well-being initiatives for staff including the introduction of an Employee Assistance Programme and supporting our team of Mental Health first aiders in the council.

- 2.14.8 As well as the deployment of the new Applicant Tracking System, the Recruitment and Retention Manager runs refresher training on Recruitment and Selection. A recruitment toolkit has been developed to assist managers.
- 2.14.9 The OD and Talent Management Strategies have a strong emphasis on effective leadership, motivation and employee development. However clearly the investment in staff training is subject to sustaining the corporate training budgets. These strategies include introducing a small graduate programme and internal staff development programme for highflyers. We also work with Managers to identify training needs for the wider workforce and incorporate these in training plans. Part of the forward plans for HR are refreshing employment policies as well as managing the day-to-day pressures of HR from casework, organisational reviews and recruitment. We will also be introducing Equalities training to ensure everyone supports and values the diverse workforce we employ.
- 2.14.10 The primary challenge is of course fulfilling our ambitious programme alongside the operational pressures of a busy HR team. The anticipated drivers for change and challenges are most likely to result from the “war for talent”, the financial backdrop facing local and central government and the impact on the workforce of the cost-of-living crisis.
- 2.14.11 The other significant pressure will result from the work to implement the new HR and Payroll system. This type of project normally places a lot of work pressure on the service area concerned for a year to 18 months. However, once an integrated HR and Payroll system with employee and managerial self-service is introduced this should drive future efficiencies within the organisation.
- 2.15 Key achievements in 2023/24 include:
- Successful recruitment campaigns for the senior posts of Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive (Place) and Corporate Head of HR & OD.
 - Provision of training for 12 mental first-aiders from across the organisation.
 - Significant input into the HR/Payroll software system procurement and implementation project.
- 2.16 Key new areas of work in 2024/25 include:
- Significant input into the non-statutory Best Value notice response programme.
 - Fully implement and optimise the new HR and Payroll solution
 - Maximise benefits of new Occupational Health Provider
 - Fully implement and optimise the new Applicant Tracking System
 - Seek approval and introduce job evaluation
 - Review the grading structure as part of the 2025 pay review
 - Reprocure the neutral vendor temporary staffing contract
 - Work to support the council to enhance our Disability Confident status from Committed to Confident status
 - Deliver key actions for continue to actively work towards reducing the Gender Pay Gap

Law & Governance Service Area:

2.17 Service Area Narrative

- 2.17.1 The Business Unit comprises seven teams which undertake a diverse range of functions. Some of the teams discharge a statutory function such as Electoral Services, Local Land Charges and Data Protection. Some support the overall work of

the Council such as Democratic Services, Legal Services, Office Services, and Information Governance. The Office Services team provides a complete suite of administrative support.

- 2.17.2 There are situations when a team will carry out dual functions such as supporting the overall work of the Council and discharging a statutory function e.g. Democratic Services, which in addition to the provision of support for the democratic process also deals with matters such as licensing of charitable collections and street closure orders.
- 2.17.3 The various teams contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Business Plan and five strategies that underpin it in a number of ways.
- Democratic Services facilitate decision making by the Council, which allows for the delivery of the five strategies.
 - Legal Services provide high quality legal advice to ensure that the Council complies with its various legal obligations and discharges its regulatory functions for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Borough.
 - The Electoral Services Team supports the exercise of the democratic process by enabling people to register to vote and by organising various elections. They will be delivering changes introduced by the Elections Act 2022 over the next twelve months. These changes will create greater confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.
 - The Local Land Charges Team will have to deal with the transfer to HM Land Registry of certain functions in respect of providing information in response to Local Land Charges searches, which are part of the suite of information required by people when purchasing property.
- 2.17.4 The Council collects a vast range of personal data in order to deliver the various services it provides to its residents and businesses. The Information Governance Team and Data Protection Officer provide extensive advice and assistance to departments to ensure that they comply with the various legal obligations which exist in respect of Data Protection.
- 2.17.5 There are a number of challenges which the various teams in the Business Unit will face over the next twelve months. As has already been highlighted the Electoral Services Team will have to implement the various changes which have been introduced by the Elections Act 2022. They will also have to deliver the local elections in May 2024 and support the delivery of the election of the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 2.17.6 The Democratic Services Team will have to deal with encouraging Members to move to paperless documentation for meetings. This is seen as an important initiative by Members and is viewed as addressing an element of the Green agenda the Council has adopted.
- 2.17.7 The Legal Services Team will face the challenge of providing legal advice in an environment where the recruitment of staff is proving difficult. This is not a problem which is unique to the Council or Legal Services.
- 2.17.8 There is a greater awareness amongst the public of the issue of Data Protection. Personal data has a value and valid concerns exist when any organisation collects personal data. Due to the types of services the Council provides it has to collect and use personal data. The Information Governance Team and the Data Protection Officer provide advice to the Council to ensure it meets its legal obligations and thereby

provides reassurance to the public that their personal data is safe in the hands of the Council.

2.18 Key achievements in 2023/24 include:

- Delivery of Local Elections in May 2023 with voter ID
- Organising all Council meetings
- Dealing with FOI and SAR requests
- Responding to Local Land Charges search requests
- Providing legal advice to Council departments
- Undertaking Constitution review
- Reviewing various Data Protection documents and policies

2.19 Key new areas of work in 2024/25 include:

- Organising Local and PCC Elections May 2024
- Organising the poll and count for the General Election when called
- Progressing migration of part of Local Land Charges service to HMLR

Chief Executive's Office Service Area:

2.20 Mission Statement

The mission of the Chief Executive's Office is to enable and encourage quality, effective and efficient performance across the Council, to communicate our services, successes and activities as well as providing organised emergency plans and responses through collaborative working, for the good of the Borough's residents and businesses. This is focussed on collectively achieving the Council's vision as set out in the Corporate Business Plan and delivering outcomes described within the five underpinning strategies. The unit specifically supports frontline and professional services in delivering these corporate plans as well as their service-level plans through the successful achievement of approved projects, initiatives and activities.

2.21 Service Area Narrative

We are a single unit comprising of a multi-disciplinary, skilled team empowered to carry out this mission by providing professional project management, procurement, communications and external relations expertise. We identify sources of funding, carry out design work, review policy, analyse performance and data and, in doing so, support the work of the Chief Executive and Mayor. We also ensure our emergency planning response is first rate so we can exceed the expectations of residents at even the most challenging times.

The Chief Executive's Office comprises a multi-disciplinary, skilled team with a broad and varied remit to:

- Provide organisational and office support to the Chief Executive including management of escalated complaints
- Provide support to the Chief Executive and wider Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)
- Interact and liaise with all service areas to help deliver Corporate Business Plan objectives
- Facilitate and manage cross-service initiatives including projects and service reviews as delegated by the Chief Executive
- Provide corporate training on project management and procurement
- Monitor and report progress and delivery against corporate KPIs (including achievement of the corporate Action Plan)
- Facilitate dynamic risk management across the organisation
- Facilitate and support best value, compliant procurement activity for all service areas

- Facilitate and manage professional communications and marketing for all service areas
- Identify and facilitate new funding bids to support service delivery within the Corporate Business Plan
- Represent the Council's interests as key stakeholder on strategic external projects
- Review and analyse emerging relevant policies and legislation to identify any changes required to existing corporate policy
- Organise civic events and support the Mayor's commitments
- Protect and enhance the reputation of the Council, instilling and embedding the corporate vision and values
- Deliver regular news updates, promoting the Council's work to the public.
- Run extended campaigns on specific topics ranging from elections to waste and recycling
- Deliver internal communications activity to keep colleagues informed of the direction of the Council and its priorities.
- Provide a design service for physical and digital content, working within a corporate style guide.

2.22 Key achievements in 2023/24 include:

- Further development and implementation of the Business Planning tool to provide one data source for all SAP planned activity to monitor progress across the year.
- Review and development of the Risk Management System including approval of the Risk Management Framework, Risk Appetite Statements and Risk Reporting at Standards and Audit Committee and Full Council.
- Communications: Embedding processes to bring structure to the team's operations, including a tool to book design work which provides tracking and management data, creating a communications output grid to structure and present all of the team's key output over a week.
- Approval of Social Media Work Plan, Social Media House Rules and Social Media Policy, delivering a 50 per cent increase in newsletter subscribers, upskilling of team members to produce high quality video and animation content.
- In addition to core activity, delivering communications activity to support Changes to Tenancy Agreements, launch of £1m investment in play areas, meals at home, personal alarms, Runnymede in Bloom, Runnymede Business Boost, the Youth Hub, Tenant satisfaction survey, re-opening of Eileen Tozer Social Centre, launch of the MyView combined HR and payroll system, move to cloud based hosting of all council digital files, launch of a one off project to review signage in key parks and open spaces, multiple one-off publications as well as Runnymede Talks, our long-standing magazine.

2.23 Key new areas of work in 2024/25 include:

- Significant input into the non-statutory Best Value notice response programme including programme management.
- Programme management of the Service Review and Savings and Efficiency programmes.
- Communications: Development of a Communications Strategy, creation of a new format to the Annual Review, review of e-newsletter performance and presentation, communications mapping exercise, deliver and review trial on Instagram, delivery of substantial Shared Community Services campaign.

Corporate Action Plan for 2024/25

2.24 The full list of Planned Activity compiled from all Service Area Plans can be found at Appendix 7. This forms the Corporate Action Plan for 2024/25 and is a total of 225 activities.

2.25 This comprises 72 activities that are linked directly to the corporate business plan and the corporate strategies (Total CBP activities box.)

2.26 In addition are a further 153 service-specific planned activities for delivery in 2024/25.

2.27 To note that Service Area Plans were formulated and approved by the Corporate Leadership Team prior to the receipt of the non-statutory Best Value Notice. The work programme to respond to the non-statutory Best Value Notice will require resource from across the organisation to deliver at pace. Therefore, as staff resources are finite, it is likely that some SAP planned activity will need to be reprioritised in-year to make resources available.

3 Policy framework implications

3.1 These SAPs support the delivery of the Corporate Business Plan.

3.2 Specifically, those actions arising from Corporate Strategies that will be addressed in delivering the Service Plan can be seen in the Planned Activity dashboard in Appendix 1-6 in the table list titled Corporate Business Plan activities.

4 Resource implications

4.1 The following initiatives from the service area plans presented require growth to be able to be delivered and the growth bids were subject to committee approval in December 2023 as part of the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy report:

Business Critical Revenue growth		Revenue		
		2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Service Area	Growth bid	£	£	£
Digital Services	SIEM upgrade to SaaS	15,000	15,000	15,000
Digital Services	WAN replacement of Unicorn lines	4,000	-1,000	-1,000
Digital Services	VOIP for remote sites	5,000	-	-
Digital Services	UCS replacement	5,000	5,000	5,000
Digital Services	SAN replacement	3,000	3,000	3,000
Digital Services	Gazetteer software replacement	6,000	6,000	6,000
		38,000	28,000	28,000

Other Revenue growth		Revenue		
		24/25	25/26	26/27
Service Area	Growth bid	£	£	£
Assets & Regeneration	Asset Management software	32,000	28,000	28,000
		32,000	28,000	28,000

Revenue costs of Business-Critical Capital Projects		Revenue		
		24/25	25/26	26/27
Service Area	Growth bid	£	£	£

Digital Services/ Finance	Revenue costs of replacement Finance system	56,000	56,000	56,000
		56,000	56,000	56,000

4.2 Following committee approval, these activities were incorporated into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Council's budget for 2024/25. Capital schemes will require relevant committee approval for the release of funds for the schemes to progress.

5 Legal implications

5.1 No direct legal implications identified as a result of this report.

5.2 Where there are contractual or other legal implications linked to any of the proposed areas of work, full consideration of these, working with colleagues in Law and Governance, will be undertaken.

6 Equality implications

6.1 No direct equality implications identified as a result of this report.

6.2 Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted for relevant activities and projects being delivered as part of this plan. This will ensure that any equality implications are identified and addressed before new initiatives are introduced.

7 Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

7.1 No direct environmental/ sustainability/ biodiversity implications arising as a result of this report.

7.2 For all planned activity, consideration will be given to environmental, sustainability and biodiversity implications, in support of the Council's commitment to climate change and its Climate Change Strategy. Planned activity from across the organisation that supports climate change will be reported to Members regularly during the year.

8 Risk implications

8.1 Each service area has reviewed their Service Risk Register for factors that may impact service delivery in 24/25. Risks have been identified, categorised and scored and any risks that score above the Risk Threshold as set out in the Risk Management Framework are reviewed by CLT to be included in the Corporate Risk Register. Planned activity in service area plans may include actions required to mitigate these risks.

8.2 Without approved annual Service Area Plans, there is a risk that is a lack of clarity and prioritisation of activity and resources to enable delivery of the CBP.

9 Conclusions

9.1 Service Area Plans support the delivery of the Council's CBP and associated corporate strategies.

9.2 The SAPs sets out the Council's ambition in delivering more, different and better as an organisation, an aspiration supported by Members and Officers alike.

- 9.3 However, it is important to note that these ambitions will have to be considered against the financial position of the authority.

Background papers

[Housing Service Area Plan](#) approved at Housing Committee 10 January 2024

[Planning, Economy and Built Environment Service Area Plan](#) approved at Planning Committee 28 February 2024

[Environmental Services Service Area Plan](#) approved at Environment & Sustainability Committee 07 March 2024

[Community Services Service Area Plan](#) approved at Community Services Committee 14 March 2024