

**Cambridge City Council**

**Customer Services and Resources  
Portfolio Plan 2014-15**

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# Introduction

## a) Purpose of the Portfolio

The Customer Services and Resources Portfolio is responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of the Council's plans, policies and strategies and the delivery of services in the following areas:

- **Customer Services:** delivery of front line services to the Council's customers through the Customer Service Centre, the main Guildhall reception, telephone services and the website. Land charges is also delivered as part of this portfolio.
- **Property Services:** buying and selling of land and property, management and development of land and buildings held by the Council, including the Council's office accommodation.
- **Civic Functions:** the mayoralty, civic hospitality and town twinning, appointments and nominations of Council representatives on outside organisations where these are not related to other portfolios.
- **Corporate Services:** provision of professional and central support services including human resources and training, health and safety, emergency planning, financial services including accountancy, audit and revenues and benefits services, property valuation and advice, legal and committee services, ICT, procurement and electoral services.

## **b) Context for the Portfolio Plan**

### **National financial picture**

The national economic situation and the Government's plans to tackle the national debt mean that local authorities have to play their part by managing a reduction in the money that they receive from government. This has meant planning for a significant reduction in the main source of government funding in the four years to 2014/15, whilst continuing to provide services that local people want and need.

Continued pressures from the national economic position suggest that prospects for future funding under the next Spending Review, i.e. from 2015-16, are unlikely to improve. Whilst this will be a significant challenge, the City Council is clear about its priorities and how it will go about achieving the necessary savings with the minimum impact on front-line services.

In addition, the whole method of local government funding changed last year; central to this being the introduction of business rate retention. This change presents new risk for the Council as well as providing new opportunities through the ability to retain a share of additional income generated through local business growth.

### **Local financial picture**

The government's grant settlement for the City Council means that over the five years following this Plan period (from 2015/16 to 2019/20) the council will need to find savings in the region of £6.1 million. The council is reasonably fortunate in comparison with many other local authorities in that only 23% (2013/14) of our income currently comes from government grant. We have set money aside, over time, to replace our key assets and have adequate reserves to meet any unexpected costs.

## **Achieving efficiencies and savings**

In order to help meet the requirement for net savings we have put in place a programme of service reviews that goes across all portfolios, so that we can look very closely at what we do, how we do it, what the services cost and whether we could do things differently in the future.

We will continue to undertake a systematic review of council services which have the potential to grow or generate income streams in order to identify how we can develop a more commercial approach to those services and maximise external income.

The reviews will inform a programme of change that will both improve the way that the Council provides services and the likelihood of the delivery of planned savings.

In looking to see where we might make savings we will seek to:

- protect services for vulnerable individuals and communities
- protect the basic services that keep our city looking good and working well
- make sure that we get right the things that we only have one chance to get right – such as planning new communities.

## **Making effective use of the Council's assets**

The council has a portfolio of assets that is worth around £710 million. In 2013-2014 the council received 75% of its income (£31 million) from services that we charge for and from our commercial rents. One of the ways we can contribute towards achieving our savings targets is to look closely at how the council uses its own offices to see if we can make better use of the space, stop paying rent on extra buildings, and exploit any commercial rent opportunities.

This involves looking at how the council's staff work, for example, to find more flexible ways of working that will reduce the requirement for office space and make better use of technology. We will also be looking at the

potential to share assets with our partner organisations in order to achieve cost reductions and improve access and services for customers.

### **Customer Service**

The Council will continue its work to deliver excellent joined-up access to services for service users. It will increase the ease of access to services by providing more choice and variety in the ways that services are accessed via the internet and its face to face and contact centre facilities.

### **c) The following service divisions will contribute to the achievement of this Plan's Objectives:**

- Accountancy and Support Services
- Customer Services
- Human Resources
- ICT Client
- Legal Services
- Property Services
- Corporate Strategy (Civic & Democratic Services)
- Revenues and Benefits
- Director of Environment (Business & Information Services)
- Internal Audit

## **Vision Statements applicable to this portfolio**

The Council's eight corporate vision statements were reiterated as part of the 2012 Annual Statement and provide the context for the Council's work.

All vision statements are applicable to the Customer Services and Resources portfolio. In particular:

- A city which celebrates its diversity, unites in its priority for the disadvantaged and strives for shared community wellbeing
- A city whose citizens feel they can influence public decision making and are equally keen to pursue individual and community initiatives

## Strategic Objectives 2014-2015

<b>Vision Statement:</b>	<b>All Vision Statements</b>
<b>Strategic Objective CSR1:</b>	<b>To achieve a transformation in the way the Council delivers its services to improve service effectiveness to achieve planned efficiencies and savings</b>
<b>By March 2015 we will have:</b>	<p>CSR1.1 Further exploited the potential of the Council's information systems to ensure that they are enabling the transformation of service delivery</p> <p>CSR 1.2 Reforming the delivery of services common to all departments to further develop a culture that is facilitative and customer focused</p> <p>CSR 1.3 Reduced bureaucracy in internal processes and procedures to improve efficiency, reduce costs and enable change and innovation</p> <p>CSR 1.4 Identified further opportunities to work in collaboration, or share services, with other public sector organisations in order to create efficiencies and improve service resilience</p> <p>CSR 1.5 Further developed and mobilised a coherent programme approach to govern and manage our transformation</p> <p>CSR 1.6 Reviewed and developed family friendly / work life balance policies that enable our transformation</p>
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<p>CSR 1.1 James Nightingale, Head of ICT</p> <p>CSR 1.2 Ray Ward, Director of BusinessTransformation</p>

	<p>CSR 1.3 Ray Ward, Director of Business Transformation</p> <p>CSR 1.4 Ray Ward, Director of Business Transformation</p> <p>CSR 1.5 Ray Ward, Director of Business Transformation</p> <p>CSR 1.6 Deborah Simpson, Head of Human Resources</p>
<b>Performance Measures:</b>	<p>All: The delivery of the Council's net saving requirements</p> <p>CSR 1.1 - IT Strategy agreed and delivery of supporting projects underway by August 2014</p> <p>CSR 1.2 - A model for providing and charging for support services and transition plan agreed by August 2014</p> <p>CSR 1.3 - 5 key processes identified and improved with measurable positive benefits</p> <p>CSR 1.4 - Additional shared service arrangements in place</p> <p>CSR 1.5 - A functioning Transformation Programme Office in place</p> <p>CSR 1.6 - Enabled more staff to work more effectively and flexibly, and therefore more efficiently by providing appropriate support in terms of buildings, technology and working practices</p>
<b>Delivery Risks:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Failure to achieve savings targets within this Portfolio resulting in increased pressure on resources in future years</li> <li>• Resistance of staff to new ways of working</li> <li>• Simplified internal processes and delegations fail to maintain appropriate levels of assurance</li> <li>• Inadequate strategy for the identification of opportunities for collaboration / sharing services, resulting in improved service delivery or efficiencies and savings being missed</li> <li>• Lack of availability of willing partners for partnering and sharing services</li> </ul>



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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failure to robustly challenge services to improve efficiency and achieve savings</li></ul> |
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<b>Vision Statement:</b>	<b>All Vision Statements</b>
<b>Strategic Objective CSR2:</b>	<b>To ensure that the Council's property assets are used to deliver the maximum effective use to the Council and to the citizens and businesses of Cambridge.</b>
<b>By March 2015 we will have:</b>	<p>CSR 2.1 Maximise the commercial return of the Council's commercial property portfolio in both capital and revenue terms recognising the need to use these assets to deliver other Council initiatives</p> <p>CSR 2.2 Continue to implement our strategy for the optimum use of the Council's accommodation for the period 2014-19 that also supports our environmental and sustainability goals</p> <p>CSR 2.3 Developed, and implemented with partner organisations (in particular through the Making Assets Count initiative), a shared approach to the management of public sector owned property assets to reduce costs and maximise their use</p> <p>CSR 2.4 Completed stock condition survey of commercial estate</p>
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<p>CSR 2.1 Dave Prinsep, Head of Property Services</p> <p>CSR 2.2 Ray Ward, Director of Business Transformation</p> <p>CSR 2.3 Dave Prinsep, Head of Property Services</p> <p>CSR 2.4 Bob Hadfield, Head of Estates and Facilities</p>
<b>Performance Measures:</b>	<p>CSR 2.1 - Total rental income on commercial properties for 2014-2015 is maintained or enhanced</p> <p>CSR 2.2 - Improved energy efficiency when compared with 2013/14</p>

	CSR 2.3 - Efficient shared arrangements in place as appropriate by March 2015 CSR 2.4 - Stock condition investment programme produced
<b>Delivery Risks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Failure to achieve the desired balance between commercial returns and achieving the Council's objectives for the growth sites on the Southern and North-eastern fringes</li><li>• Financial pressures resulting from being unable to rationalise existing council accommodation in line with targets in the Council's Accommodation Strategy</li></ul>

<b>Vision Statement:</b>	<b>A city which celebrates its diversity, unites in its priority for the disadvantaged and strives for shared community wellbeing</b>
<b>Strategic Objective CSR3:</b>	<b>To ensure the efficient and effective delivery of Customer Services to residents, businesses and visitors</b>
<b>By March 2015 we will have:</b>	<p>CSR 3.1 Improved customer access efficiency through further embedding our joined-up approach to customer service delivery; encouraging the use of low cost customer access channels by increasing accessibility and choice</p> <p>CSR 3.2 The effective planning, implementation and management of welfare reforms ensuring support is provided to the most vulnerable in the City</p> <p>CSR 3.3 Ensuring effective administration and collection of local taxes and benefits that prevents and detects fraud</p> <p>CSR 3.4 Managed the implementation of Individual Electoral Registration in a way that ensures the highest possible rates of electoral registration</p> <p>CSR 3.5 The creation of a clear approach to helping new businesses trying to set up in Cambridge, with a one-stop listing on the website and at our customer service centre enabling people to gain information on the many different services for business</p>
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<p>CSR 3.1/3.5 Jonathan James, Head of Customer Service</p> <p>CSR 3.2/3.3 Alison Cole, Head of Revenues and Benefits</p> <p>CSR 3.4 Gary Clift, Democratic Services Manager</p>

<b>Performance Measures:</b>	<p>CSR 3.1 More information request and “one and done” transactional enquiries can be performed by customers via our website</p> <p>CSR 3.1 Volumes of self-service activity increase year on year</p> <p>CSR 3.1 More enquiries via our customer service centre and contact centre are resolved at the first point of contact</p> <p>CSR 3.2 Audit of the policies and processes results in a significant assurance rating</p> <p>CSR 3.3 A reduction in time taken to process benefit claim and an improvement in accuracy levels</p> <p>CSR 3.3 An improvement in local taxation collection levels and the removal of discounts from those not entitled to them</p> <p>CSR 3.4 Electoral Registration rates maintained</p> <p>CSR 3.5 New arrangements in place by April 2014</p>
<b><u>Delivery Risks</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limits in the ability of our technology to support our aspirations</li> <li>• Reluctance or inability of customers to self-serve</li> <li>• Lack of capacity to undertake the necessary service process integration activity</li> <li>• Challenges in registering Cambridge’s highly mobile and transient electorate under the new legislation</li> <li>• Additional resource is not forthcoming from central Government to facilitate improvement of current electoral registration rates</li> <li>• Delays in the implementation of Welfare Reforms by Central Government</li> </ul>

## **Background Information:**

### **Vision Statements**

#### **Our vision**

The Council has a clear vision for the future of our city, a vision which we share with Cambridge citizens and with partner organisations.

#### **Cambridge – where people matter**

A city which celebrates its diversity, unites in its priority for the disadvantaged and strives for shared community wellbeing

A city whose citizens feel they can influence public decision making and are equally keen to pursue individual and community initiatives

A city where people behave with consideration for others and where harm and nuisance are confronted wherever possible without constraining the lives of all

#### **Cambridge – a good place to live, learn and work**

A city which recognises and meets needs for housing of all kinds - close to jobs and neighbourhood facilities

A city which draws inspiration from its iconic historic centre and achieves a sense of place in all of its parts with generous urban open spaces and well- designed buildings

A city with a thriving local economy that benefits the whole community and builds on its global pre-eminence in learning and discovery

A city where getting around is primarily by public transport, bike and on foot

### **Cambridge – caring for the planet**

A city in the forefront of low carbon living and minimising its impact on the environment from waste and pollution