THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Revenues & Benefits SERVICE PLAN
2022 - 2025

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The progress of this service plan will be monitored in the following ways:

• Through regular discussion between, service heads, managers and their teams and logged in the version control section of this document
• Performance indicator monitoring by Corporate Management Team on a quarterly basis
• Through Committee reports when necessary
• Through the projects and policy registers which are monitored regularly by Corporate Management Team.

Service Plans will be formally updated on an annual basis, taking into account internal and external influences arising from monitoring arrangements throughout the year.

Link to Strategic Plan, Service Plans and Performance Indicators Folder

SECTION 1:   THE SERVICE CONTEXT

1.1   Service Overview

The Role of the Service

The Revenues and Benefits Section is responsible for the billing, collection and recovery of key revenue streams for the Council, as well as the assessment and payment of Housing Benefit claims.

The years 2020/21 and 2021/22 were always going to be challenging for the service. Having completed much of our *"2020 Transformation Journey"*, the challenge in these years was to consolidate our changes, embed our new ways of working and at the same time define, plan, develop and start to deliver a programme of continuous improvement to meet the challenges ahead.

The emergence of the global pandemic COVID 19, meant that an already challenging time became even more difficult. Much of our plans were put on hold, while we rightly turned our attention to paying and protecting our citizens by rapidly administering a series of central government grants and emergency payments schemes. We did all of this and still maintained our core revenues and benefits business of paying and collecting from customers as much as we legally can. I remain very proud of and gratefully to all my staff for their huge efforts in keeping the service afloat and nimbly adapting to all that central government could through at us.

As we enter 2022, it is hoped that the most negative aspects of the pandemic will be behind us and we can start to focus more clearly on the type of service that our customers want in the future. One of our challenges will be how we can best research and deliver our future customer

requirements, but we are committed to doing so. Another challenge will be helping our staff consolidate our new mixed economy of working from home and coming into the office. Finally, the full roll-out of Universal Credit is also scheduled to be completed by the end of this planning cycle and although the future local welfare landscape is unclear, we must make ourselves ready for whatever role we are required to play in it.
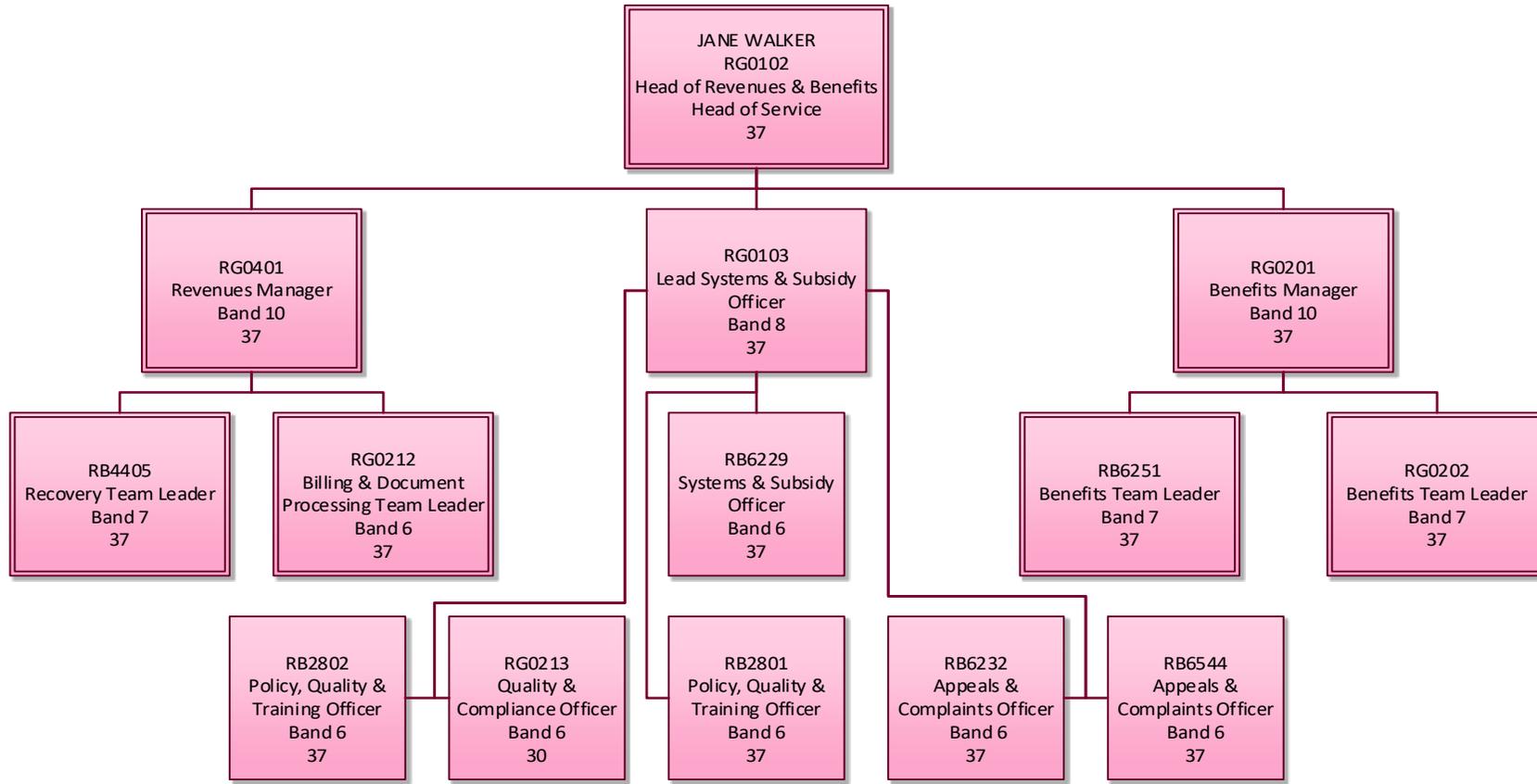
As I put this plan together for the immediate year ahead I am absolutely committed to learning from all that we did in during the Pandemic and establishing whether and to what extent we can embrace any best practices in our business as usual delivery. Adding to that challenge is still the consolidation of our earlier transformational changes as well as getting us prepared for our onward journey of continuous improvement.

It is expected that these challenges will include:

- Further efficiency savings, to contribute to the ongoing financial pressures on local government

- Further improvements to our effectiveness, as we seek to further improve our digital offering and service quality

- Challenging, empowering, supporting and developing our people, so that they are as good as the can be

- Responding positively to the governments initiatives in the area of debt management, to promote community wellbeing

At the time of writing, there is growing uncertainty around the Government plans to reintroduce some COVID restrictions, whatever is eventually decided, I am confident that my staff can once again rise to challenge.

Revenues & Benefits

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                        JANE WALKER
                         RG0102
                  Head of Revenues & Benefits
                       Head of Service
                            37
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RG0401                RG0103                    RG0201
Revenues Manager      Lead Systems & Subsidy    Benefits Manager
Band 10               Officer                   Band 10
37                    Band 8                    37
                      37
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RB4405            RG0212                    RB6229              RB6251                RG0202
Recovery Team     Billing & Document        Systems & Subsidy   Benefits Team         Benefits Team
Leader            Processing Team Leader     Officer             Leader                Leader
Band 7            Band 6                    Band 6              Band 7                Band 7
37                37                        37                  37                    37
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RB2802            RG0213            RB2801            RB6232            RB6544
Policy, Quality & Quality &         Policy, Quality & Appeals &         Appeals &
Training Officer  Compliance Officer Training Officer  Complaints Officer  Complaints Officer
Band 6            Band 6            Band 6            Band 6            Band 6
37                30               37                37                37
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Benefits

RG0202 Benefits Team Leader Band 7 37			RB6251 Benefits Team Leader Band 7 37		
RG0206 Benefits Officer Band 6 37	RB6231 Benefits Officer Band 6 18.5	RB6245 Benefits Officer Band 6 37	RB6217 Benefits Officer Band 6 37	RB6250 Benefits Officer Band 6 37	RB6223 Benefits Officer Band 6 37
RG0205 Benefits Officer Band 6 22.5	RB6226 Benefits Officer Band 6 37	RB6220 Benefits Officer Band 6 37	RB6218 Benefits Officer Band 6 37	RG0207 Benefits Officer Band 6 37 0	RB6221 Benefits Officer Band 6 37
RG0203 Benefits Officer Band 6 37	RB6227 Benefits Officer Band 6 37	RG0208 Benefits Officer Band 6 37	RG0206 Benefits Officer Band 6 37		RB6222 Benefits Officer Band 6 37

Billing Team

RG0212
Billing & Document Processing Team Leader
Band 6
37
0

RG0406
Billing Officer
Band 6
37
0

RB4457
Billing Officer
Band 6
37
0

RG0404
NNDR Officer
Band 6
37
0

RG0407
Billing Apprentice
Band 5
37
0

RG0210
Document Processing Support
Band 4
37
0

RB6531
Billing Officer
Band 6
37
0

RG0405
Billing Officer
Band 6
37
0

RB4458
NNDR Officer
Band 6
37
0

RB6541
Billing Officer
Band 6
37
0

RB6240
Document Processing Support
Band 4
37
0

RB4409
Billing Officer
Band 6
22.5
0

RB4451
Billing Officer
Band 6
37
0

RG0402
Revenues Inspector
Band 5
37
0

RG0409
Billing Officer
Band 6
37
0

RG0217
Document Processing Support
Band 4
37
0

RG0411
Billing Officer
Band 6
30
0

RB0403
Revenues Inspector
Band 5
37
0

RG0211
Document Processing Support
Band 4
37
0

Recovery Team

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                        ┌──────────────────────┐
                        │       RB4405         │
                        │ Recovery Team Leader  │
                        │       Band 7          │
                        │        37             │
                        └──────────────────────┘
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RB6534 Recovery Officer Band 6 37	RB4410 Sundry Debt Officer Band 6 37	RG0414 Recovery Officer Band 6 21
RB4422 Income Officer Band 6 37	RB4456 Recovery Officer Band 6 37	RB4461 Recovery Officer Band 6 37
RB6532 Recovery Officer Band 6 37	RB4414 Recovery Officer Band 6 37	RG0412 Sundry Debt Officer Band 6 15
RG0413 Recovery Officer Band 6 36	RG0408 Recovery Officer Band 6 37	

SECTION 2: SERVICE DELIVERY

2.1	Performance Management

2.1.1 Contribution to the Councils' Strategic Aims and Objectives

Corporate Framework Priority theme	Corporate Objectives	Service contribution to the Corporate Themes
Housing and Thriving Communities	• We will work on a local plan to deliver sufficient housing and adopt that plan by 2025 • Through our joint ventures and partnerships we will take all available practicable action to increase the supply of affordable homes in the district • We will seek to maintain the number of Green Flag accredited parks and open spaces • We will work towards reducing inequalities, prevent homelessness and encourage healthy lifestyles • We will continue to work with partners to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and secure investment in priority interventions	Much of the service actions would be business as usual and as the current benefit processing times and the Council Tax volumes and collection rates are good this should ensure that there would be no delay to the delivery of these priorities from a revenues and benefits perspective. • Council tax discount scheme policy • Hardship policies • Discretionary housing payment policy • Bailiff collection protocol's • Business rates discretionary rate relief policies • Write off policies Subject to the increase in housing not being substantial no additional resources would be required. If all policies were to be reviewed this may involve additional resource being engaged to ensure they are completed within the relevant timescales if fundamental changes were required. If the CTS scheme was to be reviewed for an April 2023 start date then this work would need to commence straight away, however, this was reviewed last year and no significant changes are anticipated this year.

Sustainable Environment	• We will deliver the Climate Emergency and sustainability Strategy and action plan • We will continue to improve the energy efficiency of the council's buildings and local housing. • We will deliver and implement a Cycling and Walking Strategy • We will seek to maintain our position as one of the highest recycling authorities in Hertfordshire and England.	To continue to review the delivery methods for our services. To cut down on operational methods that would increase the carbon footprint of the Council, e.g. to continue with the move to providing services digitally where appropriate, to ensure that our customers do not have to make unnecessary journeys to our offices. We will closely monitor therefore the impact of re-opening face-to-face services in Revenues and Benefits. To ensure that where possible our services are not adding to the TRDC waste stream, even if the majority of the waste is recycled, e.g encouraging our residents to sign up for e-billing for Council Tax.
Successful Economy	• We will produce an Economic Strategy and implement the associated action plan. • We will continue to participate in the Hertfordshire Growth Board and South West Herts Partnership and engage the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to support the economy • Three Rivers will be recognised as a great place to do business • We will continue to improve our relationship with the local business community • We will continue to support Visit Herts and promote Three Rivers as the home of the internationally significant Warner Bros Studios	To continue to collect council tax and business rates, ensuring that benefit payments are processed on time and ensuring that any applications for discounts and exemptions (Council Tax and Business rates) are processed promptly.
High Performing, Financially Independent Council	• We will generate enough income to continue to provide services for the district	Involvement in the development of the customer services strategy – we can provide help and advice from our recent improvement journeys.

	• We will develop and deliver an improved Property Investment Strategy to maximise income from our assets and support the Commercial Strategy • We will progress our Customer Service Strategy that provides a range of contact channels for customers and sets out corporate expectations of how they should be treated • We will produce an Organisational Development Strategy to support the Council in delivering its priorities and objectives.	

2.1.2 Performance indicators

See Data Quality Strategy for further details

Performance indicators are used to aid the decision making process as well as assess the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. The data that we use must be accurate, reliable and timely. To meet these requirements we have adopted the Audit Commission's Standards for Better Data Quality. Further details of the Council's commitment to data quality can be found via the link above.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) supporting the Corporate Framework

Ref	Description	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Target (Current year)	2022/23 Target (Next Year)	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target
RB01 - Council Tax	Percentage of current year Council Tax collected in year	97.7%	99%	99%	99%	99%
RB02 - Business Rates	Percentage of current year Non Domestic Rate collected in year	93.14%	99%	99%	99%	99%
RB05 - Benefit	New claims – average time to process from date of receipt of claim to date claim processed	9 days	7 days	7 days	6 days	5 days
RB04 - Benefit	Time taken to process Housing Benefit changes in circumstances	3 days	5 days	5 days	5 days	5 days
RB06	Percentage of accuracy of revenues and benefits processing	N/A	N/A	>90%	>90%	>90%
RB07	Percentage of Housing Benefit overpayments recovered in-year	N/A	N/A	>92.5%	>92.5%	>92.5%

Service Performance Indicators (PIs)

Ref	Description	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Target (Current year)	2022/23 Target (Next Year)	2023/24 Target	2024/25 Target

The **Head of Revenues and Benefits** is responsible for the source data, data entry and checking the data. The purpose of collating this data is to ensure that our services improve.

2.2   Project Management
See the Project Management Framework for further details

Project details				Project Manager: Project Sponsor:	
Project title				**Proposed outcome**	
2022/23 Milestones				**2023/24 Milestones**	**2024/25 Milestones**
Quarter 1	**Quarter 2**	**Quarter 3**	**Quarter 4**		

Project details				Project Manager: Project Sponsor:	
Project title				**Proposed outcome**	
2022/23 Milestones				**2023/24 Milestones**	**2024/25 Milestones**
Quarter 1	**Quarter 2**	**Quarter 3**	**Quarter 4**		

2.3 Contracts
See the Contracts Register for your contracts.

Information for this section can be taken from the Contracts Register, hyperlink above

Title of Agreement	Service Area	Service Contact	Description of the goods and / or services being provided	Supplier Name	Contract Sum £	Start Date	End Date	Review Date	Option to extend and length of extension
Provision of Bailiff and Collection Services for Revenues and Benefits and Parking Services	Res & Bens	Revs & Bens	Bailiff / Enforcement Agent Services	JBW Group Ltd	Framework agreement				
Provision of Bailiff and Collection Services for Revenues and Benefits and Parking Services	Res & Bens	Res & Bens	Bailiff / Enforcement Agent Services	Marston (Holdings) Limited	Framework agreement				
Provision of Bailiff and Collection Services for Revenues and Benefits and Parking Services	Res & Bens	Res & Bens	Bailiff / Enforcement Agent Services	Newlyn plc	Framework agreement				
Provision of Bailiff and Collection Services for Revenues and	Res & Bens	Res & Bens	Bailiff / Enforcement Agent Services	Rundle & Co Ltd	Framework agreement				

Benefits and Parking Services									
Provision of Technical Systems Support for Revenues and Benefits	Revs & Bens	Revs & Bens	Technical Systems Support Services	Civica	Framework agreement			2022	

2.4   Risk Management

As identified in the Risk Management Register for your Service. Simply add the information below

Risk Description	Residual Likelihood Score	Residual Impact Score	Residual Risk Score
Insufficient staff	2	3	6
Total failure of ICT systems	2	3	6
Loss of accommodation	2	2	4
Fraudulent activity	2	2	4

		Impact		
Very Likely	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
Remote	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4

Likelihood Very Likely ----------▼ Remote

Impact

Low ---► Unacceptable

Impact Score		Likelihood Score
4 (Catastrophic)		4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
3 (Critical)		3 (Likely (21-79%))
2 (Significant)		2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
1 (Marginal)		1 (Remote (≤5%))

Version Control

Version No.	Date	Reason for Update / Significant Changes	Made By