

**REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 11 DECEMBER 2013**

**REPORT ON: DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES PSIF ASSESSMENT**

**REPORT BY: HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES**

**REPORT NO: 506-2013**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To report on the results, key strengths and areas for improvement identified following a self-assessment utilising the Public Service Improvement Framework model for Democratic and Legal Services Division.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that the Management Team notes the Areas for Improvement and Improvement Plan.

**3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None.

**4.0 MAIN TEXT**

4.1 The Council has adopted an approach to assessing a department's capability to continuously improve services using the Public Sector Improvement Framework. As part of this programme the Democratic and Legal Services Division carried out an assessment between April 2013 and July 2013. A summary of the key findings is included in this report.

4.2 The Democratic and Legal Services Division consists of five sections - Committee Services, General Services, Keyboard and Secretarial Services, Legal Services (including Archives and Registrars) and Scientific Services.

4.3 Results

A major part of the assessment is reviewing the service's performance over the past three to five years for evidence of continuous improvement. The table below highlights a sample of the key performance measures for the services and shows their trends over this period.

**Democratic and Legal Services  
Key Results from SOA/Council Plan/Service Plan/Other plan for the service**

Long term status: ▲ = >5% improvement, ► = maintained, ▼ = >-5% deterioration							
Definition	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	Current Target	Benchmark	Long term Improvement Status
% of Notice of Proceedings issued within target of 3 working days	100	100	100	100	100		►
% of outstanding accounts processed within target of 10 working days	100	100	100	100	100		►
Council House Sales - number of working days to issue offer	2	3	3	3	5		►
Council House Sales - number of working days to complete sale (non-DCC loan)	5	7	8	7	14		▲
Number of working days to process sequestration	3	4	6	4	10		▲
Percentage of properties successfully canvassed for inclusion in the Electoral Register	86.25	86.19	86	85	88		►
% of applications for licenses made online (cumulative for year to date)	100	100	100	100	100		►

% of customers satisfied or better with content and presentation of agendas and minutes	99	98	99.5	98.5	95		▶
% of agendas issued within statutory timescales	100	100	100	100	100		▶
% of minutes completed by target date for production of Council Volume	100	100	100	100	100		▶
% Scientific Services Priority Sample reports issued within target turnaround times	-	95	75	85	95		▲
% Scientific Services performance in external proficiency test schemes	-	96	95	97	95		▶

#### 4.4 Areas for Improvement

The PSIF assessment looks at all the critical factors in having an improvement culture in the service. The following table summarises the key areas for improvement identified and the actions to be taken to improve them.

##### **KEY AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Area for Improvement</b>	<b>Action Required</b>
Communication	Democratic and Legal Services does not have a communications strategy for internal and external communication resulting in some service relevant information not being cascaded/disseminated to relevant stakeholders, internal, external and staff.	Develop a communication strategy for Democratic and Legal Services to include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dissemination to staff of information about the Service Plan.</li> <li>Communicate with internal stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Business Support Hub	The creation of the Business Support Hub has created uncertainty about responsibility for some functions.	Outstanding duties to be clarified and communicated to staff.
Consultation	Not every area across the service are gathering and using customer and client feedback. Those areas which are doing this are not doing it regularly enough.	Identify a responsible officer to lead a review of customer satisfaction information.
Training	Although there is an EPDR process in place not all staff have received their planned training.	Ensure all staff receive their EPDR annually.
Service Improvement	There is a lack of clarity and consistency in electronic records management eg public drives and e-mails.  Improve FOISA process	Legal to investigate the purchase of a case management system.  STEP review of FOISA process will take place.

An improvement action plan has been prepared following the assessment and will be monitored over the next two years on the council's online plan monitoring database when a repeat of the assessment will be carried out. This is attached in Appendix one.

#### 4.5 Strengths

The assessment also highlighted areas where the service has key strengths in its existing approach to continuous improvement. These are listed in the table below.

#### **KEY STRENGTHS AND IMPROVEMENTS DELIVERED**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Approach that is delivering results</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Election Canvass	We review and improve the canvassing procedure every year and have increased the number of people on the register and cut costs.	Stuart Galloway
Planning and Involvement with People	As a department we follow the corporate people policies and these are applied consistently. Leaders communicate in an effective manner as evidenced in the employee survey results.	Democratic and Legal Services Management Team
Planning and Involvement with Customers, Partners and Stakeholders	General and Committee Services carry out regular surveys of their customers and make improvements.	Graeme Hunter/ Stuart Galloway
Strategy and Planning	The department complies fully with the corporate approaches to strategic planning and risk management. Some customer satisfaction is measured.	Democratic and Legal Services Management Team
Service Standards	The department has a set of statutory service standards that are monitored closely.	Roger Mennie
Performance Management	The department benchmarks some of its performance indicators.	Democratic and Legal Services Management Team
Planning, Management and Development of People	There are sound approaches relating to the planning and management of people and these are readily available to all online.	Democratic and Legal Services Management Team

#### **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

There are no major issues.

#### **6.0 CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

#### **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Corporate Services Service Plan 2012 to 2017.

7.2 Corporate Services employee survey results 2005 to 2010.

**Improvement Action Plan****Department: Democratic and Legal Services**

<b>Action Number</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Council Plan Outcome (eg DO1)</b>	<b>Improvement Required</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Review Date (first time system will ask for an update from you)</b>	<b>End date</b>	<b>Online Plan update frequency</b>
1	Communication		Democratic and Legal Services does not have a communications strategy for internal and external communication resulting in some service relevant information not being cascaded/disseminated to relevant internal and external stakeholders and staff.	Develop a Communication Strategy for Democratic and Legal Services to include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dissemination to staff of information about the Service Plan and Training Events etc.</li> <li>• Communicate with customers and internal and external stakeholders.</li> </ul>	Communication strategy in place.  Staff survey results on communication.	Head of Democratic and Legal Services	01/12/13		01/04/14	

Action number	Theme	Council Plan Outcome (eg DO1)	Improvement Required	Action	Measure of success	Responsible Officer	Start Date	Review Date (first time system will ask for an update from you)	End date	Online Plan update frequency
2	Business Support Hub		The creation of the Business Support Hub has created uncertainty about responsibility for some functions and also led to a lack of people who can supply or assist with eg first aid, facilities management, uplift of printer cartridges, mail.	Outstanding duties eg facilities manager, mail within west wing, to be clarified, agreed and communicated to staff.	Clear staff roles. All duties covered. All West Wing staff informed.	Head of Democratic and Legal Services	01/12/13		01/04/14	
3	Consultation		Not every area across the service are gathering and using customer and client feedback. Those areas which are doing this are not doing it regularly enough.	Identify a responsible officer to lead a review of customer satisfaction information.	Customer consultation in place. Customer satisfaction results.	Legal Manager  Principal General Services Officer	01/12/13		01/04/14	

Action number	Theme	Council Plan Outcome (eg DO1)	Improvement Required	Action	Measure of success	Responsible Officer	Start Date	Review Date (first time system will ask for an update from you)	End date	Online Plan update frequency
4	Training		Although there is an EPDR process in place not all staff have received their training plan and this has resulted in some staff having outstanding training requirements e.g. the electric cars, financial budget training, shadowing, corporate complaints.	<p>Ensure all staff receive their EPDR annually.</p> <p>Ensure a Training Plan is agreed from the EPDR.</p> <p>Ensure agreed training requirements are sourced, booked and completed.</p> <p>Review EPDR/ Training Plan 6 monthly including progress of the Training Plan.</p>	<p>Percentage of staff receiving EPDR.</p> <p>All agreed training received on time.</p>	Head of Democratic and Legal Services	01/11/13		01/02/14	

5	Service Improvement		There is a lack of clarity and consistency in electronic records management eg public drives and e-mails.	Legal to investigate the purchase of a case management system.  Increase use of ERDMS incrementally in all sections of Democratic and Legal Services.	Case management system in place.  Percentage of staff in Democratic and Legal Services with access to ERDMS.  Staff survey results on getting the information needed to do their job.	Head of Democratic and Legal Services	01/12/13		01/04/14	
<b>Action number</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Council Plan Outcome (eg DO1)</b>	<b>Improvement Required</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>Review Date (first time system will ask for an update from you)</b>	<b>End date</b>	<b>Online Plan update frequency</b>
6	Service Improvement		Achieve statutory requirements for issue of FOISA's.	STEP Review of FOISA's.	Meet statutory responsibilities.	Legal Manager	01/12/13		01/04/14	