



Team Plan 2010-11

Legal Services

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1 Introduction to Legal Services

1.1 Team Role

This document describes the key activities that the Legal Services team will undertake in 2010-11. This team plan describes the detailed activities of the team along with the performance measures. The plan also documents the consultation undertaken in developing the plan.

The Legal Services team provides Corporate and other legal advice and support services to Members, Directors and their service teams across the Council to provide specific legal support across the extensive range of functions that the Council delivers and the increasingly complex nature of its statutory framework and the Council's own agenda as expressed in its Corporate Plan and other strategy and policy documents.

Legal support is provided by team members to the Monitoring Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Head of Paid Service thus ensuring the Council's ethical, financial, corporate governance and management arrangements are effective.

We provide legal advisory services, advocacy in the courts tribunals and inquiries as well as drafting a wide range of legal documents. We attend and advise meetings of the Council and its committees as required. We also maintain the strong room where the most important legal documents and title deeds are securely stored.

In addition to membership of the EMLawshare consortium which enables the Council to secure external legal support at competitive rates under the framework contract with Nottinghamshire County Council we are exploring opportunities for shared working /joint commissioning with the other Leicestershire District Councils.

What have we achieved in 2009/10 –

Successful completion of Contracts/Legal Documents for:

- New Waste Collection Contract (external support from Freeth Cartwright)
- Fleet Provision
- Interim Recycling services
- South Charnwood Leisure Centre
- Gorse Covert Community Centre
- Complex Planning Enforcement appeal in respect of Swithland Barn
- Complex legal work associated with Land Acquisition and delivery of Loughborough Eastern Gateway Regeneration project (external support from Brown Jacobson)
- Increasingly success in prosecutions cases supporting: the Cleaner Greener agenda dealing with Fly tipping and littering; Breaches of Building Control regulations; Planning enforcement; Food Hygiene.

1.2 Team Statistics

The service has a reduced staffing establishment of 9.27 full time equivalents (fte) following the termination of the SLA with CNH Ltd in June 2009. The structure comprises 5 solicitors, 2.47 other legal officers and 1.8 support staff.

External providers are used to supplement the team's resources in respect of complex or specialist matters or when demand exceeds the capacity to respond. The service is responsible for commissioning external legal work on behalf of service directorates.

1.3 Benchmarking

- No formal benchmarking.
- However, data was collated as part of the Leicestershire Legal Shared Services Project and that data is available for review; gives good de fact benchmarking information
- We will continue to refine this data together with North West Leicestershire District Council as part of this Council's commitment to work more closely with NWLDC over the forthcoming year.

2 Team Action Plan

2.1 Task List for 2010-2011

Planned changes and key activities for 2010/11. Based on our best guess of what will happen this next year

Task	Reason for doing undertaking this task	How will we know we have been successful	How will we communicate the outcome
Delivery of proactive and responsive legal support service.	Delivery of customer focussed support and increasing levels of satisfaction	LEG1 Performance Indicator LEG3 LEG4 LEG5	Case update meetings and reports.
Introduce SLA's for all service departments	Development a shared understanding of acceptable services standards that can be delivered within resources available to the Legal Services and prioritises in accordance with Corporate Priorities.	We are able to agree Service standards with Service Heads	Formal SLA to be signed by both and implementation monitored at regular liaison meetings
Meeting agreed services standards	Delivering customer focussed support, increasing levels of satisfaction and improving perceptions of our service	Services standards met and data reports confirm this LEG1 LEG3 LEG4 LEG5	Case update and services standard reports supplied to Services on a monthly basis Meeting with our customers on a regular basis to review work and SLA
Improve Customer communications	Delivering customer focussed support, increasing levels of satisfaction and improving perceptions of our service	Minimal Senior management intervention. Achieving position where Legal Services are business partner of choice within the Council.	Regular meetings with all our customer departments where we can review performance and forward plan and agree priority of requirements of customer
Continue to Develop working relationship with other Councils to deliver improved legal services	Formalising a shared services Proposal	Approval of Business case and commitment of Council to progress to implementation	Formal Report to Cabinet and resolution published Feedback to Legal Services staff as follow up to consultation Press release

Task	Reason for doing undertaking this task	How will we know we have been successful	How will we communicate the outcome
Improving our practice management and case management processes	Improving customer services and perceptions of our service	Customer satisfaction Improvement in generation of management information and case updates to customers Demonstrate excellence through achieving Lexcel accreditation	Regular liaison meetings with customers and article(s) in One Charnwood

3 Key Service Indicators

This section falls into two parts. The first part focuses on the key service indicators and measures for the team and the second part covers customer service standards. For this year, entry of performance indicators will be provided online via the TEN system. Steve Derry will provide details on how to input PIs.

3.1 Performance Indicators

Updated performance data will be held on the Council's 'TENS' reporting system

Team Indicators (Business Health)		2010/11 Q1 Target	2010/11 Q2 Target	2010/11 Q3 Target	2010/11 Q4 Target	2010/11 Annual Target	2011/12 Annual Target	2012/13 Annual Target
LEG1	Percentage of clients satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided by Legal Services	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	TBA	TBA
LEG2	Percentage of monthly Case update reports provided to Service Teams	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%	TBA	TBA
LEG3	Percentage of Court proceedings issued within 10 working days of receipt of full instructions supporting the claim/proceedings	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	TBA	TBA
LEG4	Percentage of requests for legal advice dealt with within 10 working days	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	TBA	TBA
LEG5	Percentage of Planning Enforcement action/notices issued within 6 weeks of decision to take action	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	TBA	TBA

3.2 Customer Service Standards

When you:	We will:	Within (timescale):	Achievement last year	Planned changes
N/A - Legal services is an internal facing resource and performance and service standards are to be agreed through Service Level Agreements with individual client departments.				

4 Operational Risk Register

Key Risk		Description of RISK Concern (x,y,z)	Inherent Rating			Responsible Officer	Risk Controls and Mitigation Plans		Residual Risk		
No.	(1) Type		(3) IMPACT Rating	(4) L'HOOD Rating	(5) RISK Rating		R = Risk Control M = Mitigation Plan	Details of Controls and Plans with Time Frames with End Dates	(3) IMPACT Rating	(4) L'HOOD Rating	(5) RISK Rating
1	R	Failure to implement improved practice management standards may result in reputational damage in the form of loss of customer confidence	2	1	3	Christine Taylor (Head of Legal Services)	R/M	Legal Services will undertake a review of its practice management standards with a view to achieving industry best practice standards	1	1	1
2	F	Lack of staffing resources to service demand for legal work including novel or specialist areas outside of the team's combined skill base	2	2	5	Christine Taylor (Head of Legal Services)	R/M	Legal Services is a member of the county wide EM Lawshare scheme which enables members to gain access to external legal providers at discounted rates. Also in times of particularly high demand a review of workloads against available capacity could be conducted with a view to identifying any areas of work that could be outsourced at minimal cost to the Council	1	2	3

Notes for completing the risk table.

(1) Key to Types of Impact	R – Reputational F – Financial S – Social L – Legal T – Technical E – Environmental P – Political
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(3) Key to Impact Ratings	1 – Low (noticeable) 2 – Medium (significant) 3 – High (critical)
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(4) Key to Likelihood Ratings	1 – Low (greater than 6 months) 2 – Medium (3 – 6 months) 3 – High (less than 3 months)
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⁽⁵⁾ RISK RATING TABLE

Likelihood	Impact		
	1 – Low (noticeable)	2 – Medium (significant)	3 – High (critical)
3 – High	4	7	9
2 – Medium	2	5	8
1 – Low	1	3	6

5 Value for Money Indicators

5.1 NI.179 Cashable Efficiency Savings

Costc	Costc Description	Original 2010-11	Service Pressure/ Savings	Base Budget Following Approval
	Please Note: These are General Fund Only			
E010	Legal Services Service Unit	403,300	(500)	402,800
	Legal Services Service Area	403,300	(500)	402,800

In addition, at present the external legal spend of the Council is held by budget holders. In order to secure further demonstrable cashable savings for the Council, the legal Services will formulate a proposal for the centralisation of the external legal spend. Those proposals will seek to demonstrate that if Legal Services were to control a centralised budget it could deliver better value for money by reference to identifying the optimum balance between externalisation of work and retention in-house or via approved public sector or framework providers.

		2010/11 Q1	2010/11 Q2	2010/11 Q3	2010/11 Q4	2010/11 Annual Target	2011/12 Annual Target	2012/13 Annual Target
All Targets - Legal Services								
LEG 1	% of clients satisfied or very satisfied with the legal service provided	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	96%	96%
LEG 2	Percentage of monthly case update reports provided to Service Teams	60%	70%	80%	80%	75%	80%	90%
LEG 3	Percentage of Court proceedings issued within 10 working days of receipt of full instructions supporting the claim/proceedings	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
LEG 4	% of requests for legal advice dealt with in 10 days	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	96%	97%
LEG 5	Percentage of Planning Enforcement action/notices issued within 6 weeks of decision to take action	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%	97%	98%