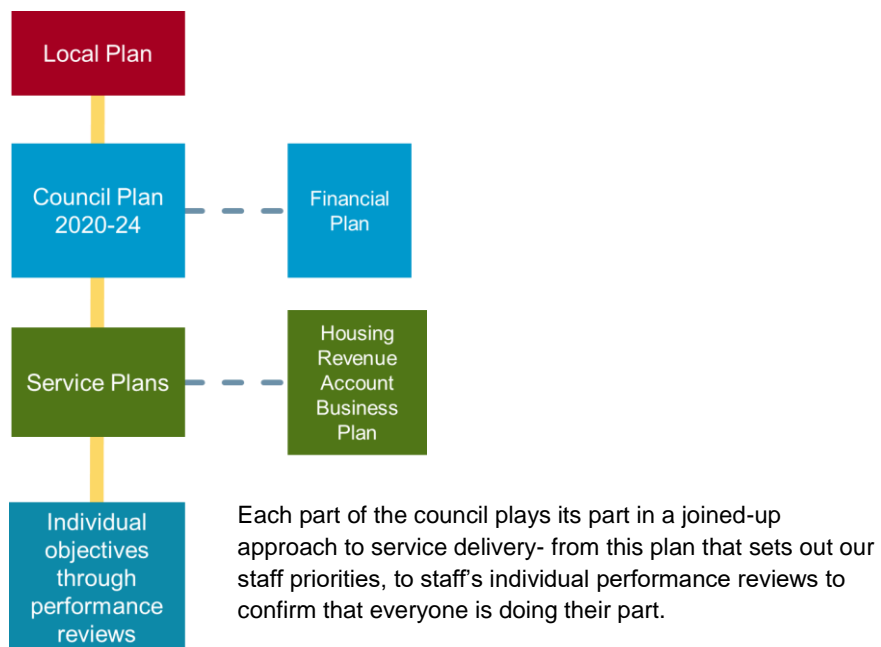


# Governance & Licensing Service Plan 2023-24

Version 0.7

April 2023 – March 2024



**Director:**

**Portfolio holders:**

## **Service Plan Template 2023-24: Contents Page**

Section 1	Brief description of service and purpose(s)
Section 2	Key achievements in 2022-23
Section 3	Looking forward: what we will do in 2023-24 Looking forward: what we will measure, how often and for whom
Section 4	Workforce planning
Section 5	Carbon and resource use
Section 6	Service risks: new/emerging
Section 7	Digital / Data Transformation
Appendix	Workforce Plan

### **Notes for Director and Assistant Director/Service Leads:**

\*Certain parts of this form will be pre-populated. This will include your turnover, full time equivalent/headcount and absence rates.

Shaded areas are for guidance.

### **When you have completed your Service Plan:**

- ✓ Save to O:\Service Plans. Final versions will be placed on the intranet/internet
- ✓ Communicate it to your staff
- ✓ Keep it under review – make it a live document which adds value!
- ✓ Use it to formulate individual objectives

## Section 1 – Brief description of service and purpose(s)

### What we do and who we deliver to

#### Licensing team

- Assist our clients to run their businesses effectively
- Contribute to the welfare of residents and visitors
- Promote a vibrant and sustainable future

#### Democratic Services team

- Help Members make informed decisions
- Support and promote the democratic process
- Help Members to develop their skills and knowledge to better serve the community

#### Legal team

- Advise the Council and its committees, members and officers on local authority powers and duties, available options and to carry out its legal work, and to facilitate projects
- Support propriety and development of the Council's decision-making, scrutiny and administrative processes, and assist the Monitoring Officer in discharging his functions

#### Elections

- Carrying out elections
- Electoral registration

#### Freedom of Information and Complaints

- Responsible for processing of Stage 1 complaints and handling all Stage 2 complaints and dealing with the Local Government Ombudsman in respect of complaints which are referred after our process has been exhausted.
- Dealing with all Freedom of Information ("FOI") requests and subject access requests under Data Protection Act and the Information Commissioner's Office where the matter is referred.

#### Monitoring Officer, Data Protection and RIPA

	Director of Governance and Licensing is also the Council’s Monitoring Officer, Data Protection Officer and RIPA Senior Responsible Officer. Principal Solicitor is the Deputy Monitoring Officer and RIPA Co-ordinating Officer.
<b>How we deliver and ensure equal access</b>	The service is predominantly delivered in-house (although external assistance, predominantly legal advice, is obtained when required). Committee administration is carried out to maximise accessibility to all in accordance with legal requirements. In addition we advise the council on legal requirements under Equality Act and other relevant legislation and assess equalities implications of our direct service delivery.
<b>How we compare</b>	We will continue to compare our services with other Devon authorities through service peer groups, government licensing statistics and Local Government Regulation (Local Authority Coordinators of regulatory services) /LGAR (Local Government Analysis and Research) and comparing data year on year (complaint outcomes / FOI requests). Other bodies, such as Electoral Commission and AEA provide useful comparator information and assistance.
<b>Statutory elements of the service</b>	Legal advice, licensing service, elections and electoral registration, freedom of information / data protection, RIPA, support to committees and members, constitutional and monitoring officer work.
<b>Current net budget (excludes Internal support charges and capital budget)</b>	

<b>Section 2 – Key achievements in 2022-23</b>		
	<i><b>Briefly</b> describe key achievements and what outcomes were created. This will contribute to annual reviews of our Poverty Action Plan, Health &amp; Wellbeing and carbon reduction work.</i>	<i>Link to Council Plan priorities and other strategic objectives: -</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greener East Devon</li> <li>• Better Homes and communities</li> <li>• A resilient economy</li> <li>• Poverty action plan</li> </ul>

Section 2 – Key achievements in 2022-23		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Health &amp; wellbeing</i></li> <li>• <i>Carbon reduction</i></li> </ul>
1.	Shercroft, Broadclyst : purchase of vacant land needed to create new Country Park	Health & Wellbeing, Better Homes and Communities, Greener East Devon
2.	Cranbrook Town Centre : freehold purchase of commercial development land comprising four linked plots	Better Homes and communities, A resilient economy
3.	Axminster Skate Park : granting long-term Lease to new Skatepark Trustee Company	Health & wellbeing
4.	Completion of leases relating providing EV charges at 15 car park site across East Devon	Greener East Devon, a resilient economy
5.	Signed up as users of the national database for taxi licence checks known as ‘NR3’	Carbon reduction
6.	Introduced more online application processes, including Street Trading and Personal Alcohol applications. Our EDDC process was shared with Teignbridge District Council	Carbon reduction
7.	Over the first six months providing support to communities districtwide organising their events to celebrate the Queens Jubilee in June	A resilient economy
8.	Continued support to the districts taxi industry to maintain sufficient income through further fare increases	A resilient economy
9.	Continued support of virtual consultative meetings	Carbon reduction
10.	Successful annual canvass	Better Homes and communities

<b>Section 2 – Key achievements in 2022-23</b>		
11.	Taking enforcement action involving the suspension of 2 taxi licences where the driver posed a risk to public safety	Better Homes and communities
12.	Responding to the vast majority of FOI requests within the statutory deadlines but with an average response time of XX days	

**Section 3 – Looking forward: what we will do in 2023-24 (service objectives)**

This service agrees that it will undertake the work required under the Financial Sustainability Model adopted by Council in its Financial Plan in reviewing the service under the following 6 areas:

- System Thinking
- Digital Transformation
- Customer Access
- Performance Management Data
- Asset Management
- Income Maximisation

<b>3.1 Service priorities we will deliver in 2023/24 which support the Council Plan Priorities; the Poverty Action Plan and Health &amp; Wellbeing. (Carbon reduction activities see section 5 below)</b>	<b>Financial/ corporate resource</b>	<b>Lead Officers</b>
Continue to secure affordable housing (and other planning benefit) through planning and property transactions.	Service budget	Director / Principal Solicitor
Support the Strategic Planning Committee in ensuring appropriate strategic policy direction and delivery of CIL regime	Service budget	Director / Principal Solicitor

Continue to support the Development Management function in securing the right development in the right place, and taking effective enforcement action against unauthorised and harmful development.	Service budget	Director / Principal Solicitor
Provide timely advice on legal strategy / implementation of major projects (including regeneration) and related processes (internal with external resource where required).	Service budget	Director / Principal Solicitor
Continued support to the Joint Habitats Committee (with Exeter and Teignbridge)	Service budget	Director / Principal Solicitor
Provide timely advice and support in relation to site acquisitions / repurposing to support provision of affordable housing and related processes (internal with external resource where required)	Service budget	Director / Principal Solicitor
Deliver a revised Street Trading Policy, being due for full review after 5 years	Service budget	Licensing Manager
Delivery of a revised Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Policy, being due full review after 5 years to include revised application procedures	Service budget	Licensing Manager
Implementation of a new Cemetery Regulations policy in conjunction with modernising processes for 'Bereavement Services'	Service budget	Licensing Manager
Implementation of a permanent Pavement Licence regime requiring new policy and fee setting through central government legislation	Service budget	Licensing Manager
Deliver licences and consents in accordance with adopted Licensing, Gambling and Taxi policies.	Service budget	Licensing Manager
Ensure all FOI requests / complaints are responded to within the stipulated timescales but with the aim of responding significantly quicker on average	Service budget	Director

Ensure implementation of any decision by Council to change its governance arrangements following the outcomes of the Governance Review Working Party	Service budget	Director
Conduct May 2023 elections safely and effectively	Service budget	Elections Manager
Implement the Induction / Member Development Programme following May 2023 elections	Service budget	Democratic Services Manager
Develop an intranet hub to provide easy access to training information on legal issues for other services	Service budget	Principal Solicitor
Develop and deliver training on governance issues for managers and new starters to ensure compliance with the Council's Constitution	Service budget	Director / Principal Solicitor

<b>3.2 Service development / project *</b> (this will be monitored in SPAR)	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>Resources required</b>
<b>Link to Council Plan priorities</b>		
<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Lead officer</b>
1.		

<b>3.3 Service measure/indicator</b>	<b>How often – monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, annually</b>	<b>For whom? Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny</b>	<b>Responsible Officer for production of management information</b>	<b>Retain this measure (yes/no) or new</b>
Number of Stage 1 complaints (year to date)	Quarterly	Scrutiny	Director	Yes



Percentage of Stage 1 complaints responded to within stated timeframes	Quarterly	Scrutiny	Director	Yes
Number of Stage 2 complaints (year to date)	Quarterly	Scrutiny	Director	Yes
Percentage of Stage 2 complaints responded to within stated timeframes	Quarterly	Scrutiny	Director	Yes
Number of Freedom of Information Requests (year to date)	Quarterly	Scrutiny	Director	Yes
Percentage of FOI responded to within the statutory timelimits	Quarterly	Scrutiny	Director	Yes
Percentage of 'higher risk' licensed premises inspected annually	Quarterly	Scrutiny	Licensing Manager	Yes
Number of taxi vehicle licence complaint investigations	Quarterly	Scrutiny	Licensing Manager	Yes

<b>Section 4 – Workforce Planning key findings and actions (see appendix for detailed Workforce Plan)</b>	
<b>Major demands impacting on the workforce have been identified as:</b>	Workflows in legal dependent upon other service work and is therefore subject to change and increased demand which affects delivery.
<b>Major issues impacting on workforce supply have been identified as:</b>	Difficulty recruiting into legal is the main issue in terms of workforce supply.
<b>Priority workforce actions that have been agreed by the Service Management Team in liaison with their HR Business Partner are:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Succession plans required for certain individuals / within teams</li> <li>• Recruitment of solicitors in Legal and an additional officer in elections</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contingency planning in Elections and Information &amp; Complaints</li> <li>Continue to review workloads and capacity</li> <li>Continue to review our Worksmart team arrangement to ensure it is still meeting our needs as a team</li> </ul>
<b>The service Workforce Plan will be reviewed by the Management Team, in liaison with the HR Business Partner, on the following basis:</b>	Yearly or more frequently as required.

<b>Section 5 – Carbon and resource use</b>		
<b>5.1 Short term objective</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>Resources required</b>
Reduce carbon footprint of the Legal and Democratic Service teams – and through Democratic Services of Members - through avoiding unnecessary travel to the office for work and meetings.	Hybrid solution enables remote participation	Funding for hybrid meeting solution and Stata support
<b>Link to climate plan action plan</b>		
<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Lead officer</b>
1. Decision by Council	January 2023	Director / Communications Manager
2. Installation	February 2023	Director / Communications Manager
<b>5.2 Long term objective</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>Resources required</b>

Improve the Iken case management system – Legal and Information & Complaints	Facilitate the ability to home work in more areas than currently.	Predominantly internal but possible support from Iken.
<b>Link to climate plan action plan</b>		
<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Lead officer</b>
Review areas for change / improvement	May 2023	Principal Solicitor
Identify scope of works required	August 2023	Principal Solicitor
Initiate programme of works	September 2023	Principal Solicitor
Complete change / improvements	January 2024	Principal Solicitor

## Section 6 – Risks

New/emerging risks consider with your team any new and emerging risks to be reported to the Management Information Officer.

Any current risks that are emerging as high risk should also be reported to the Management Information Officer.

## Section 7 – Digital / Data Transformation

Digital and data are essential building blocks of a successful organisation. Digital transformation will enable teams to work in a more streamlined and efficient way, reducing duplicated work and automating manual processes, in support of our service plans.

Digital refers to a technology-enabled way of working that uses modern tools, technology and capability.

Data refers to digital information about people, things and systems.

**Aims:** Digital transformation will make accessing and delivering our services to the customer far quicker and simpler. To deliver a better service for our customers we require fast and efficient digital services, high quality data and skilled staff.

## 7.1 Current and ongoing digital/data projects

*Use this section to record current and ongoing digital/data projects within your service relating to systems, software, processes or anything that requires a digital or data solution. Please provide details of the project objective, progress, difficulties and showstoppers currently affecting the project, a record of these will be kept across iterations of the service plan to track their progress. The Digital and Data team will analyse these projects and contact you to discuss potential solutions to the issues you identify.  
(Please use one table per project, copy and paste table as needed)*

### Name of project

Improvement of Iken Case Management system

### Impact on service (low/med/high)

Medium to High

### Names of key members of staff/project leaders involved in the project (including Strata and third parties – include organisation name)

Iken (provider), Andrew Woodhouse (Strata), ALW

### Project objective/desired outcome/goals - how does this project support the council's digital/financial sustainability strategy?

Improve the use of Iken case management system to provide more streamlined processes and workflows to gain efficiency savings

### Description of project, system/software used, current progress, difficulties and showstoppers currently affecting the project

To improve the processes and workflows in the case management system to speed up some work types and to assist with carrying out more formulaic work at a lower level therefore saving the time of qualified staff.

### Project start date (if applicable)

May 2023

### Project end date (if applicable)

January 2024

<b>Name of project</b>
Replacement of Licensing Database known as 'Lalpac' to provide an effective alternative (BCR 57850)
<b>Impact on service (low/med/high)</b>
Medium
<b>Names of key members of staff/project leaders involved in the project (including Strata and third parties – include organisation name)</b>
Licensing Manager (Steve Saunders) - Communication Team (Alex Lester) – Strata management (David Sercombe)
<b>Project objective/desired outcome/goals - how does this project support the council's digital/financial sustainability strategy?</b>
To identify and deliver an effective licensing system that will deliver the needs of the Licensing Service for 5-10 years within the priorities of digital transformation
<b>Description of project, system/software used, current progress, difficulties and showstoppers currently affecting the project</b>
The previously proposed system to be implemented, known as Uniform required significant programming and resourcing that doesn't still justify the level of engagement for implementation. That database is now an older platform and is widely regarded by licensing authorities as being unsuitable for the suite of applications administered by Licensing. The same supplier, Idox has introduced a newer cloud based alternative being specific to Licensing needs and which will be subject of a forthcoming demonstration of the system to consider resourcing needs.
<b>Project start date (if applicable)</b>
Commenced in 2018 under BCR 57850
<b>Project end date (if applicable)</b>
Milestone - December 2023

<b>Name of project</b>
Delivery of all taxi applications being available online for the first time
<b>Impact on service (low/med/high)</b>
Medium
<b>Names of key members of staff/project leaders involved in the project (including Strata and third parties – include organisation name)</b>
Licensing Manager (Steve Saunders) - Strata (Programming staff tbc)
<b>Project objective/desired outcome/goals - how does this project support the council's digital/financial sustainability strategy?</b>
Efficiency - streamlined applications with benefits to applicants
<b>Description of project, system/software used, current progress, difficulties and showstoppers currently affecting the project</b>
5 application processes are necessary for programming and testing, with progress to date of delivering one process since submission of the BCR in December 2020. 4 processes remain, EDDC await confirmation of Strata Resourcing in early 2023 to continue the delivery for further testing
<b>Project start date (if applicable)</b>
BCR submitted Dec 2020 and ongoing
<b>Project end date (if applicable)</b>
March 2024

## 7.2 Potential future digital/data transformation projects

*Use this section to identify potential new digital/data transformation projects, this may be changes to systems, software, processes or the procurement of new products that may increase the digital capabilities, efficiency of your service and income generation for the council. The Digital and Data team will analyse these projects and contact you to discuss potential solutions to the issues you identify.  
(Please use one table per project, copy and paste table as needed)*

<b>Proposed name of project</b>
Legal Hub on the Council's website
<b>Impact on service (low/med/high)</b>
Medium
<b>Impact on service (low/med/high)</b>
Medium
<b>Key member/s of staff that you can commit to the project (EDDC only)</b>
Retired member of staff returning for this project (Shirley Shaw)
<b>Project objective/desired outcome/goals - how does this project support the council's digital/financial sustainability strategy?</b>
To build a legal hub to provide standard information to members of the public via the Council's internet to reduce demand for information that is requested regularly thus freeing up staff time and delivering efficiency savings.
<b>Description of project, system/software used, transformational action/training needed for project to succeed</b>
To build a legal hub to provide standard information to members of the public via the Council's internet to reduce demand for information that is requested regularly. Training required to enable temporary staff member to carry out the project.
<b>Is your service currently able to commit a staff resource to this project? - please specify details</b>
Yes, temporary staff member from January 2023