Appendix C – Directorate Plan & Budget Variation Statement

Directorate – Law & Governance – Summary Overview

Overview of Directorate:

This directorate includes legal services; democratic services commissioning, procurement, administration of elections and the electoral register, emergency planning, communications, programme management, business intelligence, executive support, and information governance (incorporating data protection and handling information requests).

Achievements / Performance

- The number of subscriptions registered to receive the Council's e-newsletter is 4,643
- The Council's website accessibility rating has increased to 78% with plan to increase this further
- 100% of the agendas for Council and Cabinet to be published five clear working days before the meeting
- Customer complaints that have been received by quarter 2 is 47 which is 72% of the annual target of less than 65
- 96% of these complaints are responded to within the timescales set
- 112 customer compliments have been received by quarter 2 with a target of more than 145 set
- 100% of statutory information returns are completed within timescales
- 80% of external media enquiries are resolved within 48 hours
- 97% of legal advice is provided within 7 days
- Development work continues for the Business Intelligence service
- The Elections team are planning for the General Election and new requirements placed on the Council following boundary changes

Summary Budget table

Summary	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000
Commissioning & Voluntary Sector	429	426	423	423
Corporate Services	902	984	968	971
Legal Services & Director costs	747	744	735	734
Democratic Services & Chief Executive costs	689	690	821	822
Elections	131	133	136	238
Total	**2,898**	**2,977**	**3,083**	**3,187**

Budget trend over the MTFS (£m)
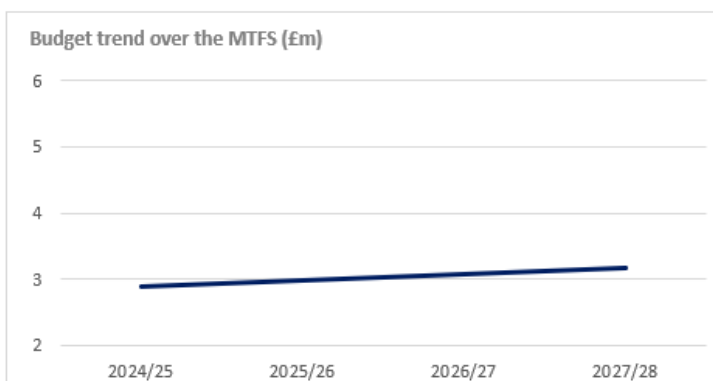
Summary Subjective table

Law & Governance	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000
Employees	2,243	2,250	2,185	2,221
Premises	0	0	0	8
Transport	10	10	10	10
Supplies & Services	530	561	690	747
Third Party Payments	373	375	378	381
Income Gov Grants	(3)	(3)	(3)	(3)
Income Fees & Charges	(16)	(16)	(16)	(16)
Third Party Income	(204)	(164)	(124)	(124)
Income from Contributions	(35)	(36)	(37)	(37)
Other Income	0	0	0	0
Total	**2,898**	**2,977**	**3,083**	**3,187**

Corporate Strategy

This directorate primarily supports the delivery of the following corporate priorities, and enables all of the other priorities indirectly through service support:

Tackling the Climate Emergency	
A diverse & sustainable economy	
Support the most vulnerable	
Provide good public services	✓

Directorate – Law & Governance – Service Ambitions

	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000
Commissioning & Voluntary Sector	**429**	**426**	**423**	**423**

Ambition:

A Commissioning Team that supports effective and efficient commissioning across the organisation, enabling individual business areas to identify how to translate service strategies and priorities in service delivery. Where procurement is needed, supporting business areas to self-serve for low value procurements and liaising with Welland Procurement Unit for higher value tenders.

What are we doing over to meet this ambition:

The Commissioning Team needs sufficient capacity and expertise to support the council to develop effective commissioning across its business.

The current staffing establishment is: 2 xPO3, 1 x SO1, 2 x SO2 and 1 x Grade 6. There is currently an underspend against the set staffing budget due to a vacant post which has not been recruited to and the cash limit level will mean that this vacant post will need to be deleted from the establishment.   Ad hoc business support could be funded from underspend in the staffing budget to maintain the delivery of low-level support and ensure Commissioning Officers focus on delivering where they can add most value.

The Service Level Agreement with Welland Procurement Unit has been reviewed this year and deemed to represent value for money - the level of advice and support could not be provided in-house and to recruit to a dedicated post would be more expensive.

Corporate Services	**895**	**977**	**961**	**964**

Ambition:

Corporate services includes 4 service areas each with their own service plan and ambitions. Their functions underpin most council services and whilst having some specific corporate strategy commitments they contribute to they cut across all of our corporate priorities.

Communications - Examples include:

- Strengthen our internal communications, creating a robust intranet and internal communications approach which reflects our corporate values and supports self service. Benefit of reduced demand on smaller support services and increasing staff connectivity to the organisation, impacting positively on staff turnover and organisational stability.

- Developing our website further to improve accessibility, in line with statutory requirements, and support access to information and services online to increase online transactions and reduce demand on high cost ways of delivering services and customer support.

- Increasing the 'visualisation' of council services through improved use of video and photography, to support effective storytelling and highlight the human impact of our work with the core goal of building confidence in the council and its services, improving public perception and in turn reducing demand.

- To become less reactive by working with teams to get ahead of the curve in our publications.

Business Intelligence - examples include

- Adapt the existing BI service to become a corporate service, strengthening business intelligence and data so that there is greater knowledge of what is happening in our services and when customers contact us (links to customer transformation). This includes rolling out PowerBI functionality. This requires a review of the service offer to enable capacity.

- Continue to deliver statutory data returns (23) whilst supporting service areas with timely data reporting.

- To introduce new model for management of social care Liquid Logic system, including training, and to adapt to support performance reporting.

- To support key projects from a data management perspective, including SEND Delivering Better Value and Adult social care reforms.

	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000

Corporate Projects - examples include

- To embed good project management through a robust training programme that enables officers to self serve making project delivery more effective across the Council.

- To support the delivery of key projects underpinning our corporate strategy, providing assurance and oversight at a strategic level.

Corporate & Exec Support - examples include

- Revised executive offer that adds value to services, minimising non added value tasks so that service supports key areas of development and projects where needed. the ideal would be to have a task force style approach that could be moved across teams when needed to address any areas under particular pressure.

- To provide effective co-ordination and management of business continuity and emergency planning arrangements.

- To deliver a cost effective and minimalist post and reprographics service, utilising digital first where possible

What are we doing over to meet this ambition:

Business intelligence

- Consideration of service structure with a greater focus on operational capacity and delivery. This risks a loss of strategic development but would potentially enable a wider coverage of support across the Council. Service areas (children and adult services) would need to manage with a reduced offer, however there is potential for children and adult services to rationalise their quality assurance resources whilst securing a robust performance focus.

- Ongoing investment will be required to support a PowerBI model and the design and implementation of that model. At present we have a ringfenced one off pot to do this but there will be ongoing subscription charges. In addition service areas may need investment in some technology/or systems to enable data to be freely accessible.

Communications

- We have already done the ground work to enable a structure to support the intranet, achieved by bringing the RIS platform into the new website and commissioning an intranet using the same website platform - this allows resource to be focussed on a singular platform.

- The challenge for communications remains the high degree of reactive work that is required, often to deal with issues that have come up in service delivery. This is a council wide challenge and relates closely to customer and structuring resources to better meet the needs of customers away from the back office, freeing up service resource to deliver the services. SLAs and working more closely with teams will also help this.

Corporate and executive support

- Fundamentally there needs to be a reduction in what the team can offer and having less staff - this means better use of technology and greater capacity amongst officers and members to be self sufficient and to self-serve. This is something that requires buy in from others to achieve e.g. willingness to not have minutes and accept recordings and action only for many areas. Key areas previously identified were minute taking, diary management, 18pt and member queries. We are currently reviewing the offer for HOS as this is disparate across areas and requires a rethink.

- Exploring the potential for a singular business support model across children and adult services, this requires those services to be open to opportunities to revise resource on areas of business development.

- Exploration of governance and exec support services could provide opportunities to realise efficiency.

	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000
Legal Services	**348**	**345**	**340**	**340**

Ambition:

For an efficient, effective in-house Legal Service delivered at as low a cost as possible.

The Council's Legal Service function was transferred to Peterborough City Council (PCC) in 2011 based on a three-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) which could be renewed annually. PCC had a significant in-house legal team at the time and offered a comprehensive one stop service to the Council.

Initially the Service worked well with regular reviews and timely advice and support. However, in May 2018, concerns with the PCC service led the Council's Cabinet to approve the transfer of the legal services function from Peterborough City Council back to Rutland County council. Cabinet also approved the delegation of authority to the then Head of Legal and Governance to assume responsibility for the management and delivery of Legal Services for Rutland to enable the Council to assess whether there is benefit in PCC continuing to provide the legal service, or whether it should be brought back in house and/or source alternative provision.

What are we doing over to meet this ambition:

Currently recruiting to two new in-house posts with a view to providing a high-quality, cost-effective inhouse legal service.

Democratic Services	**473**	**474**	**604**	**604**

Ambition:

Democratic Services will support the delivery of the Council's programme of meetings and good governance for the Council.

What are we doing over to meet this ambition:

Democratic Services did make a saving in that a governance officer post was deleted. Virtual Meetings are no longer permissible for decision making bodies, but remote working has left a legacy of a lesser reliance on paper. Meetings should be entirely paperless, even if not remote. Recording meetings means that there is no longer a need for detailed minutes.

There should be a clear process for reports to support authors to ensure that report deadlines are met. The process needs to be streamlined to prevent the need to write multiple reports for one decision and the journey should be as short as possible. Increased capacity within democratic services will be needed to support the next general election.

The most significant parts of the budget are member allowances which are fixed and member expenses, the latter are tightly managed but cannot offer a saving on them.

Elections	**131**	**133**	**136**	**238**

Ambition:

To deliver an effective general election and beyond.

What are we doing over to meet this ambition:

Elections will have to deliver a general election as well as the PCC election within a short timeframe. There is funding available, with the challenge will be resourcing and there will be a need for colleagues across the organisation to provide support.

Directorate - Law & Governance – Variation Statement

Ref	Law & Governance Budget Variation Statement	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000
2023/24 budget					
LE001	2023/24 Budget	3,092	3,092	3,092	3,092
LE002	2023/24 Budget	192	192	192	192
Previous MTFS budget adjustment					
LO001	Service Adjustments	(334)	(284)	(284)	(184)
LO002	Inflation allocation	11	20	31	41
LO005	Service Adjustments	24	24	23	23
Service Investment					
LP001	PowerBI licensing fees and charges are required to ensure reports can be shared and accessed by service areas. Without these licenses reports cannot be viewed limiting the use for decision making and target use of budgets.	0	30	30	30
LP002	Additional budget required for the emergency planning partnership with Leicestershire Councils which still provides the Council with a value for money service offer, and with an increase in the fee of the Welland Service Level Agreement which supports the Council's procurement service.	10	10	10	10
LP003	Increase in budget for the Members allowances increase in line with the recommendations made in the independent report. However, this budget will be contingent on wider MTFS assumptions at the time of implementation.	0	0	130	130
Saving					
LS001	In house provision rather than commission	(30)	(36)	(45)	(49)
LS002	Staffing structure changes within the directorate within the procurement, business intelligent, and corporate and executive support teams. Savings will derive from utilisation of existing vacancies to configure role capacity requirement combined with a reduction on capacity and demand management from other services in the Council.	(63)	(67)	(89)	(91)
LS007	Budget realignments where budgets no longer required on smaller expenditure items within Corporate Services and Legal Services	(13)	(12)	(16)	(18)
Investment					
LI001	External capacity to undertake Adult Social Care placement audit to identify high-cost packages and potential savings. Will assist in managing inflationary actual cost of care uplift requests in future years.	50	0	0	0
LI003	Audio/Visual system upgrade in the Council Chamber to improve the quality of the meeting recordings. It would reduce officer time taken prior to during and after meetings to prepare, record and upload footage. It may reduce the number of in person attendees which relieves the pressure on physical resources helping the Council to contribute to the Tackling Climate Change Corporate Strategy priority.	28	0	0	0
Reserve funding					
RF005	Funding from Innovation Reserve	(78)	0	0	0
	TOTAL	**2,898**	**2,977**	**3,083**	**3,187**