

ACTIVITIES / OBJECTIVES SCORED AS HIGH RISK

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Housing Benefits



1. Objective: Determine housing benefit entitlement for new claimants, notify claimants of their entitlement and pay benefits.

Score: (16) Likelihood – Likely x Impact - Critical

Reason: This is mainly down to the precarious staffing situation - current and projected - and the fact that Kent Benefits Partnership no longer offers a resilience service.

Existing Controls: Disaster Recovery Plan, Replacement of Training/Systems Officer. Regular monitoring. Use of agency staff.



2. Objective: Achieve high performance in both accuracy of calculating benefit due and speed of processing.

Score: (15) Likelihood = Very likely x Impact = Significant

Reason: As for Item 1.

Existing Controls: As for Item 1.

Housing Benefits



3. Objective: **Ensure that re-calculations of benefit entitlement are dealt with promptly.**

Score: (16) Likelihood – Almost Inevitable x Impact - Significant

Reason: Insufficient staff to deal with work promptly. Failure of database used for the re-calculation of benefit.

Existing Controls: FS and I.T. Disaster Recovery Plans. Reliance on agency staff.

Council Tax



4. Objective: Increase the proportion of income due to the Council collected in respect of local taxes.

Score: (15) Likelihood = Very Likely x Impact = Significant

Reason: The Council will be losing a relatively experienced member of staff because of maternity leave; the backlog of work is at an historically high level; we have a large influx of work because of the Government's rates deferral scheme (and as yet no software to process the deferrals); and the continuing impact of the Gravesham Partnership.

Existing Controls: Regular monitoring of the situation, Liaison with neighbouring councils, Promotion of the rate deferral and small business rate relief schemes for businesses, Promotion of the availability of council tax benefit, Encourage the use of debt counselling services, Endeavour to reach mutually agreeable and realistic arrangements with taxpayers for the payment of debts.



5. Objective: Further improve on the prompt collection of monies due to the Council.

Score: (15) Likelihood = Very Likely x Impact = Significant

Reason: As for Item 3; plus the impact of the recession on the public's general disposable income means that it is becoming harder to collect monies as promptly as in the past

Existing Controls: As for Item 3.

Treasury Management



6. Objective: Management of the Council's cash flow, core investments and borrowing in accordance with the Treasury Management Policy and the annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy such that liabilities and investment income targets are met with the minimum risk to capital.

Score: (20) Likelihood = **Very likely** x Impact = **Critical** (as evidenced by the recent banking weaknesses and collapse of the Icelandic banks to which we were exposed)

Reason: Potential failure of Fund Manager, investment counter party or the Council's bankers are the greatest risks, although the achievement of investment income targets can be significantly impacted by volatility in the financial market.

Existing Controls: Day to day monitoring of status via market place and the Council's Treasury Adviser. Investments held in Council name in client account held by a custodian.

PLANNING, TRANSPORTION & LEISURE

Policy & Conservation



7. Objective: Enhance the vitality of Tonbridge Town Centre by preparing Town Centre Fund Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Score: (18) Likelihood = Almost inevitable x Impact = Significant

Reason: This risk has been identified as high because the lack of appropriate adopted guidance could ultimately affect the Council's ability to collect contributions from development in the most effective way. However, the Council has been unable to progress this due to the continuing level of uncertainty at national level on how local authorities should proceed. In the meantime the Council continues to negotiate S 106 agreements effectively based on its existing policies and guidance.

The current market situation has meant a general slowing of the pace of development which has lessened the need for this to be resolved, although it has also had the effect of reducing the margin on developments to the extent that S 106 agreements have become more challenging to negotiate. On that aspect the Council has retained the services of consultant Valuers to advise on the viability issues in relation to development proposals.

Existing Controls: Whole issue under review as a result of new proposals to be introduced by Government during 2009 which could obviate the need for this Council to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document but require another approach to be adopted.

Development Control



8. Objective: **Maintain or improve the level of fee income.**

Score: (15) Likelihood = Very Likely x Impact = Significant

Reason: Impact of current economic conditions.

Existing Controls: Monthly monitoring with performance on fee income reported to Management Team. Need to maintain 'critical mass' of staff in order to run existing system and to be able to respond immediately to economic recovery.

Environmental Health & Housing

Housing



9. Objective: Secure a continuing supply of affordable housing and work to prevent homelessness.

Score: (12) Likelihood = Likely x Impact = Significant

Reason: Economic downturn. Lack of suitable development opportunities. Lack of capital funding. Lack of demand for shared ownership tenures.

Existing Controls: Strategic approach to homelessness prevention identified within current sub-regional Homelessness Strategy. Implementation and monitoring of key strategic objectives undertaken in partnership with key stakeholders including other West Kent authorities, voluntary agencies, health and social care sectors and support providers. Track record of stock-holding RSLs in housing homeless families closely monitored. Ongoing dialogue with private landlords both informally and through the West Kent Private Landlords Forum. Review of Rent Deposit Scheme - procedures updated to minimise financial risk to Council.