Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

Revenues & Benefits Service Business Plan 2013-2014

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1   Statement of Purpose

Revenues and Benefits help to shape the great waterfront city by:

- Enabling tenants to afford their rent and stay in their homes through the payment of housing benefit
- Helping people on low incomes to pay council tax with the council tax support scheme
- Generating income for the council by collecting local tax & benefit debt
- Advising residents regarding benefits, support, discounts & exemptions to which they may be entitled
- Providing tenancy support and safeguarding processes to prevent tenancy breakdown and prevent homelessness
- Engaging with residents & organisations so as to improve the service
- Investigating fraud & publicising prosecutions relating to welfare fraud

This is reflected in the following activities:

- Bill and collect Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates
- Administer Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support
- Administer Discretionary Housing Payments & Council Tax Support Hardship Relief
- Administer Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief
- Assist customers to access financial advice and support.

The Service is driven by the Council's guiding principles for transformation:

- put our customers at the heart of everything we do
- make sure services are always value for money
- be ambitious and continue to improve
- use information and evidence to shape services our customers really need
- simplify and strengthen our processes and share them with each other
- make sure every enquiry that can be resolved first time is resolved first time
- support councillors as the strategic leaders of our organisation
- recognise the importance of our staff and support them as we change
- listen to our customers and our staff, and learn from what we hear

2   Key Service Priorities

- Maintain service delivery standards through this period of change
- Plan for future budget reductions
- Successful implementation of Council Tax Support local scheme & Business Rates reform
- Successful implementation of Housing Benefit reforms, including social sector under occupation
- Continue to prepare for and implement welfare reforms that will be introduced from April 2013 onwards, including the Benefit cap and Universal Credit
- Prepare for the migration of Housing Benefit & Fraud work to DWP

3   Review

This section is a review of progress and achievements in the last year and a look forward to what is coming. There is insufficient detail on the upcoming changes to plan beyond March 2014. Therefore, this plan will concentrate on 2013/14. The plan will be re-visited as and when more detail is available on the changes.

3.1   Environmental Audit

A summary of the major influences on service planning is detailed below, including key items from SWOT and STEEP analyses.

The state of the economy and the duration of the current recession are major influences on the performance of the Revenues & Benefits Service. A re-structure of how the work is done is well underway and will complete by the summer of 2013. Essentially, this involves enhancing the capability of all Benefit Officers so that there is no significant distinction between 'back office' and 'front office' work. This will improve efficiency and avoid unnecessary double handling. The service does not employ contract staff or consultants, but seeks to meet need by forward planning against anticipated work. This is becoming more difficult with the lack of forward information from the DWP.

As always, accurate financial forecasts are extremely difficult to produce due to the unpredictability of claimant volumes and expenditure on Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support.

Through 2013/14 and onwards, there are far reaching changes, to Housing Benefit, Council Tax & Business Rates as well as to the Benefits system, with the introduction of Universal Credit and starting to move Housing Benefit work to the Department for Work and Pensions. Eventually, by 2017 Universal Credit will impact on around 18,000 households in the city.

Welfare reforms will cause additional pressure on Discretionary Housing Payments during 2013-14, which may result in an additional funding requirement on the Council to top up DWP funding. It is unclear if the additional cost can be absorbed within the Service cash limit.

Council Tax Benefit was funded by subsidy from the Government and broadly covered the cost of the benefits paid. Council Tax Support will attract a non-ring-fenced grant in place of the subsidy. The new grant will not necessarily change in the future in accordance with caseload. This means that the risk of changes in claimant numbers will rest with the Council.

The most obvious effect of the recession & the state of the economy on Local Taxation is likely to be on future revenue collection rates. As a direct result of the localisation of Council Tax Support, ultimate collection rates will be depressed in the future, estimated at 0.9% lower than 2012/13. There is expected to be a requirement for higher volumes of recovery related work to reduce the effects.

Changes to the way in which Local Authorities are funded whereby the City Council now retains 49% of all Business Rates collected instead of receiving Government Grant, meaning that a very significant proportion of the Council's funding will in future be subject to business growth / decline and is therefore variable.

The extension of small business rate relief and discretionary rate relief has helped in part to compensate for the effects of the recession.

Housing Benefit subsidy is at an optimal level and with the associated subsidy recovery rates now factored into current and future budgets, there is a significant risk of overspending. This would be exacerbated if there were an increase in expenditure, which increases the difference in absolute terms between expenditure and subsidy received. Variations in subsidy performance or increased administrative expenditure would be contributory factors.

Clearly as a result of the changes introduced in recent Government legislation (The Localism Act 2011, the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and Local Government Finance Act 2012), Portsmouth residents face an uncertain future in respect of their income, which in many cases will impact on their ability to stay out of poverty. For the same reasons, the Council faces significant risk to its income and therefore to the Services it provides.

Given this environment and the increasingly limited potential for further budget savings, the broad strategy in Revenues & Benefits will be to maintain existing service levels as far as is possible over the coming years within the available funding.

3.2 Customer Needs Analysis

The distribution of Benefits customers is annually mapped across the City. This has helped to highlight probable inequalities in access arrangements. The distribution of access arrangements is particularly an issue for the more vulnerable residents in the City. This information has been made available so as to inform the Tackling Poverty Strategy.

A significant investment continues to be made in providing tenancy support for the private sector through E C Roberts and homeless clients managed by the Council's Housing Service.

The service runs a rolling customer survey, with quarterly surveys of a random sample of Benefits customers. This indicates that Housing Benefit customers are satisfied with the service provided – 95% are satisfied with ease of access to the service and with the outcome of their contact. The City Help Desk reports similar levels of satisfaction for Local Taxation customers.

There is a continuous improvement process in place to review and improve the tone and clarity of written correspondence across the service.

3.3 Equality Impact Assessments

Preliminary Equality Impact Assessments were conducted in 2012/13. No areas for further work were identified in these reviews.

3.4 Performance Assessment

Overall

The Revenues & Benefits Service has achieved a good level of performance in most operational areas during 2012/13.

Efficiency of the service has improved massively since April 2009, reflected in the following:

- In 2012/13 Council Tax due was £68 million & Non Domestic Rates was £82 million, while Housing Benefit expenditure was £106 million & Council Tax Benefit was £14.5 million. Benefit claimant numbers are running at an all-time high of over 26,600.
- The resulting workload has increased by over 20% since April 2009.
- The total staff full time equivalent number has reduced by more than 25% since April 2009.
- This equates to an efficiency improvement of over 50% since April 2009.

The table in Appendix A illustrates the performance trends for a range of indicators during 2012/13 and the previous two years.

Reduced costs have produced a saving of over £300,000 for this & future years. This saving is included in the cumulative savings chart in Appendix B to this plan.

Appendix C shows 2012/13 performance against key indicators.

In recognition of the economic situation, the service has set realistic targets for 2012/13 based on recent trends and staffing capacity.

Benefits Service

The Benefit Service gave a steady performance in 2012/13, given the reduced staffing and increases in workload. Some key indicators improved, performance was held on some, however processing cycle times dropped to an average of 15 days overall.

Benefits subsidy performance remains unpredictable as a windfall income, although performance was a little better than forecast.

Benefit debt recovery was well above forecast in 2012/13, both from debtors and from benefits overpayments recovery. Total outstanding debt increased slightly to £7.7million, mainly as a result of recessionary effects.

The focus for staff in the Benefits teams will be to maintain performance levels and quality whilst introducing the changes brought about by welfare reforms, including Benefit cap, size criteria in social housing council tax support and the impending Universal Credit.

Local Taxation Service

In 2012/13 Local Taxation achieved 95.05% in-year collection of Council Tax & 98.01% for the NDR collection rate. Whilst these in year rates were below target, it still represents a very creditable outcome in the face of the recession and the poor business environment. Ultimate collection rates were on target.

The service achieved a satisfactory correspondence processing time of 7.75 days.

In response to the economic situation it continues to prompt the city's small businesses to take advantage of the NDR relief that might be available to them.

The focus for the service will be to continue to optimise performance in what is likely to continue to be a difficult environment and to effectively manage government initiatives in response to the economic situation such as small business rate holiday and changes to council tax support.

3.5 Key Projects

The Revenues and Benefits Service has an established Change Management process to identify, prioritise, resource and manage a range of projects including ICT elements.

2012-13 projects included:

- Various projects to implement the changes introduced by welfare reform and council tax reform.
- Northgate Revenues & Benefits – to ensure the main processing system remains current & fully functional.
- ATLAS – this initiative from the DWP/HMRC now provides direct feeds of information from DWP (for other Benefits) & from HMRC (for Tax Credits) into Northgate.
- Revenues reporting – improved forecasting.
- Disaster Recovery 2012 – ensure key systems can be recovered in the event of a serious failure.

2013 projects will include:
- Upgrade of document management system to COMINO W2
- Introduction of the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme (was Social Fund)
- Changes to support the introduction of Universal Credit
- Various projects to implement the changes introduced by welfare reform.
- Northgate Revenues & Benefits – to ensure the main processing system remains current & fully functional.
- Revenues reporting – improved forecasting and debt management.
- Disaster Recovery 2013 – ensure key systems can be recovered in the event of a serious failure.

3.6 The future

A number of far reaching changes to Housing Benefit, Council Tax & Non-Domestic Rates are in progress. These changes will radically alter the face of the Revenues & Benefits service in the future. The following is a brief summary of the changes.

- Council Tax reform [April 2013]

This change incorporates changes to discounts & exemptions for empty properties and 2nd homes, the replacement of Council Tax Benefit with a local scheme of Council Tax Support.

Council Tax Benefit (CTB) is abolished from 1st April 2013 to be replaced by a local Council Tax Support scheme. In addition, the related grant funding reduces by over 10% (equivalent to about 2% of current Council Tax charged), which has to be taken into account when developing the Council Tax local scheme. The Act prescribes that pensioners currently receiving Council Tax Benefit will not see any decrease in the support they receive. Apart from disabled people, residents will have to pay not less than 20% of their Council Tax liability, although there is built in protection from the worst of the changes that is similar to Council Tax Benefit (e.g. for War Widows, Carers, Foster Carers, Care leavers, families etc.). There is a hardship fund set up to protect the most vulnerable households in receipt of Council Tax Support.

Council Tax exemption Classes A & C are abolished from 1st April 2013 and are being replaced by a locally defined discount. Up to March 2013, class A for empty properties undergoing or in need of repair get full exemption for up to 12 months. This is being replaced by a 40% discount for 12 months leaving a 60% charge. Up to March 2013 class C for empty and unfurnished dwellings get full exemption for up to 6 months. This is being replaced by a 100% discount for a maximum of 1 month followed by no discount thereafter. For homes that have been empty for over 2 years there is an additional premium of 50% to be levied in addition to the 100% charge.

- Business Rates retention [April 2013]

The business rate retention scheme is intended to create incentives for local authorities to promote growth but the system will have to cater for a huge diversity of local conditions, whilst DCLG maintains its commitment that moving to this new scheme will not change the way businesses pay business rates, nor increase the level of business rates they pay. The system is designed so that no council is worse off as a result of its business rates base at the outset of the scheme through. This will include a one-off rebalancing of resources through a system of tariffs and top ups.

Changes to the way in which Local Authorities are funded whereby the City Council now retains 49% of all Business Rates collected instead of receiving Government Grant, meaning that a very significant proportion of the Council's funding is now subject to business growth / decline and is therefore variable.

- Local Welfare Assistance Scheme [April 2013]

The Social Fund 'Community Care Grants' and 'Crisis Loans' have been abolished by the Department of Work and Pensions as of 31st March 2013. Portsmouth's Local Welfare Assistance Scheme (LWAS) is now in place.

Applications can be made by individuals or by agencies on behalf of individuals. Most awards will be made in vouchers, with cash provided only in exceptional circumstances. The vouchers will be for use in stores such as Argos, Homebase, Park Clothing (can be used in many different clothes stores) and Euronics (white goods).

More information (including the LWAS Policy and the application process) can be found at http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/29252.html on Portsmouth City Council's website.

- Universal Credit [October 2013 - December 2017]

Universal Credit is intended to provide a streamlined welfare system which makes the financial advantages of taking work or increasing hours clear to claimants. The white paper "Universal Credit: welfare that works", explained that between October 2013 and the end of 2017, all existing claims to income based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, income based Employment Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit would gradually move to Universal Credit. This proposal is for an integrated working-age credit that will provide a basic allowance with additional elements for children, disability, housing and caring. Universal Credit will not replace any of the following non-means-tested benefits:
  - Contributory Jobseeker's Allowance & contributory Employment and Support Allowance
  - Disability Living Allowance
  - Child Benefit
  - Bereavement benefits, Statutory Sick Pay, Statutory Maternity Pay, Maternity Allowance & Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit

- Move of Housing Benefit work to DWP [October 2013 - December 2017]

Overall administration of Universal Credit will be managed by one department – the Department for Work and Pensions – as opposed to today's complex delivery of current benefits through the Department for Work and Pensions, HM Revenue & Customs and Local Authorities. This will take place over a 4 year period, with new claims migrating first, followed by a phased changeover for existing claimants.

- Local Support Services Framework for Universal Credit delivery [October 2013 onwards]

The DWP in partnership with Local Authorities plans to set up local support frameworks for the delivery of Universal Credit. Revenues & Benefits will be part of this local support framework

Portsmouth City Council anticipates being part of two local frameworks:
  1) In the Portsmouth area as a major player in the local framework, along with DWP/Jobcentre Plus & partners in the city, including voluntary & community sector, registered social landlords and private landlords;
  2) In the Havant Borough Council area as a provider in the local framework where Portsmouth's Housing tenants require support, particularly in relation to their housing needs

The outcomes for the local support framework should be:
- o Provide continuity for claimants through transition from current mainstream DWP benefits, Housing Benefit & Tax Credits to Universal Credit;
- o Provide support for new Universal Credit claimants;
- o Put in place a support structure for on-going Universal Credit claims;
- o Maintain support for homeless placed in temporary accommodation under the Housing Act - they will migrate to Universal Credit, but still receive Housing Benefit;
- o Maintain support for pensioners - in the longer term, Housing Benefit will migrate to Pension Credit.

- Single Fraud Investigation Service [April 2014]

The Government's new fraud & error strategy includes plans for a new single fraud investigation service (SFIS), a new integrated risk and intelligence unit and a new regional mobile task force. This service will investigate welfare fraud across all benefits and Tax Credits administered by DWP, HMRC and Local Authorities. This will include Local Authority Housing Benefit fraud functions. A number of pilots are running during 2013/14 which will inform the future direction of SFIS. The intention is that Local Authority benefit fraud investigators will become part of a single fraud investigation service, initially still employed by the local authority, under the powers, policies and processes of SFIS. As there is no detail available on these changes, it is not clear what effect this will have on the Council's Benefit counter fraud staff or their work.

4 Governance

The following summary is expanded in more detail in the Service's Internal Control questionnaire completed in April 2013.

1. Focusing on the purpose of the Authority; outcomes for the Community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area.

See statement of purpose (in Section 1 of this plan)

2. Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles.

The Head of Service provides regular updates to the responsible Director and meets with the Portfolio holder as required/necessary. Revenues & Benefits' purpose is clearly stated in this business plan.

3. Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour.

All staff are aware of policies such as the Codes of Conduct, Health and Safety, whistle-blowing and anti-fraud policies, and all staff have undertaken the necessary training. All staff have undertaken the required e-learning on financial rules.

4. Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk.

Any key decisions are taken with the full involvement of Members. A risk register is included as part of this business plan, with risk owners assigned to the relevant risks. Risks are regularly reviewed through DMTs, project and other specific meetings.

5. Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective.

Our reports to cabinet/executive, council & scrutiny panels informs members and enables them to participate in setting the future direction of the Service. This is done whilst ensuring the members are aware of the constraints of government statute & regulation.

6. Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust accountability.

We run a rolling survey programme of our Benefits customers in parallel with the customer survey work performed by City Help Desk for our local taxation customers. These customer surveys are used to understand their perceptions of the service we provide. The Service works closely with Registered Social Landlords, private Landlords, LA Housing, Housing Options, Fairer Charging team, EC Roberts, the Debt & Benefit Forum and other voluntary agencies. Where appropriate, this information is used to inform our service planning.

5   Service Objectives

5.1   Objective 1 – Prepare & introduce welfare reforms

Prepare for welfare reforms that will be implemented from April 2013 onwards, whilst maintaining service levels.

Section 3.6 of this document describes in outline the proposed changes.

This objective is self-explanatory and encompasses all objectives in the plan. Detailed planning is undertaken for all changes - this will be the case for upcoming welfare reforms.

5.2   Objective 2 – Customer focus

Maintain and improve customer focus in Local Taxation & Benefits services so as to meet the needs of our residents, particularly the most vulnerable.

Description:
Ensure that customer contact is always welcoming, that communication is clear, that commitments are met and that people know what to expect.

The Revenues & Benefits Service is committed to providing services that are available to everyone in line with PCC's Equality and Diversity strategy.

Service quality is not unduly influenced by the fact that these services are statutory, based on legislation & regulations. Our officers will be sensitive to customers' circumstances when performing their duties.

Mapping of the distribution of Housing Benefits customers across the city shows that residents in some areas have more difficulty accessing services than others, purely based on where they live. Further, many of our more vulnerable residents need help to understand what is available to them and additional support when accessing those services. We are often in a position to identify residents in need of other financial support and advice.

One of the Council's priorities is to "Protect and support our most vulnerable residents". The Revenues & Benefits Service plays a major role in the work that is carried out in support of this and the tackling poverty strategy.

Objective 2a

Contribute to the Council's tackling poverty strategy & the prevention of homelessness.

Lead Officer: Ed Woodhouse & Alan Knight

Strategies for achieving objective:
We'll continue to resource tenancy support work to help reduce homelessness and we'll maintain our partnership links through the tackling poverty group with other Council, Government and voluntary agencies to ensure we're working together to identify and support the most vulnerable.

We will continue in our partnership work with EC Roberts to resource a Tenancy Support Officer to help those most in need.

We'll continue to advise customers on maximising their income & benefits and take up of Council Tax discounts and exemptions. We will continue to promote BACS payment and Direct Debit take up. We'll contribute to the corporate tackling poverty strategy and will increase the range of clinics and outreach work subject to resource availability and core business priorities.

Measures of success:
The service's contribution to tackling poverty work is not linked to a specific numerical target but we aim to prioritise the resources available to support activities that provide tangible outcomes, e.g. budget resource to provide tenancy support at EC Roberts.

Objective 2b

To perform Customer surveys to test the satisfaction of users for a range of services and provide an analysis of priorities for change and improvement.

Lead Officer: Shirley Hudson

Strategies for achieving objective:

This work forms part of the process to develop a better understanding of our customers to inform improvement planning. The approach is to run a rolling survey programme of our Benefits customers (started in 2010), in parallel with the customer survey work performed by City Help Desk for our Local Taxation customers.

Measures of success:
Customer satisfaction measured according to the Council's standards.

Objective 2c

To maintain a continuous improvement programme of our written communications with customers and implement a range of improvements to clarity, content and tone.

Lead Officer: Shirley Hudson

Strategies for achieving objective:
We know that some of our documentation appears too "official" and that some Local Taxation and Benefits documents cause confusion, meaning our customers have to contact us more than once on a single topic.
We use customer feedback including complaints data in conjunction with our own analysis to identify and implement changes and improvements. The initial project completed in 2011. Following on from this, we have instituted a continuous improvement approach to these communications.

Measures of success:
Improvement updates during 2013, detailing the changes. Customer survey & complaints data, when available, will provide an indication of the impact of changes.

Objective 2d

Carry out an annual review of all service Equalities Impact Assessments.

Lead Officer: All managers

Strategies for achieving objective:
Follow up review meetings will take place as required and results will be regularly monitored. Support of the corporate Equalities team will be called upon where necessary. A full schedule of assessments was carried out during 2012/13.

Measures of success:
Review our EIAs as appropriate during the year 2013/14, with no equalities issues.

5.3   Objective 3 – Processing efficiency

Maintain timeliness and improve the quality of our processing so that service standards compare favourably with the best Local Taxation and Benefit Services.

Description:
The quality of the work we do is important to our customers and to us as an organisation seeking to improve efficiency and value for money. Sending incorrect

Council Tax bills or paying the wrong benefit has a serious and direct effect on our customers. Inaccurate or incomplete processing causes additional work sometime later and it has a negative effect on data quality and the integrity of our management information. In the case of Benefit processing, errors in processing can result in a loss of subsidy income.

According to available information, our processing times are acceptable to our customers. Our targets therefore reflect the priority to at least maintain our service standards with our existing resources.

Objective 3a

For Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, maintain processing quality at 95% during 2013/14, with New Claims processing cycle time at 25 days & Change of Circumstance processing cycle time of 14 days.

Lead Officer: Alan Knight

Strategies for achieving objective:
We'll enhance our approach to detailed error analysis and will improve the feedback to staff. We'll avoid double handling and the errors that result from it through our restructure of the work. Key elements of quality checking will continue to be carried out before Benefit notification letters are sent out.
Teams are structured to make best use of our staffing resources, and we are working to increase the throughput of work by process improvements.
We'll continue to measure the number of claims in excess of 30 days old and "average age" as work in progress indicators.

Measures of success:
Data integrity has improved to the extent that risks to subsidy are now broadly contained. Processing quality is a little below 94% - this metric is one of the more challenging in this plan.
Processing cycle times ran close to these targets in 2012/13 and overall with improved working methods, it is hoped that we can meet this target in 2013/14.
According to available information our processing times are acceptable.
Regular quality monitoring will continue throughout 2013/14.

Objective 3b

Maintain Local Taxation processing quality at 96% & Local Taxation correspondence average processing times at 10 days in 2013/14.

Lead Officer: Pete Middleton

Strategies for achieving objective:
In providing consistent service standards we give our customers a clear expectation and enable our Helpdesk to assess what priority should be allocated to a customer request. Different work types have different turnaround cycle times, based on the urgency of the circumstances. This is part of our strategy that includes improved quality monitoring and fully documented processes and procedures to guide staff.

Measures of success:
Monitoring during 2012/13 suggests that it is possible to achieve 96%, although this is a challenging metric given the increased workload and reduced staffing levels. Based on experience, 10 days appears to be an acceptable standard for our customers. Regular quality monitoring will continue throughout 2013/14.

5.4   Objective 4 – Change management

Maintain and improve systems & processes to ensure that all changes are managed so that the right benefit, tax discount and tax exemption is given to the right person for the right period of time.

Description:
Entitlement to benefit or a reduction in local tax is assessed based on circumstances and a change in these circumstances can result in a change in entitlement. Although a high proportion of our customers tell us when their circumstances change, many do not and this results in benefit being over or underpaid and in support, discounts or exemptions being applied incorrectly.
We can help some of our most vulnerable residents by preventing overpayments that would otherwise add to their financial difficulties.
Overpayments increase the value of the Council's benefit expenditure and reduce the value of subsidy income received.
The service is responsible for reminding claimants of the need to keep us informed so as to reduce errors and as part of this we diarise events in the system so as to ensure that our information accurately represents a resident's circumstances. Where appropriate, some errors are referred to our Counter Fraud team for investigation.

Objective 4a

Reported changes will be made complete and assessed in a timely manner, with a target average processing time of 14 days (see linked Objective 3a above).

Lead Officer: Alan Knight

Strategies for achieving objective:
We will ensure that there is a robust system for identifying known future changes, which is closely managed to prevent overpayments for Housing Benefit or incorrect bills where Council Tax Support is involved.
We will continue to remind claimants in as many ways as possible of the need to inform the service of any change.

Measures of success:
Our processes are designed to identifying relevant changes. Work is managed in age order with the understanding that there will be variances due to the availability of the required information and the type of change. (see measure of success in linked Objective 3a above).

Objective 4b

Carry out annual reviews of all Local Taxation Exemption and Discount policies and review programmes.

Lead Officer: Pete Middleton

Strategies for achieving objective:
To ensure that the integrity of the council tax database is maintained and consequently that revenue is maximised by carrying out an annual rolling review of all discounts and exemptions. For example, there is a check of student certification once the academic year has started. Site inspections are performed against empty property exemptions. Credit reference & tracing agencies are used where appropriate to check information on household membership.

The work will include an analysis of how discounts and exemptions are reviewed and confirm whether more effective ways of working can be developed.

This activity will include a review of existing policies, their effects on the wider aims of the council and the associated costs / savings. Where appropriate, options for alternative policies will be evaluated for member decision.

Measures of success:
This target is achievable. The schedule is planned annually.

5.5   Objective 5 – Maximum income / minimum debt

Maximise the collection of all income, minimise the age and value of outstanding debts and optimise the cost of bad debt.

Description:
The Local Taxation Service bills and collects Council Tax and Non Domestic rates and the targets associated with this objective are therefore key to its success. The revenue collected as a result of the team's activities has a direct effect on the Council's cash flow and the costs of collection.
The Local Taxation Service makes a significant contribution to the Council's performance through its direct contribution to the ultimate collection rates as well as in-year collection rates.
The Benefit Service can reduce Housing Benefit debt by reducing the size and number of overpayments and the Benefit Debt Recovery team can reduce the impact of the overpayments identified by collecting them more quickly. Both can make a direct contribution to the Benefit element of the Council's debt reduction.
These areas influence the Council's use of resources and value for money.

Objective 5a

Council Tax in year collection at 95%
Council Tax ultimate collection rate 98.5% for years to 2012; 97.6% from 2013

Lead Officer: Pete Middleton

Strategies for achieving objective:

We'll maintain our correspondence processing cycle times and continue to monitor & improve processing quality. We'll look for ways to understand the effects of the payment arrangements we agree to and whether it is possible develop recovery processes that take more account of previous payment histories.

Measures of success:
This target represents a hard challenge in the current economic climate. It is monitored weekly through performance arrangements.

Objective 5b

Non Domestic Rates in year collection at 98.5%
Non Domestic Rates ultimate collection rate 99%

Lead Officer: Pete Middleton

Strategies for achieving objective:
Maintain existing processes whilst broadening the staff trained to undertake NDR work. Continue to analyse opportunities to help businesses obtain the relief that could be available to them.

Measures of success:
Improvement of the previous years has been stunted by the effects of the recession on the business community. The number of businesses in financial difficulty will continue to make this target difficult to achieve.
Collection rates are monitored monthly as is the analysis of payers / non-payers. Revenue does not follow a month on month straight line due to payment schedules and the confidence in monthly forecasts can vary.

Objective 5c

Hold Housing Benefit overpayment debt to £7.75 million at the end of 2013/14.

Lead Officer: Damon Shulman

Strategies for achieving objective:
Recovery rates are largely dictated by policy and there is some potential to increase the income via this route.
We have already taken actions to minimise the value of new overpayments through more frequent debt reviews and we are tackling quality improvement to reduce the cost of poor quality processing.

Measures of success:
It may not be realistic to expect a reduction in overpayment debt in future years given the current economic situation and the increasing numbers of benefit claimants. Performance will continue to be monitored at least monthly.

Objective 5d

Maximise the recovery of Benefit overpayment debts from debtors in and out of benefit with at least £2,270,000 collected during 2013/14.

Lead Officer: Damon Shulman/Alan Knight

Strategies for achieving objective:
The Debt Recovery team manage & review debts in order to maximise recovery & act on non-payment of arrangements. In addition, consistent methods of negotiation and recovery will be applied.

For 'in benefit' debts, there are collection rates specified, which can be varied to take account of cases of hardship.

Measures of success:
We will continue to monitor and forecast all aspects of debt collection in an attempt to establish a realistic picture of our performance.

Objective 5e

Control Subsidy costs to cash limits and manage our financial forecasts.

Lead Officer: Alan Knight/Matt Willis

Strategies for achieving objective:
Financial performance monitoring is fully integrated in our operational performance management arrangements. We'll continue to manage our claim suspension process closely to minimise any risk to our Benefit subsidy.

Measures of success:
There is a risk of benefit 'windfall' costs exceeding estimates due to unpredictable growth in claimant numbers and even at maximum subsidy recovery rates this will put pressure on this 'windfall' cash limited budget.
This is subject to monthly monitoring of financial and operational performance.

5.6   Objective 6 – Fraud prevention

Maintain and improve systems for the prevention and detection of fraud.
Sanction 85 cases of benefit fraud during 2013/14.
Maintain a programme of publicity throughout 2012/13 to maintain levels of fraud awareness across Portsmouth City Council and the general public.

Description:
The prevention and detection of fraud is a fundamental responsibility of the Revenues & Benefits Service. Key activities are the investigation of potential fraud cases; taking legal action against offenders; publicising results to serve as a warning to others.

This objective contributes indirectly to the Council's "Reduce crime and fear of crime" theme and helps meet the requirements of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

Lead Officer: Damon Shulman

Strategies for achieving objective:
We will continue with the activities that have proven to be effective, whilst reviewing and updating processes and procedure appropriately. We are improving methods of intelligence gathering by reducing the use of external agencies and using the unit's staff to improve efficiency & reduce costs. We will apply the Anti-Fraud Strategy and Fraud Prosecution Policies, using the sanctions available in these policies. This ranges from collecting the overpaid benefit through to prosecution in court.
The publicity and communications plan is documented in the Counter Fraud Unit and implementation will be monitored through performance management meetings.

Measures of success:
Evidence suggests this is a reasonable target, based on last year's performance. This is subject to monthly monitoring. Performance management arrangements monitor referral and investigation numbers and quality.

5.7   Objective 7 – Budget control and Value for money

Establish management systems to ensure that budgets continue to be controlled well and savings opportunities are identified and implemented. Optimise service levels to the customer at a cost that does not exceed agreed cash limit budgets.

Description:
This objective is concerned with driving down the cost of service, while maintaining existing standards - many of the objectives in this business plan contribute to this objective. The current economic environment & planned budget reductions will make it difficult to maintain service levels with anticipated reductions in budgets.

We have established detailed data on financial, performance and workload trends that demonstrate the reductions in our service costs. This also provides the basis on which to assess the effects of future changes and budget pressures.

Lead Officer: Ed Woodhouse

Strategies for achieving objective:
Regular monitoring of financial and operational performance to ensure that Benefit Subsidy is maximised & administrative spend is in line with forecasts.
Risks of overspend or reductions in service standards will be highlighted to Members as and when necessary to ensure an agreed course of action.

Measures of success:
Success is subject to our ability to manage workload growth due to the economic environment and the Council's need for further budget savings.
Administration budgets are under pressure as we try to maintain service standards with increasing workload and budget reductions.
We'll monitor monthly through our performance management arrangements.

5.8   Objective 8 – Staff wellbeing

Maintain and improve the morale and wellbeing of our staff

Description:
The quality and efficiency of our services relies heavily on the wellbeing and effectiveness of our staff and this objective recognises that the Revenues & Benefits management team has a major role to play in helping to maintain a positive working environment.
This objective also contributes to the Council's aims in improving efficiency and encouraging involvement.

Objective 8a

To maintain and improve levels of staff awareness and involvement

Lead Officer: All Revenues & Benefits Managers

Strategies for achieving objective:
We want to be confident that everyone in the service is aware of what the Council is doing, how the Revenues & Benefits service is performing and how it contributes to PCC's priorities.
We also want to continue to ensure that every member of staff understands their contribution to the service through one to one feedback and appropriate appraisals. We would like as many staff as possible to be directly involved in our improvement programmes and for everyone to get regular feedback on how we're doing against our targets. We'll use a range of methods of maintaining open communications at all levels in our service.

Measures of success:
This is achievable providing we adopt a systematic and common sense approach. We'll continue to adapt our approach and assess progress through Management team meetings and based on staff feedback.

Objective 8b

Maintain morale and wellbeing.

Lead Officer: All Revenues & Benefits Managers

Strategies for achieving objective:
We will make best use of the Learning & Development training programme to ensure we have well trained staff. We will continue to manage health and safety assessments and monitor work related stress absence. We will use discretion in applying the Council's policies to ensure that they are fair and effective.

Measures of success:
Staff wellbeing is a significant issue as a result of the service reviews that are being undertaken across the organisation. The impact of budget reductions and welfare reforms that will affect Local Tax & Benefits will make this another challenging year with staff morale a key area for attention. We will need to maintain the current service standards while introducing change, and we will continue to support staff through these processes. Progress will be monitored through Management team meetings.

<u>Objective 8c</u>

Reduce sickness absence to an average of 8 days per person

Lead Officer: All Revenues & Benefits Managers

Strategies for achieving objective:
We'll continue to apply the Council absence policies fairly and effectively.
We are introducing a new approach to sickness absence that will aim to help staff to increase their attendance whereappropriate.

Measures of success:
Our monitoring indicates that sickness absence for the service is running at around 11 days per person. Each case of absence is treated on its own merits too ensure fairness. Performance will be monitored through DMTs at least quarterly.

6   Resources and Capacity

6.1   Finance

The Revenues & Benefits Service is directly responsible for the staffing and administration budgets that are required to operate Local Taxation and Benefits services, for the "windfall" budget that accounts for the income and expenditure associated with Housing Benefit, and for the income and expenditure related to Council Tax Support. In addition, we administrate the Discretionary Housing Fund & Discretionary Business Rates Relief.

Overall administrative budgets for 2013/14 have reduced owing to savings achieved. The Administration Grant is no longer ring-fenced but is included as additional funding within the overall cash limit.

The total administrative budget cash limit for 2013/14 is £3,960,100. More detail is provided in Appendix D.

The forecast for Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support expenditure is over £120 million for 2013/14. The net Housing benefit "windfall" cash limit for 2013/14 of £827,800 is under severe pressure in this financial year.

Close monthly monitoring will be essential throughout the year, as this budget is very sensitive to trends in claimant numbers, subsidy performance and the recoverability of debt. See Appendix E.

6.2   Value for Money and Efficiency

See Objective 7 of this plan and Appendices A - E.

Revenues & Benefits activities are statutory and have been designed around corporate goals and policies approved by Council. The Department for Work &

Pensions and the Department for Communities & Local Government are the Government departments responsible for the statutory activities.

The evidence of how well we are performing is derived from the following:

Customer Satisfaction Survey	Rolling surveys for Local Tax & Benefits
Feedback from Partners	Where arrangements exist, e.g. EC Roberts
Inspection Reports	DWP/Audit Commission reports & Internal Audit reports
Quality Assurance	The Service has a clear regime for quality assurance, backed up by results from audits. Structured random sampling plus focussed samples where required.
Productivity/Efficiency improvements	The Service has a specified method for measuring improvement. This is based on a combination of work throughput and staffing levels.
Cost of service	Derived from Financial Services budget monitoring, including all cost elements.

In the absence of comparative data, Value for Money is measured by year on year efficiency and quality. Across the service, efficiency has increased since April 2009 years by over 50% based on workload increases and staffing reductions, whilst quality has remained at similar levels. Customer surveys and audit inspections demonstrate that a good level of service is being provided.

Several attempts have been made to compare Revenues & Benefits data with other Local Authorities, particularly in a detailed review with the other Hampshire Authorities 4 years ago. More recently, a review was performed on the CIPFA comparison tool. The conclusion has been that it is not possible to make meaningful comparisons due to the differences in the methods used to complete the measures.

The comparative measure for Revenues & Benefits is one that demonstrates a 'time series' for performance. As a result, value for money is judged by the comparative metrics listed in the table above.

Revenues & Benefits has a continuous improvement plan which has been running for several years. Currently, this is often reactive as it is not clear what Welfare & Local Tax reform changes will mean until very late in the process. However, it has enabled the service to improve its efficiency to meet the challenges of increasing workload and reducing budgets.

6.3   Human Resources (workforce planning)

The Revenues & Benefits Service team structure is described in Appendix g. The control number for Revenues & Benefits at 1st April 2013 is 161 staff comprising 142.4 Full Time Equivalents (FTE).

Our approach to workforce planning is to get "the right people with the right skills in the right place at the right time". Through our business planning & regular review programmes, we have developed a clear understanding of the service needs, which we are able to meet by working with the staff & HR to be prepared for the future. In

practice, this means that we have to be constantly ready to take a flexible approach, as the horizon of change in Local Tax & Benefits is fluid.

Revenues & Benefits is undergoing continual change, since its inception in 2005. The organisation shape and skills have been continuously analysed and reviewed to identify and deal with any training & staffing requirements. There are currently no apparent skill gaps. Analysis is undertaken regularly to establish if there are any potential skill gaps, to meet the requirements of legislative and system changes and to determine what the future shape & size of the organisation will need to be.

Currently staffing numbers and skills are sufficient. Budget reductions or workload increases will put this status at risk. We have a permanent hiring freeze and do not flex our staff numbers through contract staff. Planning budget savings in advance has meant we have avoided large numbers of compulsory redundancies. As far as we are able, and given the unique nature of some of the roles in the service, we work to avoid single points of failure, and to ensure that knowledge is shared.

We meet at least every 6 months with HR to produce a forward plan for training. We work closely with HR to ensure all staff receive the necessary training & update their knowledge on a regular basis. This ensures that our workforce is able to perform the job role effectively. In order to meet the need for development of our management team, a number of our Team Leaders obtained a management qualification from the Institute of Leadership Management. All managers are working through the LaMP programme and this will be completed by the end of 2013/14.

Objective 8 covers our approach to staff wellbeing and sickness absence.

6.4   Information and Communication Technology

All Revenues & Benefits services are heavily dependent on two IT systems, Northgate for transaction processing and COMINO W1 for document management. The Service has developed a close working relationship with Information Services and has a co-ordinated approach to change management led by the Policy & Process Manager. All changes to procedures and IT systems are managed through the Policy & Process team.

6.5   Asset Management

The Revenues & Benefits Service has no property assets. The Service currently occupies space in the Civic Offices and it rents space for some staff at 3 Area Housing Offices.

6.6   Sustainability & carbon management

The service does not own energy consuming assets such as property and vehicles. Therefore, we are limited in what we can contribute, outside of responding effectively to corporate initiatives.

We have no desktop and network printers (from 48 in 2008) - staff use MFD printers. We have reduced our mobile phone usage to essential users only, going from 28 in

2008 to 9 handsets. Average space usage in the Civic Offices is within the required standard of approximately 8 square metres per person.

We continue to increase the use of direct debit and electronic payment methods that reduce the need for paper and mail distribution. We have reviewed our processes and the resulting documents that are sent to customers and as a result we have significantly reduced our need for paper and mail distribution. We also, where possible, avoid travel to meet 3rd party suppliers through the use of Internet based webinars.

Revenues & Benefits has 2 Green Champions who work within the broader programme on sustainability & climate change.

6.7   Equality and Diversity

The Revenues & Benefits Service contributes to the Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy by providing Services that are accessible to all, Objective 2 of this Business Plan is directly linked to this strategy. We demonstrate our commitment through our continuous review of the Equalities Impact Assessments for all of our service groups.

6.8   Section 17 requirements

The Revenues & Benefits Service contributes to the requirements of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act through its anti-fraud systems as set here.

Fraudulent benefit claims
Benefits claims are verified as appropriate so as to secure the gateway to Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support. Claimants must prove their identity & circumstances before benefit is paid. The Counter Fraud Unit works to prevent and detect fraudulent claims to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support (see Objective 6).

Fraudulently claimed Local Taxation reductions
All reductions, i.e. discounts, exemptions & all forms of relief are subject to an annual rolling review programme (see Objective 4b).

6.9   Safeguarding

As part of Portsmouth City Council, Revenues & Benefits has a responsibility to ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are kept safe from harm, including identifying and responding appropriately to safeguarding issues. Staff who are likely to come into contact with vulnerable residents have completed the relevant training to deal appropriately with such situations. Further, they are checked against the Criminal Records Bureau.

In addition, the Benefits service has specific policies & procedures to deal with the most vulnerable residents in the private rented sector. PCC's policies provide a safeguard for the most vulnerable tenants and minimise their risk of falling into rent arrears & so 'keep a roof over their head'. It is underpinned by the Benefit service's processes. In full, the policy aims are:

- Provide a safeguard for the most vulnerable tenants and reassure them that their benefit will be paid
- Prevent rent arrears and tenants being put at risk of eviction
- Help to sustain tenancies for vulnerable tenants
- Reassure landlords that their rent will be paid if they have vulnerable tenants or are approached by vulnerable tenants
- To sign post tenants to other agencies where necessary to give people the opportunity and support to manage their own financial affairs
- To make reasonable, fair and consistent decisions
- Promote a transparent and simple process that is understood widely
- To treat each case individually and not make assumptions about people's situations

For our users of the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) Customer Information System (CIS) we will adopt, as per their requirement, the Government's 'Minimum Requirements for the Verification of the Identity of Individuals'.

7   Risk Management

The risks identified in the following section of this plan have been assessed as the major risks to the objectives and targets set in this plan.

Specifically in view of welfare reforms, the current economic climate, and the Council's planned budget reductions, the service has set performance targets that reflect the risks associated with our likely ability to manage significant increases in workload and to implement change projects during the year with the resources currently available.

Operational risks are continually assessed by way of our weekly and monthly performance management arrangements.

7.1   Counter Fraud

The Service reviews its general Counter Fraud risks annually in line with Internal Audit self-assessment questionnaire.
The specific risks of Fraud associated with the administration of Council Tax and Business rate discounts and exemptions and Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit/Support are covered in detail by the objectives contained in this plan.

7.2   Business Continuity Planning

The Service's Business Continuity Plan is reviewed annually and it is also updated as and when necessary as the result of changes within the service.
The plan complies with corporate guidance and it complements corporate Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery arrangements. In addition, a Disaster Recovery agreement is in place to protect our critical systems.

7.3   Risk Management scores

Risk Number	Risk Description	Outcome(s) of the Risk	Link to Objective No.	Risk Owner	Probability	Impact	Net Risk Score	Control Measures Red-Uncontrolled Amber-Partial Green-Controlled	Control Owner	Probability	Impact	Controlled Score	Action
1	Welfare reform and Council Tax reform	Serious impact on large numbers of Benefit claimants	1-4	PCC	4	4	16	Red	EW	4	3	**12**	Provide support to residents wherever possible
2	Welfare reform and Council Tax reform	Potential impact on staff, resulting from plans to move Benefits activity to DWP from Oct 2013	All	EW and service managers	4	4	16	Red	EW	4	3	**12**	Provide support to staff as reform proposals develop
3	Welfare reform and Council Tax reform	Inability to deliver as cumulative effect of changes exceeds capacity	All	EW and service managers	4	4	16	Red	EW	4	3	**12**	Performance monitoring to anticipate and reprioritise.
4	Negative effects of the budget reductions	Reduction in capacity and productivity impacts performance	All	PCC	3	4	12	Amber	EW	3	3	**9**	Continue with work to support staff through the changes
5	Requirement for further significant	Reduction in capacity to	All	PCC	3	4	12	Amber	EW	3	3	**9**	Prioritise objectives to limit impact

	savings	improve and or maintain performance											
6	Loss of key staff	Loss of skills impacts on performance	All	EW and service Managers	2	3	6	Amber	EW	2	2	**4**	Work to minimise single points of failure.
7	Major incident interrupts service	Reduced level of service	All	EW and service managers	2	4	8	Amber	EW	2	2	**4**	Continue to maintain Business Continuity plan
8	IT Systems loss / failure disrupts processing capability	Processing and payment processes impacted	3	EW and service managers	2	4	8	Amber/Green	EW	2	2	**4**	Continue to maintain and test IT Disaster Recovery procedures
9	Benefit expenditure exceeds plan	Impacts on budget forecast	5	EW	2	3	6	Amber/Green	EW	2	2	**4**	Performance monitoring to anticipate, report and protect priorities
10	Processing quality reduces	Error rate causes a negative impact on subsidy income	3	EW & AK	2	3	6	Amber/Green	EW	2	2	**4**	Monitor to anticipate and respond to risks.
11	Benefit claimants numbers growth/ change activity exceeds processing capacity	Processing service standards would decline	3	EW &AK	2	3	6	Amber/Green	EW	2	2	**4**	Performance monitoring to anticipate then protect priorities

8 Performance Monitoring and Review

The Revenues & Benefits Service has well-established performance management arrangements and Audit Commission reviews of Benefits and Local Taxation have commented positively on the availability and use of management information.

This business plan takes a broad view of customers' needs and what we want our services to achieve. As a result, it has a balanced set of objectives and a mix of process and key activity targets.

Our performance management arrangements will continue to ensure that the senior management team reviews all of the objectives and targets in this plan at least monthly, with meetings held as necessary to monitor key projects, changes and areas where performance is a concern.

We'll continue to operate using the following principles:

- We do what we say we will according to the stated priorities;
- We incorporate customer perceptions and performance indicators to tell us what customers think of the service;
- We monitor the progress and outcomes of our improvement activities and project work;
- We understand the capacity for further improvement of our existing processes, systems and staffing structure

8.1   Appendix A: Performance trends

Benefits Service Indicators	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Quality			
Processing quality	92.00%	93.60%	93.3%
New Claims			
Year end work in progress	604	497	585
Average cycle time (days)	22.78	23.28	26.31
Changes			
Year end work in progress	2664	2093	2936
Average cycle time (days)	9.29	10.57	13.58
Overpayment Debt			
Total debt collected from Benefits	£1,254,534	£1,306,327	£1,405,154
Total debt collected from Debtors	£778,558	£740,397	£809,261
Total outstanding	£7,344,933	£7,630,423	£7,713,899
Reviews			
Review change success rate	45.09%	36.33%	32.16%
Data Matches resolved within 2 months	100%	100%	51%
Fraud			
Fraud referrals received	936	823	627
Number of closed investigations	597	612	481
Successful sanctions	113	108	85
Windfall Budget			
HB/CTB expenditure	£117,297,950	£121,682,520	£124,246,254
HB/CTB subsidy	£113,493,082	£117,620,890	£120,009,069
Subsidy recovery (Inc HRA transfer)	96.76%	96.66%	96.59%
Subsidy loss due to eligible Overpayments	£1,647,407	£1,708,081	£1,641,149
Subsidy loss due to LA error Overpayments	£0	£0	£0
Eligible error Overpayments	£2,745,679	£2,846,802	£2,735,249
Eligible error as % of correct Expenditure	2.46%	2.45%	2.31%
LA error Overpayments	£225,092	£180,780	£193,926
LA error as % of correct Expenditure	0.20%	0.16%	0.17%
National Indicator NI 181			
Benefits processing cycle time average (days)	10.84	11.98	15.27

Local Taxation service Indicators	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Combined CT & NDR			
Quality indicator	96.2%	95.4%	96.0%
Correspondence turnaround time (days)	6.11	7.56	7.75
Council Tax			
Council Tax charge	£67,880,445	£68,184,109	£68,666,376
Percentage of Council Tax collected	95.06%	95.04%	95.05%
Council Tax % of correspondence older than 30 days	10.13%	12.05%	7.48%
Collection - year end work in progress	913	928	994
Properties - year end work in progress	973	1080	621
Recovery - year end work in progress	689	998	1247
Non Domestic Rates			
NDR Charge	£73,006,898	£77,498,049	£81,689,508
Percentage of NDR Collected	98.11%	97.90%	98.01%
NDR % of correspondence older than 30 days	5.60%	6.53%	19.60%

8.2 Appendix B: MTRS savings

Revenues & Benefits MTRS contributions

	2006/07 to 2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Administration savings					
Business Improvement post	£53,000				
HB Support Manager	£38,700				
Admin grant	£150,000		£146,400		
CFU Investigator posts	£54,500				
Reduced charge from LAH	£139,000	£55,000		£28,500	£14,500
Introduction of BACS	£14,000				
CFU Team Leader	£37,000				
CFU Admin post	£21,000				
Visiting Officer post	£21,000				£63,500
Admin/Support posts	£28,000	£18,500			
Reduced Agency budget		£30,000	£24,400		
2 x CFU posts combined		£21,500			
Performance Services Mgr			£61,300		
Combine CFU & DR Mgr			£40,000		
Vacant posts from previous year			£152,000	£201,500	£168,700
Reduced hours/end acting up			£11,400	£35,500	
Print & Post savings			£24,000		£16,000
Mini restructure in Local Tax				£33,500	
Court fees increase				£25,000	£40,000
Reduce overtime				£12,000	
Discretionary Rate Relief					£5,000
Value of savings by year	£556,200	£125,000	£459,500	£336,000	£307,700
Effective budget reduction	£556,200	£681,200	£1,140,700	£1,476,700	£1,784,400
Cumulative savings	**£1,571,300**	**£2,252,500**	**£3,393,200**	**£4,869,900**	**£6,654,300**

	2006/07 to 2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
"Windfall" budget savings					
Reduction in overpayments	£175,000				
LA error below 0.54% trigger	£165,000				
LA error below 0.48% trigger	£132,700				
Value of savings by year	£472,700				
Effective budget reduction	£472,700	£472,700	£472,700	£472,700	£472,700
Cumulative savings	**£1,162,700**	**£1,635,400**	**£2,108,100**	**£2,580,800**	**£3,053,500**
Total Cumulative savings	**£2,734,000**	**£3,887,900**	**£5,501,300**	**£7,450,700**	**£9,707,800**

8.3   Appendix C: Performance metrics

<u>2012/13 Performance metrics</u>

Local Taxation			
Description	**Measurement**	**Target**	**Actual**
Council Tax Collection	Local	95.2%	95.05%
NDR Collection	Local	98.5%	98.01%
Correspondence processing	Local	8 days	7.48
Processing Quality	Local	97%	96.0%
Benefits			
Description	**Measurement**	**Target**	**Actual**
NI181 Processing speed	NI 181	13.5 days	15.27 days
New Claim Processing Speed (Average)	Part NI 181	22 days	26.31 days
Changes Processing Speed (Average)	Part NI 181	12 days	13.59 days
Accuracy of Assessments	Local	96%	93.23%
HB debt recovery	Local	£2,077,000	£2,214,415
Total outstanding overpayment debt	Local	<£7.75m	£7,713,899
LA error overpayments	Subsidy %	<0.48%	0.16%
Subsidy recovery	Subsidy %	98.29%	98.52%
Fraud Sanctions (Year total)	Local	110	85
General			
Description	**Measurement**	**Target**	**Actual**
Sickness absence (per head)	Corporate	<9 days	11.8

8.4 Appendix D: Revenues & Benefits Administration Budgets

Administration Budgets			2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Expenditure					
	Employees				
		Local Tax	£622,100	£618,150	£1,783,000
		HB	£2,616,800	£2,584,482	£2,150,206
		CTB	£1,088,000	£1,088,000	N/A
	Supplies & Services				
		Local Tax	£119,000	£148,100	£202,100
		HB	£210,500	£250,200	£209,800
		CTB	£0	£0	N/A
	Premises costs				
		Local Tax	£0	£0	£0
		HB	£0	£0	£0
	3rd Party payments				
		Local Tax	£19,500	£5,000	£5,000
		HB	£5,000	£1,500	£1,500
	Transport				
		Local Tax	£3,300	£2,350	£2,500
		HB	£12,800	£7,850	£8,000
	Internal recharges				
		Local Tax	£96,400	£96,400	£96,400
		HB	£165,372	£164,566	£82,094
	Discretionary Non Domestic Rate Relief				
		[NEW TO REVS & BENS BUDGETS]			£179,500
Income					
	Local Tax costs				
	Receipts	Local Tax	-£300,000	-£288,000	-£288,000
	Misc.	Local Tax	-£232,989	-£432,000	-£472,000
Council Tax Benefit "windfall" budget					
		Expenditure	£15,069,859	£15,043,064	N/A
		Subsidy income	-£14,848,680	-£14,831,719	N/A
		Overpayments due	-£398,587	-£377,643	N/A
Total Admin Cash limit			**£4,248,375**	**£4,080,300**	**£3,960,100**

8.5   Appendix E: Revenues & Benefits "Windfall" Budgets

HB "Windfall" Budgets			2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Local Authority Tenants						
	Rent rebate expenditure		£36,928,864	£38,432,858	£41,291,865	£41,963,723
	Subsidy income & HRA contribution		-£36,423,067	-£37,871,443	-£40,688,677	-£41,375,075
	Overpayments due		-£890,256	-£981,953	-£1,045,441	-£1,020,852
	Provision for Overpayments not collected		£108,518	£211,138	£240,575	£283,621
	Prior year subsidy adjustment		-£47,438	£0	£0	£0
	Net		**-£323,379**	**-£209,400**	**-£201,678**	**-£148,583**
Private Sector Tenants						
	Rent allowance expenditure		£62,135,814	£63,639,759	£65,586,956	£66,829,967
	Subsidy income		-£61,148,205	-£62,775,887	-£64,696,198	-£65,917,879
	Overpayments due		-£1,695,737	-£1,691,945	-£1,773,087	-£1,771,626
	Provision for Overpayments not collected		£301,710	£374,725	£433,518	£164,048
	Discretionary Payment Subsidy income		-£66,969	-£91,888	-£180,485	-£472,895
	Discretionary Payment Subsidy expenditure		£66,969	£91,888	£180,485	£489,168
	Prior year subsidy adjustment		£6,910	£0	£0	£0
	Net		**-£399,508**	**-£453,348**	**-£448,811**	**-£679,217**
Total HB Windfall			**-£722,887**	**-£662,748**	**-£650,489**	**-£827,800**
Total HB Windfall Cashlimit			**-£803,500**	**-£809,300**	**-£815,600**	**-£827,800**

8.6 Appendix F: Revenues & Benefits roadmap

	2012			2013				2014				2015			
	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - Jun	Jul - Sep	Oct - Dec
Annual billing															
Council Tax reform				★	Review/implement year 2 of local scheme				Repeat process for review & implementation of future scheme						
Business Rates retention - COMPLETE				★											
Local Tax reviews															
Single Fraud Investigation Service					SFIS pilot activity			★	SFIS with DWP			★			
HB Year End															
LHA changes - COMPLETE															
Benefit cap							★								
Social Housing under occupation				★											
Universal Credit					Long term migration October 2013 - December 2017										
Benefits reviews					BCSO upskilling										
HB Debt process					Maintenance of HB Debt at PCC										
HB for Pensioners through Pension Credit									Long term migration from October 2014						
Website improvements						Customer Management work package - long term project									
MFD replacement					Corporate project										
E-HR / HR self serve					Corporate project										
Windows 7 / Office 2010 - COMPLETE															
Northgate new server - COMPLETE															
COMINO W2 & new server					Date TBC										
Northgate (incl. Oracle)					V6.8	V6.9									
COMINO					No planned releases										
BOXI & Northgate universes					Releases to be planned										

8.7   Appendix G: Revenues & Benefits Service structure
(managers & team leaders shown)

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                              ┌─────────────────────┐
                              │   Ed Woodhouse      │
                              │   Head of Service   │
                              └─────────────────────┘
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Alan Knight	Damon Shulman	Pete Middleton	Matt Willis	Shirley Hudson
Benefits Manager	CFU & Debt Recovery Manager	Local Taxation Manager	Performance & Quality Manager	Policy & Process Manager

Customer Contact administration via Benefits CSO teams	HB overpayment debt recovery	Customer Contact administration via CHD	Performance & quality management, metrics & subsidy	Policy, process & improvement projects

Housing Benefit & Council Tax Benefit Administration
Louise Chapman
Sara Dene
Rowda Kareh
Sarah Kirby
Francis Ouvry
Nicola Purdy
Catherine Ramsay
Amy Ray-Moneypenny
Tanya Restell
Tracy Witts

HB investigations and sanctions

Council Tax & Business rates Collection
Robin Wilson
Sharon Allen
Anne Ewin
Karen Hewett
Clare Lennard

Scanning, Indexing and Mail Handling
Jan May