

# Public Document Pack

THREE RIVERS & WATFORD  
SHARED SERVICES  
JOINT COMMITTEE



## AGENDA

Date: 18 November 2013

Time: 7.30 pm

Place: Watford Borough Council

Members of the Committee:-

Councillors:-	N Bell G Derbyshire S Nelmes	D Sansom M Watkin B White
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The Joint Committee welcomes contributions from members of the public to its discussion on Part A agenda items. Contributions will be limited to one person speaking for and one against each item for not more than three minutes. Details of the procedure and the list for registering the wish to speak will be available for a short period before the meeting

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Item

Page

### Part A - Open to the Public

#### 1 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

To elect a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee for the ensuing year in accordance with paragraphs 9 and 10 of Schedule 1 to the 'Delegation and Joint Committee Agreement': Watford members to appoint the Chair and Three Rivers members to appoint the Vice-Chair.

#### 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

#### 3 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosures of interest.

#### 4 MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Joint Shared Services Committee held on 223 September 2013.

Item	Page
<b>5 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
<p>To announce items of other business notified to the Secretary of the Joint Committee, together with the special circumstances which justify their consideration as a matter of urgency. The Chairman to rule on the admission of such items. (Note: If other confidential business is approved under this item, it will also be necessary to specify the class of exempt or confidential information in the additional item(s)).</p>	
<b>6 SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING</b>	1 - 64
<p>This report considers the service plans and budgets for the shared services in the medium term.</p>	
<b>7 MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE</b>	65 - 76
<p>This report gives performance information for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2013/14.</p>	
<b>8 FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SHARED SERVICES</b>	
<p>To receive a presentation on the future arrangements for shared services.</p>	
<b>9 ICT SERVICE - UPDATE</b>	77 - 86
<p>This report provides an update on the ICT Service Provision.</p>	
<b>10 REVENUE AND BENEFITS UPDATE</b>	87 - 92
<p>This report provides an update on the Revenues and Benefits Service and current performance of the Benefits Service.</p>	
<b>11 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC</b>	
<p>The Chairman to move:-  “that, under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if the press or public were present during consideration of the item(s) there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined under the respective paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.”  If approved the Chairman will ask the press and public to leave the meeting at this point.</p>	

**Part B - Closed to the Public****12 OTHER BUSINESS**

If approved under Item 4.

**Members are reminded that meetings of the Joint Committee shall end no later than 10.30pm unless otherwise agreed by the Joint Committee.**

**For more information concerning this agenda please contact the Secretary to the Joint Committee, Elwyn Wilson, Democratic Services Manager, Three Rivers District Council, Northway, Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 1RL. Telephone: 01923 727248.**

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# DRAFT FINANCE SERVICE PLAN 2014 - 2017

Version 0.2 – Joint Shared Services Committee – 18 November 2013

## CONTENTS

Section	Item	Page
1	Key Purpose of the Service	
1.1	Scope of the Service	3
1.2	Contribution to Shared Services Objectives	6
1.3	Contribution to the Councils' Strategic Objectives	9
1.4	The Future of the Service	10
2	Inputs	
2.1	People	11
2.2	Workforce Planning	13
2.3	Partnerships & Contracts	14
2.4	Assets and Technology	15
2.5	Revenue Budgets	16
2.6	Revenue Growth, Service Reductions and Cashable Efficiency Gains	17
2.7	Capital Investment	17
3	Outputs and Outcomes	
3.1	Customer Insight and Consultation	18
3.2	Service Level Agreements	22
3.3	Performance Indicators	22
3.4	Benchmarking information	24
3.5	Outstanding Recommendations of External Inspections	25
3.6	Projects	25
3.7	Equalities	26
3.8	Risk Management	27
	Version Control	29

## SECTION 1: KEY PURPOSE OF THE SERVICE

### 1.1 Scope of the Service

The overall objective is to provide high quality, efficient, robust and resilient services for audit, finance and fraud to the s151 Chief Finance Officer, members, budget holders, employees of the two councils, citizens and the wider public.

The services include the range of activities required to meet the s151 Officer's responsibilities for a local authority. It consists of most of the services associated with the running of the finances of a local authority, including those aimed at servicing the corporate entity as well as those aimed at serving individual budget holders and service managers.

Accountancy is located in Rickmansworth. The Fraud service has offices in both town halls to ensure their effectiveness. Internal Audit is provided through a partnership with the County Council and five district councils – the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS).

Finance functions are grouped into 4 main areas:

#### Accountancy

- Budget setting and reporting – Capital and Revenue
- Month end and annual closing of ledgers
- Collection Fund Accounting
- Reconciliations of financial management and subsidiary source systems
- Budget monitoring reports
- Service planning including service level changes, revenue growth & savings and capital investment
- Forecasting (in conjunction with budget holders)
- Preparation and publication of Financial Statements
- Whole of Government Accounts
- Preparation and completion of Government Returns for capital and revenue budgets, outturn and monitoring
- External audit liaison
- Provision of financial advice to budget holders and Members
- Financial policies and procedures
- Bank reconciliations and Income reconciliations
- Value Added Tax
- Financial Management System
- Treasury Management Policies & Investment Strategy
- Payroll Accounting including statutory deductions

#### Financial Services

- Accounts payable
- Insurances and risk advice
- Investments

#### Internal Audit

- Risk based system audits
- Contract and IT audits
- Value for Money
- Advice and consultancy
- Provision of assurance for effectiveness of controls and probity

#### Anti Fraud

- Benefit Fraud
- Corporate Fraud including enhanced vetting procedures for new staff
- Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategies
- Tenancy Fraud
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme, NNDR, Council Tax Single Persons Discount

The Joint Committee Agreement specifies the following functions for Finance

- Making payments on behalf of the Councils
- Maintaining the accounts of the Councils
- Maintaining the system of purchase orders
- The provision of an internal audit service
- Managing the operation of the Councils' insurance;
- Issuing guidance and providing advice to members and officers of the Councils on the financial procedure rules of the Councils
- Providing training to officers working on financial matters
- Monitoring the Councils' prudent financial management and compliance with approved accounting practices and reporting to members on these matters;
- Preparation of the Councils' annual statement of accounts
- Maintenance of the Councils record of assets
- Monitoring the financial administration of external partnerships and other organisations in which the Councils are involved
- Undertaking Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit fraud investigations and prosecutions
- Virement within Joint Committee Budgets



The Audit, Fraud and Accountancy services operate within a number of statutory provisions including secondary legislation and statutory codes of practice. These are outlined below:

#### Accountancy and Audit

- Local Government Act 1972 – arrangements for the proper administration of financial affairs
- Local Government Act 1988 – reports in the public interest
- Local Government Act 2000 – full Council on the recommendation of the Executive to set approve a budget. Scrutiny of the financial processes.
- Local Government Act 2003 – medium term financial planning, budgeting and prudent balances, Prudential Code for borrowing arrangements, opinion on robustness of budgets and adequacy of reserves, budget monitoring throughout the year with Member involvement.
- CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit
- Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011
- Statutory Codes for financial accounting and service accounting

#### Fraud

- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Proceeds of Crime Act 2002
- Fraud Act 2006
- Social Security Administration Act 1992
- Prevention Social Housing Fraud Act 2013

**1.2 Contribution to Shared Services Objectives**

Savings

Finance met all the savings required in the original business case for shared services..

Finance further met the requirements of both councils to achieve a ten-percent reduction in costs in 2012/13.

Four posts have already been deleted from the steady-state finance establishment.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
<b>ADDITIONAL SAVINGS</b>	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)
Original Budget - Joint Committee Sep '09)	1,728	1,711	1,755	1,808
Outturn	1,698	1,611	1,533	1,420
<b>Annual Savings</b>	<b><u>30</u></b>	<b><u>100</u></b>	<b><u>222</u></b>	<b><u>388</u></b>

The savings over the Business Case are in excess of £1m and now run at more than £400k per annum.

These cost reductions have been internally driven, identified, managed and secured.

There has been significant improvement in the range of services provided by Finance and the absorption of services from Revenues & Benefits and Human Resources since the inception of the Shared Services Programme.

The service has prepared to meet further cost reductions.

Resilience	<p>The Accountancy service is experienced in providing a Business Partner service having operated this basis of delivery for two decades.</p> <p>The successful rotation at Finance Manager and Senior Accountant level continues with changes last effected in June 2011. The practice mitigates the effects of lean staffing and provides flexibility for wider team working and cover. Accountancy is preparing to reorganise the face of its delivery following structural reorganisations in both councils in 2013 and the move to a lead authority model for shared services commencing in 2014.</p> <p>During 2012 an Accountancy restructure was completed to improve resilience between the remaining Accountancy staff. Staffing was reduced by four posts (including Internal Audit) and costs were pared significantly. One team of four Finance Officers was introduced (previously two Treasury and Technical Officers and four Accountancy Assistants) with generic job description and working across finance work streams. The 2012 restructure is being reviewed to achieve further savings which are reflected in section 2.5. This restructuring is now being reviewed in the light of the need to make further savings.</p> <p>In 2013 the Internal Audit service was outsourced to the Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) in which Three Rivers and Watford are full partners.</p> <p>2014 brings new challenges for Accountancy –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To achieve additional savings demanded by Watford in connection with the outsourcing of frontline services to Veolia</li> <li>• To reshape the service following organisational restructurings in both councils in 2013.</li> <li>• To implement a new service delivery model with the move to a Lead Authority model for Shared Services</li> <li>• To achieve effective succession planning following the retirements of key experienced staff</li> <li>• To mitigate or accept increased risks associated with fewer staff and less effective internal controls</li> <li>• To meet the challenges presented following the move to a shared Chief Finance Officer</li> <li>• To take advantage of opportunities for further harmonisation</li> <li>• To secure effective joint working with Revenues &amp; Benefits following key management changes</li> </ul> <p>In specialist skill areas, work shadowing occurs to widen and strengthen the knowledge base.</p> <p>The Fraud team has been designed with the emphasis on experience within a flat operating structure. It has been successful in providing improved resilience and maintaining a high level anti fraud service since the inception of Shared Services. This is particularly important where reported incidences of fraud have increased nationally.</p> <p>In 2013 the filed of fraud managed has expanded to include tenancy fraud, blue badge fraud and new employee screening.</p> <p>The Government are still pursuing options for a Single Fraud Investigation Service and updates will be reported during the next twelve months.</p>
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Improved Services	<p>Reduced resources no longer allow participation in the Cipfa Benchmarking exercise as in previous years where Accountancy was continually had –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lowest overall cost,</li> <li>• lowest staffing cost and</li> <li>• fewest number of staff providing.</li> </ul> <p>Since the last exercise, Accountancy has deleted almost four full-time equivalents <i>and has to secure further savings in 2014/15</i>. The non-participation in benchmarking can take comfort from the cost reduction direction of travel in the last few years.</p> <p>On the quality side of the equation – Accountancy has continued to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet the statutory timetable for completion of the statement of accounts</li> <li>• Achieve the statutory timetable for audit of accounts</li> <li>• Secure unqualified opinions on the accounts from the Auditors.</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with statutory deadlines for Whole of Government Accounts, DCLG annual &amp; quarterly accounting returns for revenue and capital estimates, in-year spending and outturns and council tax setting returns.</li> <li>• Achieved all targets for the budget setting processes, and timetables for budget monitoring.</li> <li>• Accountancy has improved management of the annual audit process and were assessed as upper quartile performance for overall standards by Grant Thornton in 2012 and maintained this progress in 2013.</li> </ul> <p>Key thinking continues to be few staff, professional attitudes, finance managers and accountancy staff who are enthusiastic, dynamic, committed and able to work in small teams. Layers of support have been stripped out and staff have been given responsibility to achieve and excel. The driving approach continues to be <i>one touch processing, see it - do it and right first time</i>.</p> <p>As can be evidenced from Contribution to Shared Services Objectives (see 1.2 above), Benchmarking (see 3.4 below) and in-depth annual reviews by Grant Thornton, this approach has been highly successful. This path continues with all future thinking.</p> <p>Internal Audit (now provided by SIAS) receives an in-depth examination each year by Grant Thornton who rely extensively on the quality of and coverage by SIAS . The Service continues to receive a clean bill of health.</p> <p>The Fraud Service have been actively considering exposure to fraud risk. It has implemented new harmonised strategies and pursued a more aggressive and preventative strategy making better use of data analytics and credit reference agency checks to prevent fraud, adopted tried and tested methods for tackling fraud in risk areas - such as blue badge scheme misuse and followed best practice to drive down Housing Tenancy and Single Person Discount fraud, worked in partnership with other service providers to tackle organised fraud across local services including corporate fraud and are developing approaches to recruitment and procurement fraud.</p>
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<b>1.3 Contribution to the Councils' Strategic Objectives</b>	
<b>Three Rivers District Council</b>	<b><i>"The District should remain a prosperous, safe and healthy place where people want and are able, to live and work"</i></b>
Safety and Well-being	We will support and enable the Council and its services to meet these objectives
Clean and Green	
Economic Opportunities	
Customer Service	
<b>Watford Borough Council</b>	<b><i>"A successful town in which people are proud to live, work, study and visit"</i></b>
Making Watford a Better Place to Live	We will support and enable the Council and its services to meet these objectives
To Provide the Strategic Lead for Watford's Sustainable Economic Growth	
Promote an Active, Cohesive & Well-Informed Town	
Operating the Council Efficiently and Effectively	

## 1.4 The Future of the Service

Finance provides **several main businesses** – Internal Audit, Fraud Investigation, Accountancy, Insurances, Treasury Management and Investments, VAT and Accounts Payable.

Section 1.1 (above) provides details on the extensive range of activities within each of these divisions. Over the last three years there have been significant changes with many functions added to the tasks at the outset of Finance Shared Services. This has been successfully accomplished whilst reducing the cost base by further.

Change continues and Finance is ready to face new challenges to secure continuing improvements. The strategic aim is for continuous improvement with more efficiencies, a reduced cost base and acceptable levels of risk to both councils and the Shared Services Joint Committee.

**Internal Audit** – Costs have further reduced by partnering with the Shared Internal Audit Service. Both councils have representation on the SIAS Partnership Board.

**Fraud Investigation** - the Government announced in 2010 a fraud and error strategy that proposed the creation of a single fraud investigation service (SFIS) with additional statutory powers to investigate and sanction all benefit and tax credit offences which would combine relevant resources across Local Authorities, HMRC, and DWP. The service was intended to investigate Universal Credit fraud as well as Tax Credit offences. In September 2013 the DWP re affirmed their commitment to the scheme following some testing at a variety of pilot sites which included the testing of partnership approaches. The proposal remains only a recommendation at this point until the final business case is completed by the DWP and funding from treasury is obtained. It remains unclear still what elements in respect of benefit fraud will transfer in terms of whether only passported DWP benefits are included. The proposal does not affect also the Council tax reduction scheme and residual benefits. .

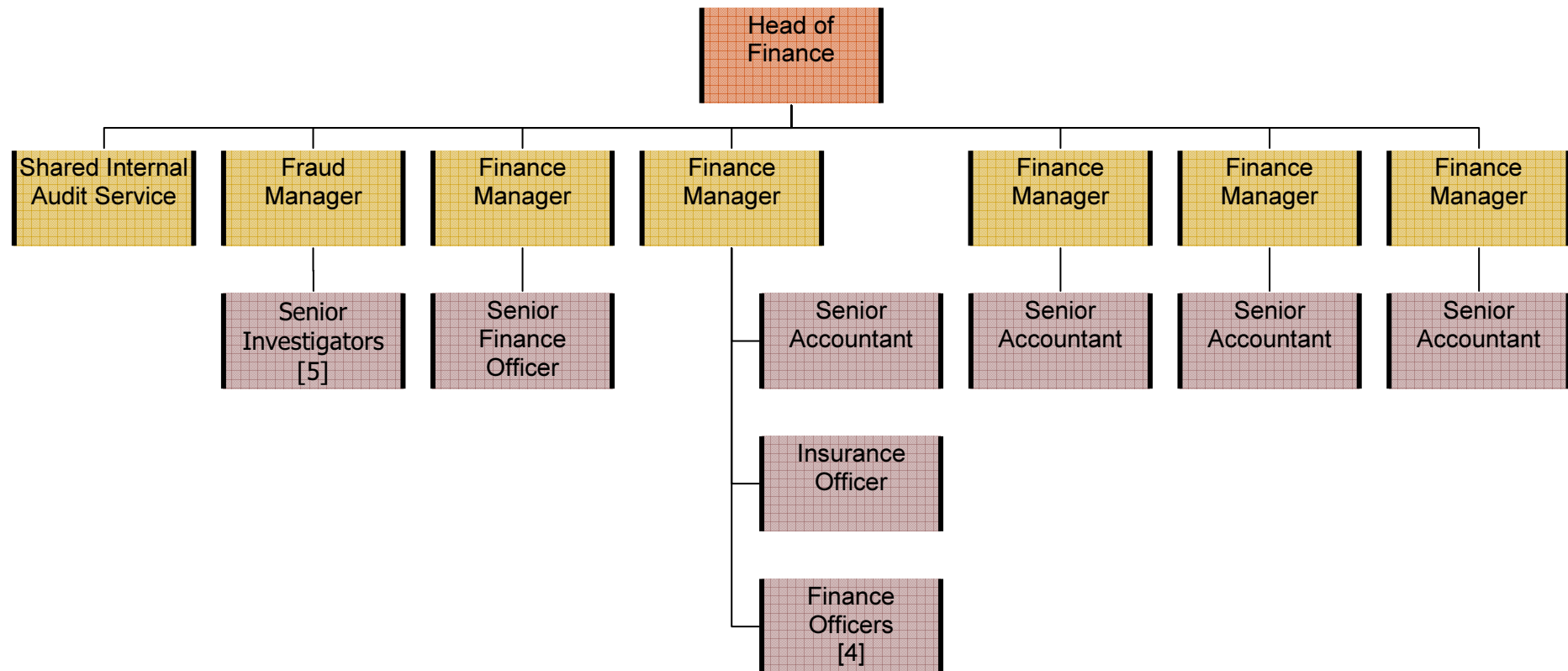
The Fraud service is reviewing counter-fraud arrangements and exposure to tenancy fraud, procurement, pay, pensions, recruitment; council tax reduction scheme, grant and blue badge schemes through better use of data analytics and more partnership working. All approaches will support the fraud and error vision to minimise fraud and error through awareness, prevention and enforcement.

**Accountancy** - every effort will be made to secure greater efficiencies with smarter working and empowering clients with knowledge and skills to increase financial abilities. Success levels will have dependencies on the partnerships with both councils and the agreement of common procedures for example, accounting policies, financial procedures, risk management framework, budgeting and financial planning arrangements, reporting formats and the financial competencies of managers and budget holders. The appointment in 2013 of a Shared Director of Finance will significantly improve the probability of successful outcomes of further harmonisation.

## SECTION 2: INPUTS

### 2.1 People

**Organisation Chart** [as at November 2013 – will be updated incrementally through to June 2014 to achieve “2<sup>nd</sup> Savings Requirement”]



FINANCE SHARED SERVICES ESTABLISHMENT – November 2013	Grade	No.	FTEs	Currently Vacant
Job Title				
Fraud Manager	10	1	1	0
Senior Fraud Investigator	7	5	5	0
Head of Finance	MG4	1	1	0
Insurance Officer	6	2	1	0
Finance Manager	10	5	5	0
Senior Accountant	8	4	4	0
Senior Finance Officer	8	1	1	0
Finance Officer	6	4	4	0

FINANCE SHARED SERVICES ESTABLISHMENT – June 2014	Grade	No.	FTEs	Currently Vacant
Job Title				
Fraud Manager	10	1	1	0
Senior Fraud Investigator	7	5	5	0
Head of Finance	MG4	1	1	0
Insurance Officer	6	1	1	0
Finance Manager	10	6	5.5	0
Senior Accountant	8	3	3	0
Senior Finance Officer	8	1	0.8	0
Finance Officer	6	3	3	0
Junior Finance Officer	tba	1	1	1



<b>2.2 Workforce Planning</b>			
<b>Workload – Trends &amp; Changes</b>	<b>Staffing Implications – Impact on Service &amp; Individuals</b>	<b>Options &amp; Preferred Solutions</b>	<b>Outcome – Financial Implications, Resilience Implications &amp; Implications for Improving the Service</b>
Age Profile	<p>The majority of both key and senior Accountancy positions are occupied by long-serving and highly experienced professionals eligible to retire in the short term.</p> <p>Age profiles in the Anti-Fraud team do not pose difficulties at present.</p>	<p>Senior staff must be retained to ensure achievement of business objectives.</p> <p>One Finance Manager opted for flexible retirement in October 2012. A second Finance will retire in mid-2014. An Insurance Officer will be retiring in early 2014.</p> <p>It was previously considered loss of several key staff may necessitate an overall FTE increase.</p> <p>Incentives to retain key staff should be implemented.</p>	<p>The risk of senior staff leaving in the same timeframe has arrived.</p> <p>Retirements will have a substantial impact on viability and service delivery and may demand an increase in organisation size and cost.</p> <p>The tipping point has arrived and events in the months to June 2014 will be key in achieving a phased and comfortable transition to a new 'steady state'</p> <p>Recognition of the inevitable issue over the last four years, subsequent planning, staff training and work allocation has ensured a good and sustainable position for sustainable future.</p>
Market Pay	<p>Market rates of pay will need to be regularly reviewed. The economic climate is not expected to impact on the jobs market in the first year of this Service Plan. Achievement of Best in Class required investment in the best systems, procedures and staff.</p> <p>Procurement rules have bias to lowest system and implementation costs. Not possible to agree fundamental harmonisation requirements. Market pay is based on 62<sup>nd</sup> percentile for non-shared</p>	<p>Review of basis and methodology for application of market factors within a shared service environment. Evidence shows that qualified accountants in our shared services are not remunerated to the levels comparable in nearby London Boroughs and similar sized authorities.</p> <p>I</p>	<p>For the lean structure (and getting leaner whilst taking on additional functions) it is essential that finance shared services staff are well above average for knowledge, skills, commitment and engagement.</p> <p>This will require competitive market rates for remuneration together with a premium. Market factors (reviewed annually) have been applied to Senior Auditors and Finance Managers.</p> <p>The Joint Management Boards were requested to apply current market factors.</p>

	service organisations.		
Succession Planning	Experienced and long serving accountants have been key to securing success and low cost (see Benchmarking).	Continued recognition of skills and age balance (within equalities requirements) for future recruitments.	Action taken had supported a sustainable workforce but deletion of less senior posts has reduced the opportunity to secure effective succession planning.  Reference should be made to the comments at Age Profile above

<b>2.3 Partnerships &amp; Contracts</b>	
<b>Partner / Partnership</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
Shared Internal Audit Service	SIAS are used to provide to provide the full range of internal audit services under a Partnership arrangement for councils, five other Hertfordshire district councils and the County Council.
LA VAT	Currently use LAVAT for provision of specialist VAT advice.
Treasury Advisers – Sector	Both councils use the services of Sector.
Insurances	Currently use Zurich for all insurance. Contracts end in March 2014 and a procurement process is currently being progressed.
Banking Services	Contracts end in March 2014 and a procurement process is currently being progressed.
National Anti Fraud Network	Fraud intelligence and support with applications under Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act

**2.4****Assets & Technology****Equipment**

Workstations each member of staff with IT access. 3 desktop HP printers and access to all central printers. Two of these workstations connected to specialist laser cheque printer.

Scanning and document management facilities.

One workstation with BACS security transmission facilities.

Remote access to network.

Cheque Printer.

Phones, Fax, Copying, Recording Equipment, Scanning, Mobile Working, Home Working.

**Land and Property**

Suitable office environment for all sections.

Hot desk facilities at Watford for Finance.

Internal Audit – office accommodation/filing/IT facilities on both sites.

Fraud – office accommodation/filing/IT facilities on both sites.

Accommodation at Three Rivers for External Audit.

**Vehicles**

Vehicles required to attend meetings or off-site locations including outside normal hours and outside districts. Vehicles are also required by fraud for surveillance, house visits, statement taking, risk assessments and visiting external agencies.

**IT systems**

Advanced Business Solutions (COA eFinancials)

Budget Monitor II (Alan Thomas – internally written and maintained interrogation and reporting software used as front-end to the ABS FMS.

Aptos (archive facilities)

Radius PowerSolve (archive facilities)

On-Line Banking & Treasury Management

Microsoft Office Applications

Financial Management System (new)

Fraud Module (within Benefits system)

In-Case

ID Manager

BACs

**2.5 Revenue Budgets**

<b>Budgets agreed by the Joint Committee November 2012</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	
	<b>Original</b>	<b>Original</b>	<b>Original</b>	
	£	£	£	
Employees	1,390,050	1,419,670	1,438,000	
Transport	16,700	16,700	16,700	
Supplies and Services	151,800	145,200	145,200	
External Income	-2,500	-2,500	-2,500	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,556,050</b>	<b>1,579,070</b>	<b>1,597,400</b>	
<b>Draft Estimates for the Joint Committee November 2013</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
	<b>Revised</b>	<b>Original</b>	<b>Original</b>	<b>Original</b>
	£	£	£	£
Employees	1,246,590	1,268,330	1,275,020	1,289,230
Transport	14,600	14,250	14,250	14,250
Supplies and Services	150,960	133,960	133,960	133,960
External Income	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000	-4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,408,150</b>	<b>1,412,540</b>	<b>1,419,230</b>	<b>1,433,440</b>
<b>Additional Savings (-) / Costs</b>	<b>(147,900)</b>	<b>(166,530)</b>	<b>(178,170)</b>	

2.6 Revenue Growth, Service Reductions and Cashable Efficiency Gains					
Description			2013/14 £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £
1	Potential Growth				
	Nil		0	0	0
2	Service Reductions				
	Nil		0	0	0
	Total		0	0	0
3	Cashable Efficiency Gains				
	Nil		0	0	0
	Total		0	0	0

2.7 Capital Investment	
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Scheme Name	New Scheme	Capital				Revenue Implications			
		2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Future Years	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Future Years
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Nil		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## SECTION 3: OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

### 3.1 Customer insight and consultation

#### I Customer access channels

Service Area	Information Access	Service Access
Financial Advice	Email, internet, intranet, letter, telephone, meetings, training events, face to face	Email, internet, intranet, letter, telephone, meetings, training events, face to face
Financial Management System		
Internal Audit		
Fraud		
Supplier and Customer Payments		
Insurance		

#### II Customer identification and segmentation data

Service provided	Customer group	Segmentation data held
Internal Audit	Statutory function. External auditors Internal – Staff, occasionally public	Individuals at all levels – job title, name, department, email address etc. Mostly systems and procedures interrogation.
Anti-fraud and corruption	Benefit fraud – tip-offs and information from public (via hotlines, letters), data matching, DWP, HMRC Systems information about individuals, e.g. MOSAIC information	Tip offs – mostly anonymous. As below, NI numbers, bank account details, personnel records. Details of partnership agencies, e.g. DWP.
Creditors payment	External – suppliers of goods and services	Address, creditor's name, VAT number, Head office/business addresses. Income Tax status for some.
Treasury	Banks, building societies, investment advice agencies	Business addresses.
Insurances	External Claimants – public, internal	Claim form details, name, DOB, claimant details, incident details.
Accountancy	Service level service planning, budget monitoring, financial advice.	Service heads/managers – name, department, position, email address.

### III Communication and consultation methods

Service provided	Inform	Consult	Engage
Internal Audit	Audit plan – public document Reports – disseminated to Services.	Timeframes for consultation implementation. Audit plan is assessed by Heads of Services and this is open to review.	Committees, Audit, Resources Policy Panel.
Anti-fraud and corruption	Tip-off publicity – website, advertisements on TV, radio etc. (National campaigns) National fraud hotline?	Respond to National initiatives – report on satisfaction.	Successful prosecutions – National press. Also serves as a deterrent.
Creditors payment	Internal, demand-led service.	Internal. This is the end of a process – CP authorise payments. Contact only foreseen if customers enter into complaints process in the case of late payment.	Shared Services Join Committee.
Treasury	Contact with banks and building societies are direct and through brokers.	Market conditions.	Committees – Annual, and 6 monthly review-back looking report Risk management and overall strategy.
Insurances	Insurance companies have involvement and conduct investigations etc. TRDC's remit is to check policies are OK.		No formal reporting strategy but linked to budget monitoring.
Accountancy	Annual report, published on website, letters.	Statutory obligation to consult with commercial representatives and internally - Heads of Services, Members, etc.	Annual report published internally and made available publically.

**IV Customer satisfaction measures**

<b>Service provided</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Collection method</b>	<b>Timescale for consultation - start date and regularity</b>	<b>Baseline result</b>	<b>Target</b>
Internal Audit	Satisfaction with service provided  Quality of service	Contractor-led satisfaction survey (rolling questionnaire)  Internal Audit/inspection	Administered after each audit		
Anti-fraud and corruption	Satisfaction  Quality of service	Service provision questionnaire  Internal Audit/inspection	Annual		
Creditors payment	Satisfaction with service  Quality of service	Questionnaire planned  Internal Audit/inspection			
Treasury	Satisfaction with service  Quality of service	Questionnaire planned  Internal Audit/inspection			
Insurances	Satisfaction  Quality of service	Survey of internal and external customers  Financial Management Model – collecting comments from users  Internal Audit/inspection	One-off survey 2006/7	CIPFA collate results and produce compliance scores on aspects of service standards	
Accountancy	Satisfaction with service  Quality of service	Benchmarking across other authorities/organisations  Internal Audit/inspection			



**V Learning from customer consultation**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
What key findings has customer consultation work identified in the last year for each service area? Have the needs of a specific customer group been identified?	Customer Insight and consultation new element in service plan
What has been done as a result of customer consultation?	Customer Insight and consultation new element in service plan
How have you feed back to customers that have been consulted?	Customer Insight and consultation new element in service plan
How effective were the consultation methods used? What changes are proposed?	Anti-fraud and corruption service provision questionnaire led to the creation of 12 SLAs

### 3.2 Service Level Agreements

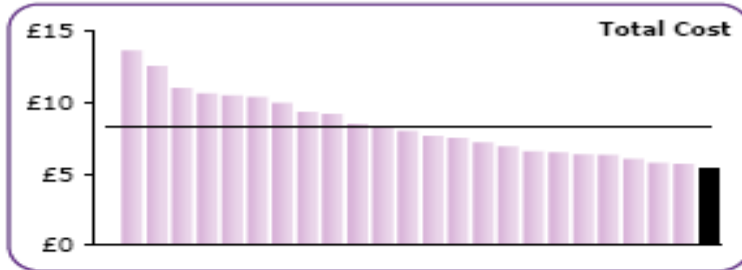
Service Level Agreements were reviewed in 2012 and no changes were required. No services are to be deleted.

### 3.3 Performance Indicators

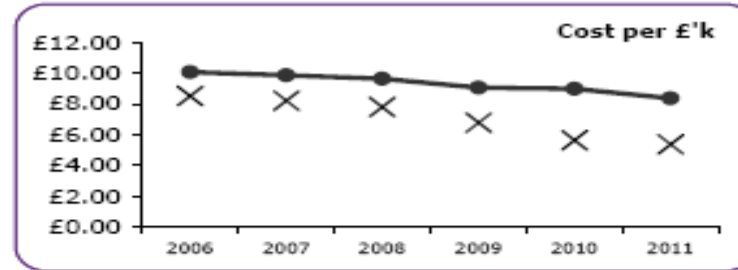
PI Reference	Description	Frequency	Target
SSF1	% payment made by BACS	Monthly	90%
SSF2	Creditor payments paid within 30 days	Monthly	100%
SSF3	Treasury , Investments and Banking Services Management of short and long term cash flow	Annual	Average Base Rate + 0.12%
SSF4	Month end account closure – reconciliations	Monthly	Task Completed
SSF5	Monthly Budget Monitoring Reports – Overall Revenue Budget Performance	Annual	-3% to 0%

<b>PI Reference</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Target</b>
SSF6	Monthly Budget Monitoring Reports – Overall Capital Budget Performance	Annual	-3% to 0%
SSF7	Closure of Annual Accounts and production of statements – Statement of Accounts approval	Annual	Task Completed
SSF8	Compilation of government returns – revenue account, revenue summary, capital outturn – (RA, RS,CO)	Annual	Task Completed
SSF9	Benefit Fraud – number of cases investigated	Annual	330
SSF10	Benefit Fraud – number of sanctions administered	Annual	62
SSF11	Internal Audit - percentage of actual SIAS billable days against planned chargeable days (excluding unused contingency)	Quarterly	95%
SSF12	Internal Audit - Planned Projects – percentage of completed projects against planned completed projects	Quarterly	95%
SSF13	Internal Audit – Client Satisfaction – percentage of client satisfaction questionnaires returned at 'satisfactory' level	Quarterly	100%
SSF14	Internal Audit – number of high priority recommendations agreed	Quarterly	95%

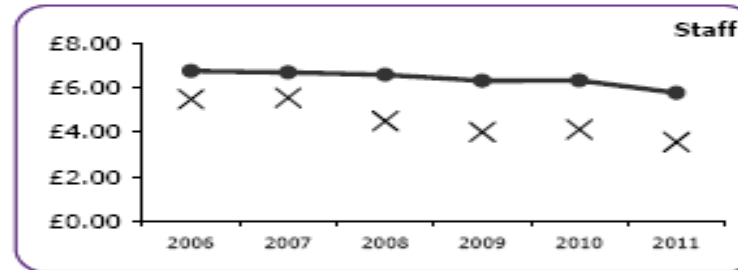
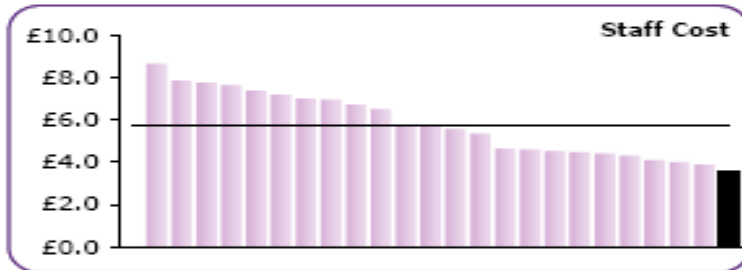
**Total Cost per £'k GRT 2011/12**  
Rows 1-8



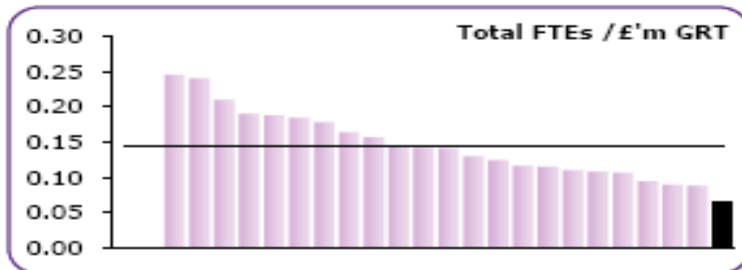
Club Average ●  
Three Rivers X



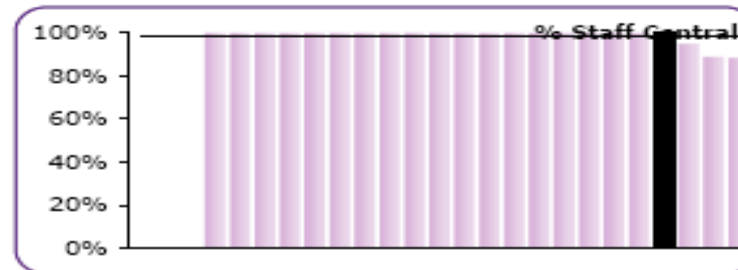
**Staff Cost / £'k GRT 2011/12**



**Total FTEs per £'m GRT**



**% Staff Central**



**3.5 Outstanding Recommendations of External Inspections**

Insert here the name of the Inspectorate – the title of their report from which the recommended action has come – and the date of the report

<i>Action</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Action to Date</i>	<i>Resolved</i>	<i>(Original) Implementation Date</i>
None					

**3.6 Projects**

There are no specific projects for Finance.

Business as usual requires Finance provide support to corporate projects, for example service redesign or outsourcing Waste, Recycling, Parks and Street Care (Watford), outsourcing ICT (Shared Services), Future Council, local council tax support, retention of business rates and emerging initiatives.

**3.7****Equalities**

The Equalities Act 2010 includes a new public sector equality duty (both a general duty and specific duties), replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. The duty places a range of steps that are legally required by local authorities covering issues such as: assessing relevance, using and publishing equality information, engagement, equality analysis, equality objectives, commissioning & procurement and business planning & reporting.

Finance Shared Services will integrate the general equality duty into service planning and will ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are conducted wherever appropriate.

**3.8 Risk Management**

**FINANCE RISK REGISTER**

All Services Operational Risks							
Risk	Risk	Impact	Impact Classification	Likelihood Classification	Reason for Assessment		
1	Insufficient staff	Service Disruption	I	E	Need to ensure full establishment and recruitment actions maintain quality to deliver. Further staff reductions in 2012 have increased risk.	Requires Treatment	Accept
		Financial Loss	II			Last Review Date	01/11/12
		Reputation	III			Next Milestone Date	None
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/09/13
		People	I			Date Closed	
2	Failure of ICT Systems	Service Disruption	II	E	AP is a key business function.	Requires Treatment	Accept
		Financial Loss	I			Last Review Date	01/11/12
		Reputation	III			Next Milestone Date	None
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/09/13
		People	I			Date Closed	
3	Loss of Accommodation	Service Disruption	II	F	AP is a key business function.	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	I			Last Review Date	01/11/12
		Reputation	III			Next Milestone Date	None
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/09/13
		People	I			Date Closed	

**Finance Service Operational Risks**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Impact Classification</b>	<b>Likelihood Classification</b>	<b>Reason for Assessment</b>		
4	Fraudulent Activity	Service Disruption	III	E	Increased threat of cybercrime	Requires Treatment Last Review Date Next Milestone Date Next Review Date Date Closed	Accept
		Financial Loss	IV				01/11/12
		Reputation	IV				None
		Legal Implications	II				01/09/13
		People	I				
		People	I				
5	Progress against Audit recommendations is not monitored, they are not implemented and internal controls are therefore weakened	Service Disruption	I	F	If Internal Audit recommendations are not implemented essential controls will be inadequate and the Council's governance arrangements will be weakened.	Requires Treatment Last Review Date Next Milestone Date Next Review Date Date Closed	No
		Financial Loss	III				01/11/12
		Reputation	III				None
		Legal Implications	II				01/09/13
		People	I				
6	Fail to close Accounts on time	Service Disruption	III	F	2011/12 Accounts for Watford, Three Rivers and Shared Services closed and reported on time.	Requires Treatment Last Review Date Next Milestone Date Next Review Date Date Closed	Accept
		Financial Loss	1				01/11/12
		Reputation	III				None
		Legal Implications	I				01/09/13
		People	I				





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# REVENUES & BENEFITS SERVICE PLAN

## 2014 - 2017

Joint Shared Services Committee – 18 November 2013

## CONTENTS

Section	Item	Page
	Introduction	3
1	Key Purpose of the Service	3-4
1.1	Scope of the Service	3
1.2	Service standards	5
1.3	The Future of the Service	7
2	Inputs	8
2.1	People	8
2.2	Workforce Planning	9
2.3	Partnerships & Contracts	12
2.4	Service Level Agreements	13
2.5	Assets and Technology	14
2.6	Current Budgets	15
2.7	Potential Revenue Growth	16
2.8	Capital Investment	16
3	Outputs and Outcomes	17
3.1	Consultation	17
3.2	Performance management	18
3.2.2	Performance Indicators	19
3.3	Audit Actions	23
3.4	Benchmarking Information	24
3.5	Projects	25
3.6	Equalities	26
3.7	Risk management	29
	Version Control	34

## INTRODUCTION

The progress of this service plan will be monitored in the following ways:

- Through regular discussion at departmental management team (DMT) and Section Heads meetings and logged in the version control section of this document
- Performance indicator monitoring by the Council's Management Board on a quarterly basis
- By Committee reports twice a year (at the end of quarters two and four)

Service Plans will be formally updated on an annual basis, taking into account internal and external influences arising from monitoring arrangements throughout the year.

## SECTION 1: KEY PURPOSE OF THE SERVICE

### 1.1 Scope of the Service

The services provided are a statutory function

The following activities will be the responsibility of the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service:

- Issuing of Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates Bills;
- Maintenance of database for billing purposes;
- Collection and Recovery of payments of Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates Bills;
- Administration, assessment and payment of Housing Benefit and Localised Council Tax Support;
- Issuing of bills for recovering of Housing Benefit Overpayments and Council Tax Benefit overpayments up till March 2013;
- Recovery of arrears of repayment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Overpayments up till March 2013;
- Compilations of returns and grant claims to central Government relating to Revenues & Benefits;
- Provision of administrative and support services relating to Revenues & Benefits;
- Calculation of Council Tax Base;
- Collection fund monitoring;
- Recommendation for approval of Discretionary Housing Payments
- Recommendation for approval of applications for discretionary National Non-Domestic Rate Relief and National Non-Domestic Rate Hardship Relief;
- Authorisation of officers to attend court for purposes relating to prosecutions for non payment of Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates;
- Approval of write-offs of bad debts within the scope of the policies established by each Council for the write-off of bad debts.
- To provide Management Functions to support both Revenues and Benefits

The following will be the responsibility of the relevant councils:

- Approving and Setting of Council Tax;
- Approval of benefit subsidy claims;
- Approval of Discretionary Housing Payments;
- Approval of reductions under S13A Local Government Finance Act 1992
- Approval of applications for discretionary National Non-Domestic Rate Relief & Hardship Relief;
- Determination of policy for discounts and premiums under S11 & S12 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012.
- Determination of policy for write off of bad debts
- Design and Approval of Localised Council Tax Support Scheme

**The service is currently provided from Watford Town Hall with a local outlet in South Oxhey and Three Rivers House. A visiting service is also provided across the two authority areas.**

**1.2 Service Standards**

The Service Standards below outline the level of service customers can expect and will be monitored and developed as appropriate. The Council's corporate customer service standards will **also** be applied and are published in the Council's Strategic Plan.

Service standards: our aims	How our standards are measured and monitored
Savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The pressures on the Revenues &amp; Benefits Service are such that there is an increasing demand for Benefits with an increasing caseload. This is having a consequential effect on the collection of Council Tax in particular. More efficient methods of communication are being developed with a greater emphasis on self-service and “e-billing” and “e-notification” that will generate savings in the long-term. However in the short-term there will be a need for growth bids to provide additional resources.</li> </ul>
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Service has now developed so that there is more of a unified approach to service delivery. Workload is not allocated on an authority basis and a harmonised approach has been adopted. In exceptional circumstances, staff can be concentrated to deal with work for a particular authority, for example at year end when a particular system may not be available, to minimise “downtime”.</li> <li>• The multi-skill approach will also provide flexibility to reallocate workload and provide cover during holiday periods and sickness absence and ensure that satellite facilities are staffed.</li> <li>• Being part of a larger team will also increase the pool of knowledge and expertise that councils can access as well as providing more opportunities to train and develop staff, which will improve retention.</li> <li>• Greater cover should enable leave and training to be scheduled more easily without detriment to the service.</li> <li>• There will be a greater resource to meet changes.</li> <li>• Specific examples include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NNDR where both councils have one officer only dealing with this and in their absence no substantial cover. Skills and knowledge in NNDR will be transferring to billing officers in anticipation of changes to the retention of Business Rates with effect from 2013.</li> <li>• Quality and training officers will predominantly be working on benefits but will have exposure to revenues work also.</li> <li>• Reconciliations on council tax refunds, direct debits etc. are now performed by a number of staff within the shared service reducing the reliance on a sole individual.</li> <li>• Recovery staff will deal with a diversity of collection – Council tax, NNDR, Sundry Debtors and housing benefit overpayments.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>Improved Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of the use of electronic access and telephone, minimise face-to-face contact especially for revenues.</li> <li>• Cash-less, cheque-less, electronically enabled service</li> <li>• Increased levels of home-working</li> <li>• Mobile working – taking the service to the customer – particularly vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Taking benefit services to the customer through the use of mobile technology which will allow benefits assessors to capture benefits claims information in the correct format, verify it and process claims quicker improving accuracy and reducing time spent on correcting errors.</li> <li>• The use of intelligent e-forms to improve productivity of less experienced benefits staff and enabling front line CSC staff to handle more benefits queries</li> <li>• Enable as much high volume, low complexity queries as possible to be resolved at first point of contact i.e. the Customer Service Centres of each council. The aim is for 80% of revenues queries and 60% of the benefits queries to be handled by CSC staff and the remainder to be passed directly to the shared service back office. There will continue to be a benefits specialist presence from the shared service located at each CSC to allow any face-to-face queries also to be resolved at first point of contact. Expert staff will be left to focus on more complex queries</li> <li>• More responsive service due to larger size of team and increased joint resources</li> <li>• Aim to reduce the volume of sundry invoices, particularly at Watford Borough Council and time taken to recover debt</li> <li>• The consolidation of all benefits processes under one manager, including any policy training and quality monitoring to ensure full accountability within one team</li> <li>• A centralised document processing team providing economies of scale to scan paperwork, process direct debits and provide general administrative support to the service allowing expert officers to concentrate on the areas in which they have been trained.</li> </ul>
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Please contact the Head of Service if you would like to provide feedback on these service standards.



2014/15

- Full implementation of e-services that will include: Self-Service Options for Council Tax Payers, Business Rate Payers, Benefit Claimants and Landlords, E-claim capability, b-billing, e-notifications
- Trusted Third Party Access allowing advice agencies to assist clients with queries locally
- Implementation of a full performance management framework
- Increased automation of processes such as ATLAS case manager to deal with increased notifications from DWP
- Introduction of Universal Credit. The full effect of this is not yet known
- A more flexible regime of workload management.
- Closer working relationships established with Housing Departments, Housing Association Partners and Jobcentre Plus
- Review of Payment methods and potential introduction of barcodes to offer easier payment options
- Review SPD's for Council Tax to ensure tax bills for all residents are kept to a minimum.
- Ensure value for money by reviewing all discretionary payments for NNDR, focusing on supporting communities within Three Rivers & Watford.
- Staff to have an embedded customer service culture and ethos which puts the customer at the heart of our service delivery.
- Review all letter templates to make them simple and easier to understand, thereby reducing phone calls, visits and customer contact.
- Introduce a robust process for sending follow up reminders for information at 14 & 21 days to help reduce overpayments and ensure timely & accurate payment of benefits.
- A revised Local Council Tax Scheme for each authority to meet the expected challenges of a reduction in grant

2015/16

- Ongoing watching brief on the progress of Universal Credit and ensuring that the Council is ready to respond to any changes.
- Increased use of multi-skilling to increase the flexibility of the workforce
- Potential increase in establishment in Revenues following the localisation of business rates
- Continued closer working with partners both external and internal

2016/17

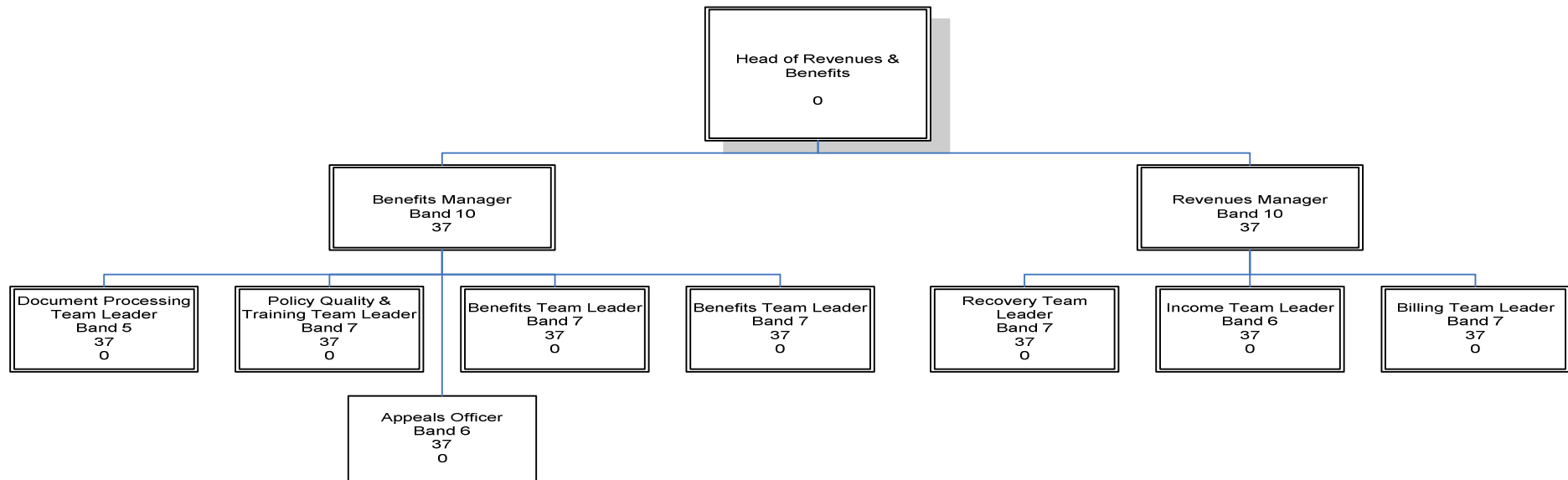
- Continued progress with Universal Credit.
- Continued closer working with internal and external partners

**SECTION 2: INPUTS**

**2.1 People**

**2.1.1 Organisation Chart**

**Revenues & Benefits**



**2.1.2 Staffing**

Existing number of staff							
2013/14		2014/15		2015/16		2016/17	
Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE	Head count	FTE
62	56.64	62	56.64	62	56.64	62	56.64

2.2 Workforce Planning			
Overview			
Workload – Trends & Changes	Staffing Implications – Impact on Service & Individuals	Options & Preferred Solutions	Outcome – Financial Implications, Resilience Implications & Implications for Improving the Service
<p>Developing the staff in order to deal with external influences such as changes in legislation and increases in workload</p>	<p>Uncertainty and worry for individuals in those areas. Possibility that some may seek alternative employment before this. The service will need to retain experienced staff if performance is not to suffer.</p> <p>The current economic climate in general and volume of work seen by the service has limited opportunities in this field.</p> <p>Future changes to the Benefit System (Universal Credit and Council Tax</p>	<p>Preferred solution is to have staff sign-up to shared services and retained. Reductions achieved through natural wastage</p> <p>We need to ensure that the teams are fully staffed to meet the demands and that the appropriate systems are in place to deal with this. Where necessary, use of external resources will be employed to meet any fluctuations in workload</p> <p>The impact of UC and timing of the implementation of UC are</p>	<p>The proposed Localised Council tax Support Schemes will retain the “means-tested” element so will continue to be administered by Benefit staff. Phased Migration of Universal Credit will lessen the impact on Housing Benefit caseload in the short-term</p> <p>Adequate Budget Provision will be required in the short-term to meet the need for additional resources due to an increasing caseload and potential backlog in addition to a greater pressure on Business Rate and Council Tax Collection</p> <p>Potential outcome could be a greater emphasis on Business Rate and Council Tax collection if the proposed changes result in there being a greater challenge in collection.</p> <p>Corporately there will be a pressure on budgets from 2013 with a reduction in grant to support Council Tax</p>

	Benefit) will have an impact on service delivery and will require a further review of the service	not fully understood at this point.	Benefit and an anticipated reduction in Benefit Admin Grant from 2013 onwards.
CSC Implications	<p>The original assumption was that some elements of Revs &amp; Bens will transfer to CSC in Three Rivers and Watford – 80% revenues, 60% benefits.</p> <p>This will call for additional training to be given to each CSC in the areas identified</p>	<p>A trained benefits officer from the Shared Service will need to be permanently based in the One Stop Shops at both councils.</p> <p>CSC staff will deal with council tax enquiries and non-complex benefits queries</p> <p>Revenues staff are now to be based in the CSC to help with caseload.</p>	Investment in intelligent e-forms will allow benefit enquiries and a high level of business rate and council tax queries to be dealt with in the CSC. This will provide a better service for our customers.
Home working	May be an attractive option to some members of staff .	<p>Need to identify the number of staff that as an optimum could work from home.</p> <p>Working from home would have to meet with the service needs and fit in with corporate aims.</p> <p>Existing use of remote working is currently in place as service demands require</p>	<p>Less office space, different ways of monitoring output, may need specific home working policy.</p> <p>Fewer interruptions would lead to increased productivity.</p>
More use of technology to improve performance and realise savings	By offering more self-service options, staff will be able to concentrate on processing work with fewer interruptions.	Delivery of self-service will continue throughout 2014/15.	The level of savings will be determined by the take-up of these solutions.

	<p>Technology will also be used to track defaulting taxpayers to enable more effective recovery and to ensure greater accuracy of the Council Tax database</p>	<p>Tracing defaulting taxpayers has already commenced.</p>	<p>There will be an increase in Council Tax and NNDR collection rates with fewer write offs.</p> <p>There will be a more accurate representation of the bad debt as more efforts are being taken to chase debtors meaning that the ones left are genuinely untraceable.</p> <p>An accurate representation of the number of Single Discounts will ensure the Council Tax Base is optimised</p>
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**2.3 Partnerships & contracts**

<b>Partner / Partnership / Contract / Projects</b>	<b>Expected outcomes / Objectives</b>
<p>The Appeals Service Magistrates and County Court Valuation tribunal</p>	<p>The Revenues and Benefits department works with a number of stakeholders to deliver an efficient and effective service. This is because we are reliant on information in order to process benefit claims and to manage council tax/business rates accounts.</p>
<p>Jobcentre Plus Housing Associations Welfare agencies Citizens Advice Bureaux Landlords</p>	<p>The relationship with some of the stakeholders is very much collaborative – for example with the CAB and landlords and system driven with others such as Job centre Plus. The ultimate ambition is to ensure revenues and benefits customers receive a consistent standard of service with seamless transfer of information and data to ensure claims are processed without undue delay.</p>
<p>Valuation Office Rent Officer</p>	<p>The relationships we have with Housing providers is designed to ensure that rents are paid, preventing arrears accruing and ultimately evictions and homelessness.</p>
<p>External Auditors</p>	<p>We rely on effective communication channels with all our partners remembering at all times that the customer is at the core of what we do.</p>
<p>External bailiffs/collection and tracing companies Internal/External solicitors</p>	
<p>DWP DCLG</p>	
<p>Capita Anite</p>	
<p>Cooperative Bank / Natwest Bank</p>	

<b>2.4 Service level agreements (SLA)</b>	
<b>SLA details</b>	<b>Expected outcomes</b>
<p>Service Level Agreements have been established with Watford Community Housing Trust setting out target performance and response times in addition to means of contact and escalation procedures. A copy is held in the shared drives.</p> <p>Other Housing Associations have been invited to sign up to the agreement.</p> <p>Service Level Agreements are also in place with the Valuation Office Agency and the Pension Service</p>	<p>Monitor performance against targets for each organisation. Discuss any issues at quarterly meetings.</p>

## 2.5 Assets & Technology

Office space for 67. Potential to reduce further depending on the success of home working.

Sufficient storage to meet statutory document retention.

67 PCs or laptops/tablet PCs

Mobile phones for 6 people

6 printers

4 scanners

1 fax machine

1 Photocopier

Facilities for communal recycling, shredding etc.

Integrated Revenues & Benefits System with interfaces to document processing systems, CSC system, main financial system, income distribution and cash receipting systems

Mobile technology software

Direct debit software

Sundry Debt System (module of Financial Management System)

Mobile technology



**2.6 Current Budgets**

<b>Budgets agreed by the Joint Committee November 2012</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	
	<b>Original</b>	<b>Original</b>	<b>Original</b>	
	£	£	£	
Employees	2,636,330	2,431,180	2,455,080	
Transport	25,820	25,820	25,820	
Supplies and Services	285,280	285,280	285,280	
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,947,430</b>	<b>2,742,280</b>	<b>2,766,180</b>	
<b>Draft Estimates for the Joint Committee November 2013</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
	<b>Revised</b>	<b>Original</b>	<b>Original</b>	<b>Original</b>
	£	£	£	£
Employees	2,861,890	2,689,040	2,697,110	2,724,660
Transport	13,030	25,070	25,070	25,070
Supplies and Services	439,980	399,980	399,980	399,980
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,314,900</b>	<b>3,114,090</b>	<b>3,122,160</b>	<b>3,149,710</b>
<b>Additional Savings (-) / Costs</b>	<b>367,470</b>	<b>371,810</b>	<b>355,980</b>	

Note: The increases in 2013/14, 2014/15 & 2015/16 reflect the actual costs being incurred for Agency, Printing & Stationery, Professional Fees (Consultancy) and Postages

<b>2.7</b>	<b>Potential Revenue Growth</b>
------------	---------------------------------

Description		2013/14 £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £
1	Potential Growth			
	Nil	0	0	0
2	Service Reductions			
	Nil	0	0	0
3	Cashable Efficiency Gains			
	Nil	0	0	0

<b>2.8</b>	<b>Capital Investment</b>
------------	---------------------------

Scheme Name	New Scheme	Capital				Revenue Implications			
		2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Future Years	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	Future Years
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Nil		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**SECTION 3: OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES**

**3.1 Consultation**

**3.1.1 Consultation**

In column (a) note the name of your service e.g. performance management.

b) What is the purpose of your consultation? Customer satisfaction; service development; service reduction/change; budget review etc

c) list what you aim to achieve from your consultation, what is the purpose of your consultation? Customer Satisfaction, Budget consultation, Service development / improvement, service reduction / change, service demand / volumes, Customer profiling, service review etc

d) Basic methodology: Face to face interviews, On-line survey, paper questionnaire, telephone survey etc

e) Timescales include any key deadlines and milestones

a) Service / Function subject of survey or consultation	b) Purpose of consultation	c) Objectives	e) Methodology	f) Timescales

**3.1.2 Learning and Actions from consultation**

Function	Actions Identified	Service Response	Due date deadlines

**3.2 Performance management**

**3.2.1 Contribution to the Councils' Strategic Aims and Objectives**

<b>Strategic Plan Priority theme</b>	<b>Strategic Plan objective (inc. ref)</b>	<b>Measure (including the reference)</b>	<b>Target</b>
Safety and Wellbeing			
Clean and Green			
Economic opportunities			
Customer Service			

### 3.2.2 Performance indicators

Performance indicators are used to aid the decision making process as well as assess the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. The data that we use must be accurate, reliable and timely. To meet these requirements we have adopted the Audit Commission's Standards for Better Data Quality. Further details of the Council's commitment to data quality can be found in the Strategic Plan.

<b>Reference SSRB1</b>	General Debts Raised.															
<b>Indicator Definition</b>	Value of Sundry Debtor Invoices Raised (£m).															
<b>Target</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>
TRDC	/	/														
Watford	/	/														
<b>Comments on Performance – Figures shown are for the final month in that quarter. Figures are gathered on a monthly basis.</b>																

<b>Reference SSRB2</b>	General Debtors Collected.															
<b>Indicator Definition</b>	Percentage of debt collected at end of quarter.															
<b>Target</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>2012/13</b>				<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>			
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Comments on Performance - Figures shown are for the final month in each quarter. Reliant on Service Departments issuing demands promptly.</b>																

<b>Reference SSRB3</b>	Council Tax Collection Rates															
<b>Indicator Definition</b>	Percentage of Council Tax collected															
<b>Target</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Comments on Performance – Figures shown for the final month in each quarter. Collection target set as in-year collection. Targets for 2013 set lower than 201/13 to allow for potential difficulties in collection due to Welfare Reforms</b>																

<b>Reference SSRB4</b>	Business Rates Collection															
<b>Indicator Definition</b>	Percentage of Business Rates collected															
<b>Target</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Comments on Performance - Figures shown for the final month in each quarter.</b>																

<b>Reference SSRB3</b>	Speed of Processing - new claims for HB / Council Tax Support															
<b>Indicator Definition</b>	Average time taken from date claim made to date decision made															
<b>Target</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Comments on Performance – Targets for 2014 onwards will be revised further as Universal Credit has a greater impact on caseload. Additional external resource will be utilised to reduce backlogs (section 2.6 refers)</b>																

<b>Reference SSRB6</b>	Speed of Processing – change in circumstances – HB / Council Tax Support															
<b>Indicator Definition</b>	Average time taken from date notification received to date decision made															
<b>Target</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Comments on Performance – Targets for 2014 onwards will be revised further as Universal Credit has a greater impact on caseload. Additional external resource will be utilised to reduce backlogs (section 2.6 refers)</b>																

<b>Reference SSRB7</b>	Speed of Processing – new claims for HB / Council Tax Support															
<b>Indicator Definition</b>	Average time taken from date all information provided to date decision made															
<b>Target</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>2013/14</b>				<b>2014/15</b>				<b>2015/16</b>				<b>2016/17</b>			
	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>	<b>Qtr 1</b>	<b>Qtr 2</b>	<b>Qtr 3</b>	<b>Qtr 4</b>
TRDC																
Watford																
<b>Comments on Performance – Targets for 2014 onwards will be revised further as Universal Credit has a greater impact on workload</b>																

The Head of Revenues & Benefits is responsible for the source data, data entry and checking the data. The purpose of collating this data is to ensure that our services improve.



**3.3 AUDIT ACTIONS**

**3.3.1 Actions arising from Audit inspection and Audit reports**

<b>Recommendation (inc. ref)</b>	<b>Action taken or planned (inc. deadline)</b>

**3.4 Benchmarking Information**

Benchmark Description	Comparison / Peer group	Result	Date Valid	Comments
<p>We are part of the Herts Benefits Managers' Group and Herts Revenues Managers' Group. Both groups report all performance data to the Herts Chief Finance Officers' Group which meets on a bi-monthly basis.</p> <p>In addition we are also members of the BenX Benchmarking group allowing us access to Benefits related performance data and best practise in Cambridge, Colchester, Hertsmere, Ipswich, Lincoln / North Kesteven, Luton, North Herts, Oxford, St Albans and Welwyn Hatfield as well as the Home Counties' Revenues Benchmarking Group providing access to best practise across Beds, Berks, Bucks, Oxon, Herts and Milton Keynes.</p>				

**3.5 Projects**

<b>Project details</b>		<b>Project timescales</b>		
<b>Project title</b>	<b>Proposed outcome</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Implementation Becs On-line claim form.	Customers are able to complete and send a benefit form on-line, speeding up the whole process. This will improve processing times and access.			
Implementation of Trusted 3 <sup>rd</sup> party Access and E-billing.	Citizens Advice Bureau will have limited access to their customer's benefit data to be able to answer basic enquires without the need to phone the Benefits Department.			

**3.6 Equalities**

Planned Equality Impact Assessments - Service Area	Lead Officer	Review Target Completion Date
<p>We will ensure that wherever we seek to make changes to our service that a full equalities impact assessment is completed. We will always be mindful that we serve a diverse and complex community with different needs, including language barriers, cultural differences as well issues such as vulnerability and disability.</p> <p>It is our aim to discuss and/or consult with relevant stakeholder groups any proposed changes, ensuring that no one group is disadvantaged and that we seek to understand and investigate issues that may arise. Where changes are made, we will seek to mitigate the consequences and effects for those groups. We will not make changes for changes sake.</p>	<p>Head of Revenues &amp; Benefits</p>	

Page 56

Service Equalities Objectives 14/17	Targets	Review process	Review date	Resources	Lead officer	Relevant Equalities Groups
<p><b>Promoting Community Leadership &amp; Community Cohesion</b></p>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Race</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Age</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Disability</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gender</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Religion</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Marriage /</li> </ul>

Service Equalities Objectives 14/17	Targets	Review process	Review date	Resources	Lead officer	Relevant Equalities Groups
						civil partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Maternity / Pregnancy
<b>Improving Community Engagement</b>						
						<input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage / civil partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Maternity / Pregnancy
<b>Promoting Equality In Service Delivery</b>						
						<input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage / civil partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Maternity / Pregnancy
<b>Promoting Equality Of Opportunity In Employment &amp; Training</b>						
						<input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Disability

Service Equalities Objectives 14/17	Targets	Review process	Review date	Resources	Lead officer	Relevant Equalities Groups
						<input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage / civil partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Maternity / Pregnancy
<b>Evaluating The Success Of Our Equalities Commitments</b>						
						<input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Religion <input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage / civil partnership <input type="checkbox"/> Maternity / Pregnancy

**3.7 Risk Management**

**RISK REGISTER**

Service Plan:							
Risk Ref	Risk	Impact	Impact Classification	Likelihood Classification	Reason for Assessment		
	<i>Brief Description – Title of Risk</i>	<i>See Impact Table</i>	<i>See Impact Table</i>	<i>See Likelihood Table</i>	<i>Use this box to describe how the score has been derived</i>		
1	Insufficient staff	Service Disruption	I	E	This impact has been assessed taking into account 'normal' circumstances. It does not assume the scenario of a flu pandemic where there would be a national shortage of staff. Under normal circumstances it is usually possible to engage agency staff easily, although this will be more expensive than budgeted payroll costs.	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	I			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	I-			Date Closed	
2	Total failure of ICT systems	Service Disruption	II	D	Although the likelihood of losing ICT Systems is considered low, in the event of it happening, the Business Continuity Plan determines timescales within which the systems should be made available in order to avoid a significant impact. For this range of services those timescales are:- Benefits - 48 hours	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	I			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	I			Date Closed	

					Overpayments - 48 hours Billing & Collection of Council Tax & NNDR - 48 hours Sundry Debtors - 5 days		
3	Loss of accommodation	Service Disruption	II	E	Although the likelihood of losing accommodation is considered low, in the event of it happening, the Business Continuity Plan determines timescales within which accommodation should be made available in order to avoid a significant impact. For this range of services those timescales are:-  Benefits - 48 hours Overpayments - 48 hours Billing & Collection of Council Tax & NNDR - 48 hours Sundry Debtors - 5 days  The ability of staff to work from locations away from the office now that we have an electronic data management system has considerably reduced this risk.	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	II			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	II			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	I			Date Closed	



Risk Ref	Risk	Impact	Impact Classification	Likelihood Classification	Reason for Assessment		
RB4	Losses incurred due to internal fraudulent activity	Service Disruption	III	E	Potential impact of any loss could be great both financially and reputationally. However, controls are in place to limit the opportunity for such action	Requires Treatment	Yes
		Financial Loss	III			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	III			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	III			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	III			Date Closed	
RB 5	Recession leads to greater take-up of benefits and added pressure on service	Service Disruption	II	E	Given that we are currently in a recession there is a high probability that more people will claim benefit. It is irrelevant whether those claims are processed successfully, the additional work will lie in checking and processing.	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	II			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	II			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	II			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	II			Date Closed	
RB 6	Recession leads to more non-payment of council tax and business rates	Service Disruption	I	D	We are maintaining collection levels at or above previous years. Provision will be made for anticipated reductions in collection due to impact of Local Council Tax Support. The financial effect will be on cash-flow and lost interest.	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	II			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	I			Date Closed	
RB 7	Recession means it is more difficult to collect sundry debts and HB overpayments	Service Disruption	I	D	We are maintaining collection at or above past years	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	I			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	I			Date Closed	

Risk Ref	Risk	Impact	Impact Classification	Likelihood Classification	Reason for Assessment		
RB 8	Breach of Data Protection etc Acts	Service Disruption	I	F	Staff are trained to know that they must not disclose personal data.	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	I			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	III			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	I			Date Closed	
RB 9	Injury to staff or customer	Service Disruption	I	F	Safety procedures in place for lone workers and those visiting customers at home. H&S policies and training in place.	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	I			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	III			Date Closed	
RB 10	Benefits are not realised once shared services is implemented or realised later than planned.	Service Disruption	II	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Councils do not achieve remaining £1.4m in savings</li> <li>- Service performance deteriorates/does not improve</li> <li>- Little or no return on investment</li> </ul>	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	II			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	II			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	I			Date Closed	
RB 11	Operational performance drops during the transition period and early phase of implementation.	Service Disruption	II	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- BVPIs drop resulting in member and customer dissatisfaction</li> <li>- Negative feedback from Audit Commission during annual audit</li> <li>- Cost of additional resources to improve performance</li> <li>- Credibility of programme drops</li> </ul>	Requires Treatment	Yes
		Financial Loss	II			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	II			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	I			Date Closed	
RB 12	Harmonisation of operational policies to deliver business improvement is either not achieved to a sufficient	Service Disruption	II	E	- Benefits not achieved as per business case or at additional cost	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	I			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	I			Date Closed	

	level or takes longer than anticipated.						
RB 13	Contracts with systems suppliers are not robust enough	Service Disruption	I	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor performance</li> <li>- Increased licence/maintenance or implementation costs</li> <li>- Delays to implementation</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	I			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	I			Date Closed	
RB 14	A reduction in the number of Benefit Assessors above that planned in advance of the full implementation of Universal Credit	Service Disruption	III	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key expertise could be lost</li> <li>- Staff decide to seek alternative career options</li> <li>- Increased reliance on 3<sup>rd</sup> parties</li> </ul>	Requires Treatment	Yes
		Financial Loss	II			Last Review Date	05/11/13
		Reputation	III			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/14
		People	III			Date Closed	

Likelihood ↑	A					
	B					
	C					
	D					
	E					
	F					
		I	II	III	IV	V
<b>Impact</b>						

Impact  
V = Catastrophic  
IV = Critical  
III = Significant  
II = Marginal  
I = Negligible

Likelihood  
A = ≥98%  
B = 75% - 97%  
C = 50% - 74%  
D = 25% - 49%  
E = 3% - 24%  
F = ≤2%

*Enter Risk number in the profiling grid (left) against the highest impact classification for the risk and the appropriate likelihood classification taken from the table above.*

**Version Control  
Example**

Version No.	Date	Reason for Update / Significant Changes	Made By
0.1	04.11.13	Updated text. Forwarded to Finance for budget information.	JW

# Agenda Item 7

## THREE RIVERS & WATFORD SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Date of meeting: 18 November 2013

PART A

AGENDA ITEM

# 7

**Title:** MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE

**Report of:** Cathy Watson – Head of Human Resources  
Emma Tiernan / Allan Caton – ICT Client Managers  
Alan Power – Head of Finance  
Robert Del Salla – Interim Head of Revenues and Benefits

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1. **SUMMARY**

1.1 This report gives performance information for the Quarter 2 of 2013/14.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the Committee notes this report.

**Contact Officer:**

For further information on this report please contact:

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**Report approved by:**

Joanne Wagstaffe – Shared Director of Finance

Telephone Number: 01923 727200 e-mail: [joanne.wagstaffe@watford.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.wagstaffe@watford.gov.uk)

### 3. **DETAILED PROPOSAL**

3.1 Measures of Performance for Quarter 2 of 2013/14 are attached at Appendix 1.

3.2 Relevant officers will attend the meeting to answer questions.

### 4. **IMPLICATIONS**

#### 4.1 **Policy**

4.1.1 The recommendations in this report are within the policies of the Joint Committee, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council.

#### 4.2 **Financial**

4.2.1 There are no changes to the budget or the efficiency gains already agreed by the Joint Committee, Three Rivers District Council or Watford Borough Council as a result of this report.

#### 4.3 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

4.3.1 There are no legal issues associated with this report.

#### 4.4 **Risk Management and Health & Safety**

4.4.1 There are no risks associated with the decision members are being asked to take (i.e. to note the report).

#### 4.5 **Equalities, Staffing, Accommodation, Community Safety, Sustainability & Environment, Communications & Website and Customer Services**

4.5.1 None specific.

### **Appendices**








Watford and Three Rivers Shared Services – Measures of Performance, Annual, Quarterly, Monthly – 2013/14 (Quarter 2: July-September)

### **Background Papers**








No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

## WATFORD AND THREE RIVERS SHARED SERVICES – MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE

### Annual, Quarterly, Monthly – 2012/13 (QUARTER 2 – JULY - SEPTEMBER 2013/14)




Ref	Measure	Target for Q2 2013/14	Actual at end of Q2 2013/14	Cumulative at end of Q2 2013/14	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2013/14)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
<b>Finance</b>									
SSF1	<b>% payment made by BACS</b>	Quarterly						Finance	
	Watford BC	90%	90.34%	90.24%		↑	↑		
	Three Rivers DC [FN09 (2)]	90%	85.08%	82.88%		↔	N/A		
SSF2	<b>Creditor payments paid within 30 days</b>	Quarterly						Finance	
	Watford BC	100%	98.32%	96.54%		↑	↑		This is a corporate PI managed and reported by Finance. Service Departments have been reminded of their responsibilities to process invoices on time. WBC performance for Sept 2013 - 98.32%
	Three Rivers DC [FN09 (1)]	100%	96.57%	96.67%		↔	N/A		

Watford and Three Rivers Shared Services - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 (July-September) – 2013/14












Ref	Measure	Target for Q2 2013/14	Actual at end of Q2 2013/14	Cumulative at end of Q2 2013/14	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2013/14)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
SSF4	<b>Month end account closure - reconciliations</b>	Monthly						Finance	
	Watford BC	100% reconciliations done	Yes – 100%	Yes – 100%		↔	↔		
	Three Rivers DC [FN02]	100% reconciliations done	Yes – 100%	Yes – 100%		↔	↔		
SSF7	<b>Closure of Annual Accounts and production of statements – Statement of Accounts approval</b>	Annual						Finance	
	Watford BC	Achieved	Achieved	N/A		N/A	N/A		Achieved for both authorities on time. Unqualified opinion from external auditors.
	Three Rivers DC [FN04 (1)]	Achieved	Achieved	N/A		N/A	N/A		












Watford and Three Rivers Shared Services - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 (July-September) – 2013/14

Ref	Measure	Target for Q2 2013/14	Actual at end of Q2 2013/14	Cumulative at end of Q2 2013/14	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2013/14)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
<b>Human Resources</b>									
SSHR1	<b>Sickness absence (working days lost)</b>	Quarterly						Human Resources	
	Watford BC	2.5 days	1.94 days	3.9 days	!	↓	↑		Watford BC has amended stats to reflect current workforce profile for qtr 1 (post transfer of staff to Veolia Watford). Although there has been improvement since last year, the change in workforce needs to be taken into account when comparing year on year trends.
	Three Rivers DC	1.25 days	1.02 days	2.49 days	😊	↑	↔		





Watford and Three Rivers Shared Services - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 (July-September) – 2013/14

Ref	Measure	Target for Q2 2013/14	Actual at end of Q2 2013/14	Cumulative at end of Q2 2013/14	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2013/14)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
SSHR2	<b>Appraisals completed on time</b>	Quarterly						Human Resources	
	Watford BC	100%	93%	93%		↑	↓		
	Three Rivers DC (HR10)	100%	86.46%	86.46%		↑	↑		
SSHR3	<b>Workforce monitoring report (6 monthly )</b>	Bi-Annual						Human Resources	
	<b>Watford BC</b>								
HR3 (a)	% of top 10% earners who are:								
	Women	50%	54.5%			-	↓		
	From Black and ethnic minority groups;	13%	18%			-	↑		
	Have a disability	5%	0%			-	↑		
HR 3 (b)	% of employees declaring they have a disability	5%	3.3%			-	↓		
HR 3 (c)	% of employees from ethnic minority communities	13%	12.5%			-	↑		
HR 3 (d)	Ratio of HR staff to FTE's	1.90	1.129			-	-		Based on CIPFA Guidance and including WHCrem, Councillors and current staff on casual contracts
HR 3 (e)	Employee Turnover	No target	5.5%		-	-	-		





Watford and Three Rivers Shared Services - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 (July-September) – 2013/14

Ref	Measure	Target for Q2 2013/14	Actual at end of Q2 2013/14	Cumulative at end of Q2 2013/14	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2013/14)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
	<b>Three Rivers DC</b>								
HR3 (a)	% of top 10% earners who are:								
	Women	50%	25%			↑	-		
	From Black and ethnic minority groups;	13.6%	6.4%			↓	-		
	Have a disability	9.2%	12.9%			-	-		
HR 3 (b)	% of employees declaring they have a disability	9.2%	4.9%			↑	-		
HR 3 (c)	% of employees from ethnic minority communities	13.6%	5.2%			↑	-		
HR 3 (d)	Ratio of HR staff to FTE's	1:90	1:29			-	-		Based on CIPFA Guidance and including WHCrem, Councillors and current staff on casual contracts
HR 3 (e)	Employee Turnover	No target	1.3%		-	-	-		










Watford and Three Rivers Shared Services - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 (July-September) – 2013/14

Ref	Measure	Target for Q2 2013/14	Actual at end of Q2 2013/14	Cumulative at end of Q2 2013/14	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2013/14)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
<b>ICT</b>									
SS ICT1	<b>ICT service availability to users during core working hours</b>	Quarterly						ICT	
	Watford BC & Three Rivers DC	99.5%	99.91%	N/A		N/A	N/A		<p>For this period there were 3 x P1 incidents against Lagan and TLC applications. These were resolved within the SLA of 2 hours.</p> <p>Note: This measure is a shared indicator.</p>
SSICT 2	<b>ICT Customer satisfaction</b>	Quarterly						ICT	
	Watford BC & Three Rivers DC	5.65%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		<p>A survey return rate of at least 20% is required for results to be valid. A reminder has been sent to all staff to complete the satisfaction surveys. (Sept 2013).</p>









Watford and Three Rivers Shared Services - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 (July-September) – 2013/14





Ref	Measure	Target for Q2 2013/14	Actual at end of Q2 2013/14	Cumulative at end of Q2 2013/14	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2013/14)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
SSICT 3	<b>Helpdesk resolution</b>	Quarterly						ICT	
	Watford BC	99.00%	99.60%	N/A		N/A	N/A		Resolution is measured from the point the response is complete until service is restored (for an incident) by workaround, or fix, or fulfilled (for a service request) and agreed by the contact.

Watford and Three Rivers Shared Services - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 (July-September) – 2013/14




Ref	Measure	Target for Q2 2013/14	Actual at end of Q2 2013/14	Cumulative at end of Q2 2013/14	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2013/14)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
<b>Revenues and Benefits</b>									
SSRB 1	<b>General debtors raised</b>	Quarterly						Revenues & Benefits	
	Watford BC	£9.2m (cumulative)	-	£18.3m		↑	↑		
	Three Rivers DC								
SSRB 2	<b>General debtors collected</b>	Quarterly						Revenues & Benefits	
	Watford BC	92% (cumulative)	-	94.8%		↑	↑		
	Three Rivers DC								
SSRB 3	<b>Collection rates of council tax</b>	Quarterly						Revenues & Benefits	
	Watford BC	55.2% (cumulative)	-	55%		↑	↑		Only just below target for Q2.
	Three Rivers DC (RB 01)	48.00%	57.60%	57.60%		↑	N/A		
SSRB 4	<b>Collection rates of NNDR</b>	Quarterly						Revenues & Benefits	
	Watford BC	60.1% (cumulative)	60.3%	60.3%		↑	↑		
	Three Rivers DC (RB 02)	49.60%	61.00%	61.00%		↑	N/A		

Watford and Three Rivers Shared Services - Measures Of Performance – Progress report as of quarter 2 (July-September) – 2013/14

Ref	Measure	Target for Q2 2013/14	Actual at end of Q2 2013/14	Cumulative at end of Q2 2013/14	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2013/14)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
SSRB 5	<b>Average time to process new claims</b>	Quarterly						Revenues & Benefits	
	Watford BC	22 days (cumulative)	19.66 days	19.66 days		↑	↑		
	Three Rivers DC (RB 03)	24 days	18.34 days	18.34 days		↑	↑		
SSRB 6	<b>Average time to process change of circumstances</b>	Quarterly						Revenues & Benefits	
	Watford BC	15 days (cumulative)	45.64 days	50.86 days		↓	↑		Average for the first 6 months is higher due to backlog of Atlas files. These are now clear.  20.12 days for Sept 13.
	Three Rivers DC (RB 04)	10 days	22.54 days	22.54 days		↓	↑		Although this indicator is under performing, this figure is, on average, a 15 day improvement on the same period last year.
SSRB 7	<b>New claims – average time to process from receipt of all information</b>	Quarterly						Revenues & Benefits	
	Watford BC	15 days (cumulative)	11.20 days	11.86 days		↑	↑		

Ref	Measure	Target for Q2 2013/14	Actual at end of Q2 2013/14	Cumulative at end of Q2 2013/14	  	Trend since last period (Q1 2013/14)	Trend since last year (2012/13)	Service Lead	Comments
	Three Rivers DC	15 days	8.43 days	8.43 days		↑	↑		

### Key to performance against target

-  on target or above target
-  not on target but there is no cause for concern at this stage.
-  not on target/ more than 10% variance and is a cause for concern.

### Annual indicators (reported at different stages throughout 2013/14)

These indicators (relating to Finance) are collected annually and will, mainly, be reported at the end of quarter 4.

SSF3	<b>Treasury , Investments and Banking Services Management of short and long term cash flow</b>
SSF5	<b>Monthly Budget Monitoring Reports – Overall Revenue Budget Performance</b>
SSF6	<b>Monthly Budget Monitoring Reports – Overall Capital Budget Performance</b>
SSF8	<b>Compilation of government returns – revenue account, revenue summary, capital outturn – (RA, RS,CO)</b>
SSF9	<b>Benefit Fraud – number of cases investigated</b>
SSF10	<b>Benefit Fraud – Number of sanctions administered</b>
SSF11	<b>Benefit Fraud – Number of sanctions administered</b>



# Agenda Item 9

## THREE RIVERS & WATFORD SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 18 November 2013

PART A	AGENDA ITEM
	<b>9</b>

**Title:** ICT Service – Update  
**Report of:** Allan Caton – ICT Client Manager

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1. **SUMMARY**
  - 1.1 This report provides an update on the ICT Service Provision.
2. **RECOMMENDATION**
  - 2.1 That the report be noted.

**Contact Officer:**

For further information on this report please contact:

Allan Caton

telephone number: 01923 727457

email: [allan.caton@watford.gov.uk](mailto:allan.caton@watford.gov.uk)

**Approved by:**

Joanne Wagstaffe – Finance Director

## 3.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL

### 3.1 Managed Service Update

3.1.1 The managed service is now established and the following functions are in place and being monitored:

- TUPE staff from the majority of the on site support team are continuing to share retained knowledge with new members from Capita SIS.
- The purpose built Service Desk in Weybridge is functioning well with 99.79% of calls responded to within SLA. There are Service Desk operators dedicated to the W3R account who log calls on a 24 x 7 basis.
- Regular Change Management meetings are taking place to ensure that changes are documented, risks are assessed and authority for changes obtained prior to changes proceeding.
- The monthly Service Review meetings are taking place to review the analysis of the previous month's data including repeat and priority 1 incidents.
- Problem Management is in place to enable early identification of repeat issues. The resolution database is being constantly updated and known problems are being dealt with in a more timely fashion.
- The network infrastructure is being constantly monitored including communications lines, storage and server availability to enable early recognition of infrastructure issues and future network planning.

3.1.2 The following meetings are currently taking place to monitor and deliver the managed service:

- Monthly service review meetings
- Monthly account management
- Fortnightly project board
- Weekly change control board
- ITSG (IT Steering Group) meet every 5 weeks

3.1.3 Meetings to further the development of the ICT roadmap continue, with the development of the ICT strategy included within this.

3.1.4 The Capita Management team consist of the following:

Service Delivery Manager:

- Dedicated to the W3R account
- Manages day to day service delivery, including the team, processes and client management liaison

Account Manager:

- Dedicated day to day client contact for all commercial and contractual issues
- Escalation point for any service delivery issues
- Key interface to Programme & Project Managers
- Access to CSIS Senior Management

Regional Account Director:

- Support and escalation point for Account Manager

- Overall responsibility for W3R account via Account Manager
- Direct access to CSIS and CAPITA senior management

## 3.2 **Project Work**

### 3.2.1 **PSN (Public Services Network):**

This has been previously known as GSI (or GCSX) and has been in place since 2009. This is a secure and trusted network over which the Councils transfer various pieces of information and data to other trusted public sector organisations e.g. DWP.

For a number of reasons the Cabinet Office has imposed a zero tolerance approach to any public sector organisation who has not met all conditions required for accreditation. In previous years local authorities have been able to evidence “works in progress” in order to meet accreditation status. This has now changed.

Cabinet Office has increased the number of conditions required of local authorities to reach accreditation. They have also increased the level of security required in certain areas of the network.

We have worked a network redesign to meet the new requirements from the Cabinet Office and we are currently having a dialogue with them to ensure the design meets their specification. Policies and procedures have been created and updated. The impact to all users will be communicated on an ongoing basis.

We have prepared a short term architecture design, required for the 2013 submission, and have held conference calls with the Cabinet Office to discuss it's suitability. Where there are elements of the design that need revisiting we are, as a result of the conference calls, making amendments to the plan to ensure that when it is submitted, the design will meet all of the required criteria.

The longer term solution required by the Cabinet Office is being considered alongside the short term solution to avoid unnecessary work for next years submission.

### 3.2.3 **Data Centre:**

Planning and design works to move the W3R estates to the Capita data centre are underway. Timeframes are currently being negotiated with Capita and an additional third party, BT, who are providing wide area network links.

All disaster recovery and business continuity plans will be risk assessed and revised in parallel to the data centre planning and migration.

### 3.2.4 **Management Tools**

Client Team projects, lead and support roles and progress are itemised in Appendix A – IT Client Work Program as requested in September's JSSC. This is a working document and, as such is subject to continual change but provides a snapshot view of ongoing work.

## 3.3 **Audit Reports**

3.3.1 The Audit Committee reports have been updated with the position on all outstanding recommendations. These recommendations have been built into the consolidated projects list under review by ITSG.

4. **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Policy**

4.1.1 The recommendations in this report are within the policies of the Joint Committee, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council.

4.2 **Financial**

4.2.1 There are no changes to the budget or the efficiency gains already agreed by the Joint Committee, Three Rivers District Council or Watford Borough Council as a result of this report.

4.3 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

4.3.1 None specific to this report.

4.4	<b>Risk Management and Health &amp; Safety</b>
4.4.1	There are no risks associated with the decision members are being asked to take, i.e. to note this report

4.5 **Equalities, Staffing, Accommodation, Community Safety, Sustainability & Environment, Communications & Website and Customer Services**

4.5.1 None specific.

**Appendices**



Appendix A – IT Client Work Program

**Background Papers**

None.

# Appendix A

## IT Client Work Program

Key: Completed Task   
Ongoing or Scheduled Task 

No	Project Area	Milestones	Target Dates	Lead	Support	Priority	RAG Status	Comments/Updates
1	PSN (Public Sector Network)	1. Complete short term requirements for 2013 accreditation	Nov 8	ET	AC	1		1. Includes completion of outstanding IT health check actions, creation of all new policies and procedures, implementation of short term network redesign. (current weekly PSN project meetings)
		2. Finalise long term requirements and put project plan in place for 2014 accreditation.	Q1 2014					2. Definition of user impact for long term design to be created, particularly in relation to unmanaged end user devices
		3. Submit short term design to Cabinet Office for approval	Nov 6					3. Documents and design submitted to Cabinet Office for accreditation or extension to deadline
2	Thin Client improvements	1. Received initial thin client solution document (Complete)		ET	AC	1		Note: this is for an initial short term solution to the current issues with thin client for WBC and TRDC. Longer term solutions need to be established in line with the medium term ICT strategy.
		2. Capita lead identified (complete)						
		3. Detailed proposal including costs and timescales - end Oct	Nov 13					
		4. Estimated timeframe for completion of short term solution - by end of Dec 13	Dec 13					
3	3rd Party Contracts	1. Suppliers contacted to complete questionnaire (Paul Morgan)		ET	AC	1		This work has a number of benefits: Collating all service levels with other suppliers will be fed into the Capita helpdesk system, therefore allowing Capita engineers and the client team to monitor performance of other third party contracts. The collation of this information includes copies of third party contracts, we will therefore be clear what is included within support and what support gaps and risks we have. Centralise spreadsheet of all third party contracts, proactive monitoring of contract review, renewals and potential savings can be identified.
		2. Collate feedback & chase outstanding - Oct - Nov						
		3. Supplier SLA's to be fed into Capita service desk system - Nov-Dec						
4	Budgets and Finance	1. Two meetings held so far with Steve Exton on ICT budgets & one meeting with Howard Hughes (involved throughout transition).		ET	AC	1		1. Awaiting additional information from Capita, where I have asked for proposals with costs for all project workstreams to deliver short term roadmap e.g. Thin client improvements, Enterprise Vault upgrade, Outstanding requirements from due diligence, desktop replacement & refresh, Email server consolidation. Expected end of October for these.
		2. Meeting with Steve Exton and Joanne Wagstaffe on Oct 11						

		3. Budget review complete - end Oct / Early Nov						2. Revenue budget changes currently being reviewed.
5	Project Process mapping	1. Review of initial process - ITSG (early Nov)		ET	AC	1		End to end process required, that should be communicated to all users. This process impacts budget and service planning for both authorities and needs to feed in. Have information on service planning from TRDC, awaiting info from WBC. Agreement required as to what projects need to be monitored and by whom. How projects are prioritised etc.
		2. Agree actions and way forward from ITSG meeting.						
		3. Projected completion - end Dec						
6	Contract Management	Meetings to monitor contract: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly service review meetings</li> <li>• Monthly account management</li> <li>• Fortnightly project board</li> <li>• Weekly change control board</li> <li>• ITSG (IT Steering Group) meet every 5 weeks – key role to develop ICT strategy</li> </ul> ** In addition to this audit committee, TRDC Management Board, WBC Leadership Team, additional project and roadmap meetings.		ET/AC		1		Other areas include: user service meetings (only in place currently for TRDC), dealing with call and procedure escalations, all procurement (hardware and software), monitoring of all other third party contracts (inc account meetings where required). In addition to this establishing clear processes and procedures for non-contract work e.g. hardware procurement
7	PCI (Payment Card Industry)	Telephone Meeting with Henry Kenyon	2/10/2013	AC	ET	1		Meeting with Henry Kenyon (Capita) and Trevor Grove (Comec) to be arranged for W/C 14/10/2013. Quarterly scans to be commenced Q4 2013
		Separate applications on Servers	Oct/Nov 2013					Workplan for Pause/Resume of call recording submitted 4/11/13
		Present Options for call recording	Oct/Nov 2013					Meeting with Capita SIS and Billy Hall to discuss Oak call recording and the options around it.
		Implement option from above						
8	Purchase Order Processing	Meeting with Billy Hall	1/10/2013	AC	ET	1		Discussed the required process with Billy Hall and Sue Meyrick. Putting together Purchase Order request form for Capita. Begin testing the procedure W/C 14/10/2013
		Agreed procedure with Sue Meyrick	3/10/2013					Jerry Faigrieve checking contractual obligation Nov 13
		Trial new procedure W/C 25/11/2013	W/C 25/11/2013					

9	Application Categories prioritisation	Meeting to finalise Contract Change Notice (CNN) 9/10/2013		AC	ET	1		Meetings on 8th and 9th to finalise the application categories
		Sign off CCN	W/C 11/11/2013					Sign off the changes and append them to the contract
10	Virgin commissioned line	Compile options from Virgin 10/10/2013		AC	ET	1		Options to be looked at including managed service. Prices to be obtained and compared to Capita monitoring levels using existing technology
		Configure Solarwinds to monitor fibre line	W/C 11/11/2013					Position Solarwinds screens in ICT section to enable early notification of a line break.
11	WBC Planning Limehouse replacement	Scoping document completed - to be reviewed by ICT	Complete	AC	ET	2		Currently under review. Review complete – amendments to ITT made and returned to Philip Bylo
12	Data Centre Transfer	1. Project initiation document completed		ET	AC	1		Design documents for the following: High level network design - completed 4th Oct. This has been through a critical review process and a follow up meeting is taking place 9th Oct. Storage design document, inc performance metrics - currently under review. Virtual server design document - under review. All of these documents will feed into an overall solution document.
		2. Design documents completed - end Nov						
		3. Data Centre transfer takes place end Jan, early Feb 2014						
13	Other miscellaneous projects	Various milestones and target dates. Client management team do not project manage, but agree scope and monitor progress through project board meetings.		ET/AC	ET/AC	2		WBC Managed Print Services, TRDC Canon print services, WBC museum telephony, Uniform upgrade (TRDC), TLC reload (TRDC), E-Services (Revs and Bens), Review of remote site links e.g. Batchworth depot etc, Academy revs and bens upgrade, Improvement of QA & Victor (Revs and Bens), Netcall (WBC) & there are others in progress.
14	A) Review WBC Uniform/IDOX B) TRDC CRM Implementation C) Building Control project (WBC)	Various milestones. Agreement of client role within these projects is required.		ET	AC	2		All only just initiated. A) Capita are reviewing the managed services proposal from Idox. B) CRM PQQ reviewed and feedback given. Feedback given to GG on ITT. C) Capita to attend initial meeting 10/10
15	Desktop Refresh	Desktop Definition Document to be drafted by 11/10/2013		AC	ET	1		Meeting with Mike Airey (Capita Programme Manager) 7 <sup>th</sup> November
		Identify dependencies and links with Thin Client						Thin Client meeting identified elements of desktop



		upgrade					refresh within it.
		Audit desktop operating systems					ESET audit carried out to establish extent of non compliant operating systems
16	Watford Museum Telephony	Meet with SDM and Comec at the museum to assess requirements	Oct 13	AC	ET	2	Visited Museum with Comec and Service Delivery Manager to gather requirements Oct 13
		Request termination period for existing lines					
		Place orders for new lines/equipment and arrange installation					
17	Communications	1. Communications forward plan - agreed by ITSG - 17th Sept		ET	AC	1	Communications in place - articles in Aug & Sept WATs Up & All Aboard. Staff & members 1/4 bulletin currently being drafted. Planned downtime emails being circulated as required.
		2. Communications strategy - Q4					
18	Road Map Projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enterprise Vault (TRDC email archive upgrade)</li> <li>2. Email server consolidation</li> <li>3. Development of ICT strategy</li> <li>4. Housing keeping and further policy development</li> <li>5. PSN long term project (to June 2014)</li> <li>6. Outstanding network recommendations</li> </ol>		NA	NA	NA	Still to be defined, authorised, prioritised and budgets allocated. (A number of these were raised as part of due diligence)

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# Agenda Item 10

## THREE RIVERS & WATFORD SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 18 November 2013

PART A	AGENDA ITEM
	<b>10</b>

**Title:** Revenue and Benefits Update

**Report of:** Jane Walker, Benefits Manager

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**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Revenues and Benefits Service and current performance of the Benefits Service.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the report be noted and Members be invited to comment on its contents.

**Contact Officer:**

For further information on this report please contact Jane Walker, Benefits Manager, telephone 01923 278272, email [jane.walker@watford.gov.uk](mailto:jane.walker@watford.gov.uk)

### 3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 The following report outlines the current performance of the Watford Borough Council & Three Rivers District Council Revenues and Benefits shared service.

### 4. BENEFIT PROCESSING TIMES

- 4.1 There has been significant progress in the speed of processing new claims during the last month. This has allowed us to put some additional resources into the processing of changes in circumstances so that we can achieve improved performance over the medium term. Whilst the improvements are to be welcomed, we are now in a position to undertake a further forensic examination of our outstanding work. In some cases, the delays to the processing of new claims/change in circumstances are simply down to the complexity of the claim or we are awaiting further information from the customer. This could result in our performance dropping in the short term but we are closely monitoring these and looking at the underlying times for the new cases.

The current benefits processing times are shown in the table below:

Performance Data - TRDC  
(Source SHEBE)

Month	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Combined Speed</b>	20.79	16.94	21.99	22.00	22.27	23.53	14.08					
<b>New Claims</b>	27.45	19.88	18.49	17.32	20.31	17.09	17.94					
<b>Changes</b>	19.46	16.50	22.55	22.55	20.27	24.26	13.55					

Performance Data - WB  
(Source SHEBE)

Month	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>Combined Speed</b>	89.95	56.83	42.20	27.57	22.53	20.15	14.54					
<b>New Claims</b>	25.43	19.35	19.49	14.47	14.15	20.34	16.55					
<b>Changes</b>	102.71	64.17	45.65	29.28	24.05	20.12	14.13					

- 4.2 One of the large factors in the historically high claims processing times has been the ATLAS system, and the number of items outstanding which still needed to be processed.

The Benefits team has completed all of the outstanding work and is now only having to manage the workload coming through ATLAS on a daily basis. Whilst the amount of data being received on a daily basis will vary, the team have now completed the backlog work and this will mean that changes are more up to date.

There is still some improvements to flow through the processing statistics, following the improvement in the ATLAS backlog and we should see these working their way through over the next couple of months.

## **5. HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT RECOVERY**

- 5.1 Housing Benefit overpayments are inevitable when dealing with housing benefit claims. The Council can reclaim grant on an element of this, in the form of Housing Subsidy. In addition the Council is able to recover the full amount of the overpayment from the claimant.

In 2012/13 the Housing benefit overpayment recovery rate achieved by the Councils was 68.81% for WBC and 62.58% for TRDC. A comparison of this in relation to other Hertfordshire Councils' can be seen in Appendix 1. This shows that not only has Watford's recovery rate increased by 12% since 2011/12 but that it is also the second best in Hertfordshire. Three Rivers has shown a larger increase in recovery rates of 17%.

The current rates for collection of Housing Benefit Overpayments as at the end of September 2013 are 66.06% for the current year for Watford and 80% for Three Rivers – against a target of 60%. This indicates that both authorities are expecting another good year for recovery of the overpayments.

- 5.2 The Revenues Service is also looking at ways in which we can improve the recovery rates, both for this year, and overpayments raised in previous years. We are now able to undertake an Attachment of Earnings order on those claimants who are now in PAYE employment. This is a new enforcement tool granted to us by the DWP. So we will be progressing this and looking at historic cases where we now have employment details.

We also hope to have LoCTA, a tracing tool, on a free trial for 3 months which we can use to obtain employment details.

We are also looking at placing Charging Orders on properties, where the claimant is a lease or freeholder of the property. We would look into this if we have a high value debt that needs to be repaid. We will be testing this shortly.

## **6. STAFFING**

- 6.1 An Interim Head of Service has now been appointed. Robert Della-Sala joined the Team on 21 October 2013. Robert is undertaking a root and branch review of all areas of Revenues and Benefits, to ensure that the service is stabilised and that any structural issues that are undermining performance of the service are identified and a plan put in place to consolidate and improve upon what is already in place.

We are undertaking interviews in week commencing 11 November for an Interim Revenues Manager.

## **7. SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS**

- 7.1 We are currently looking at ways in which we can improve the service delivery for both Revenues and Benefits. We will consider a range of solutions which improve efficiency and improve the service delivery to our customers.

Training on the new version of the Academy system has taken place and we have gone live with the new system. We have though experienced performance issues with the new system in terms of its speed and these issues have been reported to Capita and are being investigated.

A health check of our Document Image Processing system has also taken place and a comprehensive report has been supplied. We are now forming an action plan from this report to include an upgrade to the system and training on new functionality of the system which will ensure we are using the system in the most efficient way.

We are also working with the Customer Services Centre to look at how we can improve the service to our customers.

Alongside this we are also starting to develop a more robust performance management system, which will provide information which will help the service to identify

Appendix 1

Comparison of Watford with other Hertfordshire Councils

2011/12										
LA	Broxbourne	Dacorum	East Herts	Hertsmere	NorthHerts	St Albans	Stevenage	Three Rivers	Watford	Welwyn Hatfield
HB Caseload	5932	9285	6247	6127	8097	5949	7592	4523	6300	7637
Speed - New	25	24	35	n/a	19	30	28	38	35	16
Speed - Changes	9	12	6	n/a	6	n/a	9	27	30	4
HB O/P Raised	£1,788,000	£2,691,000	£1,231,000	£1,770,000	£1,512,000	£1,335,000	£1,628,000	£1,560,000	£2,975,000	£1,598,000
HB O/P Recovered	£1,242,000	£1,667,000	£1,003,000	£1,168,000	£1,094,000	£798,000	£1,328,000	£711,000	£1,690,000	£1,072,000
% Collected	69.46%	61.95%	81.48%	65.99%	72.35%	59.78%	81.57%	45.58%	56.81%	67.08%

2012/13										
LA	Broxbourne	Dacorum	East Herts	Hertsmere	NorthHerts	St Albans	Stevenage	Three Rivers	Watford	Welwyn Hatfield
HB Caseload	5985	9338	6487	6282	8119	5997	7758	4598	6505	7817
Speed - New	23	32	36	20	19	34	39	26	25	17
Speed - Changes	7	9	18	10	5	n/a	45	38	34	8
HB O/P Raised	£2,088,000	£2,585,000	£1,783,000	£2,787,000	£1,699,000	£2,518,000	£2,156,000	£1,606,246	£3,083,400	£1,680,000
HB O/P Recovered	£1,620,000	£1,695,000	£1,207,000	£1,631,000	£1,122,000	£1,314,000	£1,242,000	£1,005,139	£2,121,794	£978,000
% Collected	77.59%	65.57%	67.69%	58.52%	66.04%	52.18%	57.61%	62.58%	68.81%	58.21%

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