REVENUES AND BENEFITS HEALTH CHECK: PROGRESS AGAINST ACTION PLAN AS AT 3 JANUARY 2012

Ref No.	Recommendation	Risk Priority	Action to Date	Responsibility	Deadline	Resolved	Revised deadline
3.6.2	Ongoing processes should be set up to ensure daily reconciliation of payments between Cedar and Academy is maintained and not just reconcile to the posting file.	High	23/05/11 – Concentration on reconciling closing account as at 31/03/11. Existing controls will be in place for 2011/12 03/01/12 – Process has been devised to enable regular reconciliation and support measures currently in place. Final meeting scheduled for 06/01/12 to agree implementation and operation	Benefits Manager	March 2011	In part	
3.6.4 and 7.1.13	Reconciliation of the Benefits system to all financial systems should be commenced immediately. Processes and procedures must be agreed with Finance.	High	To be dealt with at the same time as 3.6.2 above 03/01/12 – Process has been devised to enable regular reconciliation and support measures currently in place. Final meeting scheduled for 06/01/12 to agree implementation and operation	Benefits Manager	March 2011	In part	
3.6.5	A review of cheque handling and control within the benefits service should be undertaken. This should include the automatic interface of cheque payments.	Medium	Interface will require involvement of both Academy & COA. Existing controls in place are adequate and recommendation not a high priority 03/01/12 – The current system of journal entries is considered adequate	Benefits Manager	March 2011	Yes	
3.6.6	Clarification of the procedure for emergency payments for the service as a whole is needed. A review and documentation of the reconciliation procedure for both Watford and Three Rivers payments should occur.	Medium	Existing controls are in place but formalised procedure to be drafted. 03/01/12 – Resolved. HB payments are run twice weekly and able to run ad-hoc payments via the system avoiding any reconciliation issues	Benefits Manager & Revenues Manager	April 2011	Yes	
4.4.2	Provide officers with clear procedures for the inputting of data into the Academy system.	High	"ACS" Procedure Manual has already been purchased and will be updated on an ongoing process. New post of Policy, Training & Quality Team Leader will be responsible	Policy, Training & Quality Team Leader	April 2011	Yes	

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			03/01/12 – Procedure Maps have been sent to ACS so that this resource may be used				
5.3.1 And 6.7.1	Move the Academy systems on to one server as soon as possible	High	Originally delayed to bring releases up to date. Project commenced May 2011 reporting progress to Programme Board. 03/01/02 – Completed by 29 August 2011	Head of Revenues & Benefits	April 2011	Yes	
5.3.4	Review the current structure	Medium	Much work had been undertaken in forming existing structure prior to implementation of Shared Service. No further action in short-term Not a priority action – will review by end of 2011/12	Head of Revenues & Benefits	April 2012	No	
5.3.7	Plan for single persons discount review over quarters 3 and 4	Low	Working in partnership with Herts CC 03/01/02 – Review commenced in December 2011	Revenues Manager	December 2011	Yes	
5.3.10	Harmonise payment dates as soon as possible	Medium	Most date are harmonised apart from DD. Will review for 2012/13 03/01/02 – Review carried out September 2011 and no business case to amend payment dates	Revenues Manager	April 2012	Yes	
5.3.11	Harmonise working practices and polices relating to disablement relief	Medium	Work underway – Inspector in process of reviewing cases	Revenues Manager	July 2011	No	
5.3.12	Consider reviewing bailiff performance and selecting the highest performing company	Medium	Agreed – will monitor performance of existing bailiffs in first half of 2011/12 03/01/02 – Review is continuing but not a high priority. Revised deadline set for December 2012	Revenues Manager	October 2011	No	December 2012
5.3.13	Either write off debts or reinstate committal proceedings unless it is uneconomic to collect the debt	Low	Agreed – two staff have been tasked to identify cases for write-off 03/01/02 – Harmonised write-off policy agreed and debts not being written off in accordance with policy	Revenues Manager	September 2011	Yes	
5.3.14	Harmonise recovery policies relating to bankruptcies.	Low	Agreed – not high priority. Will be resolved during 2011/12	Revenues Manager	March 2012	No	

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5.3.19	Notepads from the old Civica system have not been converted into the Academy system Either bring the information into the Academy system or import them into the Anite system using functionality within Anite	Medium	Will form part of duties of Policy Quality & Training Team Leader 03/01/12 – As we have moved further away from the migration from previous systems to Academy , there is no longer a business case for converting notepads. Access is available and for the volume of cases affected deemed sufficient. – Closed	Policy Quality & Training Team Leader	April 2011	Yes	
5.3.20 And 8.1.7	Review the use of Anite to bring efficiencies to the service	High	Will form part of duties of Policy Quality & Training Team Leader 03/01/12 – This has been subject of a number of discussions with Northgate the system providers. Progress is slow but we are continuing to explore how best to use the system	Policy Quality & Training Team Leader	April 2011	No	Feb 2012 (from Sept 2011)
5.3.21	Obtain an independent review of Academy or liaise with other authorities as to functionality available.	High	Will consider once migration to one server has been completed. We have the option to have "health checks" and will take this up. In meantime will make use of existing expertise across both councils in shared service.	Head of Revenues & Benefits	August 2011	No	March 2012
5.3.22	Review the clerical/administrative support required within the structure	Medium	Much work had been undertaken in forming existing structure prior to implementation of Shared Service. No further action in short-term Not a priority action – will review by end of 2011/12	Head of Revenues & Benefits	April 2012	No	
5.3.23	Review printing of demand notices when Academy has been migrated to one system	Medium	Migration originally delayed to bring releases up to date. Project commenced May 2011 reporting progress to Programme Board. 03/01/02 – Migration completed 29/0811	Head of Revenues & Benefits	April 2011	Yes	
6.6.3	Measure the actual workload within the Anite system and not just those items entered onto the Academy system.	High	Will form part of duties of Policy Quality & Training Team Leader 03/01/02 - Regular monitoring now underway using reports from both	Policy Quality & Training Team Leader	April 2011	Yes	

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			Academy and Anite				
6.6.4	Provide Customer Care training for all officers.	Medium	Will be delivered following introduction of new working practices with CSC taking more front-line queries. 03/01/12 – recent attention has been on clearing cases and any issues have been dealt with on a case by case basis. There is an acknowledgment that refresher training is required and this will be arranged for May 2012	Policy Quality & Training Team Leader	April 2011	No	May 2012 (from July 2011
6.6.6	Undertake customer surveys to measure satisfaction with the service	Medium	Agreed to work in collaboration with both CSC 03/01/12 – This has not been a high priority to date with focus on clearing work)	Head of Revenues & Benefits	June 2011	No	June 2012 (from June 2011)
6.6.7	Develop a measurement process of the target for customer care within the whole service.	Medium	Agreed to work in collaboration with both CSC 03/01/12 – This has not been a high priority to date with focus on clearing work)	Head of Revenues & Benefits	June 2011	No	June 2012 (from June 2011)
6.7.1 And 5.3.1	Review the project to migrate the Academy system and move the system on to one server as soon as possible	High	Originally delayed to bring releases up to date. Project commenced May 2011 reporting progress to Programme Board. 03/01/02 – Completed by 29/08/11	Head of Revenues & Benefits	April 2011	Yes	Aug 2011
7.1.2	Fast track new (clean) claims – consider a fast track service for customers at the CSC	Medium	Agreed to work in collaboration with both CSC 03/01/02 – Triage system now in place to identify clean claims and prioritise	Benefit Manager	June 2011	Yes	
7.1.5	Commence customer feedback surveys. Consider a target for customer satisfaction	Medium	Repeat of 6.6.6 and 6.6.7 above 03/01/12 – This has not been a high priority to date with focus on clearing work)	Head of Revenues & Benefits	June 2011	No	June 2012 (from June 2011)
7.1.10	Release the written procedures, review with staff working groups to ensure they are adopted.	High	"ACS" Procedure Manual has already been purchased and will be updated on an ongoing process. New post of Policy,	Policy, Training & Quality Team	April 2011	Yes	

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			Training & Quality Team Leader will be responsible 03/01/12 – Procedure Maps have been sent to ACS so that this resource may be used	Leader			
7.1.13 And 3.6.4	Reconcile the benefits system to all other systems such as Council Tax and Finance	High	To be dealt with at the same time as 3.6.2 above 03/01/02 – Now resolved. Measures now in place to enable daily reconciliation	Benefits Manager	March 2011	Yes	
8.1.6	Review the number and types of printers available to ensures they are adequate for the administration and printing requirements	High	Migration to Windows Platform will increase capacity (see 5.3.1) 03/01/02 – Multi-tray printer now in place to enhance printing ability	Head of Revenues & Benefits	April 2011	Yes	
8.1.7 And 5.3.20	Immediately review the use of the Anite system	High	Will form part of duties of Policy Quality & Training Team Leader 03/01/12 – This has been subject of a number of discussions with Northgate the system providers. Progress is slow but we are continuing to explore how best to use the system	Policy Quality & Training Team Leader	April 2011	No	Feb 2012 (from Sept 2011)
8.1.8	Provide a PC which can access all systems in the private interview room.	Medium	Agreed to work in collaboration with CSC 03/01/02 – No longer a priority so deferred to March 2012	Benefit Manager	June 2011	No	March 2012
8.1.9	Set up Watford income section users on the Three Rivers systems	Medium	Agreed. Scheduled for completion in June 2011 03/01/02 – Completed with introduction of Income Management System	Income Team Leader	June 2011	Yes	
8.1.11	Harmonise HR policies as soon as possible	High	Corporate initiative underway 03/01/02 – Corporate exercise completed	Head of HR	June 2011	Yes	
8.1.12	Review the web site and bring up to date, identify responsibility for maintenance of the site and web pages	Medium	Agreed. Responsibility assigned and tasks will be completed during 2011/12	Revenues Manager	March 2012	No	