



REVENUES & BENEFITS SERVICE PLAN

2013- 2016

Version 0.3 Shared Services Joint Committee
19 November 2012

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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 and Council Tax Benefit Overpayment;
- Recovery of arrears of repayment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Overpayment;
- Writing off of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit overpayment in accordance with the policy of the relevant local authority;
- Compilations of returns to central Government relating to Revenues & Benefits;
- Provision of administrative and support services relating to Revenues & Benefits;
- Calculation of Council Tax Base;
- Collection fund accounting;
- 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.
- Preparation of benefit subsidy claims;
- 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 second homes;
- 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 Contribution to Shared Services Objectives	
Savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pressures on the Revenues & 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.
Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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”. 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. 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. Greater cover should enable leave and training to be scheduled more easily without detriment to the service. There will be a greater resource to meet changes. Specific examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. Quality and training officers will predominantly be working on benefits but will have exposure to revenues work also. 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. Recovery staff will deal with a diversity of collection – Council tax, NNDR, Sundry Debtors and housing benefit overpayments.
Improved Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of the use of electronic access and telephone, minimise face-to-face contact especially for revenues. Cash-less, cheque-less, electronically enabled service Increased levels of home-working Mobile working – taking the service to the customer – particularly vulnerable groups 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. 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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• More responsive service due to larger size of team and increased joint resources• Aim to reduce the volume of sundry invoices, particularly at Watford Borough Council and time taken to recover debt• The consolidation of all benefits processes under one manager, including any policy training and quality monitoring to ensure full accountability within one team• 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.
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1.3 Contribution to the Councils' Strategic Objectives	
Three Rivers District Council	
Economic Opportunities	<p>3.2.1 Improve access to Benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend the number of Benefit Surgeries to include Watford Town Hall - Implement Self Service System for Benefit Claimants
Customer Service	<p>4.1.1 We will strive to improve and maintain service standards for all services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RB03 – Speed of processing new claims - RB04 – Speed of processing changes of circumstances
Watford Borough Council	
CP4 Operating the Council efficiently and Effectively	<p>By providing a service that supports those residents who are more vulnerable in terms of low income. The aim of the service is to ensure those with a genuine need are able to access the support they need quickly and effectively.</p>

1.4

The Future of the Service

2013/14

- 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
- Integration of Academy (Revenues & Benefits) with Lagan (CSC Watford) to enable more queries to be handled by CSC staff
- Increased automation of processes such as ATLAS case manager to deal with increased notifications from DWP
- Operation of Local Council Tax Support Scheme to replace Council Tax Benefit
- Operation of Housing Benefit Scheme taking into account Welfare Reforms such as “Bedroom Tax” and Benefit Cap
- Introduction of Universal Credit to be phased in from October 2013. The full effect of this is not yet known
- A more flexible regime of workload management to include the use of external resources to deal with fluctuations in workload and potential reductions in staff numbers through “natural wastage”.
- Closer working relationships established with Housing Departments, Housing Association Partners and Jobcentre Plus
- Potential review of the service dependent on the outcome of Soft Market Testing exercise
- Review of Payment methods and potential introduction of barcodes to offer easier payment options
- Review of operation of Sundry Debt collection in light of changes to other service areas, (Markets, Charter Place, Trade Refuse).

2014/15

- A revised Local Council Tax Scheme for each authority to meet the expected challenges of a reduction in grant
- Ongoing Migration of Universal Credit with more Housing Benefit cases being subsumed into that Benefit
- Increased use of multi-skilling to address challenges of Universal Credit and provide greater opportunity to redeployment of staff
- The potential for a reduction in establishment to meet the reduction in caseload created by the implementation of Universal Credit
- Potential increase in establishment in Revenues if collection and recovery becomes more challenging under Universal Credit and Council Tax Support
- Continued closer working with partners both external and internal

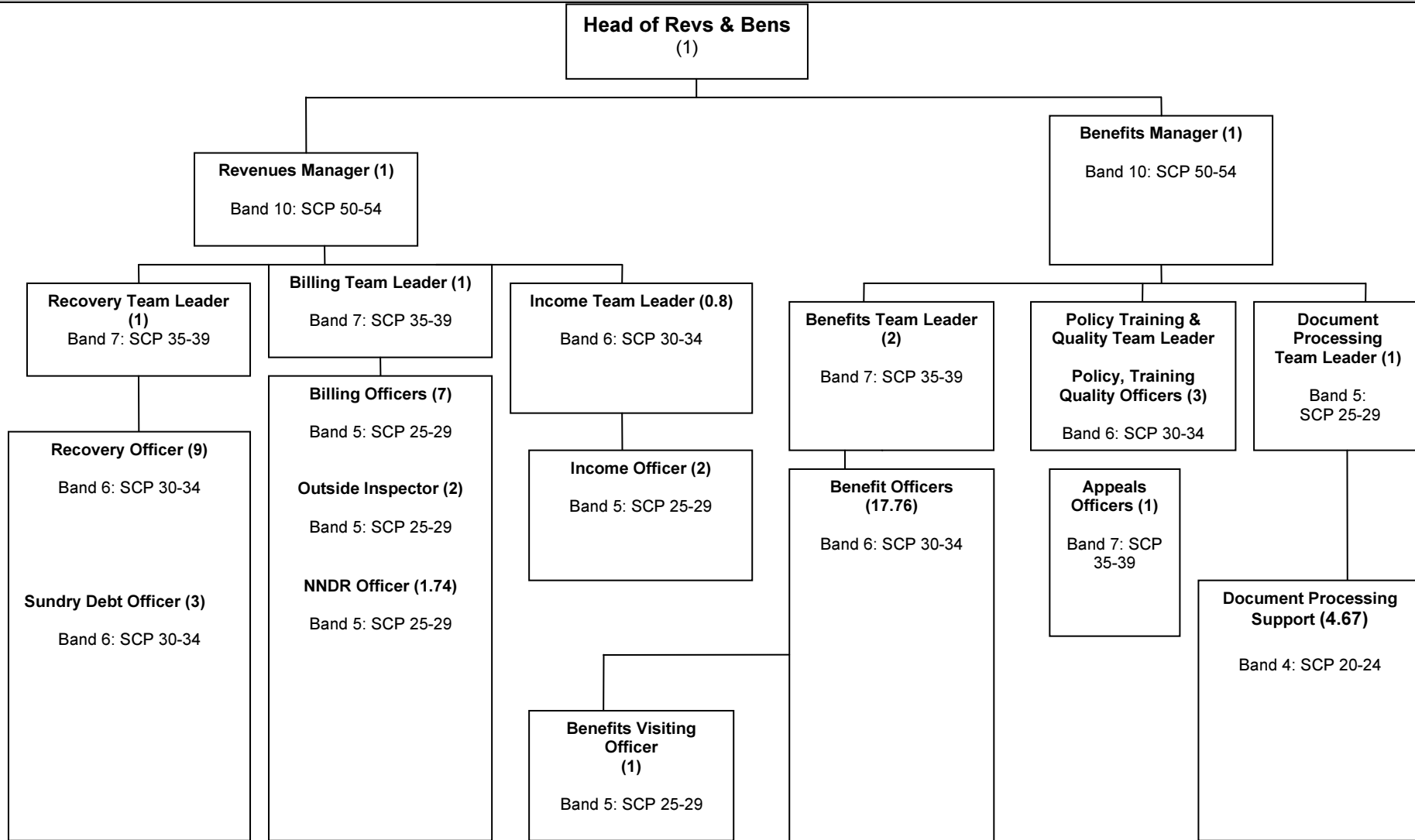
2015/16

- Continued Migration of existing Housing Benefit caseload, both Working Age & Pensioner cases.
- Further reduction in establishment as a consequence of Universal Credit.

Continued closer working with internal and external partners

SECTION 2: INPUTS

2.1 People – Organisation Chart October 2012



Job Title	Grade	No.	FTEs	'Vacant'
Head of Revenues & Benefits				
Revenues Manager	Band 10	1	1	
Recovery Team Leader	Band 7	1	1	
Recovery Officer	Band 6	10	9	
Sundry Debt Officer	Band 6	5	3	
Billing Team Leader	Band 7	1	1	
Billing Officer	Band 5	7	7	
NNDR Officer	Band 5	2	1.74	0.26
Outside Inspector	Band 5	2	2	
Income Team Leader	Band 6	1	0.8	.2
Income Officer	Band 5	2	2	
Benefits Manager	Band 10	1	1	
Benefits Team Leader	Band 7	2	2	
Policy Training & Quality Team Leader	Band 7	1	1	
Appeals Officer	Band 6	1	1	
Benefits Officer	Band 6	19	16.76	2.24
Benefits Visiting Officer	Band 5	1	1	
Trainee Benefits Officer	Band 4	2	2	
Policy, Training & Quality Officer	Band 6	3	3	
Document Processing Team Leader	Band 5	1	1	
Document Processing Support officer	Band 4	5	4.67	.33

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 Benefit) will have an impact on service delivery</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>A Phased Migration of Universal Credit from October 2013 will delay the full impact of UC. In itself this will delay a</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 Council Tax Collection</p> <p>Potential outcome could be a greater emphasis on 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</p>

	and will require a further review of the service	review until 2014, however, consideration will be required for closer working with partners to meet the challenges of UC	2013 with a reduction in grant to support Council Tax Benefit and an anticipated reduction in Benefit Admin Grant from 2013 onwards due to an anticipated reduced caseload.
CSC Implications	<p>The original assumption was that some elements of Revs & 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>Investment in intelligent e-forms will allow benefit enquiries and a high level of council tax queries to be dealt with by CSC staff. This will allow the trained council tax and benefits officers to concentrate on the more difficult work.</p> <p>There needs to be a substantial resource invested in development of the CSC during the implementation period both in terms of getting the cut-off points right and training the staff. This will provide the perfect opportunity to undertake some business process re-engineering.</p> <p>This has commenced in 2011 with Council Tax enquiries being dealt with by both CSC and a “triage” of benefits queries at One Stop Shops being operated. The early indicators are that this is achieving the required results and that the time take to reach a benefit decision is reducing</p> <p>The integration of Academy and Lagan will enable more calls to be handled by Watford CSC and provide a platform for integration with Three Rivers DC subject to the upgrade of those CRM facilities</p>
Home working	May be an attractive option to some members of staff for whom travel to Watford would cause difficulties.	<p>Need to identify the number of staff that as an optimum could work from home.</p> <p>Staff would have to be capable of working with little direct support (i.e.</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>

		<p>staff would have to be fully trained in their role or it could be used for specific tasks).</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>	
Mobile benefit officer working	<p>May be an attractive option to some members of staff who prefer an out of office role with more direct contact with customers.</p> <p>Will allow the service to be taken out to our customers.</p>		<p>This has been operated successfully on a basic level with home visits being made to vulnerable claimants. An enhanced service will be implemented during 2013 using Mobile Technology provided by our software providers, Capita, (Academy)</p>
Succession planning	<p>Staff are aware of a potential career path through the organisation.</p> <p>Impact on service is minimised because there are no gaps for key roles in the service (even if only on an interim basis).</p>	<p>'Growing your own' through the new structures e.g. team members learning to be team leaders and team leaders learning to be managers Leadership development training on-going. Identify skills/knowledge transfer programme.</p>	<p>Need to invest in training and staff development.</p> <p>If recruitment can be done from within the learning period is shorter and benefits reaped more quickly.</p> <p>To support this staff have commenced external study for IRRV Qualifications to enhance the knowledge base.</p> <p>The availability of opportunities can restrict the success of this approach</p>
More use of technology to improve performance and realise savings	<p>By offering more self-service options, staff will be able to concentrate on</p>	<p>Delivery of self-service solutions commenced in 2012 and this will be rolled</p>	<p>The level of savings will be determined by the take-up of these solutions.</p>

	<p>processing work with interruptions.</p> <p>Technology will also enable more complete applications reducing the time involved in chasing information. (BECS)</p> <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>out further in the 2013. During 2013 full use will be made of “e-claims” to adapt to the challenges of Universal Credit and encourage more use of digital applications</p> <p>Tracing defaulting taxpayers has already commenced.</p> <p>A review of Single Person and other status Discounts was conducted in 2012 and will be continued annually.</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	
Partner / Partnership	Expected Outcomes
The Appeals Service Magistrates and County Court Valuation tribunal	An effective forum to support the decision making process be it a Benefits Decision, A Liability Decision or to assist in the Recovery of outstanding debts.
Jobcentre Plus Housing Associations Welfare agencies Citizens Advice Bureaux Landlords	A co-ordinated approach to meet the challenge of Welfare Reform ranging from Local Council Tax Support to Housing Benefit Reform to Universal Credit. To be able to provide support advice and information for citizens.
Valuation Office Rent Officer	An accurate database for billing of Council Tax and Business Rates and an accurate award of Housing Benefit
External Auditors	An accurate financial position established with Certified HB Subsidy Claim and NNDR returns
External bailiffs/collection and tracing companies Internal/External solicitors	Effective and efficient debt recovery ensuring that those that can pay do and that we identify bad debts promptly to make a more efficient use of recovery resources.
DWP DCLG	We are kept up to date with Welfare Reform and made aware of any legislative changes in Benefits Administration as well as Council Tax & Non-Domestic Rate collection and administration
Capita Anite	An efficient and accurate operating system that will enable us to administer all areas of Revenues & Benefits administration and provide innovate future solutions such as self-service and "e-services"
Cooperative Bank / Natwest Bank	Efficient income management

2.4**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

2.5 Current Budgets

Draft Estimates	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	Revised	Original	Original	Original
	£	£	£	£
Employees	2,617,680	2,386,330	2,431,180	2,455,080
Transport	17,520	25,820	25,820	25,820
Supplies and Services	320,120	285,280	285,280	285,280
Contracted and Agency Services	1,300	-	-	-
Recharges	1,300	-	-	-
Total	2,955,320	2,697,430	2,742,280	2,766,180
<i>Budgets agreed by the Joint Committee November 2011</i>				
Employees	2,361,180	2,467,010	2,563,020	
Transport	19,760	19,760	19,760	
Supplies and Services	285,280	285,280	285,280	
Contracted and Agency Services	-	-	-	
Recharges	-	-	-	
Total	2,666,220	2,772,050	2,868,060	
Additional Savings (-) / Costs	289,095	- 74,620	- 125,780	

2.6		Revenue Growth, Service Reductions and Cashable Efficiency Gains		
		2013/14 £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £
1	Potential Growth			
	Benefits Activity – On-going external support for benefits processing	200,000	0	0
	Revenues Activity – Additional budget to avoid detrimental affect on collection rates and systems support	50,000	0	0
	Total	250,000	0	0
2	Service Reductions			
	None	0	0	0
	Total	0	0	0
3	Cashable Efficiency Gains			
	None	0	0	0
	Total	0	0	0

2.7		Capital Investment		
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Scheme Name	New Scheme	Capital				Revenue Implications				Savings	Resilience	Improvement
		2010/11 £	2011/12 £	2012/13 £	Future Years £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £	2012/13 £	Future Years £			
None												

SECTION 3: OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

3.1 Customer insight and consultation

3.1.1 Customer access channels

Service Area	Information Access	Service Access
Benefits	Face to face or telephone, internet, leaflets	Face to face, telephone, internet or self-service
Taxation	Face to face or telephone, internet, leaflets	Face to face, telephone, internet or self-service

3.1.2 Customer identification and segmentation data

Service provided	Customer group	Segmentation data held
Provision of benefits	Residents	Names Addresses Income National Insurance Numbers Working status Age Ethnicity (optional to provide)
	Landlords	Names Addresses Details of tenants on benefit
Billing and collection of council tax	Residents	Names Addresses Council tax property band Discounts/exemptions awarded Payment profile (regular/bad payer etc.)
Billing and collection of business rates	Businesses	Names Addresses Rateable values Discounts/exemptions awarded Payment profile (regular/bad payer etc.)

Sundry Debt Collection	Internal service departments	
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3.1.3 Communication and consultation methods

Service provided	Inform	Consult	Engage
Provision of benefits	Leaflets, e-mails, internet, face to face, telephone	Satisfaction survey Landlord Forums	Face to face Landlord Forums
Billing and collection of council tax and business rates	Bills and leaflets, e-mails, internet, some face to face	Satisfaction survey	Electronically, telephone

3.2 Service Level Agreements

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.

Other Housing Associations have been invited to sign up to the agreement.

Service Level Agreements are also in place with the Valuation Office Agency and the Pension Service

3.3 Performance Indicators

Reference SSRB1	General Debts Raised.															
Indicator Definition	Value of Sundry Debtor Invoices Raised (£m).															
Target	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	1.2	2.4	3.6	4.7	1.2	2.4	3.6	4.8	1.3	2.5	3.7	4.9	1.3	2.5	3.7	5.0
Watford	4.5	9.0	13.5	18.0	4.6	9.2	13.6	18.4	4.7	9.4	14.1	18.8	4.7	9.5	14.2	19.1
Outcome	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	1.4	2.3														
Watford	4.6	9.8														
Comments on Performance – Figures shown are for the final month in that quarter. Figures are gathered on a monthly basis.																

Reference SSRB2	General Debtors Collected.															
Indicator Definition	Percentage of debt collected at end of quarter.															
Target	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	75.0	89.0	90.0	91.0	75.0	89.0	91.0	92.0	75.0	89.0	91.5	93.0	75.0	89.0	92.0	94.0
Watford	75.0	89.0	90.0	91.0	75.0	89.0	91.0	92.0	75.0	89.0	91.5	93.0	75.0	89.0	92.0	94.0
Outcome	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	71.88	79.82														
Watford	75.81	89.06														
Comments on Performance - Figures shown are for the final month in each quarter. Reliant on Service Departments issuing demands promptly.																

Reference SSRB3	Council Tax Collection Rates															
Indicator Definition	Percentage of Council Tax collected															
Target	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	32.1	59.9	88.6	98.2	30	58	86	96	30	58	86	96	30	58	86	96
Watford	28.6	55.2	82.4	95.6	28.6	55.2	92.4	95.6	28.6	55.2	92.4	95.6	28.6	55.2	92.4	95.6
Outcome	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	29.2	57.8														
Watford	28.1	54.7														
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																

Reference SSRB4	Business Rates Collection															
Indicator Definition	Percentage of Business Rates collected															
Target	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	34.4	61.4	89.4	99.2	34.5	61.5	89.5	99.3	34.6	61.6	89.6	99.3	34.7	61.7	89.7	99.4
Watford	33.5	60.4	88.8	97.0	33.6	60.5	88.9	97.1	33.7	60.6	89.0	97.2	33.8	60.7	89.1	97.3
Outcome	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	34.3	61.5														
Watford	32.6	56.6														
Comments on Performance - Figures shown for the final month in each quarter.																

Reference SSRB3	Speed of Processing - new claims for HB / Council Tax Support															
Indicator Definition	Average time taken from date claim made to date decision made															
Target	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	30	28	27	25	25	25	24	24	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
Watford	30	28	27	25	25	25	24	24	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22
Outcome	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	43.92	28.11														
Watford	42.95	29.5														
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)																

Reference SSRB6	Speed of Processing – change in circumstances – HB / Council Tax Support															
Indicator Definition	Average time taken from date notification received to date decision made															
Target	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	20	18	17	15	15	15	15	15	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Watford	20	18	17	15	15	15	15	15	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
Outcome	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	38.12	33.64														
Watford	35.49	35.35														
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)																

Reference SSRB7	Speed of Processing – new claims for HB / Council Tax Support															
Indicator Definition	Average time taken from date all information provided to date decision made															
Target	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	15	15	15	15	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Watford	15	15	15	15	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Outcome	2012/13				2013/14				2014/15				2015/16			
	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	19.76	14.84														
Watford	20.2	12.15														
Comments on Performance – Targets for 2014 onwards will be revised further as Universal Credit has a greater impact on workload																

3.4 Benchmarking Information

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.

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.

3.5 Outstanding Recommendations of External Inspections

Grant Thornton Report to those charged with governance (ISA260)– September 2012

	Assessment	Recommendation	Management comments	Implementation date and responsibility
1	Medium	<p>Council tax debtor account listing The Council should run detailed year end debtor listings to support the council tax debtor balance.</p>	<p>Agreed - This was not run this year based on Capita guidance about the length of time that the programme would run. Capita advise that it cannot be run retrospectively – it must be run at that point in time. The Council though will ensure that the full detailed report is run for 2012-13 at year end regardless of Capita advice.</p>	<p>April 2013 K Stewart Revenues Manager</p>

Recommendations	
High Priority	
We recommend that the Shared Service:	Paragraph number
<p>1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> quantifies outstanding ATLAS work and immediately implements plans to clear all the outstanding notifications and introduce standardised work processes, ensuring prompt action on all future notifications. This will avoid further overpayment of benefit and reduce any subsidy losses.</p>	3.23
<p>2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> urgently constructs a capacity plan that includes all known future work to identify the actual cost of recovery and that Members should be made aware of the actual costs of sustaining improvements.</p>	3.18
<p>3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> amends the indexing of documents to create a change of circumstances category to better identify outstanding changes of circumstances.</p>	3.13
<p>4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> pursues and extends, where possible, its plans to automate processes to reduce processing and handling time and increase efficiency.</p>	3.49

Medium Priority

We recommend that the Shared Service:

1

maintains tighter control of the contract to ensure that work is actioned in line with the original agreement. This should involve negotiating and closely monitoring specific timelines and milestones for completion of the work allocated.

2

ensures the planned corporate review of scanning and indexing should include automating processes, addressing any confusion over post received from South Oxhey, prioritising fast-track claims and introducing trigger points to investigate delays.

3.31

3

reduces the 15 day target for fast-track claims to, at most, 7 days in order to encourage further take up and make the most of this initiative.

3.35

4

routinely analyses errors in information given or collected by customer services' staff relating to triage and fast-track claims. Feedback loops should be formally introduced to improve customer services staff's knowledge of HB/CTB and to reduce waste through rework.

3.36

5	<input type="checkbox"/> ensures the assessors covering the counter action all work taken in from customers they see each day. This will reduce rework, improve efficiency, speed up processes and reduce the occurrence of customers revisiting numerous times to resolve their queries.	3.37
6	<input type="checkbox"/> introduces key targets that are as straightforward as possible and only include volumes, speed and accuracy of decisions on new claims and changes.	3.46
7	<input type="checkbox"/> considers the impact of e-claiming on the back office processes, mapping out and standardising the new process.	3.48

3.6 Projects

The one major project will be the implementation of the suite of Academy “E-Services”.

Project	2012 Q1	2012 Q2	2012 Q3	2012 Q4	2013 Q1	2013 Q2	2013 Q3	2013 Q4	2014 2015	2015 2016	Progress / Comments									
Implementation of Academy Self-Service Modules											Complete									
Implementation of Academy / Lagan Integration 1																				
Implementation of BECS On-line claim form																				
Implementation of Trusted 3 rd Party Access, E-billing and Mobile Working																				

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 and procurement and business planning and reporting.

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

RISK REGISTER

	Risk	Impact	Impact Classification	Likelihood Classification	Reason for Assessment		
Risk Ref	<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>		
RB 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	05/11/12
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/13
		People	I			Date Closed	dd/mm/yy
RB 2	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 Overpayments - 48 hours Billing & Collection of	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	I			Last Review Date	05/11/12
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/13
		People	I			Date Closed	dd/mm/yy

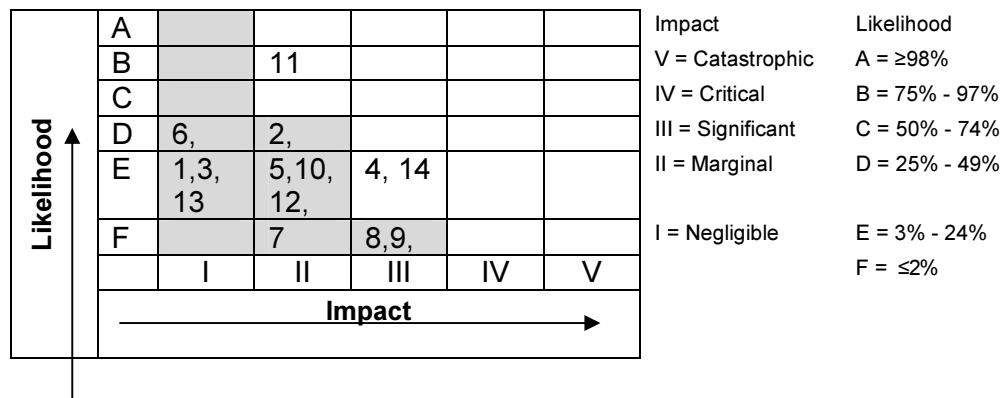
					Council Tax & NNDR - 48 hours Sundry Debtors - 5 days		
RB 3	Loss of accommodation	Service Disruption	II	E	Although the likelihood of losing accommodation is considered low, in the event of it happening, the Business Continuity Plan determines timescales within which accommodation should be made available 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	05/11/12
		Reputation	II			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/13
		People	I			Date Closed	dd/mm/yy

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	05/11/12
		Reputation	III			Next Milestone Date	
		Legal Implications	III			Next Review Date	01/10/13
		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	05/11/12
		Reputation	II			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	II			Next Review Date	01/10/13
		People	II			Date Closed	dd/mm/yy
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	05/11/12
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/13
		People	I			Date Closed	dd/mm/yy
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	05/11/12
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/13
		People	I			Date Closed	dd/mm/yy

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	05/11/12
		Reputation	III			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/13
		People	I			Date Closed	dd/mm/yy
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	15/08/12
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/08/13
		People	III			Date Closed	dd/mm/yy
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"> - Councils do not achieve remaining £1.4m in savings - Service performance deteriorates/does not improve - Little or no return on investment 	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	II			Last Review Date	05/11/12
		Reputation	II			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/13
		People	I			Date Closed	
RB 11	Operational performance drops during the transition period and early phase of implementation.	Service Disruption	II	B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BVPIs drop resulting in member and customer dissatisfaction - Negative feedback from Audit Commission during annual audit - Cost of additional resources to improve performance - Credibility of programme drops 	Requires Treatment	Yes
		Financial Loss	II			Last Review Date	05/11/12
		Reputation	II			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/04/13
		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	05/11/12
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/04/13
		People	I			Date Closed	

	level or takes longer than anticipated.						
RB 13	Contracts with systems suppliers are not robust enough	Service Disruption	I	E	- Poor performance - Increased licence/maintenance or implementation costs - Delays to implementation -	Requires Treatment	No
		Financial Loss	I			Last Review Date	05/11/12
		Reputation	I			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/13
		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	- Poor performance - Increased licence/maintenance or implementation costs - Delays to implementation -	Requires Treatment	Yes
		Financial Loss	II			Last Review Date	05/11/12
		Reputation	III			Next Milestone Date	Ongoing
		Legal Implications	I			Next Review Date	01/10/13
		People	III			Date Closed	



RISK TREATMENT PLAN

Risk Ref:	4	Risk Title:	Losses incurred due to internal fraudulent activity.		
Responsibility	<i>Who is managing the risk?</i>		Phil Adlard		
Consequence	<i>What can go wrong? How can it go wrong? Has it gone wrong before?</i>		Financial (and integrity) loss to the Councils and the public purse. A breach of controls either by an individual alone or in collaboration. To date there have been no incidents of this activity.		
Cause / Trigger	<i>What happens to bring the risk into being?</i>		Identified by Audit Inspection as a potential weakness at a corporate level that needs addressing		
Existing Control	<i>What controls exist now to minimise the risk?</i>		Auditors Internal controls Effective Fraud Section Regular reconciliations Education Prevention "Whistle blowing " policy Disciplinary / Legal action against staff Regular monitoring and updating of policies and procedures and ensure staff are aware of these		
Adequacy of Control	<i>What evidence is there that the existing Controls are working? What would the Risk Rating be without the existing controls?</i>	There have been no reported incidents to date	Impact	Likelihood	
			See Impact Table	See Likelihood Table	
Further Action / Controls Required	<i>What gaps have been identified? What can be done to reduce the likelihood of something going wrong and/or reduce the Impact if something does go wrong?</i>		The controls listed above should be sufficient		
Cost / Resources	<i>Are there cost / resource implications in achieving the further action above?</i>		No.		
Current Status	<i>What is the current position on introducing additional controls? What is the current Risk Rating</i>	The current rating is as identified. The potential impact could be significant if there was a determined and deliberate fraud.	Impact	Likelihood	
			See Impact Table	See Likelihood Table	

Critical Success Factor	<i>How will you know that the action taken has worked? What will be the Risk Rating outcome with the new controls?</i>	There continue to be no incidents of fraudulent activity	Impact See Impact Table	Likelihood See Likelihood Table
Risk Ref:	11	Risk Title:	Operational performance drops during the transition period and early phase of implementation.	
Responsibility	<i>Who is managing the risk?</i>	Phil Adlard		
Consequence	<i>What can go wrong? How can it go wrong? Has it gone wrong before?</i>	Performance drops as staff become used to new ways of working. There has been experience of this occurring in the past.		
Cause / Trigger	<i>What happens to bring the risk into being?</i>	Change in system, changes in procedures and culture. Becoming used to working in different cultures.		
Existing Control	<i>What controls exist now to minimise the risk?</i>	Training is on-going with sufficient time for staff to practice prior to go live. Process change workshops have been held involving all staff.		
Adequacy of Control	<i>What evidence is there that the existing Controls are working? What would the Risk Rating be without the existing controls?</i>	Existing controls not yet tested as we have not got to the point where the risk will come into being.	Impact See Impact Table	Likelihood See Likelihood Table
Further Action / Controls Required	<i>What gaps have been identified? What can be done to reduce the likelihood of something going wrong and/or reduce the Impact if something does go wrong?</i>	See above. In order to reduce the risk we have identified and resourced additional agency staff well experienced in the new system to reduce/prevent problems in benefit assessment which is very high profile.		
Cost / Resources	<i>Are there cost / resource implications in achieving the further action above?</i>	Additional agency staff.	£ 50 – 75k	
Current Status	<i>What is the current position on introducing additional controls? What is the current Risk Rating</i>	Existing controls not yet tested as we have not got to the point where the risk will come into being.	Impact See Impact Table	Likelihood See Likelihood Table
Critical Success Factor	<i>How will you know that the action taken has worked? What will be the Risk Rating outcome with the new controls?</i>	The backlog reduces and processing times improve.	Impact See Impact Table	Likelihood See Likelihood Table

Risk Ref:	14	Risk Title:	Unscheduled reduction in number of Benefits Staff.		
Responsibility	<i>Who is managing the risk?</i>		Phil Adlard		
Consequence	<i>What can go wrong? How can it go wrong? Has it gone wrong before?</i>		Staff will view the introduction of Universal Credit as a threat and may seek alternative, more secure employment elsewhere. We will be unable to appoint permanent replacements and there may be an added reliance on short-term temporary staff		
Cause / Trigger	<i>What happens to bring the risk into being?</i>		Staff leaving the department		
Existing Control	<i>What controls exist now to minimise the risk?</i>		Focus on alternative service delivery methods to divert attention to the opportunities that UC can offer. Potential to offer redeployment within the Service		
Adequacy of Control	<i>What evidence is there that the existing Controls are working? What would the Risk Rating be without the existing controls?</i>		Existing controls not yet tested as we have not got to the point where the risk will come into being.	Impact	Likelihood
				See Impact Table	See Likelihood Table
Further Action / Controls Required	<i>What gaps have been identified? What can be done to reduce the likelihood of something going wrong and/or reduce the Impact if something does go wrong?</i>		The Soft Market Testing exercise will highlight alternative delivery methods and ways of working that can reduce the dependency on temporary staff		
Cost / Resources	<i>Are there cost / resource implications in achieving the further action above?</i>		To be determined		
Current Status	<i>What is the current position on introducing additional controls? What is the current Risk Rating</i>		Existing controls not yet tested as we have not got to the point where the risk will come into being.	Impact	Likelihood
				See Impact Table	See Likelihood Table
Critical Success Factor	<i>How will you know that the action taken has worked? What will be the Risk Rating outcome with the new controls?</i>		Staff turnover is managed and successful redeployments are effected.	Impact	Likelihood
				See Impact Table	See Likelihood Table

Version Control

Version No.	Date	Reason for Update / Significant Changes	Made By
0.1	25/10/12	Draft for discussion of contents	PA
0.2	05/11/12	SSMT Comments	PA
0.3	08/11/12	Revenues & Benefits Management Team Comments	PA