



DRAFT

# **REVENUES & BENEFITS SERVICE PLAN**

## **2014 - 2017**

Joint Shared Services Committee – 18 November 2013

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## 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.

### 1.3

### The Future of the Service

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

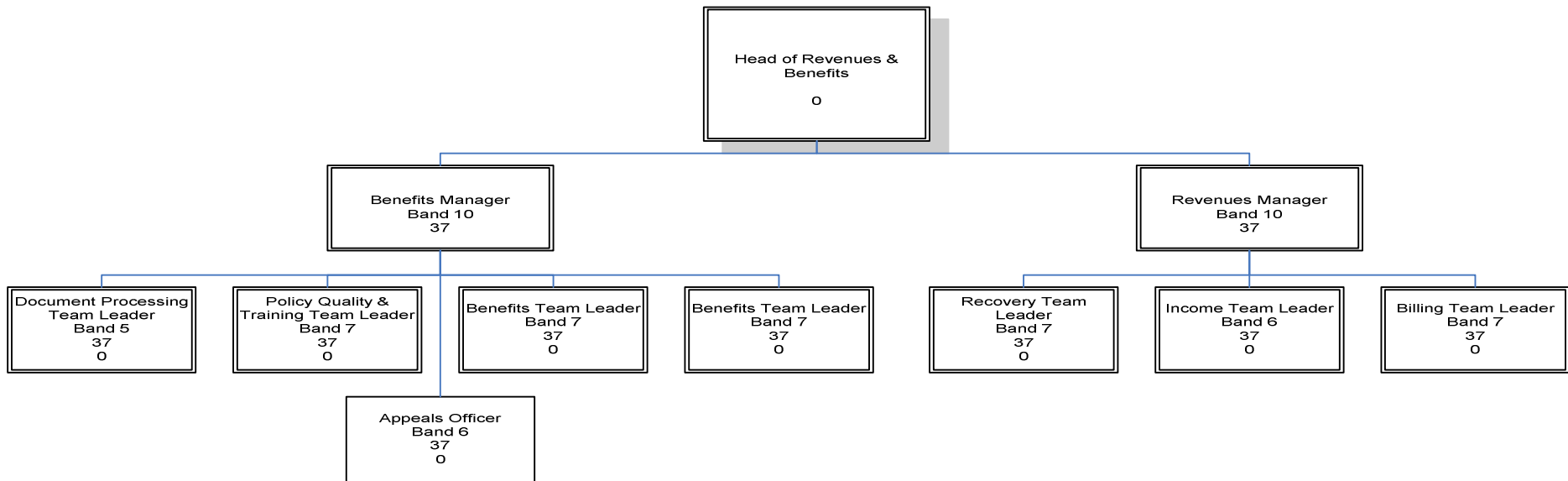
- Continued progress with Universal Credit.
- Continued closer working with internal and external partners

**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	
Partner / Partnership / Contract / Projects	Expected outcomes / Objectives
<p>The Appeals Service Magistrates and County Court Valuation tribunal</p> <p>Jobcentre Plus Housing Associations Welfare agencies Citizens Advice Bureaux Landlords</p> <p>Valuation Office Rent Officer</p> <p>External Auditors</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>	<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>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>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>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>

<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	
Total	2,947,430	2,742,280	2,766,180	
<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
Total	3,314,900	3,114,090	3,122,160	3,149,710
<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>
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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>
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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 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>			
	<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 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>			
	<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 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>				



<b>3.5</b>	<b>Projects</b>

Project details		Project timescales		
Project title	Proposed outcome	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
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>	

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