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AUDIT COMMITTEE

TABLED PRESENTATION

Date: Friday 16 December 2011
Time: 10 am
Venue: Warspite Room, Council House

Members:
Councillor Dr. Mahony, Chair.
Councillor Stevens, Vice-Chair.
Councillors Evans, Stark and Thompson.

Independent Members:
Mr Clarke and Mr Stewart

PLEASE FIND ATTACHED A COPY OF THE PRESENTATION WHICH WAS TABLED UNDER AGENDA ITEM NO. 7.

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AUDIT COMMITTEE

7. CERTIFICATION WORK REPORT 2010/2011 (Pages 1 - 8)

The Council's external auditor, Grant Thornton, will submit the Certification Work Report for 2010/2011.

REVENUES & BENEFITS



What we will cover:

- Context and challenges
- Improvement plans
- Performance improvement – managing expectations

PRE-RESTRUCTURE CONTEXT



- Benchmarking = high cost / low performing
- Inconsistency in management practice and leadership
- Top heavy staff structure with low turnover
- Vast majority on Grade E with differential practice
- Low morale, high sickness, high term time working
- Adopted a 'lean systems', customer focus approach but....

Need to improve customer focus – resources to meet the demands of the service

POST-RESTRUCTURE CONTEXT



- Rationalised management structure
- Appointed right people to right jobs – competencies
- Emphasis on strong and consistent management
- Providing support and development but...
 - 18 FTE experienced HB assessors have left
 - Morale amongst some still low – i.e. D/E split
 - Welfare reforms will bring added pressures

PERFORMANCE NOW



- 2010/11 target - 20 days for claims processing (bottom quartile)
- Actual performance – 28 days moving into restructure
- **6%** increase in workload over last 12 months = up to 150 new cases per month (on top of 4.5% increase in '10/11)
- **Now below benchmark on cost**
- Processing new claims ok – but significant backlog on changes to circumstances
- Retained 28/29 days through changes and increased referrals
- **We said it would get worse before it gets better!**

ACTIONS AND IMPACT



- New staff trained in Council Tax, achieving improvement targets
- 15 FTE new HB assessors trained by 31 May '12
- Running 'take up' campaign in Jan / Feb '12 – will maximise benefit re: legislation changes
- Introducing 'self service' – early 2012. Need ICT support
- Engaged 5x agency staff to clear backlog – but, this will have **negative** impact on processing times
- Addressing consistency issues – absence, core working hours etc
- Team Leaders completed HB subsidy claim – still high error rate

SUBSIDY



Challenges

- Restructure – reduced number of experienced staff
- Training new staff (customer services & restructure)
- Welfare Reform Changes
- Increasing workloads
- Legacy of stock transfer

Actions

- Dedicated Subsidy Officer & QA support
- Reviewing lessons learned from audit – action plan
- Reviewing current Quality Assurance Process
- 100% checking for all new staff

IMPACT ON PERFORMANCE



Performance Indicator	2011/12 Target	Aug '11 Actual	Oct '11 Actual	Jan '12 Forecast	Mar '12 Forecast
Processing new claims	20 days	29 days	28 days	32 days	24 days
Changes to Circumstances	15 days	15.1 days	15.7 days	28 days	20 days
In year Council Tax Collection	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
NNDR Collection	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%

2011/12 Processing Target = below 15 days whilst absorbing demand

REVIEW & EVALUATE



- Structure implemented 1 November 2011
- Formal review after 6 months
- Staff survey undertaken at start of restructure to establish baseline – to be repeated after 6 months
- Scrutiny task & finish group early in 2012
- Peer challenge across Customer Services and Transaction Centre
- Robust monthly performance monitoring