

# Public Document Pack



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Date: 21 September 2012

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## **SUPPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**Date:** Monday 1 October 2012

**Time:** 3.30pm

**Venue:** Warspite Room, Council House

**Members:**

Councillor Murphy, Chair

Councillor Bowyer, Vice Chair

Councillors Casey, Churchill, Gordon, James, Martin Leaves, Parker, Rennie, Stark and Stevens.

Members are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business overleaf.

Members and officers are requested to sign the attendance list at the meeting.

**Bob Coomber**

Interim Chief Executive

# **SUPPORT SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

## **AGENDA**

### **PART I – PUBLIC MEETING**

#### **1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

To receive apologies for non-attendance by panel members and to note the attendance of substitutes in accordance with the Constitution.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members will be asked to make declarations of interest in respect of items on this agenda.

#### **3. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)**

To confirm the minutes of the Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 6 August 2012.

#### **4. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

To receive reports on business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be brought forward for urgent consideration.

#### **5. TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD (Pages 5 - 6)**

To receive a copy of the panel's tracking resolutions and any feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on issues which concern this panel.

#### **6. UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGES**

The panel's Lead Officer will provide an update on any recent Government policy changes.

#### **7. CARBON MANAGEMENT UPDATE (Pages 7 - 14)**

To receive an presentation on Carbon Management.

#### **8. CIVIC CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT (Pages 15 - 18)**

To receive an update on the Civic Centre Redevelopment Project.

#### **9. REVENUES AND BENEFITS, CUSTOMER SERVICES (Pages 19 - 30)**

## **AND TRANSACTION CENTRE REVIEW**

To receive an update on the Revenues and Benefits, Customer Services and Transactional Centre.

### **10. WORK PROGRAMME**

**(Pages 31 - 32)**

To receive the panel's work programme for 2012-2013.

### **11. EXEMPT BUSINESS**

To consider passing a resolution under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it (they) involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) ... of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

## **PART II (PRIVATE MEETING)**

### **AGENDA**

#### **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO NOTE**

that under the law, the Panel is entitled to consider certain items in private. Members of the public will be asked to leave the meeting when such items are discussed.

NIL.

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## Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Monday 6 August 2012

### PRESENT:

Councillor Murphy, in the Chair.

Councillor Bowyer, Vice Chair.

Councillors Casey, Churchill, Gordon, James, Martin Leaves, Parker, Rennie, Stark and Stevens.

Also in attendance: Councillor Peter Smith – Deputy Leader, Mark Grimley – Assistant Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development, Neville Cannon – Programme Director for ICT Shared Services, Mel Gwynn – Operational Service Delivery Manager, Simon Arthurs – Panel Lead Officer, Ross Jago – Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 3.30 pm and finished at 5.00 pm.

*Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.*

### 16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made in accordance with the code of conduct -

Name	Minute Number and Issue	Reason	Interest
Councillor Alison Casey	21 School Academy Transfer Update	School Governor	Personal

### 17. MINUTES

The Chair informed the panel that questions regarding the comparison of sickness levels between manual and administrative workers would be addressed during a later agenda item. The Democratic Support Officer would make enquiries into the make-up of the Capital Programme Board and inform the panel via email.

Agreed the minutes of the meeting held on the 2 July 2012.

### 18. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Chair's urgent business.

19. **SICKNESS POLICY REVIEW**

Mark Grimley, Assistant Director for Human Resources and Organisational Development, introduced a report on the Sickness Policy Review as requested at the last meeting of the panel. In response to questions from the panel it was reported that –

- (a) the department were unable to provide a comparison between the sickness levels in the manual and administrative work force. This was due to the difficulty of obtaining this level of information from the software application in use. The work required to obtain this information would use a significant amount of resources, pose a risk to the successful implementation of a new software system and would not constitute an efficient use of current resources;
- (b) in general terms four per cent of the work force were reported as sick at any one time;
- (c) in the private sector staff could be financially penalised if they were to report sick, this often included the first three days of sickness being unpaid. This was not an approach council officers were considering as it was not proven to reduce sickness levels;
- (d) the standard lifetime for an IT system was in the region of five to seven years. The current system used by Human Resources had allowed the council to reach a certain point, however the implementation of a new system would allow for further developments such as employee 'self-service' and would cost less than upgrading the current system;
- (e) the top 100 staff on long term sickness were managed by Mark Grimley, this was a constantly changing group which was proactively managed. There had been several dismissals over the last month;
- (f) sickness figures did not give an indication on how sickness was being managed, the figures were available and were provided to the panel at the last meeting;
- (g) staff were able to claim back their leave and were asked to report when they were well again if sick immediately before any period of leave;
- (h) there had been no staff reinstated following dismissal under the sickness and absence policy;
- (i) the influenza vaccination pilot would realise savings not only in terms of staff sickness but mitigated the risk of outbreaks of influenza which could occur in health and social care settings with staff, patients and residents at risk of infection.

Agreed that the costs of temporary staff to cover employee sickness is distributed to the panel.

20. **SHARED SERVICES AND ICT UPDATE**

The Deputy Leader and Neville Cannon, Programme Director for ICT Shared Services, presented a report to update the panel on the ICT investment and progress toward ICT shared services. It was reported that -

- (a) Plymouth's approach to shared services was of national interest, and was being watched by several national bodies;
- (b) the overall strategy was to create a service vehicle that would ease the capital burden on the council, enable the transfer of risk, and to provide on-going benefits to the council and partners by offering standardised services at competitive rates;
- (c) the ideal client base was any public sector organisation in Plymouth and Devon, the initial focus was on delivering the business case to include Public Health, NHS Plymouth and Sentinel CiC;
- (d) there were two key gateways for delivery of the project by April 2014 –
  - December 2012 - Business case agreed with the partners;
  - May 2013 – Approval of system design and the service level agreements;
- (e) Plymouth City Council had 277 business software applications operating across all departments. The model of ICT infrastructure had grown through business needs and demands but had high overheads and complex interfaces which led to duplication. Nearly 30 per cent of the existing applications could be consolidated into the proposed core infrastructure;
- (f) the business case for the allocation of £3million in capital to invest in developing a core infrastructure would be presented to the Cabinet in September 2012 and would set out:
  - The components of a core infrastructure that would enable customer service transformation and a modernisation and efficiency programme.
  - The opportunity for application consolidation onto the core infrastructure.
  - The development of a core suite of self-service applications to reduce internal costs.
  - The opportunities for transformation of services and service redesign in every department over the next 2 – 3 years.
- (g) the first systems and departments to migrate would be human resources and organisational development.

In response to questions from members of the panel it was further reported that –

- (h) the specific risk levels and mitigating actions regarding shared services would depend on which organisations made up the final partnership. A risk register would be developed once final membership had been confirmed;
- (i) both Sentinel Community Interest Company (CiC) and Public Health (Plymouth) would be partners. Further discussions with other NHS areas and Plymouth Community Healthcare were on-going. Shared services would also be discussed at the September meeting of all Devon council Chief Executives;
- (j) the formation of a company, which could be set up as a community interest company (CiC) or social enterprise, could protect the investment made into shared services. The approach would provide improved technical facilities for the city and positively affect the economy by protecting and increasing highly skilled jobs;
- (k) surrender of control and investment was a concern of many potential partners. By adopting a CiC or social enterprise model the organisation could remain in public ownership. The surrender of some control should not be seen as negative as benefits would be delivered across public sector.

The panel agreed to request that final shared service business cases are presented to the panel for pre-decision scrutiny.

21. **SCHOOL ACADEMY TRANSFER UPDATE**

Agreed -

- (1) to note the update on the School Academy Transfer;
- (2) To request a further update providing information on the take up by academy schools of services provided by the council.

22. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

Agreed to note the panel's tracking resolutions.

23. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel agreed to add dates against the Budget and Performance Item (subject to management board approval) and an update on the Academy Schools Transfer.

24. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.



## TRACKING RESOLUTIONS

### Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date/Minute Number	Resolution	Explanation/Minute	Officer	Progress	Target Date
06.08.12 17	The Democratic Support Officer would make enquiries into the make-up of the Capital Programme Board and inform the panel via email.		Ross Johnston, Democratic Support Officer		1 October 2012
06.08.12 19	that the costs of temporary staff to cover employee sickness is distributed to the panel.		Mark Grimley, Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development		1 October 2012
06.08.12 20	to request that final shared service business cases are presented to the panel for pre-decision scrutiny.		Neville Cannon, Programme Director for ICT Shared Services	A date has been added to the work programme to scrutinise this issue.	1 October 2012
06.08.12 21	request a further update providing information on the take up by academy schools of services provided by the council.		Jayne Gorton and Mark Grimley		

**Grey** = Completed (once completed resolutions have been noted by the panel they will be removed from this document)

**Red** = Urgent – item not considered at last meeting or requires an urgent response

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# Carbon Management Update 2010-2012



Alex Hurth  
Carbon Manager

for the Support Services OSP  
on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012

# Carbon Management Drivers... reminder



- **Environment,**                      Climate Change ...
- **Energy Security,**                Depletion of fossil resources ...
- **Cost,**                                PCC: 20% energy cost increase since 2010 ...
- **Legislation,**                      Carbon Reduction Order 2010 ...
- **Reputation,**                      CRC Performance League Table ...



# Carbon Management Plan 2010-2015



**“To reduce CO<sub>2</sub> from Plymouth City Council and Schools operations by 20% by 2014/15 from 2009/10 levels” through:**

Progress to date

- **Invest to Save projects**

Salix projects, Schools boilers, Accommodation strategy, Server Virtualisation, ...



- **Improved Energy Management**

Electronic invoice processing and verification, Smart meters, Strategic procurement, ...



- **Improved Awareness**

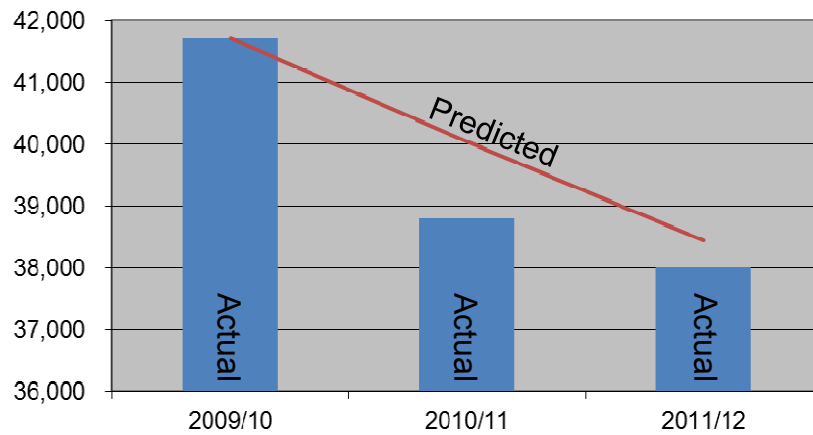
Presentations to schools and staff, Sustainability action required in Business Plans, ...



# Trends 2010-2012



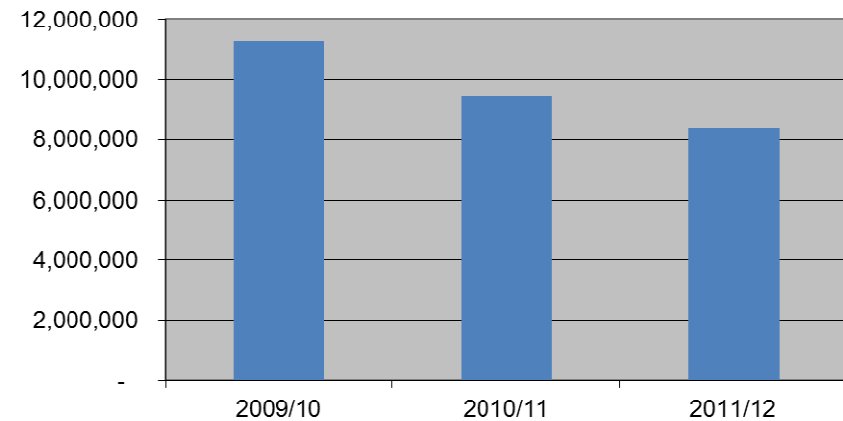
Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e



9.1% CO<sub>2</sub> reduction

25% Cost reduction\*

Spend (£)



\*Improved energy procurement in mid 2009 also plays a role



# What we are measuring (using ISO14064 standard)



Category	2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		CO <sub>2</sub> e vs prev fy	
	£ 2009/10	2009/10 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	£ 2010/11	2010/11 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	£ 2011/12	2011/12 tCO <sub>2</sub> e	↓/↑	%
Air	111,341.43	78.15	65,767.09	46.16	36,528.12	25.64	↓	44.46%
Rail	239,057.88	122.31	163,879.98	83.84	107,889.28	55.20	↓	34.17%
Taxi	187,874.89	35.47	169,730.80	32.04	105,312.20	19.88	↓	37.95%
Diesel from Fleet	1,731,043.13	2,283.25	1,058,926.79	1,890.12	1,165,384.28	2,070.36	↑	8.71%
Car Business mileage	1,088,485.27	725.21	1,097,930.85	830.01	892,198.82	575.59	↓	30.65%
Heating Oil*	338,234.59	1,283.00	397,310.37	1,090.81	215,247.26	1,363.06	↑	19.97%
Natural Gas	1,557,233.00	10,403.12	1,191,467.69	8,867.63	843,732.83	8,237.50	↓	7.11%
Electricity	4,518,728.38	24,697.45	3,764,651.91	23,446.92	3,746,588.40	22,843.51	↓	2.57%
Water	1,219,500.39	301.94	1,209,343.95	288.83	1,006,420.51	305.53	↑	5.78%
Waste	276,354.09	1,776.32	321,710.76	2,217.07	271,088.63	2,499.21	↑	12.73%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,267,853.05</b>	<b>41,706.21</b>	<b>9,440,720.19</b>	<b>38,793.45</b>	<b>8,390,390.33</b>	<b>37,995.48</b>	↓	2.06%

\*Data inconsistencies



# Carbon Management: the future



- **A new wave of ItS projects** (Efficiency in public buildings pledge)
- **Electronic Billing for Water** (Efficiency in public buildings pledge)
- **Improved Waste Management** (Efficiency in public buildings pledge)
- **Improved Energy Management** (Efficiency in public buildings pledge)
- **Staff Awareness Plan & Implementation** (Green Workplaces Scheme pledge)





# Questions?



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**PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL**

<b>Subject:</b>	Civic Centre Redevelopment Project
<b>Committee:</b>	Support Services Overview & Scrutiny Panel
<b>Date:</b>	1 October 2012
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Lowry
<b>CMT Member:</b>	Director for Place
<b>Author:</b>	Karen Brimicombe - Portfolio Manager
<b>Contact:</b>	Tel: 01752 30 7478 E-mail: karen.brimicombe@plymouth.gov.uk
<b>Ref:</b>	KMB/1/20120918
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Part:</b>	1

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**Purpose of the report:**

This report provides an update for the Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the progress of the Civic Centre Redevelopment Project.

In 2011 Cabinet agreed that the Council would continue to explore the opportunity for Freehold disposal as part of the Competitive Dialogue process. Subject to this not being possible it approved a proposal for the redevelopment of the Civic Centre to be put out for an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) procurement with a view to the Council taking a lease-back of reduced space in a refurbished Civic Centre. Approval has since been given to extend the scope to being able to take accommodation in alternate city centre premises.

The Council has decided that in order of preference, a freehold disposal with a clear and enforceable re-development obligation followed by a sale and part lease-back of part of the premises or alternate city centre accommodation are the most cost effective solutions provide the best balance between need, risk and value for money.

The Civic Centre Redevelopment Project is dealing with the disposal of the site based on the above approvals. The tender process will be conducted with the adoption of the Competitive Dialogue Process (CDP) in accordance with the latest OJEU legislation. The reason for this route is because the Council needs to consider all possible options for the sale and long-term effective renovation of the Civic Centre building and requires a positive enforceable obligation on the private sector to undertake the agreed redevelopment.

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**Corporate Plan 2012-2015:**

The Council's revised Corporate Plan stresses the need to focus more strongly on the growth agenda. The sale and redevelopment of the Civic Centre will be a driver for growth within the city. It is also a cornerstone of the Council's plans to deliver on the priority to provide value for communities in terms of maximizing resources to benefit customers and secure corporate efficiencies.

The Council is working towards making the most of its assets in its drive to become more efficient and effective – both through the accommodation strategy and rationalisation of Council's property estate. The delivery of the Civic Centre disposal is integral to the Council being able to deliver budget savings.

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**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:  
Including finance, human, IT and land**

The resolution of the future of the Civic Centre:

- Will reduce running costs for the Council once relocated
- Will contribute to the growth agenda and provides value for money for communities by supporting other corporate priorities in reducing the cost of the property estate to the Council, thus freeing up finances for front line services
- Links to the Council's Accommodation Strategy and forms part of the Council budgetary delivery plans for the next three years
- Will remove the liability of backlog maintenance and increased maintenance liability for the future
- Will provide improved more energy efficient accommodation for the Council

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**Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:**

Health and Safety and Risk Management:

Disposing of the Civic Centre will remove a serious Health and Safety risk. Doing nothing and maintaining the building in its current state requires a significant investment to ensure structural stability.

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**Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:**

None

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**Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:**

Alternative options were considered prior to the decision to dispose of the Civic Centre – see background papers.

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**Background papers:**

Future of Civic Centre – Cabinet paper Part I & Part II 23 August 2011

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**Sign off:**

Fin		Leg		HR		Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	
Originating SMT Member											
Have you consulted the Cabinet Member(s) named on the report? Yes											

## **1.0 Introduction**

The Civic Centre and Council House were Grade II listed in 2007 by the Department of Culture Media & Sport.

Initial legal advice was taken to determine if there were grounds for a challenge of the listing. Advice from Counsel was that there were no grounds on which to mount a challenge.

A feasibility study was commissioned jointly with English Heritage to look at the options for the building given its listed status. This was completed in April 2010 and resolved that the building could be sufficiently repaired to give a further 50 years life, but at considerable cost. It also concluded that there were alternative uses for the buildings as either office, a hotel or residential use. These options are supported in planning terms.

As part of the Accommodation Strategy the Council has established its current and future office accommodation requirements and has concluded that it does not need the full current office capacity provided by the Civic Centre alongside its other Freehold owned office estate. A decision was reached to soft market test the Civic Centre site in October 2010 for Freehold disposal.

Expressions of interest were requested by January 2011. A significant response was received with a range of alternative uses. Each of the interested parties required the City Council to take out long leasehold interest in new or refurbished accommodation. None of the proposals matched the Council's projected requirements in terms of quantum of office accommodation.

A thorough appraisal was carried out on five different options considering financial benefit, risk of delivery and best match with service and accommodation needs. All of the options included keeping the Council House as freehold owned as there was clear indication from the earlier marketing exercise that an alternative use for that building is not practical. The decision has now been taken that the Council House is therefore out of scope.

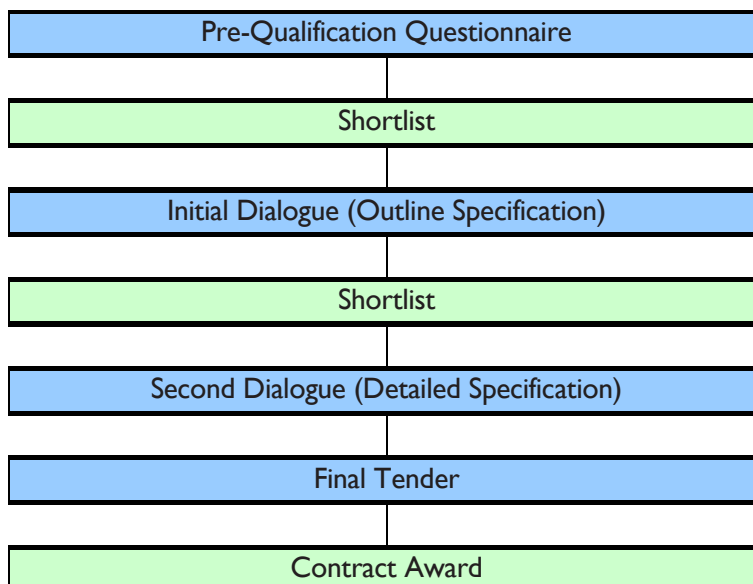
The Council has decided that in order of preference, a freehold disposal with a clear and enforceable re-development obligation followed by a sale and part lease-back of part of the premises or alternate city centre accommodation are the most cost effective solutions provide the best balance between need, risk and value for money.

## **2.0 Current progress**

A Bidder's Day was held on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2012 in the Guildhall. A wide spread of disciplines were present; property developers, construction, project management, architects, surveyors and funders. The feedback received so far on the day has been positive.

The project has now moved into the next stage - the "Pre-Qualification Stage". This is where the financial strength and technical capability of those who wish to tender is tested. A Notice was issued by the European Journal (OJEU) and Pre-Qualification responses are to be returned to us by 12 October. Responses will be evaluated and the 4 highest scoring taken through to the next stage – the Invitation to Submit Solutions.

The project is being run with a three stage Competitive Dialogue Process as shown in the diagram overleaf.



**3.0 Timetable**

The outline timetable is shown below:

Stage	Actual or Planned Date
Bidders Day	5 September 2012
OJEU Notice published	7 September 2012
Descriptive Document and PQQ issued	11 September 2012
Return of PQQ	12 October 2012
Inform bidders of outcome	22 October 2012
Competitive Dialogue opened and solutions invited (ISS document issued)	23 October 2012
Submission of solutions	18 January 2013
Bidders Presentation of ISS submission	21 January 2013
Close of competitive dialogue and Final Tenders sought	14 March 2013
Final tenders submitted	18 April 2013
Bidders presentation of CFT submission	19 April 2013
Preferred Bidder Selected	15 May 2013
Cabinet decision (indicative)	11 June 2013
Inform participants	11 June 2013
Contract Award	26 June 2013

A successful process culminating in the contract award will be followed by the statutory planning process by the preferred bidder, which could result in vacation of the office building by the council, to facilitate refurbishment/remodelling, in 2014.

**4.0 Conclusion**

The Support Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel are asked to note the process being followed by the Project Team for the sale of the Civic Centre.

# REVENUES AND BENEFITS, CUSTOMER SERVICES AND TRANSACTION CENTRE



## Service Update September 2012

In February 2012 a Task and Finish Group was established to review the impact of the restructure in Revenues and Benefits, Customer services, and Transaction Centre (previously Incomes and Creditors). The aim of the group was to ensure that staff and customers were not negatively impacted following the restructure.

The panel recognised the difficulties associated with the restructure process, but were pleased with the majority of its findings. As part of the review 12 recommendations were identified which were deemed to offer suggested improvements to further benefit the services areas, improve staff morale and increase customer satisfaction.

Part one of this report provides an update on the 12 key recommendations and part two provides a more detailed update on the performance of the Revenues and Benefits Service.

## PART ONE

### 12 Key Recommendations

#### **R1 – Arrange the next stage of staff engagement workshops to follow through suggestions and recommendations raised by staff at the initial workshops.**

Staff workshops have been undertaken and key ideas have been taken forward. Within Revenues and Benefits this resulted in setting up a focus group of staff to review the front counter and trial different ways of responding to customer demand to improve the customer experience. The outcome has been to provide a filter queue on reception with experienced staff dealing with quicker queries and more complex cases being directed to the cubicles. A further review will be undertaken by the focus group in October.

#### **R2 – Interview feedback is provided as a matter of urgency to all applicants successful or unsuccessful during the recruitment process.**

All staff have received feedback around the assessment process and further support has been given where necessary on key competency areas.

#### **R3 – Interim survey is conducted with all staff in May 2012, six months after the implementation of the new structure and the results of which are shared with the Support Service and Overview and Scrutiny Panel.**

Due to a significant increase in work demand along with trialling new ways of working, this survey has been put back until October 2012. Discussions have taken place with staff regarding this change in timing.

**R4 – A dedicated cross-department training resource be established to help deliver a service function that has a more effective and consistent role in dealing with training requirements, interpreting and dealing with legislation changes and monitoring quality assurance.**

Training in the Transaction Centre and Customer Services has been completed as part of the post restructure changes. Changes in legislation and quality assurance are primarily key to Revenues and Benefits as part of the DWP requirements. Initial training post restructure has centred around new staff and is part of an on-going 12 month programme being delivered by technical experts. A recent review of training has been undertaken to look at the changes required as part of Welfare Reform and on-going service improvements. Consideration is currently being given to the creation of a temporary training officer post.

A Subsidy Officer post was built into the Revenues and Benefits structure to focus on quality assurance. Temporary posts have been set up to support the Subsidy Officer in the development and implementation of a robust quality assurance programme and are closely aligned to interpreting and delivering the legislation changes, and providing training and support to staff.

**R5 - Undertake a review of role profiles for Grade D and E posts to ensure that clear differentials are contained within the role profiles to bring clarity and alleviate confusion and friction between staff.**

Following the restructure, consultation was undertaken with staff to consider grading differentials around varying tasks. Follow up work was undertaken to review this and ensure differentials were implemented.

A technical expert training programme was drawn up to ensure that Grade E roles undertook tasks appropriate for the grade and help to cement the changes. This has included dealing with complaints, trialling key changes, technical changes and IT updates. A training programme has been developed with learning and development on coaching and mentoring which is due to be delivered to all technical experts throughout October.

**R6 – Undertake a review of the flexible working policy within affected departments**

A review of the flexible working policy was undertaken post restructure across the three areas. Staff were given opportunities to increase or decrease hours, and/or change working days. Consideration was given to improving response to business need especially in Revenues and benefits where it had been a particular problem, whilst also giving consideration to work life balance of staff were possible.

Limitations in term time working have allowed for greater consistency in service delivery allowing for a much more stable service in Revenues and Benefits and less pressure on staff remaining during holiday periods. The removal of term time working at team leader level has also resulted in staff being better supported by a more consistent management team.

**R7 A single, central customer services location to be developed as part of the Corporate Accommodation Strategy to meet the needs of our customer base and allow for flexibility within disciplines.**

Awaiting update on the Civic Centre and any potential move to an alternative location. Longer term a more comprehensive customer service delivery model will be developed as part of the community hub proposal within Customer Services Libraries whereby service delivery for a range of services will be included (also to include self-serve options and partnerships).



**R8 – Uniforms for customer facing staff at First Stop should be incorporated into the role as soon as practicable and that consideration should be given to all back office staff having to dress to an appropriate standard.**

All first stop staff in customer services have uniforms and this has proved positive with both customers and staff. Scoping is now underway to extend this to Revenues and Benefits staff as part of new ways of working.

**R9 - Consideration should be given to all establishing a staff reward scheme which would improve staff morale and encourage staff to promote service improvement ideas that could develop future service delivery.**

A major 'staff award' event was facilitated on the Hoe in September 2012 to give recognition in areas such as team working, participation and leadership. A corporate staff reward scheme is being considered and led through the Assistant Director for Human Resources.

**R10 – Strategic Manager (Revenues and Benefits) role to be re-evaluated through job evaluation process in an attempt to ensure fairness is established in the grading of strategic manager positions.**

The Management of Finance, Efficiencies, Technology and Assets will reviewed and restructured using a corporate framework to incorporate factors such as spans of control, number of layers etc. This was due to commence in September 2012 but has been delayed due to capacity in HR. The role of the Strategic Manager, (Revenues and Benefits) will be reviewed and re-evaluated as part of this restructure.

**R11 – Given the concerns identified with the call management in the Proof of Concept Team, the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel add this issue to its work programme and request an update at a future meeting from the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Care.**

Over the last three months significant improvements have been made to allow workflow from the Contact Centre into the Proof of Concept Team. Staff from Adult Social Care and Customer Services are working together to ensure all opportunities to improve performance and prevent failure demand are taken.

Telephone answer rates have improved to 96% with 88% answered within 30 seconds, abandoned rates stand at 4%.

**R12 – Review and extension to the Customer Services department operating hours to deal with general public enquiries between the hours of 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday and 8am – 5pm on Saturday.**

This is now incorporated within the 100 pledges and the latest update is as below:

**Provide access to council services at more suitable times - DS**

**Cabinet Lead:** Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Smith

**Lead:** Dave Saunders

**'Quick Win' descriptions:** (Whether key early action or whole thing)

On-going dialogue with customers through regular focus groups to assess desire and potential volumes to increase opening hours (not an early win), potential for quick win Q3/2012 with online portal (via PCC website) to access services that have moved onto Microsoft Dynamics e.g. Waste, Highways and Corporate feedback plus Revenues & Benefits online portal (longer term additional services will also be offered as part of Transformation/Modernisation plan) this will provide 24/7 access and may negate the need to extend existing opening hours as customers can self-serve in the most cost effective way.

**Timeline:**

Online portal available Q3 2012, assessment and viability of extending opening hours based on customer feedback will be incorporated within transformation programme with aim to report to cabinet by Q1 2013 for decision to be made.

## **PART TWO**

### **Revenues and Benefits Performance Update**

#### **Introduction**

This is an update report to Cabinet on the progress in performance of the Revenues and Benefits service. This service area has gone through significant change through a total review of their systems, processes and structures, culminating in a new staff structure being implemented in November 2011.

Prior to the restructure, the service benchmarked as being high cost and poor performance. Specific concern was focussed on the time taken to process new benefit claims which for the last few financial years have been averaging at 30 days.

The restructure was based on rationalising management and retaining as many front line processing staff as possible. Alongside the restructure, the service adopted a comprehensive improvement plan detailing how the service could deliver improvements to customers with significantly less resources.

#### **Successes**

- Processing times for new claims has reduced from 30 to 23. This is against a national trend of increases due to increased service demand and policy changes. PCC performance is now **equal to the average national processing times** (compared to bottom quartile as at the end of last financial year).
- The staff cost of this service is now top quartile in terms of efficiency (CIPFA benchmarking 2012) compared to previous performance of bottom quartile. Cases dealt with by FTE is above average.
- The service now operates with a nil backlog system with the backlog of daily work in Housing Benefit cleared during May 2012. The service has previously operated a backlog system for many years.
- Staff focus groups ensure that staff suggestions are listened to, tested and implemented. For example, the introduction of a filter queue has resulted in a more effective response to customer demand.
- We have developed and implemented a performance management system to provide staff across the department with clear measures for work clearance, quality and processing times. This was launched in line with the appraisal system.
- DWP feedback has recognised that our processes are in line with the top performing authorities.
- Customer feedback continues to recognise the improvements made to our service both in terms of processing times and services access.
- Introduction of quarterly staff briefings and monthly communication briefs ensure staff are involved in and kept up to date with key activities.
- Proactive recovery has assisted in breaking the cycle of debt for customers who would normally end up with the bailiff. Telephoning customers in the evening as well as during the day has continued to improve collection, and reduce the number of summonses issued, making recovery more efficient and cost effective.

- Outreach work with customers and welfare agencies has helped improve understanding of benefits, and the changes through welfare reform and helped to increase take-up.

### **Current Challenges**

- ATLAS files from the DWP could not be downloaded for 6 weeks and resulted in a backlog of changes. This has affected processing times for changes in circumstances. A small team has been set up to tackle this work as a priority.
- ATLAS work has impacted on our overall ability to clear work in a timely way. Files of changes are on average 200 per day, but can be as much as 500. This is a national issue with processing times for 'changes in circumstances' significantly increasing, (in the short term), across the vast majority of authorities.
- Take-up campaigns will continue to impact on resources and will need to be managed to avoid peaks at critical times. The Housing Benefit caseload continues to increase at 31,015 cases.
- Welfare Reform has increased the demand for advice and requires constant changes to processes. This will continue as more changes are implemented.
- Revenues and Benefits resources have been prioritised to launch the pan-Devon consultation in respect of the localised Council Tax Support scheme. This requires a replacement for the existing, national Council Tax Benefit scheme to be fully implemented by April 2013.
- Term time working patterns has had a small adverse impact on July / August processing times.

### **Staff Attendance**

Extensive work has been undertaken with HR and managers to improve the way absence is managed within the service area.

- Training has been given to team leaders and process and guidance has been developed and implemented to allow more timely and consistent responses.
- Monthly meetings with HR have allowed team leaders to discuss difficult cases and learn from experience
- Monthly review meetings are undertaken by managers to ensure continued review of cases and continued focus on reducing absence
- Hearings have been undertaken by the Strategic Manager to ensure consistency in decision making and appropriate weight given to cases.

Absence has improved considerably within the service area over the last 6 months.

## On the Horizon

- The introduction of self service has been delayed due to results from initial testing, but 'go live' is imminent. Self service will mean that customers for Council Tax, Housing Benefits and Business Rates will be able to sign up to a number of benefits:
  - E-billing for Council Tax and Business Rates
  - E-notification for Housing and Council Tax Benefit
  - Direct Debit sign up
  - Housing Benefit claim progress for customers and landlords
  
- Risk Based Verification – will reduce the need to evidence low risk cases and allow for the continued improvement in processing times both for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and through the implementation of Council Tax Support. Resources can be redirected to the implementation of Welfare Reform.
- Risk Based Recovery – will allow for better targeting of recovery action. This will be important with the introduction of Council Tax Support.
- Continued focus on generic training to allow for greater flexibility of resource to respond to continuous changes in legislation, practice and service demand.
- Further training on telephone and negotiation techniques to maximise in year collection and allow staff to better work with customers to improve payments. This will be especially important as we go move into the new Council Tax Support scheme.

## Performance

### Housing Benefit

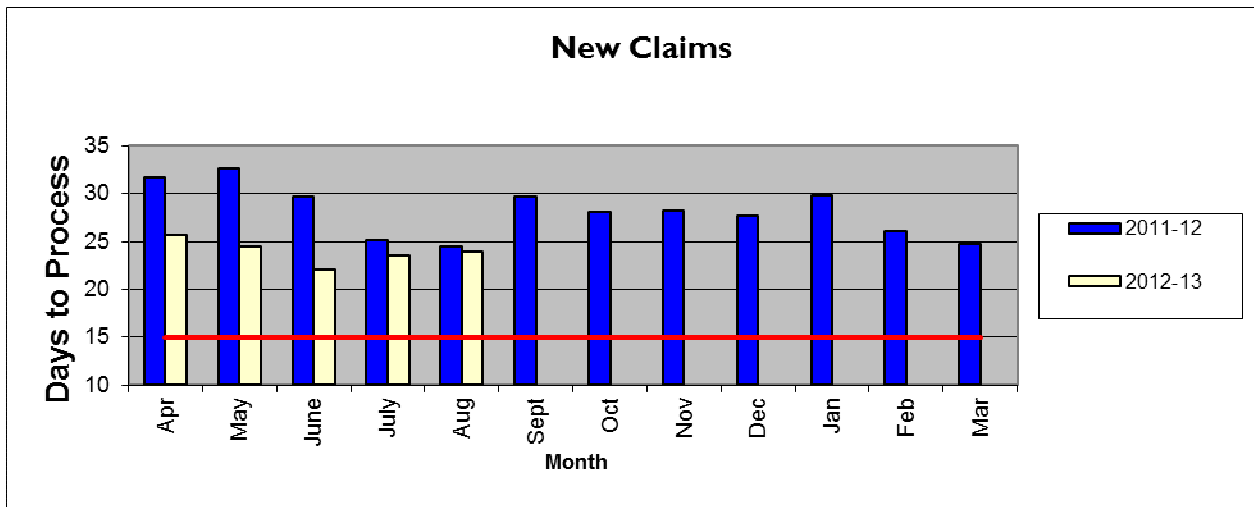
#### New Claims - August

##### Target 15 days

The average time to process new claims in August 2012. ■

A total of **1389 new claims** were processed (July 1434)

- 50.10% were processed within 15 days of receipt (July 49.02%).
- 38.63% were processed within 7 days of all information being received (July 38.63%)
- 86.75% were processed within 15 days of receipt of all the information. (July 86.68%)



	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>
<b>2011</b>	<b>31.74</b>	<b>32.70</b>	<b>29.74</b>	<b>25.19</b>	<b>24.47</b>	<b>29.70</b>	<b>28.13</b>	<b>27.71</b>	<b>27.71</b>	<b>29.77</b>	<b>26.05</b>	<b>24.68</b>
<b>2012</b>	<b>25.62</b>	<b>24.49</b>	<b>22.09</b>	<b>23.54</b>	<b>23.05</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>



#### Forecast Processing Times

New claims have been impacted by term time working and the peak holiday period over July/August. This is likely to have a slight impact in September and it is expected that processing times will continue to reduce after this. Overall this area is significantly better compared with 2011 12 (and prior year) performance and is now performing at national average.

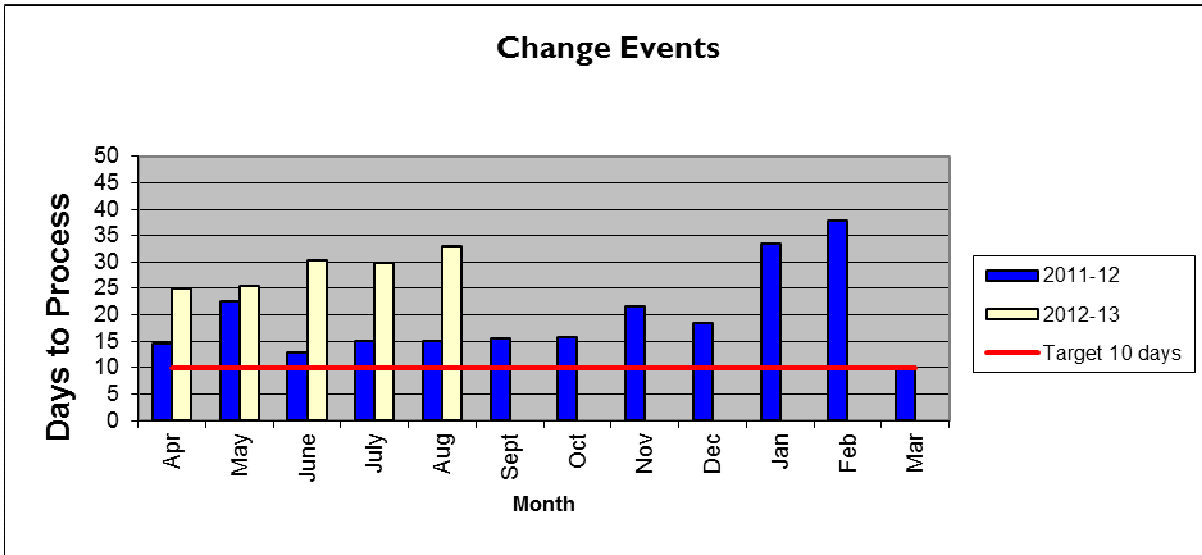
#### Change Events - August

##### Target 10 days

The average time to process change events in August 33.08 days (July 29.73). ■

A total of **6520 change events** were processed (July 8152)

- 43.92% were processed within 10 days of the notified date (July 45.53%)
- 26.80% were processed on the day they were notified. (July 25.29%)

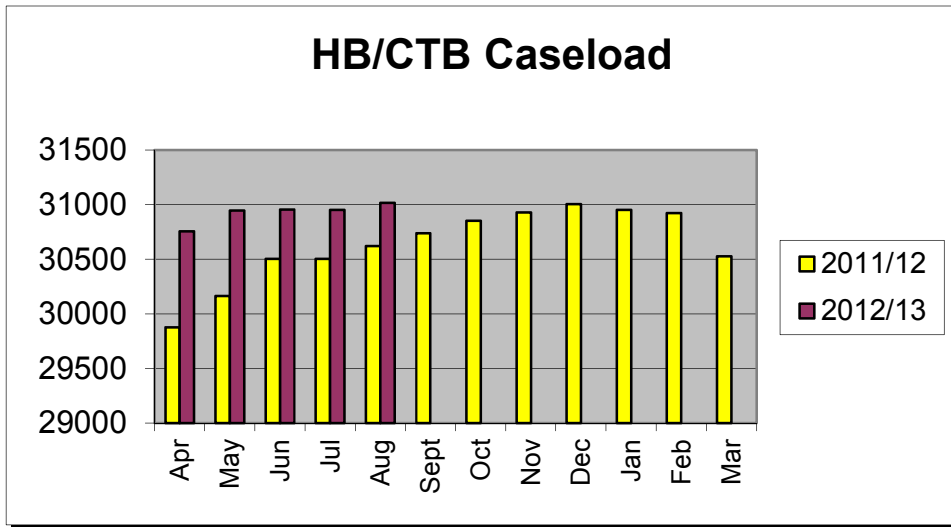


	<u>Apr</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>Mar</u>
<b>2011</b>	14.58	22.57	12.94	12.12	15.15	15.62	15.73	18.34	18.34	33.36	37.82	25
<b>2012</b>	25.05	25.41	30.23	29.73	33.08	33	29	26	24	22	19	15

**Forecast Processing Times**

Change of circumstances performance increased in August, with the days increasing to 33.08. This is a result of a targeted effort clearing ATLAS files received from the DWP. This work has become a concern across many authorities due to the volumes of work received each day, and we have introduced plans to manage this. It is envisaged that it will be 6-8 weeks before we start to see a real decrease in the processing days for change of circumstances.

**Number of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claimants**



	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2011/12	29879	30165	30505	30504	30621	30737	30853	30929	31004	30952	30923	30528
2012/13	30754	30945	30953	30952	31015							



## Income Collection Rates

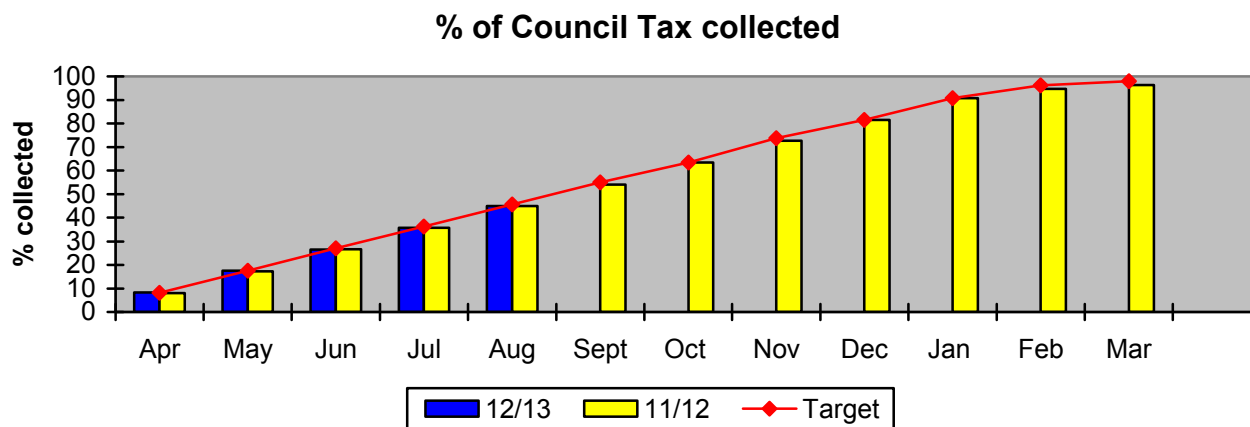
### Council Tax

- Net Collectable Debt 2012/13 £93,686m
- Collection Target 2012/13 98.00%



Monthly Target = 45.57%  
Collection Rate = 44.95%

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>12/13</b>	8.25	17.53	26.53	35.70	44.95	54.06	63.38	72.72	81.68	90.91	94.93	96.6%
<b>11/12</b>	8.07	17.31	26.62	35.61	44.85	54.04	63.34	72.60	81.54	90.71	94.68	96.30
<b>Target</b>	8.22	17.61	27.06	36.19	45.57	54.90	63.34	73.74	81.54	90.71	96.24	98.00



Council Tax collection rates have continued to improve at 44.95% for August against a collection rate of 44.85% for the same point last year. This is slightly under target of 45.57%.

The percentage of payers who pay by DD has increased to 66.44% from 60.34% at the same point last year. The Valuations Team is working on the valuation schedules and work levels in Council Tax continue to be in a good position. Proactive work is ongoing around the summons run and our 'gone away' accounts are being targeted to ensure prompt and accurate billing.

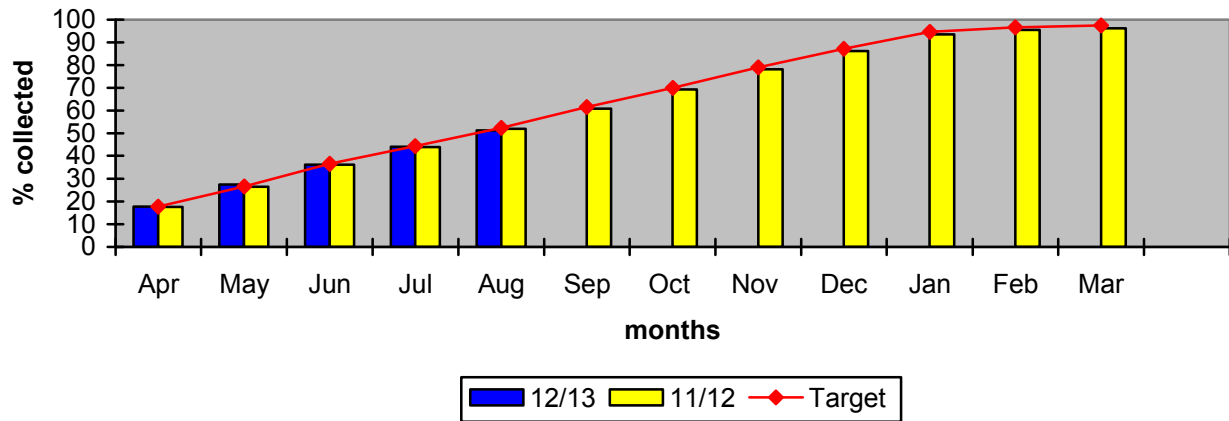
**National Non Domestic Rates**

- Net Collectable Debt 2012/13 £88,215m
- Collection Target 2012/13 97.50%

 Monthly Target = 52.28%  
 Collection Rate = 51.20%

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>12/13</b>	17.82	27.46	36.11	43.95	51.20	<b>60.31</b>	<b>68.85</b>	<b>77.92</b>	<b>86.13</b>	<b>95.42</b>	<b>95.75</b>	<b>96.63</b>
<b>11/12</b>	17.63	26.48	36.17	43.80	51.84	60.85	69.23	78.14	86.19	93.52	95.49	96.21
<b>Target</b>	17.74	26.69	36.48	44.22	52.28	61.47	69.97	78.98	87.13	94.57	96.64	97.50

**% of NNDR collected**



Business Rates collection has shown a slight drop at 51.20% for August, against 51.84% for the same point last year. However we have identified a number of unallocated payments which will have impacted on this.

We are also experiencing difficulties with landlords refusing to take back leases on empty properties which is affecting the collection of empty properties rates.

The NDR and Valuation team are continuing to bring the schedules up to date and have been managing large increase in archive re-bandings. Current working practices are being regularly reviewed to ensure on-going improvement in collection and more alignment with council tax processes recovery. Proactive work continues around reminder and summons runs and we are confident collection will improve during the remainder of the year.

**Work Programme 2012 - 2013**

Proposed work programme	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A
<b>Finance, Efficiencies, Technology and Assets</b>											
Shared Services Programme Review			6			19					
Carbon Management update					1						
Civic Centre update (Accommodation Strategy)					1						
ICT improvements update			6								
<b>Customer Services</b>											
Review Revenues and Benefits Service (Follow on from SS OSP T&F Group)					1						
<b>Human Resources and Organisational Development</b>											
School Academy Transfer update			6								
Review other authorities' occupational health services and sickness (referred by Audit Committee on 16.12.11)		2									
Human Resources Workforce Update											
Sickness Policy Review			6								
<b>Democracy and Governance</b>											
<b>Corporate Communications</b>											
Social Networking Review						19					
<b>Policy, Performance and Partnerships</b>											
Community Engagement update											
<b>Other Issues</b>											
Government Policy Changes					1	19			11		8
<b>City and Council Priorities</b>											

Proposed work programme	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A
Value for Communities											
<b>Task and Finish Groups</b>											
Council Tax Scheme review (Welfare Reform)											
Shared Services (DELT ICT Shared Services)											

**Key**

\* **New item**

**N.B – items will be automatically deleted from the work programme once they have been considered by the Panel.**