



Corporate Services Department

Revenue & Benefits Service Plan 2009/13



OVERVIEW

The Revenues & Benefits service within Corporate Services Department provides a valuable service to the community. It manages a range of services which aim to improve service provision for the local community and ultimately deliver better outcomes for the people of West Dunbartonshire.

Following an organisational restructure in September 2007, the Revenues & Benefits section is now located in the Finance & ICT Division within Corporate Services Department.

This is the first service plan for the Revenues & Benefits Section. It sets out the service themes, priorities and objectives for 2009/10, the action plan that has been developed to deliver these objectives, in the first year, together with the resources required to implement it successfully. It also sets out the section's objectives and the actions and resources that will be required to deliver these.

Achievements

In the past year the Revenues & Benefits service has delivered a number of achievements through the commitment and active effort of all our staff, set against a particularly testing and complex business and economic environment. These include:

- Implementation of paperless direct debits
- Implementation of a new fraud management system
- Introduction of 12 monthly opt in payment scheme for council tax payers
- Introduction of corporate debt policy
- Introduction of revised rent arrears policy
- Introduction of in and out of work pilot in benefits administration
- Successfully prepared the benefits service for the introduction of Employment Supplement Allowance (ESA)

The plan is intended for a wide range of audiences – elected members, employees, our Community Planning partners, our customers and citizens, voluntary and community groups.

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1.0 SECTION PROFILE

Our vision is to provide best value, delivering effective and efficient services. In delivering these we will adopt specific departmental values which describe the way in which we will work. These include:

- Professionalism – we are professional in our approach and all we do in the Council
- Integrity – we are reliable and honest with each other
- Trust – we trust each other and our team members
- Honesty and openness – we are open and understand the importance of being honest
- Respect – we respect each other and show respect in all that we do.

The revenues and benefits section comprises of 7 distinct teams each providing internal and external facing services linked by the common theme of providing high quality best value services to the Council and its population.

Council Tax (Masterfile)

This team manages over 44,000 properties for Council Tax. This front line service provides advice and administration to the public on registration, exemptions and discounts, issues annual bills to customers and reminders if the tax is not paid on time

Housing & Council Tax Benefit

This team administers housing and council tax benefit for residents. The section provides housing and council tax benefit advice and administration to owner occupiers, tenants of Registered Social Landlords, Council properties, voluntary organisations and private landlords. The team also administers discretionary housing payments.

Housing & Council Tax Fraud Investigation

This team investigates housing & council tax benefit cases to determine if a fraudulent claim has been made. Any case where fraud is suspected is referred to the procurator fiscal for a decision. This team investigates referrals from staff and the public, the National Fraud Initiative and the Department for Works and Pensions.

Finance Recovery Unit (FRU)

This team collects debts and monitor arrangements for council tax, non -domestic rates and sundry debtors accounts. They also monitor debts that are passed to Sheriff Officers. The team also provides court administration for council rent and other debts.

Rent Accounting & System Administration

The section currently has two teams that provide advice and administer the section's systems. These teams ensure that our systems comply with legislation and provide essential support to the front line teams. One of these teams also administers the rent accounting function that maintains the rent accounts for over 11,000 council properties.

Rent Arrears

This team collects debts and monitors arrangements for current and former council house rents and garages.

During 2008-09, the revenues and benefits services contribution to organisational business included:

- Managing 44,200 properties for Council Tax (£39.8m)
- Processing council tax benefit for 14,500 claimants (£9.8m)
- Processing housing benefit for 8,000 households (£33.8m)
- Carrying out 131 housing and council tax benefit fraud investigations
- Collecting 93% of council tax due in the year
- Increasing the number of council tax payers paying by direct debit to 16,761 and the number of council house rent payers to 403.
- Continual improvement in rent arrears as a percentage of net debit since 2000/2001
- Processing rents for 11,500 council houses (£28m)
- Processing 625 discretionary housing payments (£50,000)
- Implementing a new fraud management system
- Developing and introducing a corporate debt policy through extensive consultation with partner agencies and stakeholders
- Publicising and introducing the opt in scheme to pay council tax by 12 monthly instalments
- Issuing 23,000 annual statements to all residents in debt with council tax, non domestic rates and sundry debts

2.0 PERFORMANCE REVIEW

In accordance with the new performance management framework introduced in April 2009 a year end progress report for the first year of the Corporate Services departmental plan for 2008/12 was submitted to Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee on 24th June 09.

STRENGTHS

The revenues & benefit section has a large number of strengths:

- Increase in the take up of direct debit payers in both council tax and rent
- Rent arrears have consistently decreased as a percentage of net debit since 2000/2001
- Council tax collection has increased consistently since 2004/05
- The recovery of housing benefit overpayments has increased substantially since the introduction of the Northgate debtors system

PERFORMANCE ISSUES

The Revenues & Benefits section has a number of weaknesses/performance issues:

- A high percentage of staff in red circled posts
- High rent arrears as a percentage of net debit compared to other councils
- Increasing former tenant rent arrears
- Low council tax collection rate compared to other councils
- Low number of fraud sanctions

These issues are addressed in our action plan.

The Corporate Services departmental plan will inform the work of the section over the next year and beyond, influencing our service priorities and objectives and our action plan for 2009/10.

The table at appendix 3 details our performance across the range of services provided by the section. The table details performance from 2004/2005 (where available) to 2008/09 for both statutory and local performance indicators. This replaces previous annual performance reports that were submitted to Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee

Annual Performance Overview

Rent Arrears

Performance on rent arrears is an integral part of the voluntary remedial plan for Housing Management Services agreed with Communities Scotland, now the Scottish Regulator.

The lifetime debt figure of current tenant arrears of £1,131,353 as at 31 March 2009 represents a reduction of £98,755 and an increase of 139 cases from 2007/08.

Former tenant arrears have increased by £34,611 to £1,303,931 with an increase in caseload of 855.

The lifetime debt of £2,435,284 for both current and former tenant arrears has decreased by £42,368.

Current tenant arrears as a percentage of net debit has decreased from 11.9% in 2007/2008 to 10.6%. This indicator has shown continuous improvement since 2000/2001. Our target for this year is 9%.

During 2008/09 decree for recovery of possession due to non-payment of rent was granted in 41 cases. Of these 41 cases, 22 came to suitable payment arrangements were granted a new tenancy agreement, 16 abandoned their tenancy, one case resulted in eviction, one tenant died and one terminated their tenancy.

The Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee approved our revised Rent Arrears Policy in April 2009.

If we fail to collect rent arrears this will have an effect on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the ability to provide services. Failure to implement an improvement plan for the continuous improvement in rent arrears could result in the agreement to a voluntary remedial plan being revoked and a statutory notice under the Housing Scotland Act (2001) being served on the Council.

We are committed to reducing the level of arrears. We will continue to monitor our arrears performance, make early contact with tenants who have arrears, maintain close links with housing management, housing benefits, welfare rights and other agencies and make affordable, sustainable repayment arrangements with tenants in arrears.

Council Tax

In February 2008 the Council set a 2008/09 council tax of £1,163 (Band D), included in the budgetary assumptions was an estimated collection level of 97% of the net charges levied. The budget yield from the council tax was set at £38,589,260.

The first council tax instalment for 2008/09 was due by payment on 1st April with subsequent instalments due thereafter for 9 months, on the 1st of the month or the 15th or 28th if paying by Direct Debit. Tax payers can also now opt to pay by 12 monthly instalments.

During 2008/09 the Council achieved the greatest increase in Direct Debit uptake of all UK authorities. The prize given for this achievement was to nominate a charity to receive a donation of £1,000.

With respect to the bills issued for 2008/09, the following control totals as at 31 March 2009 have been produced (excluding any sums due for Scottish Water charges)

	£
Gross charges levied	45,082,210
Less reliefs and exemptions	<u>5,638,110</u>
Net charges levied	39,444,100
Less benefits awarded	<u>9,745,250</u>
Net sum collectable	<u>29,698,850</u>

On the basis of the billing totals as at 31 March 2009, the actual yield for 2008/09 is £38,260,780 which compares with the budgeted yield of £38,589,000. The drop in yield is largely due to the re-banding exercise carried out in Duntocher and Hardgate. However, the full effect of the re-banding exercise is approximately £980,000 as the new bands are effective from 1 April 1993 in most cases.

The in-year collection target for 2008/09 was 93%. The percentage collected as at 31st March 09 was 93%

Housing & Council Tax Benefit

Housing and council tax benefit performance is measured by three statutory performance indicators (SPIs). Two of these indicators are new and we have no comparative information available to assess our performance against. However, we have maintained the previous SPIs as local performance indicators to allow detailed monitoring of all areas of the service.

The performance information for housing benefit and council tax benefit is attached at appendix 3.

An audit of the benefits service was undertaken by Audit Scotland in December 2008 and the service received a favourable report. The action plan following this audit was submitted to Audit and Performance Review Committee in March 2009 and all actions pertaining to the report are included in our action plan.

The first SPI is the gross administration cost per case which has risen dramatically from £37.41 in 2007/08 to £45.81 in 2008/09. This is mainly as a result of a change in the allocation of central administration recharges and single status realignment payments. We will continue to monitor our performance in this area.

The second SPI is the average number of days to process new claims and change events is a new indicator. This measures the time taken from the date the claim is received at the local authority office, even although all the information may not be available to assess the claim, to the date a decision is made on the claim. This is an amalgamation of two previous indicators, time taken to process new claims and the time taken to process changes. Our performance for this indicator in 2008/09 was 12 days.

Our average time for processing new claims in 2009/09 increased from 21 to 24 days. However, our average time for processing a change of circumstances decreased from 8 days in 2007/08 to 6 days in 2008/09. One of the reasons for the increase in time taken to process new claims was the loss of experienced members of staff during 2008/09.

The third SPI measures the number and percentage of changes to customer's benefit entitlement that are processed within the year compared to an estimate published by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). We achieved over the target set by DWP and processed 22,958 changes that affected customer's entitlement to benefit.

Our performance in housing benefit overpayment recovery has improved since 2007/08 with over 75% of overpayments being identified in the year being recovered and over 21% of the total overpayment debt being recovered. We will revise our overpayment strategy this year in line with the Corporate Debt Policy and continue to pursue overpayments of housing benefit.

The benefits section administers discretionary housing payments. These payments are made at the discretion of the local authority subject to an annual cash limit. A discretionary housing payment can only be paid to a claimant if:-

- a) they already get housing and / or council tax benefit, and
- b) there is a shortfall between their benefit and their rent charge or council tax charge, and
- c) they have difficulty paying the shortfall.

A total of 625 discretionary payments were awarded in 2008/09 amounting to £49,941. Central Government grant for the year was £50,019.

If claimants are refused housing or council tax benefit or are not satisfied with the Council's decision, they can ask the Council to reconsider. If they are still not satisfied with the outcome, they can appeal to the Appeals Tribunal. The Appeals Tribunal is part of an independently legally qualified body administered by the Scottish Government.

During the year 2008/09 we received 43 requests for re-determination and one appeal was referred to the Appeals Tribunal. The council decision in this case was upheld.

Benefit Investigation Team

The investigation team works within the Council's agreed anti-fraud / prosecution policy with regard to the imposition of sanctions and during 2008/09 investigated suspected cases of benefit fraud referred to it from a number of sources and from proactive activities. During 2008/09 the team received a total of 257 referrals (excluding referrals from the National Fraud Initiative) which resulted in 32 of these investigations being classified as fraud.

In 2008/09 36% of referrals received were not investigated, 48% were investigated and no fraud proven, 16% of referrals were investigated and fraud proven. Of these 32 cases we achieved the following sanctions: 5 administrative cautions, 2 administrative penalties and 3 successful prosecutions.

During 2008/09 the team also identified 250 fraudulent housing and / or council tax benefit fraud overpayments amounting to £343,283 of which £231,099 (67%) has been recovered.

The team also undertakes the following proactive anti fraud work:

- Data matching from the Housing Benefit Matching Service (HBMS) and the National Fraud Initiative (NFI)
- Joint working and investigations with the Fraud Investigation Service (FIS)
- First payment visits
- Publicising the National Fraud Hotline
- Participating in the DWP national fraud campaign
- Fraud awareness training for revenues and benefit staff, welfare rights, registered social landlords and housing management staff
- Fraud awareness sessions for all new council employees at induction

3.0 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The key issues arising for the Revenues and Benefits service from the Corporate Services Management team strategic assessment of major influences on our service delivery and departmental operations are as follows.

Efficient Governance

The efficient government group is considering best practice for a framework to monitor efficiencies. This group has five main work streams to progress the efficient government theme. Revenues & Benefits contribute to the Customer First work stream and initiatives such as on line benefits claim form and fraud referral form are being monitored by this group.

Workforce development

Staff are the most important factor in ensuring organisational success. The Council has placed significant emphasis on improving the organisational culture and ensuring we have a diverse and engaged workforce with the right leadership and skills to deliver efficient and effective services.

In Revenues and Benefits we are restructuring the section to improve service delivery and to achieve our priorities and targets.

We will roll out personal development plans to all employees and provide more opportunities for staff development through both internal and external training and coaching.

Economic climate

Our budget for 2009/10 reflects the impact of the economic downturn and an increase in housing & council tax benefit caseload. The Revenue & Benefit section are leading on two policies to mitigate the immediate impact. These are the introduction of a 12 month opt-in scheme for taxpayers to pay their council tax and the introduction of a Corporate Debt Policy.

Together with the outcome of our performance review for 2008/9 set out in Section 2, these will inform the work of the Section over the period of this plan, influencing our service priorities and objectives and our planned actions for 2009/10 and beyond. Section 5 looks at this in more detail.

4.0 CORPORATE PLANNING CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

The Council has developed a new Corporate Plan for 2009/13, closely aligned with the Community Plan 2007/17 and the Single Outcome Agreement of June 2008. The values, vision, themes, priorities, and objectives, set out in detail in the Corporate Plan 2009/13 and summarised below, provide the context for departmental planning over the next four years.

CORPORATE VALUES

The Council's values underpin the way we work and guide everything we do. They are:

- putting customers first;
- communication and consultation;
- valuing our employees;
- openness and accountability;
- sustainability;
- continuous improvement;
- partnership working;
- equal opportunities.

CORPORATE VISION

The Council's vision for West Dunbartonshire is shaped by partnership:

We will improve prosperity and inclusion for all citizens, deliver better and more efficient services, and improve West Dunbartonshire as a place to live, work and visit.

CORPORATE THEMES and PRIORITIES 2009/13

Following from this vision, the Council has identified six themes and related priorities. These are shown below and the details are in the Corporate Plan. The Revenues and Benefits service is primarily influenced by Theme 6:

- Theme 1 Regeneration and the local economy
- Theme 2 Health and well being
- Theme 3 Safe and strong communities
- Theme 4 Sustainable environments
- Theme 5 Education and lifelong learning
- Theme 6 An improving Council
 - improve leadership
 - improve community engagement
 - improve governance and resource management

- value our employees
- promote continuous improvement
- promote sustainable development
- promote equal opportunities
- improve the perception of West Dunbartonshire

Full details of the Corporate Plan 2009/13 are available on the intranet.

DELIVERING THE 2009/13 CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

All of the Section's actions are focussed on delivering the corporate priorities and objectives under Theme 6 - An Improving Council. Many of the priorities and objectives under this theme are part of the Best Value Improvement Plan developed as a response to Audit Scotland's Best Value and Community Planning Audits carried out in 2006 and 2007.

Section 6 sets out the Section's contribution to meeting the corporate priorities and objectives in the form of a detailed action plan for 2009/10 in Appendix 2.

5.0 KEY SECTION PRIORITIES

The primary focus of the Section is to contribute to delivering the corporate priorities and objectives referred to in Section 4 above. In addition, our performance review and strategic assessment, set out in sections 2 and 3 of this Plan, have highlighted a number of departmental issues to be addressed in the coming year. These issues have been translated into objectives and appropriate performance indicators and targets have been developed to monitor progress towards them. The key section objectives for 2009/13 are:

- Improve rent arrears performance
- Implement Corporate Debt Policy
- Develop benefit take up strategy
- Develop and implement benefits overpayment policy
- Improve revenue & benefit & contact centre enquiry resolution
- Improve revenue & benefit information on web site
- Improve council tax processing
- Improve benefit fraud investigation service
- Improve learning & development opportunities for revenue & benefit staff
- Restructure the service to improve service delivery and deliver the sections priorities and action plans.

The key objectives of the restructure of the service are to:

- Improve customer service
- Drive out inefficiencies
- Improve performance through the sharing of information, the elimination of duplication and the introduction of smarter methods of working

Section 6 sets out more fully what the Section hopes to achieve together with relevant performance indicators, targets and actions.

6.0 INDICATORS, TARGETS AND ACTIONS

Revenues & Benefits Service has set out in detail the 2009/10 action plan to help deliver the Corporate objectives (Appendix 2). It also sets out the full list of the section's objectives, the performance indicators that we will use to measure progress towards them and our 2009/10 action plan to deliver them. Performance indicators have targets for each of the four years covered by the plan, together with comparative performance data where available, and the senior officer responsible for managing the indicator.

7.0 RESOURCES

BUDGET

The gross annual budget for revenues and benefits services in 2009/10 is £48,204,460. Included in this sum is £43,494,050 of payments in respect of rent allowances, rent rebates and council tax benefit.

EMPLOYEES

The section has a staff of 132 comprising of 40.5 in benefits administration, 22 in council tax masterfile, 23 in finance recovery unit, 7 in fraud investigation service, 11.5 in system & administrative support and 26 in rent arrears. A high level structure chart for the section is set out in Appendix 1.

It should also be noted as per Section 5 above, a restructure of the service is planned for 2009/10. The key objectives of the restructure will be to improve customer service, drive out inefficiencies and improve performance. This restructure may have an impact upon the current allocation of staff to service areas as outlined in the previous paragraph.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

The revenues and benefits section is fully committed to supporting the personal development of staff to achieve their full potential in terms of skill and performance.

Training strategy

We will carry out and develop Personal Development Plans (PDPs) for all staff within the section.

Staff at all levels within Revenues and Benefits will be given the opportunity to undertake the relevant Institute of Rates Revenues and Valuation (IRRV) qualification whether by SVQ, college attendance or distance learning.

Staff in debt recovery will be given the opportunity to undertake a debt management qualification.

Fraud investigation staff will be encouraged to undertake Professionalism in Security (PINs) training or equivalent.

A training plan will be followed for all new entrants in the service working in council tax, benefits and debt recovery that sets out the skills and knowledge they should have by a certain timeframe.

Key learning milestones for existing staff will be developed and discussed with staff at their PDP's.

Learning opportunities will be provided by a range of methods including:

- Induction training
- Coaching and mentoring
- Attending relevant external training courses
- In house training
- Briefing sessions
- Bulletins

Staff will be encouraged to undertake the European Computer Driving License (ECDL)

We will hold briefing sessions for revenue & benefit staff to develop their understanding of the work of the section and how the section links to both internal and external stakeholders including housing management, welfare rights, citizens advice bureau and registered social landlords.

We will encourage and allow wherever possible development and learning opportunities, however, consideration will need to be given to budgets and service delivery when deciding on the most appropriate method of development.

8.0 RISKS

Section Risks

The main risks facing the section in 2009/10 are:

The Council's general services and HRA budgets for 2009/10 assume a yield from council tax and council house rents. Failure to collect these sums will have an adverse effect on the Council's budget.

Failure to improve rent arrears performance may have an impact on the outcome of the Housing Inspection due in November 2009.

Failure to implement the actions identified in the Audit Scotland Benefit audit in December 2008 may influence the outcome of any future audits.

9.0 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

A new performance management framework was agreed by the corporate management team (CMT) and subsequently by the Audit and Performance review Committee on 14th January 2009. It sets out how departmental plans will be monitored, managed and reported to stakeholders and replaces the current performance management framework that was based on quarterly performance review meetings.

The progress of this Plan will be monitored, managed, and reported in accordance with the new framework. In summary, it sets out how departmental plans will be considered at directorate management team, CMT, and elected member levels, providing opportunities to scrutinise performance and pro actively manage it through taking corrective action where necessary and possible.

Full details of the new performance management framework as it relates to departmental plans, are set out at Appendix 4

In addition, a range of other performance management processes and structures currently operate within the section:

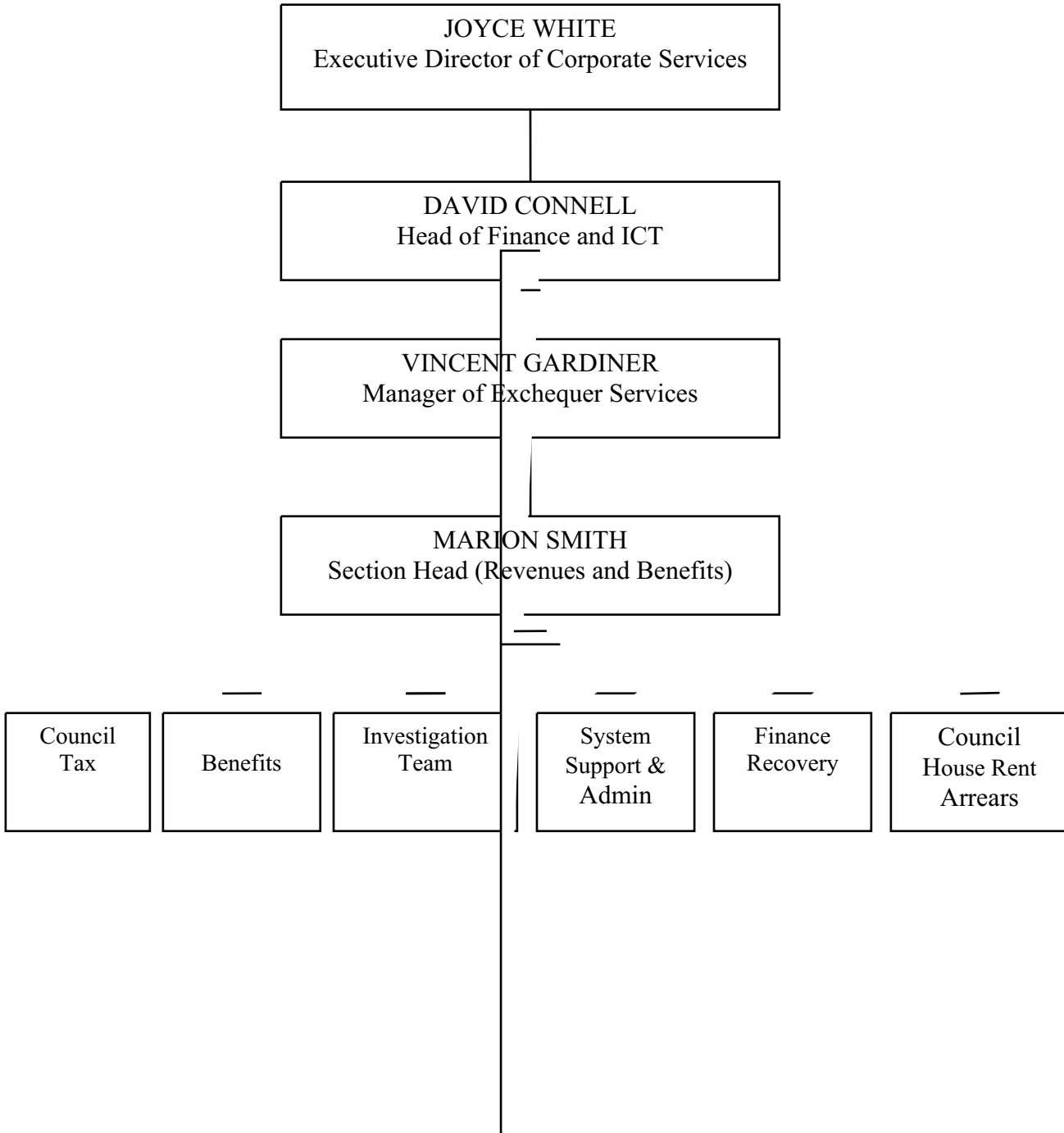
- Monthly performance meetings with Team / Section leaders
- PDPs
- One to ones with staff

PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Reporting performance to external stakeholders is carried out in a number of ways, primarily through the Council newspaper, West Dunbartonshire News. Each of the four editions of the newspaper produced features a performance article focusing on one of the Council's six themes. These articles set out each directorate's contribution to delivering the corporate objectives and the extent to which these have been delivered.

For the revenues and benefits section, we will include our performance on rent arrears in tenant's news letters, housing and council tax benefit performance is included in our Registered Social Landlord newsletter and council tax performance is issued annually to residents with annual bills.

APPENDIX 1: DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE CHART



APPENDIX 2: ACTION PLAN 2009/10

**Corporate Services Department Plan
Appendix 2a PIs**

Report Type: PIs Report
Generated on: 08 September 2009



Theme 6 An improving Council (CP9-13)
Priority Promote continuous improvement and transform service delivery (CP9-13)
Objective Improve overall service performance and self awareness (CP9-13)

Performance Indicator	2008/09		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Assigned To
	Value	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target	
SHS4ai HS5aiiii: Current tenant arrears as a percentage of the net amount of rent due in the year	10.59%	10%	9%	7.5%	7%	6.8%	6.5%	Marion Smith
CS/FI/LPI001: Old BA2a SPI - The time for processing applications for new claims from the date of receipt of the application to the day on which the claim is decided.	24	23	23	22	21	20		Marion Smith
CS/FI/LPI005: Old BA3b(ii) SPI - The amount and percentage of Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments recovered expressed as a percentage of HB overpayments identified for total overpayments debt at the start of the year plus the in-year overpayments.	21.2%	14%	22.5%	23.5%	24.5%	25.5%		Marion Smith
CS/FICT/LPI011: Percentage of appeals submitted to the Tribunals Service in 4 weeks.	0%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%		Marion Smith
SHS4bi HS5biii: Percentage of current tenants owing more than 13 weeks rent at the year end, excluding those owing less than £250	4.5%	5%	4.5%	4%	3.5%	3.4%		Marion Smith
SBA2 BA2a: The average number of days per case to process new HB/CTB claims and change events.	8.4	12	11.5	11	10.5	10		Marion Smith
CS/FI/LPI003: Old BA3a SPI - The % of cases - calculation of the amount of benefit due was correct on the basis of the info avail, a sample of cases checked post-determination.	98.5%	99%	98.5%	99%	99%	99%		Marion Smith
CS/FI/LPI004: Old BA3b(i) SPI - The amount and percentage of Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments recovered expressed as a percentage of HB overpayments identified in the year.	75.4%	60%	77%	78%	79%	80%		Marion Smith

SCM6b CM6b: Percentage of income due from Council Tax for the year, net of reliefs and rebates that was received during the year	93%	93%	93%	93.25%	93.5%	93.75%	94%	Marion Smith
CS/FI/LPI002: Old BA2b SPI - The time for processing applications for notifications of changes of circumstances from the date of receipt of the application to the day on which the claim is decided.	5	9	6	5.5	5	4.5		Marion Smith
CS/FI/LPI006: Old BA3c SPI - The amount of HB overpayments written off as a percentage of total overpayments debt outstanding.	4%	4.25%	3%	3%	3%	3%		Marion Smith
SBA3e BA3biii: The percentage of changes to customers' HB/CTB entitlement that are processed within the year compared to estimate established by DWP.	100%	80%	95%	95%	95%	95%		Marion Smith
CS/FICT/LPI007: Percentage of new claims outstanding over 50 days.	15%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%		Marion Smith
CS/FICT/LPI008: Percentage of new claims decided within 14 days of receiving all information.	96%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%		Marion Smith
CS/FICT/LPI009: Percentage of Rent Allowance claims paid on time or within 7 days of decision being made.	94%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%		Marion Smith
CS/FICT/LPI010: Percentage of applications for reconsiderations actioned and notified within 4 weeks.	84%	80%	80%	80%	80%	80%		Marion Smith
CS/FICT/LPI012: Percentage of appeals submitted to the Tribunals Service (including those in CS/FICT/LPI011 above) in 3 months.	100%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%		Marion Smith
CS/FICT/LPI013: Percentage of discretionary housing payment budget spent.	100%	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%		Marion Smith
SBA3d BA3aai: The number of changes to customers' HB/CTB entitlement that are processed within the year.	20,616							Marion Smith

Theme 6 An improving Council (CP9-13)

Priority **Promote continuous improvement and transform service delivery (CP9-13)**

Objective **Improve service efficiency and competitiveness (CP9-13)**

Performance Indicator	2008/09		2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Assigned To
	Value	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target	Target	
SBA1e: BA1f: Gross administration cost per housing benefit case	£45.81	£37.00	£36.50	£36.00	£35.50	£35.00	£34.50	Marion Smith
SCM5 CM5: Cost of collecting Council Tax per dwelling	£17.71	£16.00	£16.00	£16.00	£16.00	£16.00	£15.00	Marion Smith

Corporate Services Department Plan

Appendix 2b Actions

Report Type: Actions Report
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Theme 6 An improving Council (CP9-13)
Priority Improve governance and resource management (CP9-13)
Objective Improve medium to long term financial planning (CP9-13)

Action	Assigned To	Start Date	Due Date
Introduce 12-month council tax payment scheme	Vincent Gardiner	01 Apr 2009	28 Feb 2009

Theme 6 An improving Council (CP9-13)
Priority Promote continuous improvement and transform service delivery (CP9-13)
Objective Improve overall service performance and self awareness (CP9-13)

Action	Assigned To	Start Date	Due Date
Analyse results of early intervention team and implement restructure if effective	Marion Smith	01 Apr 2009	31 May 2009
Revise rent arrears policy in conjunction with stakeholders	Marion Smith	01 Apr 2009	31 May 2009
Revise current and former tenant arrears procedures	Marion Smith	30 Apr 2009	31 May 2009
Develop and Implement benefit overpayment policy	Marion Smith	01 Apr 2009	30 Jun 2009
Develop benefits take up strategy	Marion Smith	01 Apr 2009	31 Oct 2009
Consider feasibility of facility to complete benefits claim on-line	Marion Smith	01 Apr 2009	31 Dec 2009
Improve revenue & benefits/contact centre enquiry resolution	Marion Smith		31 Mar 2010
Improve rent arrears performance	Marion Smith		31 Mar 2010
Implement corporate debt policy	Marion Smith		31 Mar 2010
Improve revenues and benefits information on website	Marion Smith		31 Mar 2010
Improve learning and development opportunities for revenues and benefits staff	Marion Smith		31 Mar 2010
Improve benefits fraud investigation services	Marion Smith		31 Mar 2010
Complete revenue and benefits financial returns	Marion Smith		31 Mar 2010
Improve council tax processing	Marion Smith		31 Mar 2010
Develop business plan for Revenues and Benefits Service	Marion Smith	18 May 2009	30 Apr 2010
Carry out benchmarking to inform revenue service development	Marion Smith		30 Apr 2010

Housing and council tax benefit performance indicators

Statutory Performance Indicators	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05
Benefits gross admin cost per case	£45.81	£37.41	£39.37	£45.82	£42.48
Average number of days per case to process new HB/CTB claims & change events (new indicator)	12.07	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
The number & percentage of changes to customers HB/CTB entitlement that are processed within the year compared to estimate published by DWP (new indicator)	22,958 100%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Local Performance Indicators					
Average time to process new claims	24	21	28	34	42
Average time to process changes of circumstances	6.25	8	15	26	n/a
% new claims outstanding > 50 days	14.5%	9.8%	10%	n/a	n/a
% new claims paid within 14 days	88.9%	85.7%	92%	93%	94%
% new claims paid within 7 days of determination	94%	95%	92%	75%	86%
% new claims determined within 14 days of receiving all info	96%	98%	92%	93%	94%

The % of cases where the calculation of benefit due was correct based on the information available	99%	98.4%	98%	98%	99%
The %of HB overpayments recovered as a % of HB overpayments identified in the year	75.4%	63%	48%	39%	n/a
The % of total overpayment debt recovered	21.2%	11.8%	11.3%	8.7%	n/a
The amount of HB overpayments written off as a % of total overpayment debt outstanding	3.1%	3%	5%	7%	n/a
% of reconsiderations dealt with within 4 weeks	84%	82%	100%	78%	n/a
% of appeals dealt with within 4 weeks	0%	100%	100%	100%	n/a
% of appeals dealt with within 3 months	100%	100%	0%	0%	n/a
% of discretionary housing payments budget spent	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Council Tax performance indicators

Statutory Performance Indicators	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05
The cost of collecting council tax per dwelling	£17.71	£16.59	£7.26	£9.24	£12.14
The % of income due from council tax for the year, net of reliefs and rebates that was received during the year	93%	92.8%	92.1%	90.4%	89.4%
Local Performance Indicators	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05
Number of direct debit payers	16,761	12,412	12,265	11,976	11,454

Time taken to process exemptions	To be developed				
Time taken to process discounts	To be developed				

Fraud investigation team performance indicators

Local Performance Indicators	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05
Number of cautions issued	5	1	0	0	0
Number of administrative penalties issued	2	4	5	0	0
Number of successful prosecutions	3	10	4	0	0
% fraudulent overpayments recovered	67%	58%	42%	47%	42%
Number of fraud referrals per 1000 caseload	17.9	20.6	27.8	37.7	77.3

Rent Arrears performance indicators

Statutory Performance Indicators	2008/09	2007/08	2006/07	2005/06	2004/05
Current tenant arrears as a % of the net amount of rent due in the year	10.59%	11.9%	12.7%	14.5%	15.8%
% of current tenants owing more than 13 weeks rent at the year end, excluding those owing less than £250	4.5%	5.4%	5.8%	6.3%	6.6%
Proportion of those tenants giving up their tenancy during the year that were in rent arrears	55.8%	55%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Average debt owed by tenants leaving in arrears as a	£11.29	£11.60	n/a	n/a	n/a

proportion of the average weekly rent					
Proportion of arrears owed by former tenants that was either written off or collected during the year	23.9%	3.71%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Local Performance Indicators					
Amount of current tenant rent arrears	£1,131,353	£1,230,108	£1,270,785	£1,397,439	£1,460,340
Caseload of current tenant arrears	2893	2754	2929	3086	3191
Average debt current tenants	£391	£444	£434	£453	£458
Amount former tenant (FT) arrears	£1,303,931	£1,269,320	£1,067,750	£990,082	£991,378
Caseload FT arrears	2893	2040	1671	2064	1861
% current tenant debt prior to 2001	14%	18%	25%	33%	n/a
Total Current & FT arrears	£2,435,284	£2,499,428	£2,338,535	£2,387,521	£2,451,718
% rent collected by Direct Debit	6.72%	3.73%	n/a	n/a	n/a

APPENDIX 4: PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Scrutineer	Focus	Element	Proposal
Directorate Management Team	Departmental Plan	Frequency	Monthly (recommended) Quarterly (minimum)
		Format	Meeting incorporated into wider directorate management team meetings e.g. SMT/DMT OR dedicated performance management meetings
		Attendance	Director, heads of services, managers
		Timing	Monthly - Maximum of two weeks after end of month Quarterly - Maximum of four weeks after end of quarter
		Scope of report	Monthly - Actions (exceptions only), monthly monitored PIs that are not on track, absence Quarterly - All actions, PIs, and directorate risks from Covalent scorecard for directorate's strategic plan (including absence), as well as complaints, FOI requests, and health and safety statistics, etc
		Source of report	Covalent scorecard for directorate's strategic plan
		Format of report	Standard Covalent report formats to be agreed
Corporate Management Team	Departmental Plan	Frequency	One directorate every quarter
		Format	CMT meeting with Heads of Service from whichever directorate is presenting
		Timing	Timetable to be agreed
		Scope of report	Key issues, PIs that are not on track, departmental risks, financial issues
		Source of report	Covalent scorecard for directorate's strategic plan
		Format of report	Standard Covalent report format to be agreed
Elected Members	Departmental Plan	Frequency	Twice yearly (minimum)
		Format	Twice yearly - Formal report to relevant committee/s Quarterly - E-mailed Covalent report to members of relevant committee/s?
		Timing	Twice yearly - Mid year report around November and year end report around June Quarterly - Maximum of four weeks after end of quarter
		Scope of report	Twice yearly - All actions, PIs, and directorate risks Quarterly - monthly PIs
		Source of report	Covalent scorecard for directorate's strategic plan
		Format of report	Standard Covalent report format to be agreed