

Revenues Services Best Value Review

Service Improvement Plan – Progress Report

Item	Objective	Progress to date	Target Completion Date	Responsible officer and major contributors
1.1	Improve Revenues reception and interviewing facilities.	Access to services working group meetings have re-commenced. Interviewing and reception facilities are included in the scoping document for this review.	2004/2005	Access to Services Review (J Mercer)
1.2	Increase office-opening hours. Cost based on 3 members of Revenues Services staff working 4 hrs on Sat morning for 1 year.	Access to services working group meetings have re-commenced. Office opening hours are included in the scoping document for this review.	2004/2005	Access to Services Review (J Mercer)
1.3	Increase telephone access hours and review use of voicemail/call diversion.	Access to services working group meetings have re-commenced. Telephone access is included in the scoping document for this review.	2004/2005	Access to Services Review (J Mercer)
1.4	Provide staff presence at Dunmow CIC. Cost based on 1 member of Revenues Services staff present for one morning per week for 1 year.	Consideration being given to training up CIC staff to deal with more complex queries thereby enabling cover during full working week. Training to be carried out in the late summer.	27 February 2004	Sheila Adams
1.5	Maximise take up of benefit.	See separate action plan.	Ongoing	Sheila Adams

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1.6	Publicise Council Tax discounts and exemptions.	Advert regarding exemptions and discounts placed in Uttlesford leaflet issued with annual demand notices. Leaflets produced for Revenues counter on exemptions and discounts available to Council Tax customers.	Ongoing	Sue Ellis
1.7	Provide facility for customers to receive information in large print, Braille or audiotape.	Access to services working group meetings have re-commenced. Provision of information in different formats is included in the scoping document for this review.	2004/2005	Access to Services Review (J Mercer)
1.8	Improve the standard of Benefit decision letters.	The SX3 Beta release of the new user friendly Benefits has just come out and should be live by September 2004.	31 January 2004	Julian Sayer

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2.1	Develop Revenues web page	Improvements have been made to the Revenues web page to enable customers to complete a benefit claim form on-line. Work is progressing to allow people to view personal details of their Council Tax and Business Rates.	31 March 2004	IT section and Revenues Q/D Team
2.2	Introduce 'workflow' technology to compliment document imaging system (including additional VDU flat screens)	DWP funding has recently been secured to enable this project to go ahead.	2004/2005	IT section and Revenues Q/D Team
2.3	Pilot the introduction of home working	DWP funding has recently been secured to enable this project to go ahead.	June 2004	IT section
2.4	Develop management reporting reports to assist in the speed and accuracy of processing claims and the recovery of overpayments.	Negotiations have taken place with Brentwood Borough Council for the provision of enhanced management reporting to enable more detailed analysis of the speed of processing claims.	2004/2005	Mike Brean Julian Sayer

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2.5	Create an Intranet referral form and send out email to all staff	Implemented.	31 October 2003	Adrian Webb
2.6	Implementation of new server for Sx3 Revenues and Benefits computer system	DWP funding approved, up to date quotation requested from Fox IT on 20 May 2004. Advice on server configuration and utilisation of old server requested from SX3 on 20 May 2004.	2004/2005	FOX IT Julian Sayer

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Aim 3	Introduce new and improved methods of administering and making payment			
3.1	Introduction of payment card for cash payers at Post Offices	<p>Meeting held with Allpay to look at other alternatives to Girobank swipe cards.</p> <p>Housing have been advised that payment cards are being considered for council tax payments. Although interested, Rents predict that the demand for rent payment cards will be low. Housing will be advised of progress on this project.</p>	31 January 2004	Sue Ellis Julian Sayer Denise Greenwood
3.2	Automated telephone payments (ATP)	Funding has been included in the IT Programme to enable the system to be installed during 2004/05.	2004/2005	IT Section
3.3	Introduce automated Direct Debit set up (AUDDIS), amendments and cancellations (ADDACS).	BACS IP project has not yet gone live. AUDDIS and ADDACS will follow after new BACS system has bedded in.	ADDACS 31 May 2004 AUDDIS 31 Dec 2004	Julian Sayer IT Section

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3.4	Introduce direct payment of Housing Benefit	New Accountancy IT system has not yet gone live, direct payments will follow after the new Accountancy system has bedded in.	October 2004	IT Section Phil O'Dell Julian Sayer
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Aim 4	Introduce the Department for Work and Pensions Performance Standards			
4.1	Implement DWP Performance Standards in benefits administration	The Council was assessed at being 99% compliant with the standards by the BFI. Staff have been informed that targets will be introduced in the near future.	31 March 2004	Mike Brean Sheila Adams Sue Mustill
4.2	Submit Fraud Policy to Resources Committee for approval	Completed.	20 November 2003	John Mercer Adrian Webb
4.3	Finalise and issue Code of Conduct to Investigators	Completed.	30 November 2003	John Mercer Adrian Webb
4.4	Register all qualified Authorised Officers with Counter fraud Investigation Branch	Completed.	30 September 2003	Adrian Webb
4.5	Produce an Authorised Officer request form with an area for the outcome of the authorisation.	Completed.	30 September 2003	Adrian Webb

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4.6	Analyse the Administrative Penalty recovery rate for 2002/03.	Completed.	31 October 2003	Adrian Webb Matt Southall
4.7	Agree a policy with Revenues for regular feedback on the recovery of Administrative Penalty debts	Agreed that the Overpayments Officer would submit a quarterly summary report.	31 October 2003	Adrian Webb Mike Brean
4.8	Review all fraud policies on an annual basis	Completed.	31 January 2004	Adrian Webb

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Aim 5 Use partnership arrangements to deliver improved levels of service				
5.1	Pilot Revenues Services staff presence on mobile library service. One member of staff for 8 weeks.	Karen Prentice (Essex CC) has been contacted and she has faxed details of time and places that the mobile library calls. Visit still to be arranged.	27 February 2004	Sue Ellis Sheila Adams
5.2	Enable customers to pay Council Tax and other debts at Braintree, East Herts and South Cambs Councils.	Meeting held with 3 other L.A's only South Cambs willing to proceed. D Greenwood and P O'Dell will implement this.	2004/2005	Denise Greenwood Sue Ellis IT Section
5.3	Investigate the feasibility of Business Rates joint working arrangements.	Discussions still to take place.	2005/2006	Mike Brean Adrian Marsh
5.4	Explore potential data matching partnership opportunities with neighbouring authorities	On-going ~ data matching exercises undertaken with East Herts District Council and CFIS during last few months. These exercises related to Stansted Airport & local care providers.	31 December 2003	Adrian Webb John Mercer

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5.5	Pursue joint working initiatives with Counter Fraud Investigation Service as appropriate	On-going. See 5.4	On-going	Adrian Webb
5.6	Consider joint working arrangements for the Anti-Fraud Team.	A report is being submitted to the June 2004 Resources Committee regarding a possible counter-fraud partnership with East Herts District Council.	31 December 2003	John Mercer Adrian Webb

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6.1	Fraud Awareness and Induction Training with 6 monthly follow-up sessions	Outstanding.	December 2003	Michael Perry
6.2	Produce a quarterly fraud newsletter for Council staff	Outstanding.	31 December 2003	Michael Perry
6.3	Produce fraud referral source statistics on a quarterly basis and analyse for trends and good/poor levels of referrals	Completed.	31 December 2003	Adrian Webb
6.4	Submit an annual fraud report to Members	Included in Members Bulletin.	31 December 2003	John Mercer Adrian Webb
6.5	Introduce the training evaluation documentation provided by Personnel	Completed.	30 September 2003	Adrian Webb

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6.6	Establish a corporate Anti Fraud training plan to include training provider and dates	Completed.	31 December 2003	Adrian Webb