

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Finance Portfolio Holder

24th July 2008

AUTHOR/S: Head of Revenues

FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES 2008/09 SERVICE PLAN – CONFIRMATION OF PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Purpose

1. To request the Portfolio Holder agree revised targets for a number of performance indicators contained in the service plan for Finance and Support Services.
2. This is not a key decision, however, it is usual practice for the Portfolio Holder to formally agree the service plan including performance targets.

Background

3. The Resources Portfolio Holder agreed the 2008/09 service plan for Finance and Support Service on 3rd April 2008. However, at that time final 2007/08 performance results for some Revenues Service performance indicators were not yet available and therefore targets shown in the plan were provisional.

Considerations

4. Proposed revised targets, based on final performance indicators for 2007/08, are shown in the extract from the service plan at Appendix A. The revised targets are shown in bold type with the provisional targets agreed on 3rd April 2008 shown below in italics for comparison. Targets in normal typeface are not altered from the figures agreed on 3rd April.
5. The targets are considered to be both stretching and achievable within the current level of resources available to the service.

Options

6. The proposed targets may be agreed, or alternative targets set. However, it should be noted that in order to achieve a higher level of performance than proposed by the recommended targets it is likely that additional resources would be required.

Implications

7.

Financial	Many targets relate to revenue collection and will ensure that the Council's budgeted income is received.
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Risk Management	None
Equal Opportunities	The targets will help to ensure that revenue collection and benefits administration are delivered in a fair and consistent manner to all members of the community.

Consultations

8. Managers and team leaders responsible for delivering Revenue Services have been consulted.

Effect on Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities

9.

Work in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future
Achieving the targets will require close working with local advice agencies.
Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community
The level of performance required by the revised targets is considered to be of a high level, and revenue collection targets will help to ensure the Council provides best value.
Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work
Targets for benefit administration will help to ensure residents received any benefits they are entitled to promptly to assist with their housing costs.

Conclusions/Summary

10. The performance targets contained in the service plan for Finance and Support Services should be revised in order to ensure that they represent a stretching and achievable improvement on the performance achieved in 2007/08.

Recommendations

11. The Portfolio Holder is recommended to agree that the performance targets shown in bold in Appendix A be incorporated into the 2008/09 Service Plan for the Finance and Support Service.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Service Plan for Finance and Support Services
Revenues Service Quarterly Performance Report 2007/08 Quarter 4

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APPENDIX A

OPERATIONAL PLAN: Revenues Service

OPERATIONAL PLAN: Revenues Service							
Relevant Corporate Objective/s: CO2: high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community							
Relevant Service Priorities:							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) <i>Ensuring the best value for money options for service delivery</i> (b) <i>Strong management and prioritisation of resources, resulting in improved audit assessments</i> (c) <i>Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services</i> (d) <i>A commitment to improvement and good quality services, demonstrated by performance against national, local and Direction of Travel indicators.</i> (e) <i>Improving access to services through our Contact Centre</i> 							
Service Objective: To work in partnership with stakeholders to provide an efficient and customer focused Revenues Service.							
Supporting Objective	Key Performance Indicator or other SMART measure	Supporting Indicator or Action/s	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer	Resources Used
			08/09	09/10	10/11		
Provide a service that meets customers' expectations	Number of complaints found to be justified		<20	<20	<20	Head of Revenues	
	Improve the customer focus of the benefit service by improving the service performance as measured by the Department for Works and Pensions' user focus performance standard		11	12 (maximum)	12 (maximum)	Benefits Manager	
Service performing to agreed and measurable standards	Service delivered to the standard set out in the Council's Customer Service Standards	Various – refer to published Service Standards					

	Performance standard score for Benefits service at maximum level of 4		4	4	4		
Views of customers are sought and acted upon	Improve % customers satisfied with for Benefits Service	Introduce annual surveys to complement the triennial statutory survey. Develop action plan to implement improvements resulting from survey	80%	82%	84%	Head of Revenues	Subject to availability of corporate satisfaction survey
	Monitor and improve general customer satisfaction with the Revenues Service	Conduct regular customer satisfaction surveys/consultation exercises				Head of Revenues	Subject to availability of corporate satisfaction survey
Improve links with local advice agencies	Number of joint meetings per year		4	4	4	Head of Revenues	
Ensure there is a high level of awareness of equality and diversity issues amongst Revenues Employees	% Revenues employees who feel they have a good understanding of equalities and diversity issues		100%	100%	100%	Head of Revenues	
	% of Revenues employees attending at least one training session during the year		100%	100%	100%		

OPERATIONAL PLAN: Revenues Service

Relevant Corporate Objective/s: CO2: high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community

Relevant Service Priorities:

- (a) *Ensuring the best value for money options for service deliver*
- (b) *Strong management and prioritisation of resources, resulting in improved audit assessments*
- (c) *Achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services*
- (d) *A commitment to improvement and good quality services, demonstrated by performance against national, local and Direction of Travel indicators.*
- (e) *Improving access to services through our Contact Centre*

Service Objective: To ensure residents promptly receive the correct bills and all benefits and discounts they are entitled to.

Supporting Objective	Key Performance Indicator or other SMART measure	Supporting Indicator or Action/s	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer	Resources Used
			08/09	09/10	10/11		
Issue accurate and timely bills with correct discounts and benefits	NI 180 Changes in Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Benefit entitlements within the year		10,000	10,500	11,000	Benefits Manager	
	NI 181 Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events		14 days	13 days	12 days	Benefits Manager	
Professional and well trained employees	Number of Revenues staff undertaking professional training		3	3	3	Head of Revenues	£6,000

Raise awareness of financial rights and responsibilities in the local community	Raise awareness within the community of the responsibility to pay bills on time	Number of press releases or publicity campaigns highlighting action taken to recover unpaid monies	4	4	4	Head of Revenues	
	Raise awareness within the community of the right to discounts and benefits	Number of press releases or publicity campaigns highlighting availability of discounts and benefits	4	4	4	Head of Revenues	

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Service Objective: To prevent fraud and to identify and punish those who commit fraud.

Supporting Objective	Key Performance Indicator or other SMART measure	Supporting Indicator or Action/s	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer	Resources Used
			08/09	09/10	10/11		
Raise public awareness of fraud and the sanctions imposed against those found to have committed fraud	Number press releases or publicity campaigns highlighting action taken to punish fraudsters		12	12	12	Fraud Manager	
	Number of fraud referrals from the public	Encourage the public to report suspicions through publicity.	90	95	100	Fraud Manager	
Impose sanctions against those committing benefit fraud in accordance with the Council's policy	BVPI 76d Number of sanctions imposed per 1,000 benefit claims.		10	10	10	Fraud Manager	(note due to increasing caseload a target of 10 per year represents continuous improvement)

Promote awareness of fraud throughout the Council and encourage suspicions to be reported	Number fraud awareness training sessions delivered in the year	Arrange regular fraud awareness training Ensure fraud awareness training is part of the induction process	6	6	6	Fraud Manager	
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Service Objective: To take prompt and effective action against those who do not pay, whilst recognizing and assisting those customers with genuine financial difficulties.

Supporting Objective	Key Performance Indicator or other SMART measure	Supporting Indicator or Action/s	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer	Resources Used
			08/09	09/10	10/11		
Embed effective debt recovery processes and procedures, setting challenging targets, and monitoring and managing performance against target.	BVPI 9 Council Tax collection rate	Regular recovery action in accordance with debt recovery forward plan.	99.2% 99.1%	99.3% 99.2%	99.4% 99.4%	Revenues Manager	
	SF743 % Council Tax previous years arrears collected	As above	44.0% 40.0%	45.0% 41.0%	46.0% 42.0%	Revenues Manager	
	BVPI10 Non-Domestic Rates Collection Rate	As above	99.8% 99.6%	99.8% 99.6%	99.8% 99.6%	Revenues Manager	
	BVPI 66a % current tenants rent collected	As above	98.6% 98.0%	98.7% 98.2%	98.8% 98.4%	Revenues Manager	

	BVPI 66b % tenants with more than 7 weeks arrears	As above	3.4% 4.5%	3.3% 4.3%	3.2% 4.2%	Revenues Manager	
	BVPI79bii % of benefit overpayments recovered	As above	36.0% 39.0%	37.0% 39.5%	38.0% 40.0%	Benefits Manager	
	SF739 % of sundry debts that are due collected		96.1%	96.2%	96.3%	Revenues Manager	
	% Sundry debts over 3 months overdue		0.60% 2.5%	0.55% 2.4%	0.50% 2.3%	Revenues Manager	
Provide advice and assistance to residents with financial difficulties including signposting to independent advice agencies.	Develop links with local advice agencies to facilitate partnership approach to debt management and benefit advice services	Number of people referred to advice agencies	100	120	140	Revenues Manager	
	BVPI 66d % of tenants in arrears evicted		0%	0%	0%	Revenues Manager	
	SF740 % of discretionary housing payment grant paid to customers	Increase awareness of DHP scheme through publicity and staff training.	100%	100%	100%	Benefits Manager	
	BVPI 66b % tenants in arrears receiving notices seeking possession		20%	19%	18%	Revenues Manager	

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Service Objective: To provide value for money through efficient processes and through effective electronic service delivery.

Supporting Objective	Key Performance Indicator or other SMART measure	Supporting Indicator or Action/s	PI target or deadline for action			Lead Officer	Resources Used
			08/09	09/10	10/11		
Make it easier for our customer to access services by telephone	Customers able to report benefit change events by telephone	Number of events reported by telephone	1,000	2,000	3,000	Benefits Manager	
Increase the number of electronic payment transactions	SF738 % benefit payments made by BACS		88%	91%	94%	Benefits Manager	
	SF741 Increase in the number of accounts paid by direct debit	Annual take-up campaign	700	700	700	Revenues Manager	
Effective management of service budgets, ensuring income opportunities are realised.	Overpayments due to local authority errors below the threshold required to attract maximum subsidy	Maintain current high level of staff training and sample checking	0.48% of expenditure paid at 100% rate	0.48% of expenditure paid at 100% rate	0.48% of expenditure paid at 100% rate	Benefits Manager	

	Income received from Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates legal fees meets budgeted amount	Summonses are issued promptly in cases of non-payment	£188K	£190K	£192K	Revenues Manager	
Ensure processes are conducted in a controlled environment	Number of statutory returns qualified by the auditors		0	0	0	Head of Revenues	
	% of agreed audit recommendations implemented		100%	100%	100%	Head of Revenues	

