

Key features of the Revenues and Benefits Services

Customer base	EHC Revenues and Benefits	SBC Revenues and Benefits
Population of the district / borough	138,114	81,074
Geographical size of the district/borough	184 sq miles	10 sq miles

Local Taxation	EHC Revenues and Benefits	SBC Revenues and Benefits
Tax base for 2010/11	57,790.60	28,570.81
Tax Collectable debit 2010/11	£85.9 million	£41.6 million
NNDR (Business rates) properties 2010/11	4096	2004
NNDR (Business rates) collectable debit 2010/11	£40 million	£44 million

The combined Revenues and Benefits services collect in excess of £200 million of local taxes and pay out more than £70 million of benefits each year. These services are delivered to every household and business in the Councils' districts.

Benefit service	EHC Revenues and Benefits	SBC Revenues and Benefits
Claimants at 01/02/11	7,514	8,700
Claims at 01/02/11	12,720	14,988
Housing & Council Tax Benefit paid 2010/11	£34.7 million	£39.7 million

The main difference between the nature of benefit caseloads arises from the different decisions taken around each Council's housing stock. In the case of EHC, the stock was transferred to two registered social landlords, and subsequently tenants claim rent allowance. In the case of SBC, the stock remains the property of the Council, with tenants claiming rent rebate.

Managing this difference is a simply issue of ensuring that cross-training of staff is completed at the earliest opportunity.

Benefits service growth in caseload	EHC Revenues and Benefits	SBC Revenues and Benefits
2008/09	9.20%	5.81%
2009/10	9.38%	4.06%
2010/11	2.42%	4.08%

Both services have experienced significant caseload growth since mid 2008/09, as a result of current economic conditions. This growth impacts on the performance of processing and assessing new claims. It has also created on-going pressures associated with maintaining larger caseloads.

Maintaining good performance levels in this environment has been challenging. A need to create additional capacity within the EHC service was addressed by investing in new IT solutions, including customer self service and mobile working modules. These innovations are being rolled-out during 2011/12.

The economic downturn has meant added difficulties in collecting both Council Tax and Business Rates. Changes to the rules for charging rates on empty business premises has added a further challenge, which has impacted negatively on collection rates.

With an increase in Council Tax and Business Rates arrears, so follows an increase in action to recover those arrears. This inevitably means hearings in the magistrate's courts with the attendant costs of summonses and bailiff action. This has inevitably increased the overall cost of collecting local taxes.

The tables below set out comparisons of key performance measures between the two Revenues and Benefits Services. This clearly shows significant variations, which will be addressed as a priority through the shared service.

Performance

Benefits service performance (days) New claims	EHC Revenues and Benefits	SBC Revenues and Benefits
2007/8	21.58 days	30.26 days
2008/9	22.18 days	23.22 days
2009/10	27.96 days	28.13 days
2010/11	27.83 days	21.64 days

Changes in circumstances	EHC Revenues and Benefits	SBC Revenues and Benefits
2007/8	3.29 days	15.05 days
2008/9	1.72 days	9.11 days
2009/10	5.72 days	10.63 days
2010/11	6.02 days	10.06 days

Tax In-year collection rates	EHC Revenues and Benefits	SBC Revenues and Benefits
2007/8	98.4%	96.8%
2008/9	98.6%	96.5%
2009/10	98.6%	97.5%
2010/11	98.5%	96.2%

NNDR (Business rates) in year collection rates	EHC Revenues and Benefits	SBC Revenues and Benefits
2007/8	99.4%	99.5%
2008/9	97.6%	97.9%
2009/10	97.5%	96.4%
2010/11	96.64%	95.8%

	EHC Fraud	SBC Anti-Fraud
Fraud / Anti- Fraud performance	Sanctions secured	Sanctions secured
2007/8	98	39
2008/9	101	37
2009/10	116	36
2010/11	123	48