

East Herts Council and Stevenage Borough Council

**Revenues and Benefits Shared Service
SERVICE PLAN**

2012/13

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SECTION 1: Service Plan ‘Snapshot’

Revenues and Benefits Shared Service (East Herts & Stevenage)

Service Manager: Su Tarran

Service Aims:

- Administer on behalf of both Councils, cost effective Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit services, paying benefits promptly and accurately and investigating fraud.
- Local Taxation Collection; issuing bills promptly and accurately and undertaking effective recovery action to achieve high rates of collection.
- Provide front line services to the public for Benefits and Revenues

Service Delivery

The service delivery is split between the partnership and Stevenage Borough’s Customer Service Centre (CSC). The CSC retain the front facing customer interaction for Stevenage customers visiting the Stevenage Council Offices. Stevenage customers telephoning Stevenage Council directly, will be diverted by the CSC into the partnership.

It will be necessary to measure the impact and success of this form of delivery to ensure no duplication of resources.

Key service responsibilities:

Key Service Responsibilities	Links to East Herts’ Corporate Priority	Links to Stevenage Corporate Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and support to elected members and senior officers in determining policies on the exercise of discretion allowed by legislation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosperity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move towards Excellence
Benefits		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the integrity of the information held on ICT systems and in other media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosperity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move towards Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the control systems operate successfully, so that Benefits are paid promptly and accurately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosperity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move towards Excellence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to customers that is accurate and helpful and meets their varied needs, having regard to equality of access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move towards Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake forward planning, to ensure the service responds effectively to statutory changes and customer expectation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move towards Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be alert to fraud, seeking to deter it and identify, investigate and prosecute those who engage in fraud. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move towards Excellence
Local Taxation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the integrity of the information held on ICT systems and in other media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move towards Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the control systems operate successfully, so that Council Tax and NNDR are collected promptly and accurately and that recovery process operate to achieve effective collection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move towards Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to customers that is accurate and helpful, and meets their varied needs having regard to equality of access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move towards Excellence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake forward planning to ensure the service responds effectively to statutory changes and customer expectation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move towards Excellence

Customer Insight and Consultation









What consultation have you undertaken in 2011/12?

Description of consultation	Date it was undertaken	Key findings	Service improvements
East Herts Exit survey at Wallfields	September 2011	98% satisfaction at 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied'	Contact to be made with dissatisfied customer to deal with any outstanding issues and to identify any service learning opportunities.
East Herts Gov metric	01/04/2011 – 31/10/2011	See below	Customer details are not recorded, so it is not possible to identify the

data			cause of any dissatisfaction.
Stevenage Gov metric data	01/04/2011 – 31/10/2011	See below	Customer details are not recorded, so it is not possible to identify the cause of any dissatisfaction.

Stevenage

OVERALL BENEFITS AND COUNCIL TAX FEEDBACK (01/04/2011 – 31/10/2011)

Benefits				Overall Rating
Number of respondents	563	41	83	 Good
Percentage of respondents	82%	6%	12%	
Council Tax				Overall Rating
Number of respondents	921	40	46	 Good
Percentage of respondents	91%	4%	5%	

Benefits









Channel	Good	Average	Poor
Face to Face	541 (81%)	39 (5%)	80 (12%)
Telephone	16 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Web	6 (54%)	2 (18%)	3 (27%)
Total	563 (82%)	41 (6%)	83 (12%)

Council Tax

Channel	Good	Average	Poor
Face to Face	233 (82%)	19 (6%)	29 (10%)
Telephone	673 (97%)	17 (2%)	1 (0%)
Web	15 (42%)	4 (11%)	16 (45%)
Total	921 (91%)	40 (4%)	46 (5%)

East Herts

OVERALL BENEFITS AND COUNCIL TAX FEEDBACK (01/04/2011 – 31/10/2011)

Benefits				Overall Rating
Number of respondents	298	14	45	 Good
Percentage of respondents	83%	4%	13%	
Council Tax				Overall Rating
Number of respondents	594	47	116	 Good
Percentage of respondents	79%	6%	15%	

Benefits

Channel	Good	Average	Poor
Face to Face	292 (86%)	13 (4%)	34 (10%)
Telephone	0 (0%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Web	6 (35%)	0 (0%)	11 (65%)
Total	298 (83%)	14 (4%)	45 (13%)

Council Tax

Channel	Good	Average	Poor
Face to Face	237 (86%)	13 (4%)	34 (10%)
Telephone	334 (94%)	17 (5%)	4 (1%)
Web	23 (22%)	7 (7%)	73 (71%)
Total	594 (80%)	37 (5%)	111 (15%)

What consultation do you have planned for 2012/13?

Description of consultation	Date it will be undertaken
Customer surveys	July –September 2012
Gov Metric	Ongoing

Please list below any activity that needs to be undertaken to improve equality within the service following any Equality Impact Assessments:

Activity	Date it will be undertaken	Lead Officer
In harmonizing processes any potential equality issues are being identified and will be developed into an action plan by March 2013		Manager Control & Fraud.

Key unit/transactional costs for the service are:

East Herts only Historical data not available from Stevenage Council	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Actual	2009/10 Actual	2010/11 Actual
Net cost of Housing and Council Tax Benefit per claim	£90.94	£77.80	£82.35	£74.38
Net cost of Collecting Council Tax per property	£19.52	£18.06	£17.83	£16.82
Net cost of Discretionary Non Domestic Rates per number of business properties	£33.26	£32.07	£32.77	£26.14
Benefits admin per £ of Benefit paid	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.04
Council Tax & NNDR admin costs per £ of income collected, net of refunds, and excluding Benefit payments received.	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.01

1. Net cost of Housing and Council Tax Benefit per claim

The trend is showing a decrease in unit costs.

2. Net cost of Collecting Council Tax per property

The trend is showing a decrease in unit costs.

3. Net cost of Discretionary Non Domestic Rates per number of business properties

The trend is showing a decrease in unit costs.

People and Workforce Planning

- Do you need to review your organisational structure? If no when did you last review it?

The structure was reviewed to establish the shared service, which is due to go live in December 2011. A review at the end of the first year will be made to ensure that this is fit for purpose and to take advantage of efficiency gains.

- Have your staff got the right skills they need to support your service? If no, what skills are missing?

Appointments to the new structure for the shared service were undertaken in November 2011. That approach matched people to posts, including an assessment of skills, knowledge and experience. A training plan is being developed, to address any skill gaps identified during the appointment process.

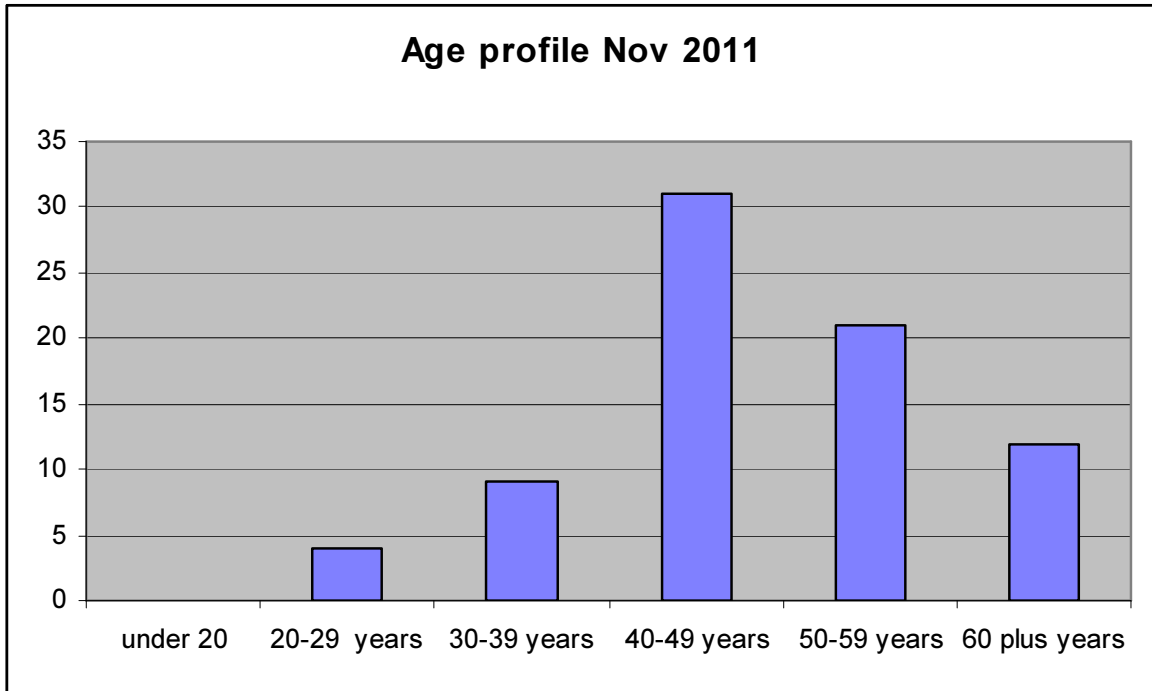
- Do you have or anticipate any recruitment needs now and in the future (including hard to recruit roles)?

These will be apparent once the recruitment to the shared service is completed.

- Do you have a succession plan?

The structure was designed to encourage succession through the levels.

The age profile of staff is demonstrated in the diagram below.



SECTION 2

KEY PROJECTS FOR 2012/13

This will help Corporate Management Team identify the core projects for monitoring in the Corporate Healthcheck.

These should be reflected in your Section 3, so this section needs to just highlight what they are. No detail regarding them is needed at this stage.

Project	Completion Date	Service involvement
Shared service implementation completion	March 2013	All staff involved in bedding in the shared service and new ways of working
Shared service review of operation	March 2013	All staff involved in reviewing service position and future plans.
Harmonisation of processes and procedures	March 2013	All staff involved in reviewing service position and future plans
Deliver excellent customer service	March 2013	All staff involved to ensure that every aspect of their activity promotes excellent customer service.
Reduce environmental impact	March 2013	All staff involved to ensure that every aspect of their activity reduces the cost to the environment, including increasing paper free working.

