

REVENUES & BENEFITS

SERVICE DELIVERY

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1 VISION

1.1 OVERARCHING VISION

Our overarching service vision is one where Capita's support to Barnet extends beyond the NSCSO scope, enabling Barnet to be recognised as a Borough where the supply of services are owned by those who live and work here, and where citizens, staff, business and the community are aware of and participate in an environment of opportunity and success.

To achieve this we will enable citizens and customers to live in sustained and supported independence, as Insight allows people's individuality to be understood, recognised and reflected in getting the help they need, in the manner they need it and within the financial constraints they understand. Customers will become co-designers, shaping relevant and valued services as well as being willing partners in delivery, helping us to build on what already works in Barnet, working with existing organisations to improve their capacity, rather than creating our own. This allows us to provide the infrastructure to deliver a One Public Sector single solution through unified customer interaction and an integrated supply EcoSystem, extending beyond Council services to interaction with the wider public sector.

In the future the Council will be unique in the public sector, recognised as a business-led and truly customer-focussed organisation, all staff, suppliers and delivery partners feeling supported and informed as they work to achieve their best for citizens - whether that be through continually improving existing services or helping to design new services to meet new emerging needs.

Delivering the Overarching Vision

As Barnet's trusted NSCSO service provider, we will deliver a step change in service delivery and customer experience so that interactions with Customers (be they Citizens, Barnet Businesses, Voluntary Organisations, Suppliers, Members or Council Employees) are valued and easy to complete. To do this, we have defined 3 key over-arching design objectives for the NSCSO:

- **Build Service Delivery Differently** - Create a new service delivery paradigm to change the customer relationship. Enable multi-channelled delivery and the ability to bundle services in ways that relate to and are valued by Customers and puts them at the heart of service delivery
- **Manage Service Delivery Differently** – Transform the way Customers interact with our services (and the Council) by transferring control to them. A new level of transparency, rapid process improvements and built-in deeper levels of Insight are inherent in this approach
- **Maximise Efficiencies Differently** – Changing the way Customers interact will impact how services can and should be delivered. Changes will be co-designed with users of the services; focussed on their needs and supported by tools and technology platforms enabling transformation and continual improvement.

Our objective is to offer high quality and relevant services. We will provide effective, engaging and personalised services at every touch point. To achieve this, we will promote a shift from the typically supply dominated "Push" approach to service

design and delivery to a Customer Orientated “Pull” approach, which is time and location independent, personalised and contextual.

We will use the intelligence gathered through co-design and our on-going management of processes and operations to create dynamic and personalised service delivery for all customer groups. This rich understanding of Customers drawn from behavioural analysis, and combined with our experience and Barnet specific Insight, will enable us to identify and understand patterns of Customer behaviour and will be embodied as Single Customer View.

Service Delivery Model

We will establish a robust Service Delivery Model which enables certainty of delivery and performance, partnership flexibility (commercially and operationally), with investment in infrastructure and capability to support achievement of the Council's outcomes. All Customer groups, internal and external, will interact through the same service delivery model structure, as shown in the diagram below:

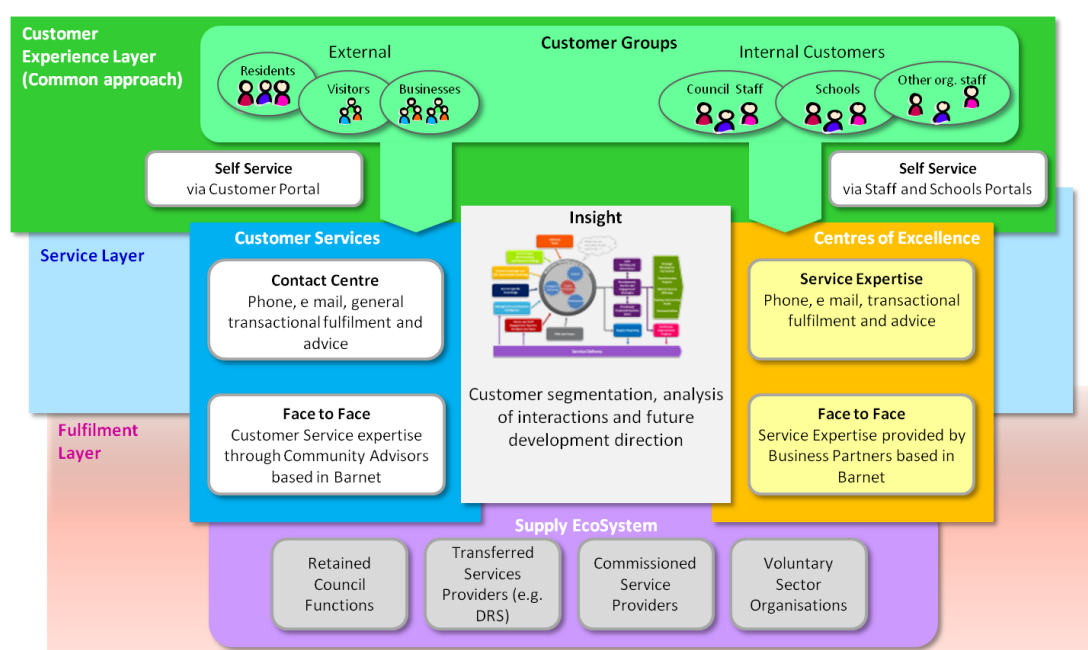


Figure 1 - NSCSO Service Delivery Model

We will invest in and deploy **technology and repeatable strategies** that shift the focus from merely surfacing the service offerings, to providing a single window to bundled services from ourselves, the Council and other providers where appropriate.

We will build our service architecture using **flexible rapid service deployment frameworks**. These will enable us to carry out efficient transaction handling, irrespective of channel, and deliver an organisational change capability that enables us to respond effectively to the changing environment. They will also allow us to promote a culture of service excellence and improving delivery while at the same time lowering cost.

At the heart of our proposition is a drive for effectiveness and increased self-help and self-service. This will only be realised if the customer experience is excellent, the services are relevant and execution is timely. To achieve these, we need to

understand what our Customers want to do and design our services, and their constituent transactions, around those needs, ensuring we deliver effectively from beginning to end.

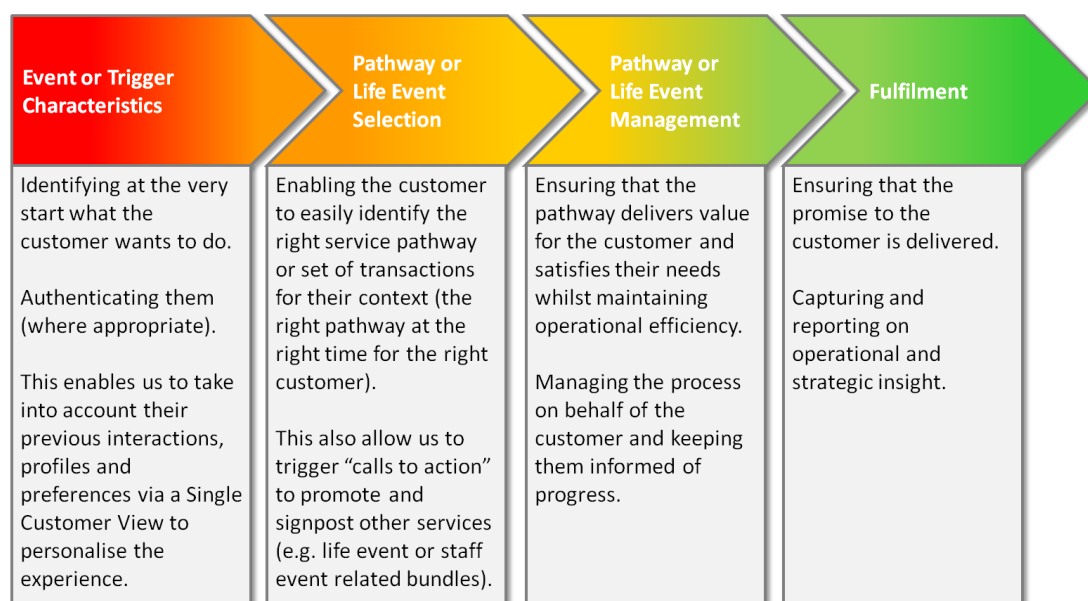


Figure 2 - Customer centric, effective end to end service delivery

This approach will make our services effective and our experience shows us that "efficiency" follows "effectiveness" – this is a fundamental element of our business ethos. We will deliver value by:

- Building Delivery Capacity, not just channels - through an integrated Service Delivery Model that is channel transparent
- Building Delivery Capability, not just Services - making things easy to do
- Building Operations Competency- delivering operational excellence, continual improvement, service alignment and business assurance.

1.2 REVENUES AND BENEFITS VISION

Our overall vision, approach to services design and Service Delivery Model (SDM) form the basis of the services we will delivery in relations to the Revenues and Benefits Service.

The key interactions we envisage in relation to Revenues and Benefits are:

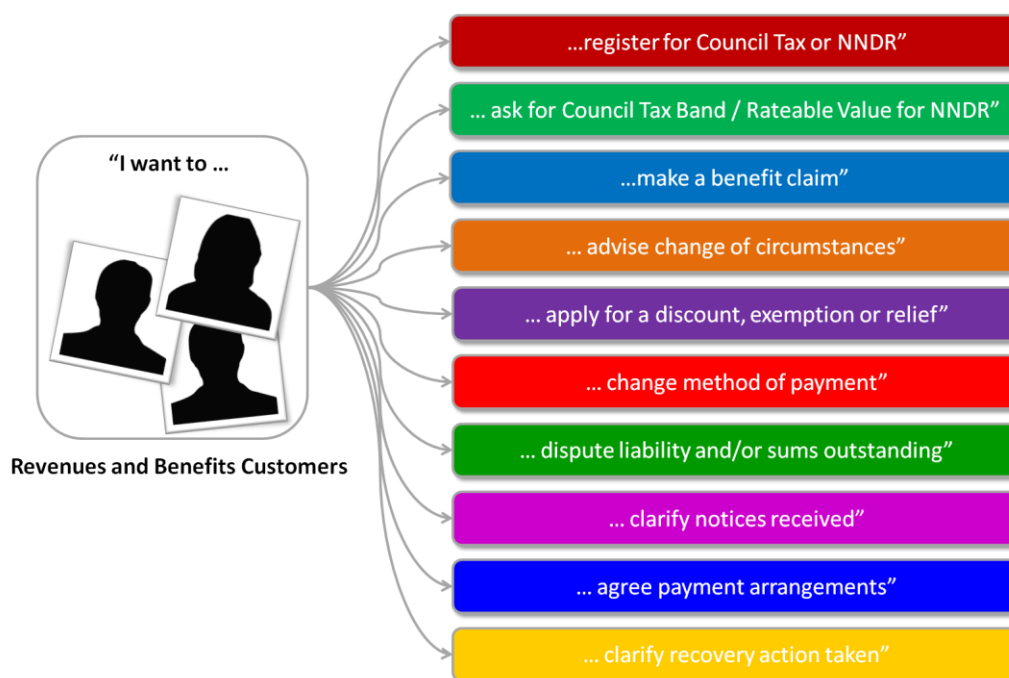


Figure 3 - Key interactions

We have had productive dialogue sessions in relation to the wider context and priorities for the Revenues and Benefits Service. We appreciate the information and feedback that has been provided and have provided additional detail in this Method Statement explaining how the Revenues and Benefits Service will integrate with our overall Service Delivery Model, particularly in relation to Customer Services. We also appreciate that with local authorities facing budgetary constraints, the importance of Revenues & Benefits Services being cost-effective whilst simultaneously providing an enhanced customer experience, is now more critical than ever.

Our SDM is predicated on this basis, utilising Capita's existing infrastructure to deliver a solution that provides a customer-centric approach that meets all aspects of the Revenues & Benefits specification.

To minimise service disruption and retain cost-effectiveness, we will continue to use the existing IT systems; Civica Revenues and Benefits and the Comino EDM application, as we have a wealth of experience in the development of these systems.

Geographically our service delivery model will be as follows:

- The Council Tax Contact Centre solution will, as detailed within the Customer Services Method Statement, be operated from our Darwen site, which provides Contact Centre operations for BBC TV licensing
- The Council Tax and Benefits processing centre will be operated from our Blackburn with Darwen Shared Service Centre (SSC)
- The NNDR operation, including telephone calls, will be delivered from our Bromley SSC

- Subject Matter Expert (SME) activity which includes Valuation, Bailiff Liaison and Enforcement for both Council Tax and NNDR, as well as Central Support (who deal with system administration) and Assessment, Policy and Training will also be delivered from our Bromley SSC
- Face to Face services will, as detailed within the Face to Face Channel description in the Customer Services Method Statement, continue to be delivered through the existing locations of Burnt Oak Library, Barnet House and NLBP.

Although geographically disparate our solution for the delivery of the Revenues and Benefits Service is linked to the overall Capita Service Delivery model, and the need for a single view of the customer.

We believe the SDM will meet the current and future needs of the Council and will deliver value to other public sector agencies through its service flexibility, utility approach and customer engagement. To clarify our commitments in relation to Revenues and Benefits, each layer is explained in further detail below:

Customer Experience Layer

We will implement best practice customer service principles, integrating all contacts through customer services in order to underpin the single customer view, delivering increased resolution through using the right channels for the right customer. We will ensure all customers benefit from improved communication, customer advocacy and self-help enablement (e.g. internet, SMS, natural voice, IVR) via multiple contact channels.

The exception to this integration is NNDR, where we will still adopt and implement best practice principles but due to the relatively low volume & highly specialised nature of the contacts received, we have made the decision to integrate the full NNDR Service in to our Bromley SSC.

Service Layer

This ensures effective and efficient handling of contacts from all channels through to completion.

The **Front Office** will manage contacts received through all non-automated channels. Staffed by Customer Service Professionals and supplemented by SMEs, we will leverage the skills, expertise and Insight Engine capability of our Customer Service expertise. We will achieve a significant increase in the number of calls resolved at first contact and reduce the number of repeat calls by ensuring all calls are handled by an Advisor with the appropriate skills and knowledge. To support this, we will use natural voice and IVR call routing and the Council's seven 'silver' phone numbers, as well as investing in training, multi-skilling, script production and a supporting knowledgebase.

Face-to-face services will be provided by Frontline Service Delivery Professionals. We will place Community Advisors at Community Hubs; the Advisors will also carry out home, community and small-to-medium business visits. We will use Business Partners and SMEs to handle complex cases, property

audits, user desktop problems, and classroom training where face-to-face contact is required. They will be agile workers, located in Barnet when required.

We will also provide forums at least quarterly for customers and retained staff across the range of services we provide.

Fulfilment Layer

Any **Revenues and Benefits processing activities** that have not transferred to Customer Services will be located within the existing Capita Shared Service infrastructure at Blackburn and Bromley. We can confirm that customers will have single points of contact for each area of SME activity and the Service will be seamless and tailored from their perspective.

We will leverage our broader capability and drive efficiency by:

- Developing and multi-skilling staff
- Undertaking a Lean review for processes (e.g. debt collection)
- Continually reviewing, improving and automating processes (e.g. payment reminders).

Through **Commissioned Services**, we will increase the providers of Council services as well as the customers receiving those services (e.g. community groups, schools, small-to-medium businesses).

We will be operating in line with this model within one year of service commencement and will continually improve the services during the contract by: refining the mix of interactions at each touch point, reviewing the locations of the services and striving to continuously improve the services.

1.3 MULTI-CHANNEL APPROACH

The table below provides an indication of how the services within the Revenues and Benefits specification will be delivered. Detailed descriptions of how we will address the individual output specifications are provided in Sections 1.4, 1.5 and 2 below.

OUTPUT SPECIFICATION REFERENCE	DELIVERED THROUGH				
	Self Help/ Self Service	Contact Centre	SME	F2F	Processing
BEN001	X	X		X	X
BEN002-004			X		
BEN005-006			X		X

OUTPUT SPECIFICATION	DELIVERED THROUGH				
BEN007	X	X			X
BEN008-011					X
BEN012	X	X			X
BEN013					X
BEN014		X			X
BEN015	X	X		X	X
BEN016			X		X
BEN017			X		
BEN019-020					X
BEN021	X	X	X	X	X
BEN022					X
BEN023				X	
BEN024-025					X
BEN026-029			X		
BEN030			X		X
BEN031-045			X		
BEN046					X
BEN047-054			X		
OP01			X		X
BS1	X	X	X	X	X

OUTPUT SPECIFICATION	DELIVERED THROUGH				
BS2			X		X
BS3	X	X	X	X	X
BS7	X	X		X	
BS8-9		X	X	X	X
BS10-11	X		X	X	
BS12-33			X		
BS33-50			X		
CS1-2				X	
CS3		X			
CS4			X		
CT1-14					X
CT15-16	X	X		X	
CT17-18			X		
CT19-21	X	X		X	
CT22-26					X
CT27-29			X		X
CT30-39			X		
CT40-44			X		X
R1-4					X
R5		X			

OUTPUT SPECIFICATION	DELIVERED THROUGH				
R6-16			X		X
R17-18			X		
N1-40			X		X
C01-29			X		

1.4 HOW OUR APPROACH TO CUSTOMER SERVICES IMPACTS ON THE SERVICE

This addresses CS1 - CS3, BS1, BS03, BS8 - BS9, BS14

A successful relationship between the Revenues and Benefits Service and the delivery of Customer Services is key to ensuring that:

- Customers receive the level of support and responsiveness they need and expect
- We meet the Council's requirements for a cost-effective solution that maximises collection and deals with HB/CTB claims in a timely and accurate manner.

Full details of our Customer Services solution can be found within Customer Services Method Statement. However the following table summarises how our approach to Customer Services integrates with the Revenues and Benefits Service at an operational level:

CUSTOMER SERVICES APPROACH	IMPACT ON REVENUES & BENEFIT SERVICE
Delivering increased resolution through using the right channels for each customer.	Greater choice of access channel allowing for improved access for those not able to contact during core hours or with preference for on-line/automated services.
A significant increase in the number of calls resolved at first contact and reduction in the number of repeat calls by ensuring all calls are handled by an Advisor with appropriate skills/knowledge	Reduced repeat contacts and delivery of right first time approach; accuracy of response increases customer satisfaction; reduced demand and cost.
Place Community Advisors at Community Hubs who will carry out home and community visits.	Increased access to face to face channel via Community Hub and increased visiting activity ensuring that hard-to-reach groups are not excluded.
High and measured Customer	Increased confidence in Service Delivery

CUSTOMER SERVICES APPROACH	IMPACT ON REVENUES & BENEFIT SERVICE
Satisfaction	leading to greater willingness to use new channels.
Enabling Citizens and Customers	Maximising customer self-service resolution to ensure efficiencies are supported by consistent and high levels of service performance.
Maximising Access and Quality	Customer Services solution manages the entire journey from initial contact to resolution. Establishment of a Single Customer View with the same information available across channels, services and shared with partners.
Integrating with other Council services and partners	Allows for greater integration with services/partners dealing with the same customers to ensure the efficient use of resources and information.
Meeting diverse customer needs and Customer engagement	Collaborating with customers to ensure our solution encourages the right behaviours and meets customer needs.
Improved reporting and MI	Provision of MI and Customer Insight in a consistent and agreed manner raising the visibility of performance at all levels, as well as accountability for the delivery of services, etc. Regular relationship management sessions with each stakeholder group will review performance, discuss any issues or areas of improvement, and track benefit realisation.

1.5 ENSURING AN HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SERVICE DELIVERY

This addresses BS28 - BS32

Our experience in the delivery of Revenues and Benefits Services has enabled us to refine the manner in which customer interactions are delivered and how a specific service integrates with the overall approach to Customer Service delivery.

The majority of enquiries will be dealt with by the Customer Services teams but where assistance is required or the query is identified as requiring back-office resolution, Level 3, then identified points of contact will ensure that the enquiry is

resolved appropriately and without delay. Where SME teams are dealing with a case, e.g. appeals or NNDR, then the customer will be provided with specific points of contact so that any further enquiry does not have to be unnecessarily routed via normal contact channels. However, to ensure seamless service delivery and not compromise the single view of the customer, comprehensive notes will be added to the case / account on the Civica system so that Customer Services have a clear view of what action is being taken by the SME teams.

The electronic flow of work items will ensure that specific areas of activity are automatically routed to the appropriate team including the SME groups dealing with specific areas of work. Agreed protocols will ensure that individual items are not bounced from area to area where there is any uncertainty in relation to the nature of the item or remedial activity required.

Clear and open channels of communication are essential to ensuring that Customer Services, the Centre of Excellence and the SMEs provide an effective and efficient service where customer satisfaction is achieved through seamless interactions. Agreed contact points will provide for effective co-ordination of activity that identifies and resolves potential issues with no impact on service delivery or the customer experience. The Insight Engine will enable the identification of potential difficult cases and allow early intervention, for example by home visit, so that claims can be resolved without escalation or further query.

Our solution minimises hand-off points through the utilisation of self-service and online facilities that limit the back-office activity required for an individual contact or transaction and prioritises first point of contact resolution. The Revenues and Benefits Service will work closely with Customer Services to develop a matrix of activities, such as account updates, payment method changes etc, that can be completed at the point of contact. We will also provide the ongoing support and training required to maintain the high levels of quality and resolution required. For those contacts that require back-office referrals, identified staff will prioritise these items so that processing times are minimised.

1.6 KEY COMPONENTS OF OUR REVENUES & BENEFITS SOLUTION

The successful delivery of the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service underpins the Council's financial position through maximising revenue collection and the timely and accurate payment of benefits. We have therefore sought to utilise Capita's breadth of experience to design a service that:

- Improves in-year Council Tax collection to 98% and overall Council Tax collection to 99%
- Improves NNDR in-year collection to 98% and overall NNDR collection to 99.5%
- Processes HB/CTB claims in 10 days and changes of circumstance in 5.5 days
- Achieves accuracy levels of at least 95% and guarantee that LA Error and Admin Delay Overpayments will be below the lower DWP threshold.

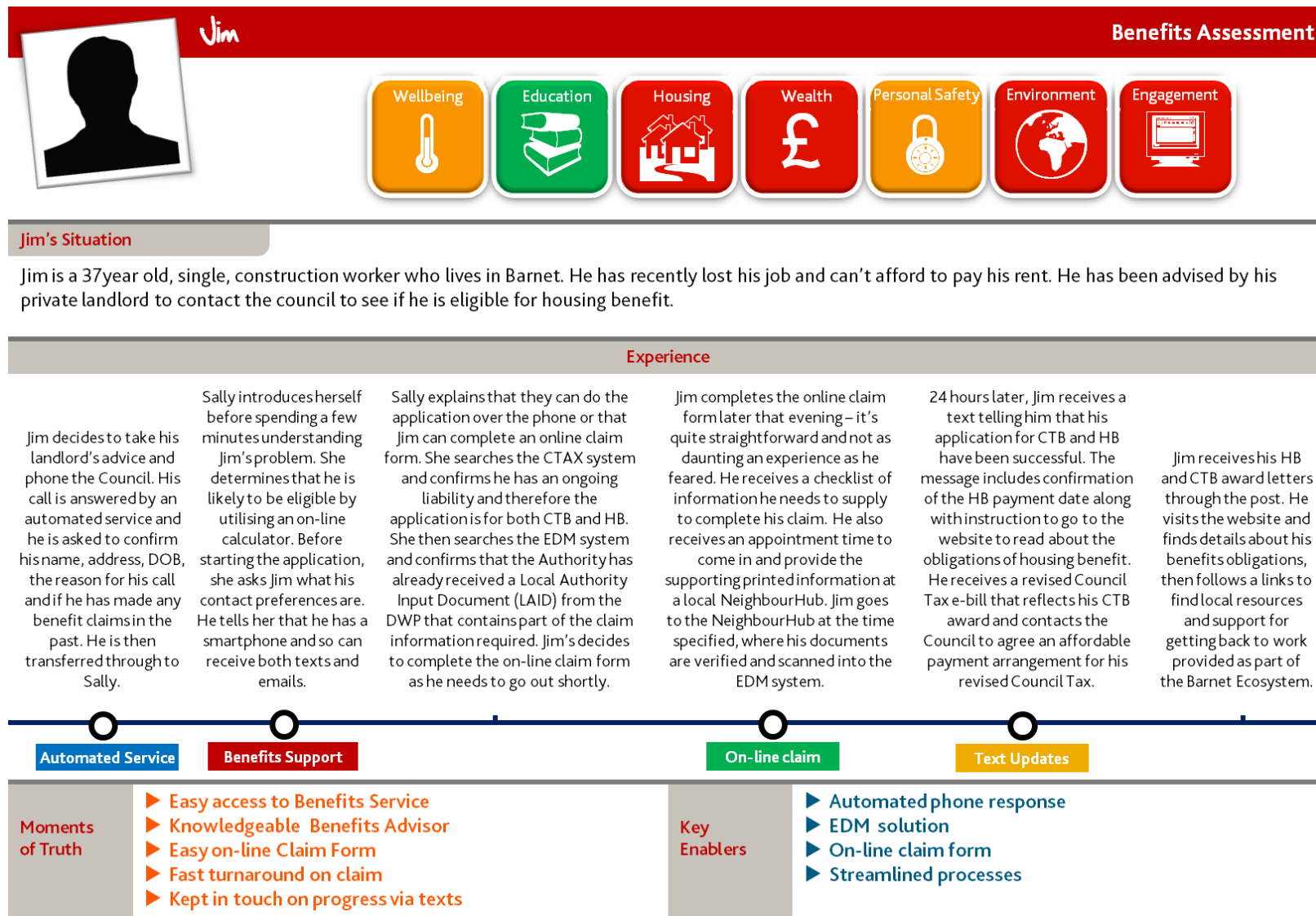
Underpinning the service delivery are the financial guarantees that are contained in Schedule 4, Part 2 of our response but the key components of our solution are that it is a service which:

- Is multi-sited, providing a blended solution that is cost-effective, uses best practice processing techniques and provides service resilience and comprehensive contingency arrangements over the contract-term
- Uses Insight to encourage challenges to conventional thinking in order to deliver service improvements
- Embeds the Council's existing Control Team in to our Central Support Team (CST), providing resilience and embedding Capita's system support principles and security arrangements
- Adopts a right first time approach to processing, and encourages proactive and early intervention in order to resolve issues and minimise processing times
- Minimises benefit overpayments but where they do occur, works with the Council Tax Recovery Section to establish a single view of a customer's debt
- Understands that the integrity and accuracy of the databases is critical and that investigates live accounts that are inactive and that enriches the information it holds through use of Credit Reference Agency (CRA) data
- Innovates, using SMS text messaging to communicate with customers and uses Capita's Process Automation tool to realise further efficiencies
- Promotes the range of self-service options and cost-effective payment options
- Understands the impact of future legislative changes and is pro-active in its approach to their implementation
- Through our Internal Intelligence Infrastructure explained in Section 5.2.1, will provide managers with the appropriate tools and MI to make well-informed decisions
- Aligns its training strategy to the Service priorities, providing a clear link between an individual's training objectives and the objectives of the Service and wider partnership.

2 DELIVERING SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

We can confirm that we will meet the Council's service requirements for the Revenues and Benefits Service and all performance measures and standards detailed in the output specification.

We commit to developing and delivering services to meet the needs of the London Borough of Barnet as expressed in your Output Specification and progressed through dialogue. Our new Service Delivery Model will have a significant impact on how customers interact with the service. In the example below, we have shown how we anticipate this working.



Capita has a proven track record in delivering Revenues and Benefits Services and in meeting the requirements of our local authority clients. We deliver Revenues and Benefits services to over 120 Councils across the UK on either a fully-managed or short-term basis, maximising the collection of over £1.63 billion in Council Tax, £2.5 billion in Business Rates and administering nearly £1.1 billion in HB/CTB payments.

The strength of our market presence provides confidence in our capability to deliver these complex services, as evidenced by our current long term client portfolio which is shown below.

LOCAL AUTHORITY	CONTRACT TERM	COUNCIL TAX	NNDR	BENEFITS	SYSTEM ADMIN (CST)
Kensington & Chelsea	1992 - 2015		✓		✓
Mendip	1993 – 2017	✓	✓	✓	✓
Westminster	1994 – 2015	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bexley	1994 – 2016	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lambeth	1997 – 2021	✓	✓		✓
Havant	1998 – 2017	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blackburn with Darwen	2001 – 2017	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brent	2003 – 2016	✓	✓		✓
Vale of White Horse	2006 – 2013	✓	✓	✓	✓
South Oxfordshire	2006 – 2013	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rossendale	2006 – 2016	✓	✓	✓	✓
Southampton	2007 – 2017	✓	✓	✓	✓
Swindon	2007 – 2019	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hart	2008 – 2017	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sheffield	2009 – 2016	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cherwell	2010 – 2015	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charnwood	2010 – 2020	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birmingham City Council	2011 – 2021	✓	✓		

It is this experience that allows Capita to bring best practice services and the associated guarantees to Barnet as we understand the importance of the Revenues and Benefits Service to the Council and Barnet as a whole and understand why providing a responsive and accessible Service is a key priority for the Council. We appreciate that the Revenues and Benefits service:

- Impacts on every household and business in the Borough
- Underpins the Council's financial position by maximising income collection and accurately assessing and paying benefits

- Supports deprived households and the local economy through the timely and accurate payment Housing and Council Tax Benefits.

We also recognise that the service is faced with a range of other external pressures including:

- The Welfare Reform Bill and the challenging timetable for the abolition of both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit
- The localism agenda and attempting to interpret how the proposed implementation of a local support scheme for Council Tax will affect collection.

We believe Barnet is well placed to meet these challenges and is already implementing a transformation programme aimed at creating significant savings opportunities and allowing for an improved customer experience. This, combined with continued investment in staff and new technology, delivers a high performing service with high levels of collection and expeditious processing times.

Our experience gives us the confidence to build on this service and enhance it through proven tools, approaches and infrastructure, committing to performance standards and underpinning these standards through financial guarantees. Furthermore we will provide the commercial flexibility to scale resources both upwards and downwards to respond to the external pressures and uncertainties described above.

To provide Barnet with further clarity on how we are going to meet the performance standards and deliver the Revenues and Benefits Service over the initial contract term this section will provide detail on:

- Our approach to partnership working
- How we will deliver the Revenues & Benefits Service
- How we will use the Insight Engine to deliver service improvements
- How we will maximise take up of online and self-service options
- How we will improve the speed of processing
- How we are managing the implementation of Welfare Reform
- How we will ensure Service Resilience.

2.1 OUR APPROACH TO PARTNERSHIP WORKING

This Section addresses requirements OV001 - OV004

Capita is proud of the partnerships it fosters with its partners and our approach is underpinned by robust partnership management and a sustainable commercial model. The Council is entering in to this partnership against a backdrop of tighter funding and increasing pressures on its services and it is on this basis that the partnership solution we have developed will:

- Use Insight to encourage challenges to conventional thinking and permeate a culture that will drive ground breaking new ways of delivering services
- Provide effective governance for the service, and the partnership as a whole, with clearly established communication routes for the rapid resolution of issues
- Provide a dedicated Head of Revenues & Benefits from preferred bidder who will have overall responsibility for delivery of the Revenues and Benefits Service and will ensure:
 - The strategic vision of the partnership is realised through the successful operational delivery of the Revenues and Benefits Service
 - Comprehensive contingency and resilience arrangements exist
 - The multiple teams that deliver the Revenues & Benefits Service collaborate effectively and understand the overall objectives of the Service
 - Forthcoming changes (e.g. legislative) are recognised, and that the partnership has analysed the potential impact and developed associated implementation programmes to ensure the smooth adoption of such changes
- Minimise wherever possible the use of Change Controls, thereby allowing the Council to have a high degree of confidence that additional costs will only be incurred in exceptional, or unforeseen, circumstances.

Within each of our partnerships we agree robust Contract Management governance arrangements. The arrangements enable us to manage and monitor the service delivery at different levels ensuring a quality service and mitigation of risks and issues. We believe that the purpose of Contract Management governance is to ensure that:

- Our partners retain the ability to drive strategy and control how it is implemented through the managed service
- There is ongoing compliance with legislation and Council policies and guidelines
- There is clear guidance and specific goals which support the achievement of objectives
- Effective monitoring and measurement of performance is established in order to ensure there is compliance with the contractual agreements and that the service continuously improves over the contract term
- There is a robust approach to risk management.

We will work with Barnet in a way that secures the highest quality of service and delivers the jointly agreed Partnership outcomes. Our aim will be to create a unified team that understands the need for contractual compliance and performance and is dedicated to achieving the Partnership outcomes. This approach facilitates an effective relationship and creates a new dynamic, avoiding many of the issues commonly associated with a traditional client/contractor split.

Schedule 12 describes the governance arrangements for the Partnership. The Strategic Partnership Board, comprising of senior executives from both Barnet and Capita, will manage the relationship and strategic direction of the Partnership. Under the senior strategic management level we envisage a hierarchy of close day-to-day working relationship at the levels shown in the diagram below:

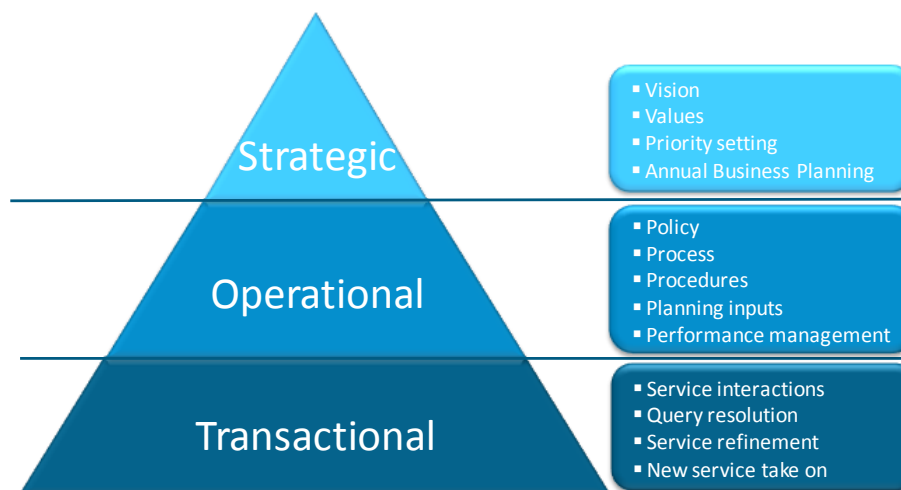


Figure 4 - Governance Arrangements

In our experience, most service issues or risks will be dealt with at an operational level, where there is a detailed understanding of the services, their drivers, performance impacts and dependencies. By doing this, we allow the corresponding service leads the opportunity to change and mould the service as required, ensuring that issues are resolved without the need for escalation to the partnership board. With proven technology in place, we will provide high quality robust Management Information and this, coupled with our liaison hierarchy, will promote agile working through streamlined decision-making and effective knowledge and demand management.

By their very nature however, changes to the ongoing service derive from a variety of sources, some of which are imposed and others which are identified through technological changes or through the normal course of business activities.

We believe our solution covers each of these angles, providing Barnet with the confidence in knowing that they are working with a partner who is committed to delivering the best possible service for its residents and community.

2.2 HOW WE WILL DELIVER THE REVENUES & BENEFITS SERVICE

2.2.1 CONTROL AND SYSTEM SUPPORT

This Section addresses BS33 - BS47, C01 - C18, C25-C29

Technology is a critical enabler for our Revenues and Benefits solution and therefore our solution subsumes the existing Control Team to form a virtual extension of our Central Support Team (CST).

Capita's CST provides system administration for all 19 of our long-term Revenues and Benefits clients and provides annual billing processing for another three local

authorities by operating 24/7 during this critical time. By extending their remit and integrating the Control Team in to CST it will allow the existing Control Team to continue in its function, whilst embedding Capita's system support principles and security arrangements. Some functions of the existing Control team, such as providing a facility for receipting income out of hours, will remain in Barnet but adopting this approach provides access to a wider pool of experienced Revenues system administrators, guaranteeing resilience to this most critical of activities.

The activity that CST will cover includes:

- Batch processing
- Reconciliation and Management Information
- Statutory Returns and Extracts
- Technical Support, Upgrades and System Development
- Annual Billing
- Security and Data Integrity
- Problem and Change Management
- Attendance at User Groups.

A brief explanation of each activity is provided below.

Batch Processing

Running batch jobs places high demand on the systems and we understand the reason for and the importance of running such activities out of core office hours. We will maximise our productivity through close liaison with the Council and through the communication of the overnight service delivery plan and the daily service delivery plans for both standard and ad-hoc jobs.

All batch queues will be submitted by a specialist team, with detailed procedures and controls in place to minimise the risk of error. Given the criticality of certain batch processes and parameters, appropriate additional checks and controls will be put in place where required, with any deviation from the standard processes subject to a formal change management process.

We will maximise the use of system functionality and available server resources to complete batch processes within the agreed batch schedule window. Batch schedules will be proactively managed and maintained by infrastructure support teams and Database Administrators (DBAs), who will remotely monitor the batch queues through to midnight, resolving problems as appropriate and out of hours in order to minimise consequent downtime. Early morning checks will also be completed prior to making the system available for general use.

We will configure the system using our core data centre management toolset to ensure that proactive monitoring of all critical batch jobs and infrastructure components takes place to detect any potential capacity or performance issues. This will allow corrective action to take place to protect the batch schedule

Reconciliation and Management Information

This refers to any routine daily, weekly and monthly reconciliation required as part of maintaining the integrity of the revenues and benefits systems, including:

- Daily balancing of cash postings to NNDR and Council Tax
- Daily balancing of CTB postings between Council Tax and Benefits
- Daily balancing of HB postings between Benefits and Debtors
- Monthly Subsidy Reconciliation.

The reconciliation team will also produce a monthly information pack. The contents of this will be agreed with the Council as part of the service transition process.

Statutory Returns and Extracts

CST will be responsible for statutory returns and extracts, and will complete these prior to sending them to Barnet's Authorised Officer for verification and sign off prior to submission.

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information, although we confirm that Capita will be responsible for any liability directly attributable to inaccurate data it has provided in relation to statutory returns and extracts or delays in the provision of that information for the period after the Service Transfer Date. We will however be unable to accept liability for any inaccurate data relating to legacy issues or data integrity issues that originated prior to the Service Transfer Date.

We can also confirm Capita will be responsible for any corrective action in relation to remedial action required for statutory returns and extracts.

Technical Support, Upgrades and System Development

CST has a technical team that will provide ongoing system support for the Civica and Comino applications and will provide the technical knowledge to assess the feasibility of off-line corrective work. All corrective action will be completed within a test environment and signed off by Barnet prior to live updates, which will also require Barnet's acceptance and sign off.

The Technical Team is also the primary resource for system development work and is responsible for carrying out the following:

- Planning, testing and support for new software releases
- System testing for bug fixes and system enhancements
- Production of system testing reports including recommendations for maximising functionality
- Liaison and co-ordination with third parties for application upgrades.

Annual Billing

CST has a robust and proven annual billing project which minimises system downtime and incorporates:

- Overall project management of annual billing process from a systems and printing perspective
- Liaison with operations and third party printers for any document changes required for annual billing
- At least one full test run of the annual billing process
- Liaison with third party application support for any annual billing related upgrades
- Execution of the live annual billing process using shifts to provide 24 hour cover including weekend where possible
- Provision of an annual billing pack including full and detailed reconciliation from charge raised to bills mailed.

Security and Data Integrity

The support offered by CST conforms to Capita-wide security policies. CST also operates a number of policies specific to Local Government Services which are aimed at meeting specific requirements for revenues and benefits. These will be implemented for Barnet.

Problem and Change Management

CST is the first point of contact where a Revenues & Benefits Officer is experiencing IT difficulties. These can range from password resets through to reporting system faults or errors. Where that error affects multiple users or means the business will be unable to fulfil its business obligations and/or poses serious short-term operational issues for core business processes, CST will escalate and manage resolution of the enquiry.

Attendance at User Groups

Due to the number of Revenues Clients we partner with, we attend the user groups established by the various IT providers. This means that we are able to monitor forthcoming changes and act as a catalyst for change where we believe IT changes would make processing more efficient.

2.2.2 ASSESSING BENEFIT ENTITLEMENT

This Section Addresses BEN001 - BEN054, OP01, BS15 - BS27, BS48 - BS50

Capita's approach will complement the Council's existing processes and identify potential areas for improvement.

We believe that carrying out each element of the assessment process only once underpins high quality and efficient services, particularly those involving customer contact. Cases that are simple can be fast tracked and dealt with quickly meaning

that more attention can be placed on complex cases and enquiries and ensuring that processing times are kept to a minimum. We will therefore adopt a “Right First Time” approach to processing, ensuring that both processing performance and accuracy requirements are achieved and continue to improve.

This will be enabled through a proactive and early intervention approach, achieved through:

- Investment in staff through individualised training programmes
- The development of consistent policies and procedures, informed by the regulatory knowledge of Capita's Assessment, Policy and Training (APT) team
- Focussing quality monitoring on high risk areas of processing, based on known risk factors and our analysis of error trends
- Tailoring customer access channels to ensure that customers are able to fully understand the evidence required of them and provide it in the most effective means
- Effective engagement with the wider customer support network and key stakeholders to ensure that they can access the service in the most convenient way.

Our **right first time approach** is inherent within all our processes and will bring the following benefits to Barnet:

- It avoids duplication of effort and thus enables assessors to deal with more cases
- It releases capacity within Customer Services as claimants do not need multiple contacts
- It reduces the number of defective claims and it safeguards the performance of new claims and changes in circumstances ensuring that these continue to improve
- The subsidy claim is safeguarded, as any errors are identified quickly and reoccurrences are prevented through feedback and training.

We understand that the Council will have implemented the IEG4 online claims form prior to service commencement, meaning that all claims will be completed online either by the claimant or through mediated self-service. Verification of supporting information is fundamental to the process, and we will use a variety of methods to optimise the accuracy and speed with which this is provided, including:

- Ensuring that information already available to us is fully utilised to minimise any contact with the customer and thus avoid unnecessary delays
- Utilising telephone and text messages to explain requirements and to help identify the best way of providing information
- Visiting the customer in their home where they have been identified as being vulnerable

- Receiving scanned documents from organisations that are trained to verify information.

It is important to design a service that also engages the wider support networks that can assist a customer in making a successful claim, as this has the mutual benefit of reducing the amount of contact that both the customer and service require and means that claims are 'right first time'. On this basis, we will ensure that our Community Advisors will work with key stakeholders to support the claims process and develop mechanisms whereby queries and urgent claims can be resolved expediently.

Overpayment Recovery

Our 'right first time' approach will mean that any overpayments created are minimal. In the event that an overpayment is created, we will ensure that all methods of recovery are used to maximise income to Barnet and contribute to the Council's overall debt recovery strategy.

The administrative procedures that we will put in place will align with the Council's aims by:

- Assisting customers to notify change events promptly and being proactive in identifying future changes in entitlement
- Mitigating the financial impact on the Council by the accurate and timely calculation and classification of overpayments when they occur
- Having dedicated resources to ensure that debt is monitored and recovered to meet targets balanced against customers' circumstances. We will ensure that all customers are treated fairly, with due consideration given to individual circumstances and anti-poverty policy when pursuing a debt, whilst giving priority to overpayments created as a result of identified fraud
- Monitoring the level of outstanding debt and recovery against agreed targets
- Working with the Council Tax Recovery Section to establish a single view of a customer's debt.

Our preferred method will be to recover overpayments through deductions from ongoing entitlement to benefit. However, where appropriate, we will ensure that all options are used to recover monies outstanding. To encourage customers to keep to their arrangements, we will ensure that all statutory reminders and documentation are sent. This will be done through the traditional paper channel, with reminders sent by SMS text message to prompt customers to make regular payment prior to their due date.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs)

The increased funding currently being made available to Local Authorities along with the additional areas of expenditure that are arising due to the welfare reform agenda will inevitably result in more focus being placed on the distribution of DHPs and the manner in which the funding is allocated.

We publicise the availability of DHPs at all our sites in accordance with our clients' policies. We also ensure that potential claims for DHPs are proactively identified by our staff where the claimant is experiencing hardship or the nature of any vulnerability means a DHP might be appropriate. The nature of DHP claims tend to vary from site-to-site, principally in relation to the requirement for a prescribed pro forma and the need for supporting evidence. We therefore tailor these requirements for individual authorities and would expect to agree a DHP policy specifically for Barnet and to review this on a regular basis.

Notwithstanding the need to agree a DHP policy, we will administer all claims for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) in accordance with the Council's service standards and the processes required for the early identification of DHP claims will be included in all relevant training modules.

All claims for a DHP will be made in a manner approved by the Council and all relevant information requested and verified as required before any recommendation is made. Any recommendations for the payment or otherwise of a DHP made by Capita staff will detail as a minimum:

- the reason for the DHP claim
- supporting information and associated evidence including financial and personal circumstances and details of current HB/CTB entitlement
- the amount and duration of the DHP
- a recommendation and relevant considerations.

Details of DHPs made and forecast will be included as part of the regular reporting protocols and will include the amount of DHP funding remaining for the current financial year.

2.2.3 SUBSIDY REPORTING

This addresses BS2 and BS33 - BS47

We will also review each subsidy claim to identify areas where income may be increased by targeting specific areas of administration for performance improvement.

In addition to the reporting and systems expertise provided by our Central Support Team, dedicated on-site resources will be responsible for monitoring subsidy, including LA error overpayments, taking the necessary measures to mitigate any associated financial loss and ensuring that all subsidy and statistical returns are completed on time. They will be responsible for collating and maintaining data for use in the submission of relevant subsidy and statistical returns including DWP quarterly returns. They will work closely with Barnet to complete both the draft and final subsidy claim forms and assist with audits during the subsidy sign off period.

Subsidy performance will be tracked on a monthly basis in order to identify areas where there is potential for loss or improved performance. High profile areas, such as LA error overpayments, will receive more frequent reporting and scrutiny to ensure that any threat to the lower threshold is identified and addressed as early as possible. However, our performance in this area will also be underpinned by the financial guarantees that are contained in Schedule 4, Part 2.

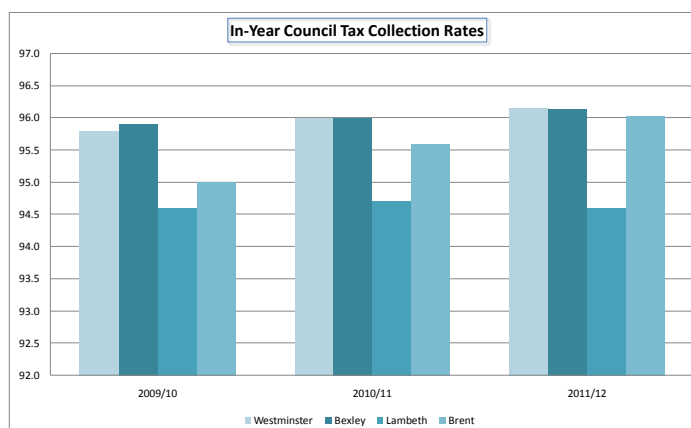
2.2.4 DATA ACCURACY AND INTEGRITY

This Addresses CT33 - CT36, N29 and N30

Data integrity and accuracy is fundamental if collection targets are to be consistently achieved and processing times maintained.

We are able to evidence our ability to achieve such collection improvements and the graph opposite shows our Council Tax collection achievements for our London based Revenues Clients for the previous three years.

This record of continuous improvement, which can be demonstrated across our entire Client portfolio, is achieved through ensuring that the fundamental basis for any raised charges is accurate. We therefore place great importance on ensuring that the property base is reconciled and up to date, and that all liability information is current, correct and relevant. To ensure that collection levels are maintained and improved upon we therefore ensure that:



- The Council Tax Register and NNDR Rating List totals are balanced against the IT system totals after every update schedule, with a full reconciliation completed quarterly
- Property Inspectors have a robust inspection program that maximises the effectiveness of physical inspections and allows them to monitor building works, issuing completion notices where necessary
- We liaise with the your internal property/planning Departments to obtain data on all building applications, so that we may monitor building work and inform the Valuation Office of the necessary changes to the Council Tax Register and NNDR Rating Lists
- Enquiries are completed at the point of contact, providing an enhanced service to the customer and minimising hand offs and the potential for error
- Data is enhanced and enriched with additional contact details such as telephone numbers (including work and mobile) and e-mail addresses captured, either at the point of contact or through credit reference agencies. In a recent pilot exercise for another of our local authority partners these agencies were able to provide:
 - Home numbers on at least 70% of accounts
 - Mobile numbers on 45% of accounts
 - Work numbers on 62% of accounts

- Accounts that have been awarded discounts, reliefs or exemptions are regularly reviewed in order to validate the continuing award
- We conduct random sample quality assurance checks on all completed work.

This continuous process of review and validation of both the properties and the liabilities is further underpinned by a series of standard and bespoke data integrity reports, examples of which include:

- Validation of accounts progressing through the collection process, identifying those that aren't (either through system error or use of account holds by officers) so that remedial work can be undertaken and accounts may re-enter the recovery process
- Reports that verify that benefit queries are being appropriately prioritised by the Council Tax department to ensure that there are no unnecessary hold ups in the assessing of a benefit application
- Identification of live accounts that are neither in payment nor in contact, or where recovery action has been held or suspended, which, if left unresolved, will inhibit collection.

This range of activities underpins and improves collection performance (and therefore underpin our guarantees in this area) and demonstrates our ability to provide a highly-tailored, sophisticated solution design.

2.2.5 BILLING AND COLLECTION

This Section Addresses CT1 - CT40, N1 - N20, N32 and N37 - N40, C19 - C24

For many customers, accurate billing is one of the main barometers by which they gauge the efficiency of the Revenues and Benefits Service, as it is often one of the few interactions they have with the Council. We therefore place great importance on issuing accurate bills and notifications on time.

We will utilise the existing billing functionality within the core applications and continue with the print and scanning arrangements that the Council currently has, although we expect to see a significant drop in mailings as we migrate customers to self-service and e-billing.

Notwithstanding this anticipated reduction in incoming and outgoing "white mail", in order to maximise collection rates, productivity and the customer experience, it is critical that the property base is completely up to date and fully reconciled to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) records and all liability information is current, correct and relevant.

By maintaining the integrity of these two elements, we will meet the required obligations, ensuring:

- The billing process is not compromised through delays or erroneous errors
- Customers are correctly notified of their entitlements and advised in advance of what they have to pay, by when, whilst understanding the consequences of non-payment

- The Council's reputation is protected.

To maintain the accuracy of the property information, we will therefore:

- Liaise closely with the Valuation Office in Southgate to ensure that valuation changes are updated accurately, with completion notices issued in accordance with the law
- Establish a system through which we can monitor the progress of these applications for reporting to the VOA
- Balance the Council Tax and NNDR system totals against the VOA records after each update schedule
- Complete full reconciliations against the VOA's records every three months
- Use inspectors to verify the status of properties and to establish the correct liabilities.

To ensure that the Council Tax and NNDR liabilities are accurately maintained we will:

- Complete enquiries at first point of contact, providing an enhanced service to the customer and minimising hand offs and the potential for error
- Implement new processes which use Experian (or other comparable Credit Reference Agency data) to enhance the data held on live accounts
- Identify those in-year accounts that are neither in payment nor in contact which, if left unresolved, will inhibit collection
- Develop bespoke reports that allow specific and non-standard data to be extracted allowing us to focus on specific areas and protect the integrity of the Council Tax and NNDR databases
- Prioritise the completion of certain work document types (i.e. Direct Debit Mandates) while ensuring the prompt update of all notified liability changes
- Implement real-time Dashboards on LCD televisions that allow the Council Tax Team Leaders in the Processing Centre to monitor work positions.

We will also:

- Embed and adopt Capita's system support principles and security arrangements in order to ensure that information is used appropriately and for the customers benefit
- Review data capture techniques to ensure that we collect all relevant information at the initial point of contact
- Encourage people to complete their own enquiries online by providing mediated self-service, help and assistance so that customers can fulfil a range of tasks
- Ensure the timely assessment of benefit entitlement and the award of exemptions, discounts and reliefs.

We will ensure the integrity and relevance of the data we collate through;

- Building strong relationships with the Council's Planning and Building Control departments so that any proposed developments and alterations are known about and that building work is monitored
- Monitoring long-term empty properties in order to raise the appropriate charges and premiums
- Verifying the accuracy of self service amendments
- Regularly review all discount, exemption and relief awards
- Conducting random quality checks on a representative sample of various items of completed work
- Regularly investigating live accounts that are inactive or have been placed "on hold" by members of staff, in order to ensure they are corrected and progressed as necessary.
- Through the use of insight and resident analysis we will maximise and continue to promote low-cost payment options such as Direct Debit by; Issuing mandates with statutory notifications
- Ensuring that Customer Services promote Direct Debit during every customer interaction
- Using customer intelligence to target Direct Debit campaigns to:
 - the most affluent areas of the borough
 - those residents in higher value properties
 - those citizen types who prefer making payment via this method.

However, the introduction of Council Tax Support is going to create a large number of small debts payable by people with limited incomes for whom Direct Debit will not be an option. Given this, the level of Direct Debit penetration is going to reduce as the overall number of live accounts with an outstanding balance increases. Accordingly, targets should be adjusted accordingly once Council Tax Support is live and the impact can be more readily quantified. **2.2.5.1 Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)**

This Section addresses N4

As BIDs vary in scope and size, we have not included in our core price the costs of administering any schemes. Should the Authority be requested to administer and collect a BID levy we will provide on request, a written quotation for the administration and collection of the BID levy, on receipt of the BID levy rules and reporting requirements.

2.2.6 RECOVERY AND ENFORCEMENT

This Section Addresses R1 - R18, N21 - N31

In order to maximise recovery and reduce the cost of collection, it essential that customers have confidence in the collection processes and that decision-making in relation to the recovery process is underpinned through thorough analysis of all available data. We will support customer confidence in the collection process by:

- Continuing to offer a full range of payment options and continuing cheaper alternatives such as direct debit and online payments (including new payment technologies such as PayPal as appropriate)
- Allocating payments in accordance with the Council's preferences and the prevailing legislation
- Reviewing payment dates to establish whether alternative or additional dates would increase payments
- Using SMS text and emails reminders to prompt payment
- Pro-actively promoting e-billing, where those customers who pay by Direct Debit 'opt out' rather than 'opt in'
- Establishing an SMS text messaging facility that allows us to text Council Tax customers in advance of recovery notices being issued (e.g. reminders, finals, summonses), asking them to bring their payments up to date, and using the same facility to inform benefit claimants of appointments or where additional information is required in order to complete the assessment. The screen below is extracted from our proven solution for this:



Figure 5 - Screen Shot of SMS Interface

- Providing an automatic e-mail response which confirms receipt of e-mail enquiries and confirms the timeframe in which the customer can expect a response
- Increasing awareness of CTB discounts (if required by the Council), exemptions and reliefs through targeted take up programme.

We will ensure a robust but equitable approach to recovery by:

- Fostering a good relationship with the local magistrates court, underpinned by a robust recovery timetable
- Adopting all available means of recovery, aligned to statutory timescales
- Using all available tracing processes, including the use of credit reference agency (CRA) data, and agreeing a mechanism for writing off unrecoverable debt
- Streamlining decision-making and automating processes that could, if not completed, inhibit collection
- Identifying cases for charging orders and bankruptcy and providing recommendations to the Council for continued action
- Preparing cases for committal and supporting clients through attendance at court.
- Prioritising persistent non-payers through the recovery process
- Customising outgoing letters depending on a customers payment history
- Giving reliable customers with a good payment history slightly longer before issuing a reminder, to reduce the volume of outgoing post and associated queries
- Employing Equita plc as bailiffs to ensure that performance amongst the bailiffs can be measured, assessed and validated on an ongoing basis

We will also protect a valuable income stream by collecting incurred court costs, ensuring that any payments that don't match a current year instalment or agreed payment arrangement are allocated to costs first.

2.3 COMPLAINTS AND MEMBERS ENQUIRIES

This addresses CS4, CT41 - CT44 and N33 - N36

Barnet's citizens will complain if things go wrong. Complaints and customer feedback provide additional insight into service delivery and can be useful for monitoring performance. We are therefore committed to using this information to improve services and better meet customers' needs.

Our approach will be to align our internal processes with Barnet's Corporate Policy whilst using relevant data sources (e.g. audit results, complaints, customer surveys) to identify potential problems. Any improvements or refinements will be identified and built into existing procedures as appropriate by senior managers.

Using Complaints to Develop the Service: we operate various complaint and feedback procedures in line with our clients' corporate procedures and use these to monitor the quality of the service. Complaints are reviewed at operational manager and team leader level to ensure that a similar issue does not arise again and the information is used to continuously improve service delivery.

Complaints Objectives: an integral part of complaints handling is the use of a written procedural framework. This will enable us both to ensure that Barnet's corporate complaints policy is fully understood and that the framework for handling complaints is practical and effective. This will include such elements as:

- Setting out a definition of a complaint that can be clearly communicated to both customers and staff
- Establishing clear minimum service standards that can be monitored and reported
- Being responsive to the needs of the customers
- Being transparent and easy to understand
- Reflecting best practice
- Helping all parties learn from complaints
- Enabling staff to deal with complaints effectively at the earliest stage in the process.

We will nominate a specific Complaints and Liaison Officer, who will be the focal point for complaints about service delivery, for the analysis of Customer Feedback and will also be the on site contact point for enquiries from the Council. The Complaints Liaison Officer will act as Capita's local administrator for complaint management and maintenance.

Complaints Training: front line staff will play a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of the complaints and feedback procedure. Complaints will by their very nature often be received by these staff and there are many benefits associated with fully dealing with the complaint at the first point of contact. All staff that are likely to come into contact with customers will receive support and training in the procedures with emphasis on their roles and responsibilities. Complaints that highlight a training need will be addressed through our ongoing training programme.

Complaints Analysis: we will routinely review all complaints and feedback including dismissed cases to identify any potential service improvements. We will provide regular statistical reports for the Council which will summarise the complaints where service improvements may be achieved.

This review will also provide a mechanism of analysing the details of the cases received, evaluating the level of complaints, the causes and the remedies. This could include such issues as:

- Identifying training needs
- Implementing Council policy where it affects complaints
- Assessing trends in the nature of complaints
- Reviewing the complaints procedure to ensure it is up-to-date and relevant.

Enquiries from Council Members: We assume that the normal route for Member's enquires would be via the Council but we will ensure that the appropriate person is notified should any enquiry be received directly from a Member. All such enquiries will be dealt with as a priority and a response provided, via the Council's representative if required, in a timely and accurate manner which:

- Addresses all issues outlined in the enquiry

- Provides details of any information that is required to complete the transaction
- Provides timescales for resolution of outstanding issues.

2.3.1 PROCESS AUTOMATION

The subsections above outline how we will manage the Revenues and Benefits service, and the range of activities we will perform in order to meet all associated KPIs and PIs. We are also in the process of implementing the Capita Process Automation (CPA) tool across our partnerships, as this will enable us to build and automate a number of key processes. Built on proven business logic and data management already built into existing applications it has the potential to automate any rules-based processes, no matter how complex.

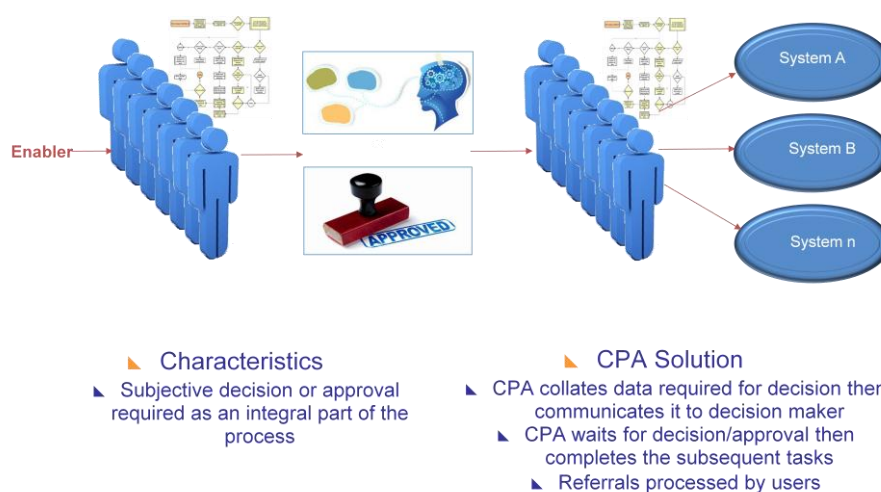


Figure 6 - Capita Process Automation

All of the selected processes will be automated in consultation with our partners and subject to strict project management rigour:

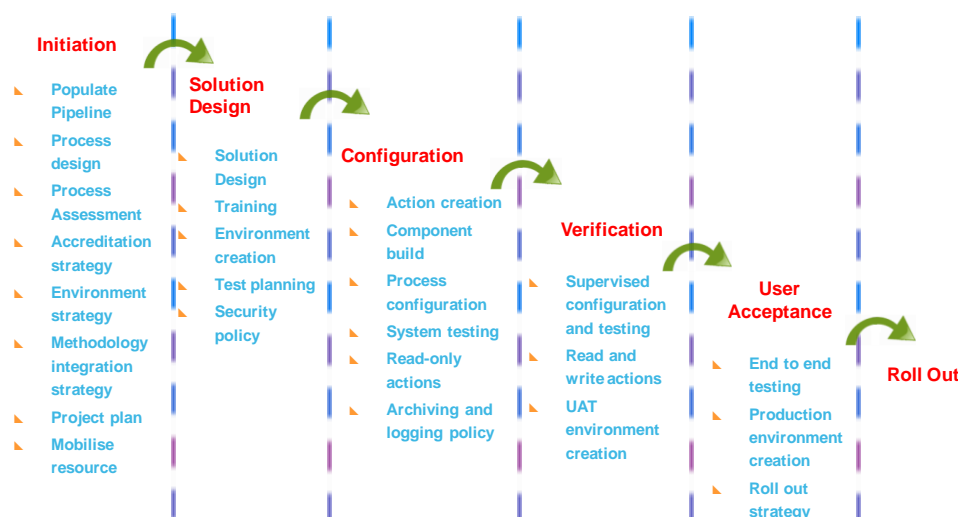


Figure 7 - Project Management Approach to Automation

Underpinning this development will be a Process Automation Academy, which will train developers across the Capita Local Government network, allowing individual partnerships to individually decide on which processes are best suited for automation. We envisage that selected candidates will progress through the Academy as follows:

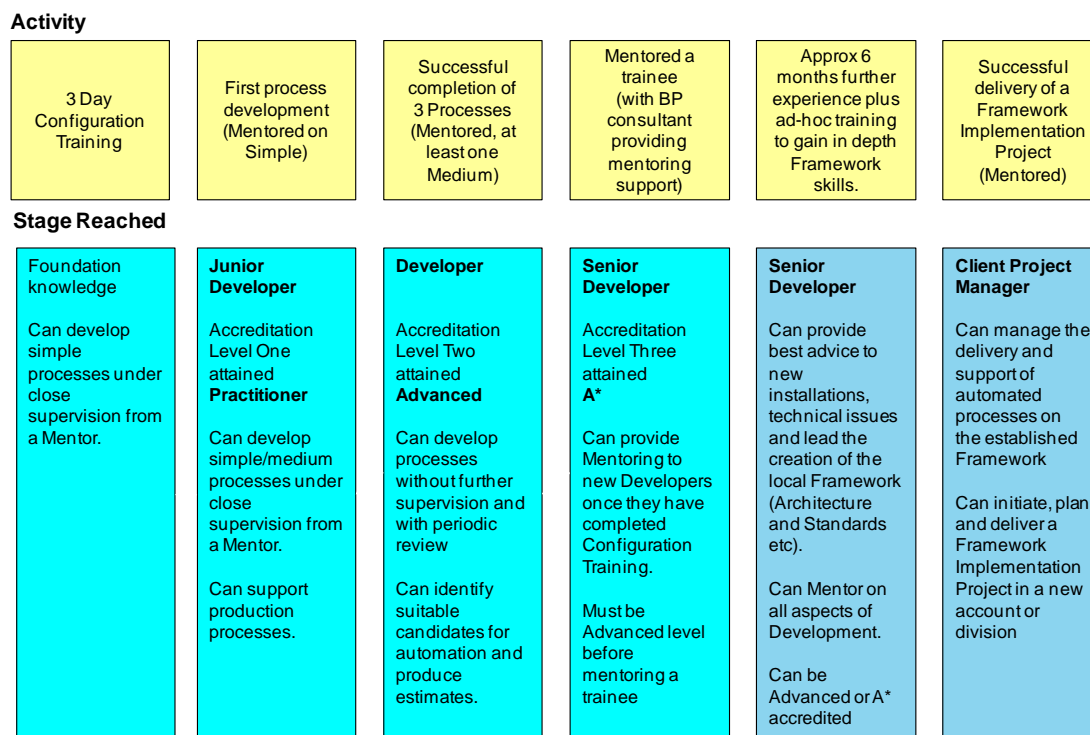


Figure 8 - Staff Development Route through LGS Process Automation Academy

2.4 HOW WE WILL MAXIMISE TAKE UP OF ONLINE AND SELF-SERVICE OPTIONS

This addresses BS7 and BS10 - BS13

We understand that LBB is currently in the process of implementing an on-line benefit application system, IEG4, and the OPENAccess self-service module. We are currently rolling out the IEG4 product at a number of our managed sites and have developed a strategy to promote our range of self-service options that we will utilise to maximise the use of these access channels in Barnet.

We will implement a clear promotion strategy for self service and online claiming, as we believe this is critical to the successful take up and maximisation of this access channel. The involvement of stakeholders will be key to this strategy, particularly Barnet Homes, who will ensure that we are able to reach a high percentage of customers who wouldn't naturally access the service over the web. The strategy for Barnet will utilise the Insight Engine to tailor initiatives to meet the requirements of specific customer groups. Typical activities will include:

- Targeting those customers who are most likely to utilise the self-serve option e.g. those contacting the service via email

- Amending the website so that the self serve options are prominent and appear before other contact options
- Amending all letters to promote self-serve options and how to register for them
- Using an opt out approach in relation to specific options e.g. E-Billing at year end
- Implementing revised IVR messaging to promote the self-serve options
- Using leaflets and posters to promote the new options.

Some customers will need to be assisted, at least initially, in order to successfully utilise self-service options. We will therefore provide a mediated service that actively supports the use of new access channels by all customers. To achieve this, we will use the Insight Engine to identify customer groups that may require additional assistance and implement additional support initiatives, such as:

- Offering a telephone based appointment service so that forms can be completed by operational Benefits staff, thereby increasing the correct completion of claims at the first stage
- Providing assisted self-serve in customer service locations where dedicated Customer Service Advisers help with enquiries
- Working with support networks and organisations already in place and provide training sessions so they can assist customers when using the self-service options.

2.5 HOW WE ARE MANAGING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WELFARE REFORM

This addresses OV003

The current programme of welfare reform is presenting significant challenges to Local Authorities both in terms of the short term legislative changes that need operational implementation and long term planning following the implementation of Universal Credit.

There are a number of changes effective from April 2013 that, although awaiting royal assent of final legislation, will have significant impact customers and on the way in which the Revenues and Benefit Service is delivered. Although further detail will not be known until later in the year, we have detailed below our view of the potential impact of these changes and the way in which we would like to deal with them from the point of preferred supplier.

2.5.1 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

The introduction of Council Tax Support (CTS) as a replacement for Council Tax Benefit represents a significant shift in the way that financial assistance is provided to Council Tax payers.

We have reviewed the proposed scheme that the Council has designed and that is currently undergoing a programme of public consultation. We recognise the problems that all Councils face in trying to design a scheme that is both fair and achieves the

requisite level of savings and acknowledge that Barnet is seeking to address this through the five scheme principles outlined in the consultation document:

- Those with the ability to pay make a fair contribution
- Provides incentives to work
- Supports those in exceptional circumstances
- Protects the vulnerable
- Is transparent and accessible.

We acknowledge that the required period of consultation is underway and that this may have an impact on Barnet's final scheme such that it will not be fully agreed by the Council until later in the year. However, any scheme that reduces current levels of support in order to align with the reduction in funding is likely to have a significant impact on various services areas.

The key principles of the Council's proposed scheme are supported by six individual scheme features ranging from changes to current Council Tax exemptions and discounts to changes in which individual components of support is calculated. To illustrate the potential impact of the local scheme on service delivery, we have detailed below a number of key service areas and identified the scheme features that may affect service delivery and/or performance.

SERVICE AREA / IMPACT	LOCAL SCHEME FEATURE
<p>Increase in Customer Contact: Tax payers receiving first time or increased bills despite no change in circumstances are likely to contact the Council, leading to increased demand which will need to be met through additional resources.</p> <p>Although advance publicity could mitigate this to some extent, it is anticipated that increased demand is inevitable.</p>	<p>Feature 1: changes to current Council Tax exemptions and discounts</p> <p>Feature 2: minimum contributions by working age claimants</p> <p>Feature 3: removal of second adult rebate</p> <p>Feature 4: reducing capital limit</p> <p>Feature 5: limiting support for higher banded properties</p> <p>Feature 6: changes to non-dependant deductions.</p>
<p>Increase in Processing requirements: Although difficult to quantify until final legislation is confirmed, there is potential for additional processing requirements should duplication of effort be required or where an increase in transactional activity is encountered.</p>	<p>Feature 1: changes to current Council Tax exemptions and discounts</p> <p>Feature 5: limiting support for higher banded properties.</p>

SERVICE AREA / IMPACT	LOCAL SCHEME FEATURE
Additional consideration will have to be given to dealing with CTS claims where the claimant is also in receipt of Universal Credit which is due to be introduced from October 2013.	
<p>Impact on Council Tax Collection: A large number of small debts will have to be collected from those with the least ability to pay. This will lead to increased collection costs and the potential for reduced collection levels.</p> <p>The Council will also need to consider its approach to enforcement in relation to these debts.</p>	<p>Feature 1: changes to current Council Tax exemptions and discounts</p> <p>Feature 2: minimum contributions by working age claimants</p> <p>Feature 3: removal of second adult rebate</p> <p>Feature 4: reducing capital limit</p> <p>Feature 5: limiting support for higher banded properties</p> <p>Feature 6: changes to non-dependant deductions.</p>
<p>Increase in appeals: Those taxpayers who feel they are unable to pay may appeal against their CTS award leading to increased volumes of appeals.</p> <p>It is unlikely to remain with the Appeals Service which will result in duplication of appeal work/submissions if different agencies hear the HB and CTS appeals.</p>	<p>Feature 2: minimum contributions by working age claimants</p> <p>Feature 3: removal of second adult rebate</p> <p>Feature 4: reducing capital limit</p> <p>Feature 5: limiting support for higher banded properties</p> <p>Feature 6: changes to non-dependant deductions.</p>
<p>Increase in complaints: Those taxpayers affected by the Local Scheme may use the complaints process as a means of venting their displeasure thereby increasing workloads in this area of the service.</p>	<p>Feature 1: changes to current Council Tax exemptions and discounts</p> <p>Feature 2: minimum contributions by working age claimants</p> <p>Feature 3: removal of second adult rebate</p> <p>Feature 4: reducing capital limit</p> <p>Feature 5: limiting support for higher</p>

SERVICE AREA / IMPACT	LOCAL SCHEME FEATURE
	<p>banded properties</p> <p>Feature 6: changes to non-dependant deductions.</p>

We are fully aware of the level of challenge and risk that the introduction of CTS presents to Benefit Services. In order to mitigate the level of risk and to support the successful implementation of local schemes we have initiated a CTS programme within our existing contracts that:

- Provides dedicated project management resources to co-ordinate and manage project tasks and resources and provides a dedicated point of contact
- Co-ordinates project activity and liaison/management of other Capita teams
- Develops and maintains Project and Implementation Plans and a RAID log
- Issues regular reports on progress against plans
- Aligns and co-ordinates with annual billing projects
- Engages with software suppliers (release/testing timetable/functionality etc.)
- Undertakes resource and impact analyses to quantify the impact of revised CTS arrangements on Benefits and Council Tax performance and cost
- Provides the role of Critical Friend (e.g. providing advice and consultation) for any activities that sit wholly or partly with the Council
- Identifies and disseminates best practice via external routes and/or from within LGS client portfolio
- Maximises economies of scale, wherever possible, by sharing generic tasks/costs across sites
- Uses non-BAU resources to ensure that ongoing service delivery is not put at risk and performance maintained during the implementation.

From preferred supplier stage, we will utilise these principles along with the experiences and best practice gained over the coming months to support Barnet's CTS implantation project to ensure that:

- Annual billing is completed on time
- The CTS scheme is documented and staff training is undertaken
- Software is tested and fit for purpose

- Additional resources to deal with potential peaks in activity (in particular customer contact) are in place.

2.5.2 THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORMS

The replacement of CTB is one of a number of reforms that will come into effect in April 2013 and will include:

- Rent restrictions in the social rented sector for those households that are considered to be over-accommodated
- The benefits cap, which will restrict the level of overall benefit entitlement through reductions in Housing Benefit.

These reforms will impact a significant proportion of the existing HB/CTB caseload, but there is the potential for one or more of these reforms to adversely affect individual households. The cumulative loss of benefits, for those least able to make up the shortfall, will result in increased financial instability with decisions having to be made as to what is the most important bill to pay including basic household expenditure.

For councils, this may mean that arrears for both Council Tax and rent increase with limited scope for improving recovery proportionately and consideration will therefore need to be given to the impact of recovery and operational costs.

It will be important to quantify the potential cumulative impact on the service, both in terms of resources (particularly in relation to increased customer contact) and performance, with particular attention paid to Council Tax collection. From preferred supplier stage, we will work closely with the Council to review all relevant data that will assist in providing a clearer picture of the number of affected households and agree a programme of activity that will:

- Mitigate the immediate impact through advance publicity
- Anticipate the additional operational resource requirements.

The Insight Engine will provide the means to identify those customer groups that may be particularly affected by these changes and will allow specific activity to be tailored accordingly.

To date we have been actively engaged with understanding the impact of Welfare Reforms through our relationships within both Central and Local Government. Our ability to bring together these relationships to the benefit of our clients is demonstrated by our strong relationship with DWP around the issue of welfare reform. We have held a series of meetings with the universal credit programme director and other senior officials which enabled us to communicate the concerns of a number of our local authority clients around issues such as the changes to housing benefit and replacement of council tax benefit.

We are currently conducting research in this area with local authorities and have agreed to present the findings to DWP on their behalf. As part of this engagement we have employed our own resources to liaise with our local government clients around the impact of legislative changes on all areas of service delivery including tailoring for

local requirements. These resources continue to liaise directly with the relevant Central Government departments to clarify technical issues and queries.

This approach enables us to assist our local government clients to be aware of future changes, plan for the impact upon them and then develop the required change programmes to respond to Central Government agenda. It also allows us to provide access to our clients to influence the future shape of these agendas.

Through our internal best practice network and by chairing events for all our Revenues and Benefits clients to exchange topics of interest and future challenges, we ensure a consistent and compliant approach that maximises economies of scale as this approach is applied across all our contracts. Our engagement and advocacy at a central government level developed a number of DWP funded national initiatives securing funding for pilots on our existing contracts.

We will incorporate Barnet into our established external network and bring the benefits of horizon scanning; our ability to provide representation of key concerns regarding future legislation; involvement in pilots and prototyping to the Authority plus facilitate Authority participation in co-designing future legislation.

2.5.3 TRANSFER OF LOCAL ASSISTANCE (SOCIAL FUND) SUPPORT

With Local Assistance (Social Fund) payments transferring in to the Benefits Service, negotiations have been ongoing to understand the scope and remit of the activities and the likely impact on both the Benefits Service and Customer Services.

The outcome of these discussions has been to agree that the Social Fund will be administered in full by Civica for an initial 12 month period, commencing on 1st April 2013, and it is for Barnet to negotiate the delivery of these additional services.

Following the transfer of the Benefits Service, Capita will work with Civica to determine whether this service delivery model is the most appropriate and cost-effective going forward or whether Capita are better placed to align the administration of Social Fund payments to Barnet's wider initiatives.

The outcomes of these discussions can then inform the longer-term solution and Capita will submit a proposal that confirms our delivery solution, recommendations and ongoing costs which will be treated in accordance with Schedule 14 Change Protocol.

2.5.4 IMPACT OF COUNCIL TAX TECHNICAL REFORM

The Government has consulted on various technical changes to Council Tax, which it intends to enact for the start of the 2013-14 financial year. Through dialogue and with reference to your recently issued CTS consultation document, we understand that it is the Council's intention to offset some of the 10% funding cut for your localised CTS scheme by:

- Reducing the Council Tax discount for properties not occupied as a main home from 10% to 0%
- Abolishing Class A exemptions and reducing the replacement discount to 0% for 12 months

- Abolishing Class C exemptions and reducing the replacement discount to 0% for the 6 month period
- Introducing a premium of 50% on properties that have remained empty & unfurnished after 2 years.

The Council estimates that these changes could generate income of up to £1.9m per year as the changes add just over 1% to the overall Net Collectable Debit.

While the majority of our local authority partners are looking to offset some of the CTS funding shortage in a similar way, there are inherent risks which include:

- Trying to recover these additional monies from taxpayers that reside at an alternative address, which is not always known
- Taxpayers attempting to apply for other discounts, such as the Single Person Discount, in lieu of their previous awards
- Owners not providing the Council with information on when tenants vacate, or with spurious information, in an attempt to avoid and/or reduce their own liability to pay.

We are confident that through a combination of the processes outlined in Sections 2.24, 2.2.5 and 0 above, our data enrichment activity, our annual reviews of discounts and the Insight Engine, we will mitigate the impact of such risks. However, we will also monitor collection closely across this group of taxpayers, as it is one of the key income drivers the Council needs to support its CTS scheme on an ongoing basis.

2.5.5 IMPACT ON COUNCIL TAX COLLECTION

Having canvassed opinions at our internal LGS forums and through wider groups, such as the Core Cities Group or the London Revenues Group, it remains difficult to accurately quantify the potential impact that the Welfare Reform changes are going to have on Council Tax Collection, with estimates on non-payment of the difference between the Council Tax liability and the CTS award ranging from 25% and 55%.

The potential impact on collection can only be gauged once we have access to the Council Tax and Benefits system. This will allow us to analyse the existing caseload and determine the propensity to pay across the working age claimant group. We propose to do this at preferred bidder stage.

What is known is that a large number of small debts will have to be collected from those members of the community least able to pay and as a partnership we must be mindful of that. Therefore, the Debt Recovery Policy will also need to be updated so that a clear strategy exists on how to deal with those taxpayers that have:

- An amount to pay which is less than the cost of issuing a summons and obtaining a liability order
- An amount to pay which is over the summons threshold but will not be cleared in the financial year through an Attachment of Benefit
- An amount to pay which is over the summons threshold but will be insufficient to send to the bailiffs

- An accruing and ongoing liability, with no means to pay.

By updating such documents now, and implementing clear guidelines on how to deal with these cases, any confusion the claimant has around why their benefit entitlement has been cut will not be compounded by confusion on what, if any, remedial actions should be taken to recover the debt.

2.5.6 THE LOCALISATION OF NNDR

The localisation of NNDR may provide Barnet with the opportunity of retaining a proportion of additional revenue raised. However, at the moment, this is still subject to Technical Consultation, and further clarity is likely to be needed from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on the exact mechanisms for local retention proposed.

If the retention of NNDR is achieved through growth in the Net Collectable Debit, we will look to support any initiatives that the Council implements in this regard. In reality though, the Revenues and Benefits Service may be limited in what impact it can have, other than perhaps an annual review of the Crown Property List.

We would like to have the opportunity of further discussion with Barnet to examine what gainshare arrangements could be put in place to maximise or influence the proportion of retained income available to the Council (e.g. additional resources in the NNDR Service to influence collection performance). We therefore propose that further dialogue is initiated in the next stage of the commissioning process and once the full impact of the scheme is known.

2.6 HOW WE WILL USE THE INSIGHT ENGINE TO DELIVER SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

The Insight Engine underpins our partnership with Barnet and is the driving force behind continuous improvement, innovation and the future. It will:

- Generate the data and analytics that will inform the Service Improvement Plan and ensure continuous improvement and innovation in the Revenues & Benefits Service
- Provide the inputs to drive out ground breaking new ways of delivering services
- Take current Insight to create future value.

We envisage that the Insight Engine will allow for a two-way dialogue and exchange of information, as shown in the diagram below:

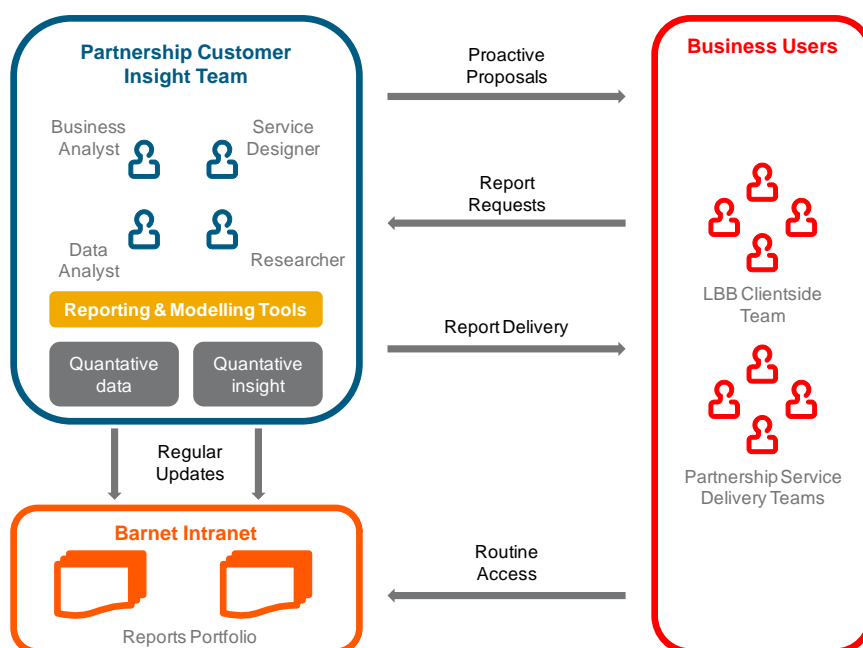


Figure 9 - How the Insight Engine works

In order to meet the Council's ambitions, we will use resident segmentation to target campaigns so that their impact can be maximised. An analysis of the demographic make up of the borough using Experian's Mosaic Public Sector Profiling shows the following:

	Mosaic Public Sector Groups	Barnet (%)	London (%)
A	Residents of isolated rural communities	0.05	0.03
B	Residents of small and mid-sized towns with strong local roots	0.45	0.96
C	Wealthy people living in the most sought after neighbourhoods	22.49	8.88
D	Successful professionals living in suburban or semi-rural homes	1.21	1.15
E	Middle income families living in moderate suburban semis	9.17	14.27
F	Couples with young children in comfortable modern housing	1.13	0.83
G	Young, well-educated city dwellers	35.67	27.84
H	Couples and young singles in small modern starter homes	7.15	4.67
I	Lower income workers in urban terraces in often diverse areas	8.46	14.92
J	Owner occupiers in older-style housing in ex-industrial areas	0.05	1.17
K	Residents with sufficient incomes in right-to-buy social housing	0.95	2.12
L	Active elderly people living in pleasant retirement locations	4.15	1.35
M	Elderly people reliant on state support	2.18	1.30
N	Young people renting flats in high density social housing	6.21	19.14
O	Families in low-rise social housing with high levels of benefit need	0.69	1.36

Figure 10 - Mosaic Profiles for Barnet

This illustrates that three Mosaic Groups account for almost 70% of the resident population:

- **Group C:** Wealthy people living in the most sought after areas
- **Group E:** Middle income families living in moderate suburban semis
- **Group G:** Young, well educated city dwellers.

These groups have defined characteristics and, when combined with an analytical interrogation of the Revenues and Benefits databases, allow us to develop collection and take up strategies on a ward by ward basis.

Group G: Young, well-educated city dwellers
G26-G34

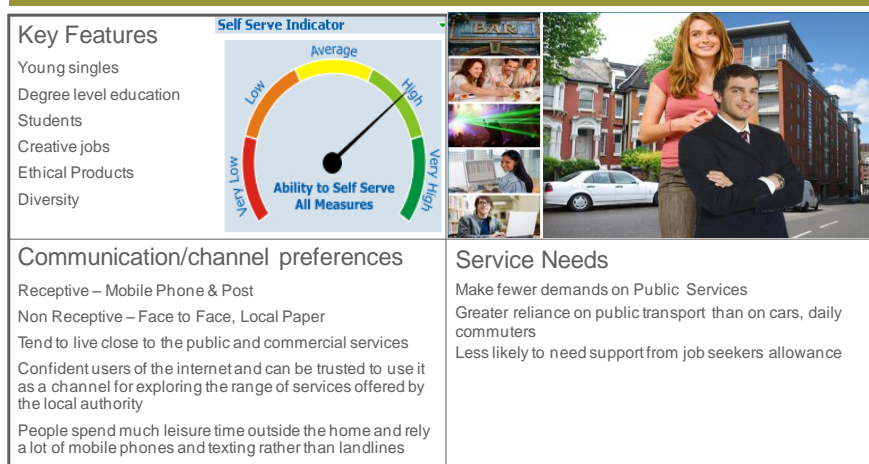


Figure 11 - Group G - Young, well-educated city dwellers

So, for example, for those residents who fall into Group G: Young, well educated city dwellers we will:

- Enhance the existing self-serve capabilities so that they are able to self-serve on the web and over the phone on a 24/7 basis
- Actively encourage them to switch to e-billing and use SMS text reminders
- Work with our IT partners to develop smart-phone applications that link to the Civica Council Tax system
- Promote Direct Debit and amend working practices to ensure that opting out of payment by this method is a last resort
- Implement robust recovery protocols to ensure that any instances of non-payment within this demographic group are prioritised. Our collection strategy will therefore include:
 - Verifying the sums outstanding
 - Checking their understanding of what is due
 - Refusing to extend or agree non-statutory payment arrangements
 - Utilising the full range of recovery options available, actively pursue Attachment of Earnings and the use bailiffs on an out-of-hours basis, and should non-payment continue, commence bankruptcy proceedings.

The effectiveness of these activities will be recorded and assessed against the desired outcomes to ensure that this targeted approach is valid and that the interpretation of the data reinforces and strengthens our insight over the course of the partnership.

Two less affluent Mosaic groups account for approximately 15% of the demographic:

- **Group I:** Lower income workers in urban terraces in often diverse areas
- **Group N:** Young people renting flats in high density social housing.

Group I: Lower income workers in urban terraces in often diverse areas

These will largely fall into a "can't pay" category, but may not be entitled to Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit.

Group I: Lower income workers in urban terraces in often diverse areas I39-I44

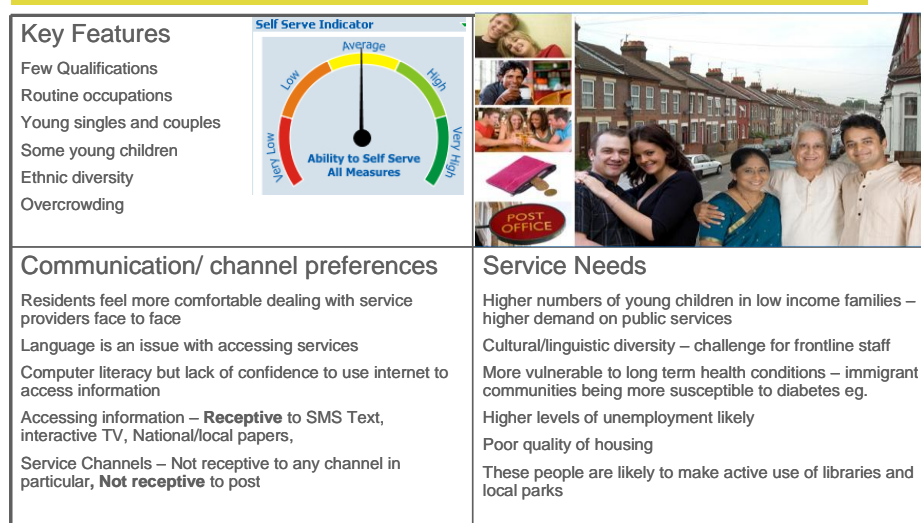


Figure 12 - Group I - Lower income workers in urban terraces in often diverse areas

Our proposed collection strategy for Group I will include:

- Checking eligibility for all discounts, exemptions or reliefs
- Utilising those recovery options which, where possible, minimise any increase in indebtedness
- Offering payment arrangements based on affordability.

In order to support those that need to access to benefits or assistance in establishing any potential entitlement, our solution will provide:

- Online access to services and advice providing the flexibility of delivery that fits in with their lifestyle and commitments
- Clear point of contact, benefits and welfare advice alongside a right first time assessment service that provides a stable platform on which they can budget accordingly
- Signposting other benefits and Council services that will provide additional financial, employment or lifestyle advice

- Flexible Council Tax payments options, including a range of direct debit payment dates that allows budgets to be managed effectively.

Group N: Young people renting flats in high density social housing

These will largely fall into a 'can't pay' category but may be entitled to full Council Tax Benefit and therefore have no accruing liability.

Group N : Young people renting flats in high density social housing N60-N66

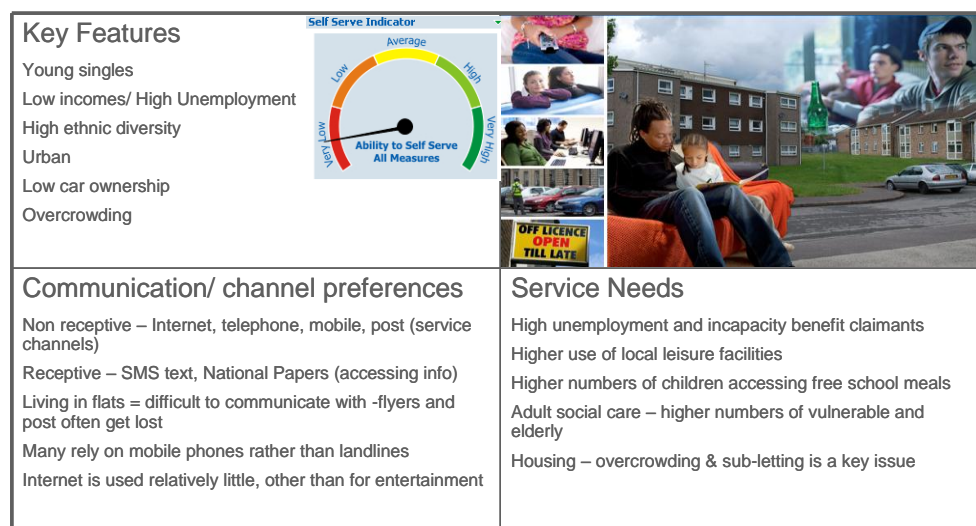


Figure 13 - Group N - Young people renting flats in high density social housing

Our proposed collection strategy for Group N will include:

- Offering extended payment arrangements
- Using recovery options such as Deductions from Income Support.

Obviously, experience is essential when dealing with these enquiries and we will adopt approaches that protect the Council's income, while remaining sensitive to the taxpayer's situation.

Benefit entitlement will be critical to this group's ability to budget and so our solution will provide:

- Clear point of contact benefits and welfare advice alongside a right first time assessment service that provides a stable platform on which they can budget accordingly
- A Service that assists in the transition to work by providing accurate benefits advice and tailored Council Tax payment arrangements including flexible direct debit payment dates
- A clear communication strategy in relation to future Welfare Reforms that will impact on their entitlement and ability to pay new or increased liabilities.

2.7 HOW WE WILL ENSURE SERVICE RESILIENCE

Capita is the market leader in the provision of Revenues and Benefits Services to Local Government, with a proven and demonstrable track record. Employing 2,260 people, we deliver these services locally, through our infrastructure of eight Shared Service Centres (SSCs) or through a mix of the two derived from what is most suitable for the ongoing success of the contract.

The Shared Service Centres are serviced through a centralised IT delivery model and interconnected IT infrastructure, providing unrivalled service resilience and business continuity. This ensures that operational activity can either be supported over the short-term or transferred should the need arise. We propose to deliver services for the Council from a number of separate but linked sites as shown below.

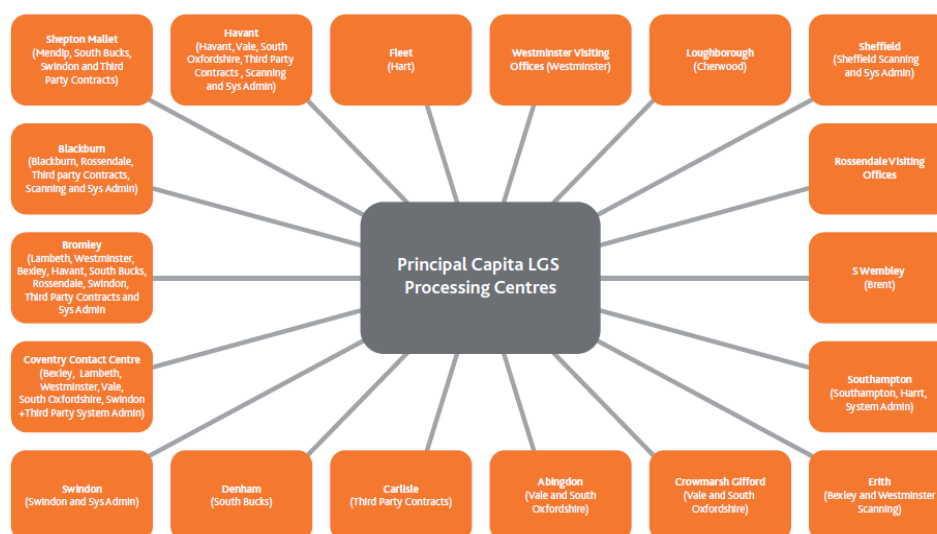


Figure 14 - Principal Capita LGS Processing Centres

This flexibility allows us to provide resilience to the:

- Core processing activity, which obviates any unnecessary costs caused by backlogs or delays
- Control Team, through having them as a virtual extension to our Central Support Team, a team of experienced system administrators
- Inspectors, as we can integrate work processes with our London based inspection team, an amalgamated team of Inspectors that provide services to all of our London based Clients
- Contact Centre, through routing calls to the back office, either on or offsite.

Our approach to business continuity is closely aligned to the BS25999-1 standard 'Code of Practice for Business Continuity Management' and both our Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery strategies are based on key principles that form best practice. More information on our approach to Business Continuity, especially during the transition and transformational period is included in Section 6 of this document.

3 LOCATION AND STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 LOCATION

The Revenues and Benefits Service for Barnet will be delivered via a virtual Centre of Excellence based at two of Capita's established Shared Service Centres (SSC), in Blackburn with Darwen and Bromley, and from Barnet itself for those services that need to remain within the locality. The activity that will be undertaken and the rationale for choosing these locations are detailed below:

Blackburn with Darwen SSC will be employed as the main processing centre for both Council Tax and Benefits activity and it is envisaged that all non-SME activity will be carried out at this location including the assessment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims (and subsequent Council Tax Support reductions) and the billing and collection of Council Tax. Our Blackburn SSC provides high quality resources that:

- Are fully trained and prior to the transfer will receive full training on Barnet's own procedures
- Focus on service quality and delivering accuracy
- Facilitate the profiling of resources to meet peaks in demand through additional offsite capacity negate the need for short term temporary staff.

The use of an established SSC will ensure a smooth transfer of work due to the familiarity of the management and staff of the operational requirements needed to maintain performance throughout the transition phase. Dedicated training will ensure all staff will be familiar with Barnet's policies and procedures whilst a quality assurance mechanism will be designed, agreed and implemented in advance of the transfer.

Liaison points will be agreed with the retained client and other service delivery sites in order to ensure clear and open lines of communication. Open and regular dialogue will be maintained with these sites in order to maintain service delivery, quality and efficiency with an escalation route identified should any matter not be resolved as necessary.

Bromley SSC will be utilised to deliver remote Subject Matter Expert (SME) activity along with the NNDR service. Over the last decade we have developed our Bromley SSC, which has been fully ISO9001 and Investors in People (IiP) accredited for the last 6 years and from which we provide:

- Full administration of 2 Council Tax contracts and SME support for another 5 contracts
- Full administration of 8 NNDR contracts, making it the largest NNDR processing centre in the UK and collecting over £1.8 billion for our local authority clients
- On-demand resilience services to our long-term partners as well as short-term processing solutions, such as backlog clearance, SPD reviews or sickness cover

- Specialist support teams based which include our Central Support Team (CST), Assessment, Policy and Training (APT) Team and Valuation, NNDR, Bailiff Liaison and Enforcement Teams.

The existing infrastructure of the Bromley SSC provides the opportunity to transfer specialist activity to a stable location with considerable operational experience of the disciplines required. A full compliment of fully trained staff is underpinned with an established management team whose approach to quality is demonstrated by the ongoing accreditation of liP and ISO9001. The following teams are located within the Bromley SSC and provide an indication of the initial SME activity that we envisage transferring:

- **NNDR:** Provide a full Billing, Collection and Recovery hub and provides the largest concentration of NNDR practitioners in the UK, providing Barnet with access to a wider pool of NNDR experience. In addition, it provides ongoing business continuity and allows us to flex resource to accommodate short-term peaks in demands
- **Assessment Policy and Training (APT):** Co-ordinate Capita's centralised Revenues and Benefits training activity for our full managed sites and on a stand alone basis for other LAs. The team provides general policy and guidance support along with bespoke training solutions and specific query resolution. The team also administer HB/CTB appeals and tribunal representation on behalf of three of our managed services
- **Central Support (CST):** support all aspects of system support activity in order to maximise system functionality and effectiveness as well as providing an established business continuity model. This will provide Barnet with access to a wider pool of experienced system administrators and provide the necessary resilience to these service critical activities. CST provide subsidy reporting support and manage the Annual Billing process for the majority of our managed sites and on a stand alone basis for other Councils and are responsible for co-ordinating a combination of resources from the Statistics, Batch and Technical Teams as well as the operational revenues and benefits management team
- **Valuation:** the Valuation Team deal with all Valuation matters for both Council Tax and NNDR, ensuring regular liaison with the VO office, the balancing of system totals after every schedule and full quarterly reconciliations
- **Bailiff Liaison and Enforcement:** utilise a range of initiatives and operational tools that ensure all recovery is prompt and accurate in order to maximise collection. The approach is tailored to the requirements of individual recovery strategies but initiatives include:
 - Being innovative in our approach to arrears collection through the appropriate segregation of determinate groups, thereby allowing tailored strategies to be adopted accordingly
 - Adopting a stringent approach to the management of bailiffs, targeting their approach to maximise income, agreeing collection targets and monitoring performance

- Using all available tracing processes, including the use of credit reference agency (CRA) data, and agreeing a mechanism for writing off unrecoverable debt
- Streamlining decision-making and automating processes that could, if not completed, inhibit collection
- Identifying cases for charging orders and bankruptcy and providing recommendations to the Council for continued action
- Preparing cases for committal and supporting clients through attendance at court.

Barnet: Those services that do not lend themselves to remote delivery will continue to be provided from Barnet and will mainly consist of the customer facing activity addressed in the Customer Services response. However, this will also include the delivery of home visits and inspections carried out in relation to the Revenues and Benefit Service.

Liaison activity, both with the Council and stakeholders will also be undertaken within Barnet and will be supported as required by representatives from the Shared Service Centres.

3.2 STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

In determining the appropriate resource profile for the back office administration of the Revenues and Benefits Service, we have factored in all of the planned service improvements cited earlier in this document. These improvements have allowed us to realise staff efficiencies so that the staffing profile over the contract term is as follows:

	Year									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FTE	113.75	106.1	101.1	97.1	96.1	94.1	93.1	92.1	92.1	91.1

Figure 15 - Staffing Profile

We commit to ensuring that our employees have the necessary skills and competencies to achieve their objectives, be successful in their roles and progress in their careers. These will directly reflect the cultural values of the Council and the Partnership.

People are at the core of our business and our success. We have a comprehensive and fully integrated, competency-based performance management framework that focuses on ensuring all employees have the skills and knowledge they need to do their jobs to the best of their ability.

This is underpinned by a comprehensive workforce development approach that makes available learning and training to meet both generic and service-specific development needs. It is focused on ensuring the right balance and delivery method for:

- Organisational Development
- Recruitment and Retention
- Leadership Development (from team leaders to senior managers)
- Talent Management
- Skills Development
- Pay and Rewards.

Head of Revenues and Benefits (Vacant Post): We have been made aware through dialogue that the current Head of Revenues and Benefits post has been left vacant in order that the successful bidder is able to fill the post as they require. We can confirm we will put in place a Head of Revenues and Benefits from the preferred supplier stage so that a permanent management structure can be implemented as early as possible and that continuity throughout transition, transformation and business as usual is established.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits will be supported from preferred supplier stage by resources from the pool of expertise from within the existing Capita infrastructure. A team of service specialists will be identified as required to provide support to the existing management team and staff through the transition phase and provide ongoing assistance through the subsequent transformation programme.

3.3 EFFECTIVE TRAINING PROVISION

We have a wealth of experience of the training and development of Revenues and Benefits staff and will be able to supplement the existing training provision accessing Capita experience and resources as required. Capita has made a significant investment in training through the Assessment Policy and Training team (APT), a centralised resource of 22 staff providing training across our local government sites as well as developing national initiatives in partnership with local authorities throughout the UK, including an on-line HB/CTB training tool. The team includes systems specialists who ensure that system functionality is maximised and PRINCE2 project managers.

Our training strategy will align the priorities of the Service with the individual training objectives of all staff and will underpin the quality, accuracy and responsiveness of all aspects of the Service whilst delivering a learning culture, which empowers staff to take greater responsibility for their continuing personal and professional development.

We want to ensure that the in scope staff possess all the necessary skills to execute the work referred to them as efficiently and consistently as possible. We recognise that our service improvements may require Revenues and Benefits staff to develop new skills and expertise and we are committed to supporting the in scope staff through this development journey. We have developed an approach to training and development that we will implement in Barnet that is based on clearly identified training needs through the process of appraisal and personal development plans and makes use of a wide variety of creative learning opportunities, rather than relying on traditional off-the-shelf courses.

This approach will provide staff with the information and skills they need by providing integrated training on:

- The legislative and regulatory provisions that provide the framework for the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service incorporating the Regulations, primary legislation and guidance
- The local procedural and service issues that determine how services are delivered in practice, in particular the importance of customer care and the recognition that these are key services for the Council and their residents and businesses
- The use of the relevant IT systems that allow staff to put their knowledge into practice.

We place considerable emphasis on on-the-job coaching as well as formal classroom training, as this modular approach allows trainees to consolidate their knowledge at a speed that suits them. Whilst this can be resource intensive, we have found that it is often the most effective means of training delivery.

A Training Needs Analysis will be carried out during the transition phase to identify any immediate training requirements and to inform a longer term training plan that will be agreed, on an annual basis, with the Council. The training material and course content will address and incorporate all Council specific policies and procedures. Ongoing training needs will be co-ordinated via a dedicated APT representative who will liaise with operational managers to identify and schedule training requirements.

4 SUPPORTING TECHNOLOGY

Technology is a critical enabler for our Revenues and Benefits solution. However, for the benefit of the customer, most of the technological innovation is rightly in Customer Services.

In order to minimise service disruption and retain cost-effectiveness, we will continue to use the existing IT systems, Civica Revenues and Benefits and the Comino EDM application, as we have a wealth of experience in the use and development of these systems.

These core systems will be supplemented with the Capita Process Automation (CPA) technology and our Local Government Service's Internal Intelligence Infrastructure (III), with LCD screens also displaying MI for Managers in the Centre of Excellence. Where an LCD is not possible, Managers will have the same level of information available on their desktop computer.

4.1 TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

Technology innovation is one way of delivering business benefit. Our approach is to include technology innovation into an all-embracing innovation management process which we term as the Innovation Centre. Managed centrally, we use this process to test new ways of working, new technologies, applications or solutions which has benefited all our Local Government clients.

This innovative approach is aimed at delivering business benefit rather than being driven merely by the exploitation of technology, so it focuses on the business objectives as they evolve. The Innovation Centre provides a showcase for both the "art of the possible" and model office pilots where staff can see, touch and experience new technologies and understand how they can help them in their roles, with their engagements with the public and in the ways they work.

The Innovation Centre is able to draw upon a number of sources of technology innovation:

- Capita plc, which includes companies such as Technophobia who are market leaders in driving channel shift to the internet and will provide all the necessary Transformation consultancy, guidance and technical implementation
- Capita's strategic technology partners, such as Oracle, Google, Microsoft, Cisco, Citrix
- Sector based Innovation Forums, including the Model Office Innovation Forum
- Capita's partnerships with other local authorities and its customers in the private sector
- Supplementing the Innovation Centre, we also continuously monitor non-technological innovations, and any other advancement that could improve service delivery, customer interactions or payment methods, through our Model Office Innovation Forum
- The primary aim of the forum is to ensure our Local Government capability meets the changing needs of our partners, accelerates innovation and identifies opportunities to share reusable solutions to the benefit of our Local Government partnership network. This is achieved through providing the necessary rigour to evaluate the viability of potential enhancements by creating an environment through which these innovations can be assessed
- This forum includes representatives from key Local Government customers and we will ensure that the Barnet is suitably represented so that the Revenues and Benefits Service benefits from any future innovations.

5 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, REPORTING & QUALITY ASSURANCE

We can confirm that the management information requirements of the contract will be met in full as detailed in the Output Specification.

In addition to the statistical information produced by the IT systems, we will ensure that all system generated housekeeping reports are produced and actioned in a structured, periodic and timely manner. An audit trail will be maintained for all transactions and will be made available to the authorised Council Officers or auditor on request.

All records, data and claim files relating to the provision of the service will be stored in a secure manner and access to these records will be restricted to authorised personnel.

The maintenance of control totals, reconciliations and the preparation of statutory returns and questionnaires will be fulfilled in strict accordance with the Council's requirements. All statutory returns will be passed to the Client team in the appropriate format for approval and will be accompanied with the relevant supporting documents and in accordance with agreed timescales.

5.1 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

We will implement a performance management regime across the Revenues and Benefits Service in order to achieve high levels of performance and maximise the effective management of individuals and teams. This will be achieved through providing each member of staff with:

- A clear set of expectations that detail organisational, team and individual objectives
- Regular team meetings at which these expectations are developed on an ongoing basis
- An annual appraisal mechanism which focuses on an individual's development so that they have the skills and ability to deliver on these expectations
- Organisational support which facilitates the achievement of these goals.

Staff will receive individual training, while personal and team objectives will be linked with regular appraisals and 1-2-1s with their line manager.

To help manage overall performance, real-time management information dashboards will be displayed on LCD screens, a screenshot of which is shown below:

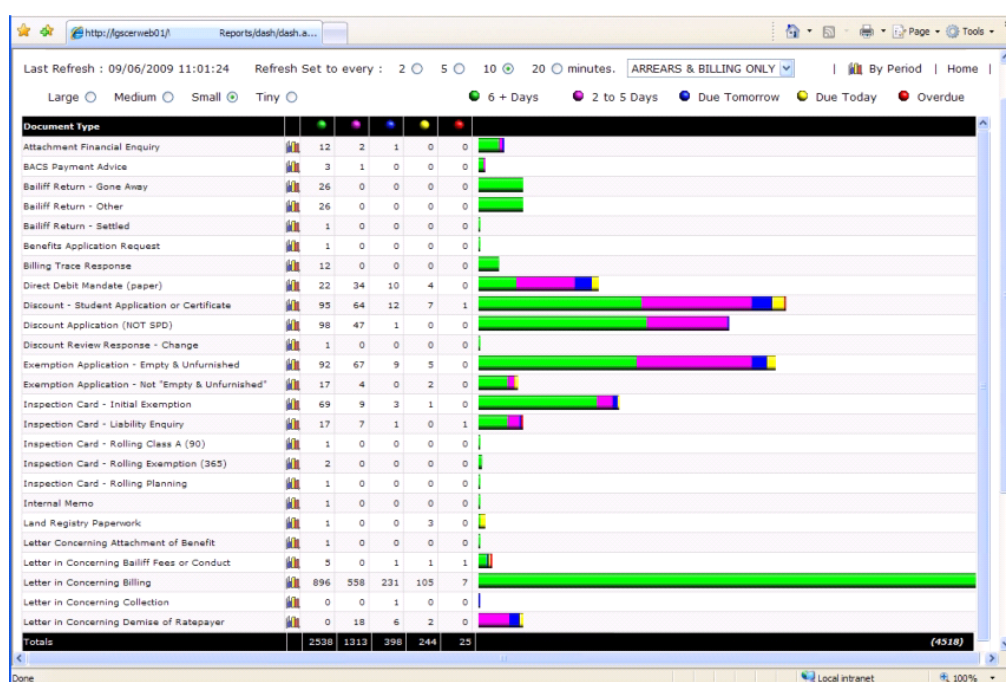


Figure 16 - Management Information Dashboard

By displaying operational performance in this way, we allow managers and staff to monitor progress against the required performance standards, motivating staff while at the same time providing managers with information that allows priorities to be continually assessed, thereby ensuring successful service delivery.

5.2 REPORTS

5.2.1 PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Capita Local Government Services has consolidated its performance reporting regime into a single business intelligence platform which we call the Internal Intelligence Infrastructure (III). This utilises daily uploads of performance data or scheduled outputs from all sources into a data warehouse. The benefits to Barnet of this approach are that it allows us to:

- Create high level dashboards tailored to operational roles and levels
- Create various granular levels of reporting through data mining to understand root causes of variances or movement
- Conduct 'across system' analysis
- Compare performance across our Local Government network so that best practice initiatives can be identified, their benefit determined and the ideas shared and evaluated
- Standardise reports and emailed them to a pre-defined distribution list
- Analyse staff productivity to aid performance management
- Trend and forecast workloads to manage resources more efficiently.

The Internal Intelligence Infrastructure (III) is illustrated below:

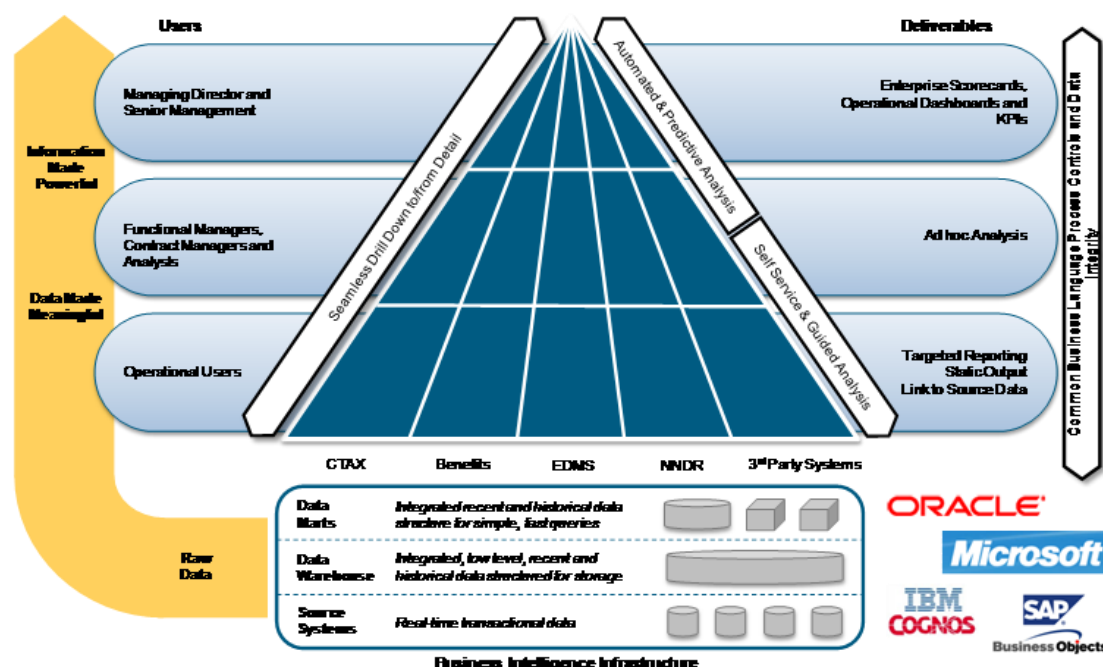
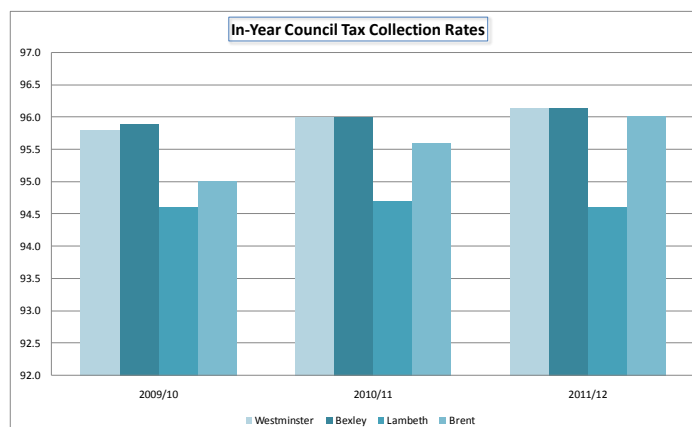


Figure 17 - Local Government Service's Internal Intelligence Infrastructure (III)

Performance will be reviewed at the Partnership Operations Board and we will agree the specific contents of the monthly performance report with Barnet, providing it in advance of the meeting. The monthly report will include all information required by the service specification, including KPI performance which will provide early notice of any potential problems with service delivery. Many of these targets will be cumulative, so we will also provide details of projected performance for the year as well as details of the quarterly returns submitted as part of the Management Information process.

5.3 QUALITY ASSURANCE

The cornerstone of our commitment to Quality Assurance is to put in place processes that mean all transactions are processed 'right first time' in order to provide an efficient and customer focused Revenues and Benefits Service. In order to ensure accuracy and quality we will nominate senior staff who will be responsible for a Quality Assurance regime that has at its centre the following key attributes:



- **Pro-active** - quality checking will be undertaken pre-notification to ensure errors are prevented prior to payment
- **Risk based** - quality checking will target those areas of work that are most likely to result in an error
- **Analysis** - the errors that are identified will be analysed to identify potential error trends either by an individual or as a topic e.g. claim start dates
- **Monitoring** - Areas of error will then be focused on and monitored by the quality and mentoring officers, including the monitoring of new policies to ensure they are correctly applied and align with the Council's priorities
- **Continual feedback** - Any errors identified will be discussed with the assessment officer to ensure that they understand how to correct the case and to establish if there is a need for further training or development.

We believe that our focus on effective staff training and documented procedures contributes significantly to the reduction of error. However, we understand that the importance of ensuring that all transactions are routinely checked for both accuracy and quality. We will monitor every aspect of Barnet's Service and we have detailed below some examples of the checking that will take place. However, it should be noted that the underlying emphasis will be on having business processes in place where quality and checking are an inherent component of day-to-day service delivery. Each process will therefore incorporate the most appropriate method of checking, including:

- Random checking
- Sampling
- Targeted checking
- New starter checking.

Staff carrying out these checks will be provided with guidance and checklists so that there is consistency throughout the checking and auditing process and we will provide the results of the accuracy check as part of a monthly report. In addition, the results of the checks will be used as a feedback mechanism to inform staff of their own performance and to contribute towards their individual training needs.

Trends or patterns in error that are identified as part of the check will be addressed in a similar fashion and will inform on potential changes to procedures or generic training requirements.

5.3.1 COMPLAINTS

We have outlined in Section 2.3 how we will use complaints to develop the service; listening to the customers to, where appropriate, revise work procedures and continuously improve service delivery. However, the level of justified complaints also provides a level of quality assurance; identifying process inconsistencies, procedural deficiencies or training requirements.

We therefore actively monitor and report on the level of complaints, the reasons for the complaint and whether or not the complaint is justified so that we can analyse and identify trends which can further develop our shared Insight for the service and inform subsequent initiatives.

6 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The key element of our NSCSO transformation programme for Revenues & Benefits will see the migration of processing to our Shared Service Centre in Blackburn, and the transfer of SME roles to our Centre of Excellence in Bromley. However, this will be underpinned by a programme of activity designed to;

- Ensure a smooth transfer with minimum disruption during the transition of the service from Barnet to Capita
- Optimise the service so that it is in a state of readiness prior to the migration
- Refine and transform the service as it embeds in to the existing Capita centres.

Our solution is predicated on our ability to maintain stability during transition and deliver improved performance at a reduced cost based on a realistic series of measures for the development of the service. The service will be delivered through a tried and tested operating model that balances the divergent needs of customers and stakeholders and our approach is detailed below.

Transition: the overriding principle for all transition activities will be to minimise risk and any potential service disruption to the Revenues and Benefits Service. To best achieve these goals, we are proposing to:

- Leave the service operating in situ, with existing operational managers being shadowed and supported by Capita Managers
- Identify the level of operational support needed and ensure that IT links are established so that this support is available from our Shared Service Centres from Day 1
- Co-ordinate transition activities through providing specialist and dedicated project resources who are experienced in dealing with Revenues & Benefits service transfers.

Following the service transfer, and allowing for a period of stabilisation, we will start to embed our behaviours and values, our approach to resource and workflow management and will conduct a comprehensive review of existing procedures to ensure best practice exists throughout the service.

Optimise: During the first six months we will focus on the implementation of a comprehensive performance management and quality regime, ensuring that our processes and responses are aligned with Customer Services and to our Service Delivery Model (SDM). We will therefore review:

- Existing process maps and tailor training programmes in order to increase the resolution of queries at the first point of contact
- The measures already implemented by the Council to promote self-service and the use of e-forms
- A long-term strategy for maximising channel shift to alternative channels.

In collaboration with Customer Services, the development of a Customer Access Strategy for Revenues and Benefits during this phase will be informed by a detailed analysis of Barnet's customers and we will also introduce measures to maximise revenue collection, principally through targeting recovery activity. This will also allow us to reduce processing times through proactive intervention for customers experiencing difficulty accessing the Service and the Can't Pays who need assistance with debt management or claiming other benefits.

During this optimisation stage, we will also be preparing our Processing Site (Blackburn) and our SME site (Bromley) for the migration of the service. Activities to prepare for the migration will include:

- Recruitment (if needed) and training on Barnet policies and procedures
- Mapping the required telephony changes
- Ensuring IT connectivity exists between the sites
- Establishing the knowledge base.

We will build capacity through our Processing Centre, providing resilience through our network of Shared Service Centres from the outset, allowing us to maximise the use of resources whilst mitigating the risks of the implementation of Universal Credit and without compromising the stability of the Service.

It is our intention to use experienced Council Tax and Benefits Officers on the Barnet Service by affording existing staff at these centres and at Barnet the opportunity to transfer from an existing contract, where their position will be backfilled. This minimises the risk to Barnet's service.

Should an instance arise where the service could face potential disruption as a result of staff shortages, we will either increase our offsite support to the service through our other Shared Service Centres or consider the early migration of some activities to our Processing and/or SME centre, thereby providing a degree of confidence that business will continue as normal throughout this difficult phase.

Refine & Transform: The back office processing service migration to Blackburn will be completed by Month 7. Following this, the relocation of SME work from Barnet to Bromley will be phased over Months 7-12, to allow for a longer period of knowledge transfer, thereby protecting service continuity and stability. Depending on how this process progresses it may transpire that some SMEs are retained in Barnet.

As the partnership will have an agreed Customer Access Strategy for the realignment of the Revenues and Benefits which puts the customer at the heart of service delivery, the majority of claims and queries will be through self-service or resolved when the customer makes contact. Therefore, by month 13 better working practices, such as maximising take up of self serve and channel shift to the online benefits application (IEG4 e-claims), will reduce the FTE headcount further

Achievement of the FTE reduction over the transformation programme will be dependent upon a series of 6 major interventions. The detailed transition and transformation plans are contained within the Transition and Transformation Method Statements.

INTERVENTION	DESCRIPTION
2, 3 & 4 (Month 7)	Integration with Capita shared service infrastructure, best practice/ BPR reviews and performance management
6 (Month 7)	Move out of Barnet Processing Centre Staff to Capita location
7 (month 8)	Move out of Barnet SME Staff Phase 1
11 (Month 12)	Move out of Barnet SME Staff Phase 5
13 (Month 13)	Continuing annual improvements & efficiencies start of Yr 2
14 (Month 25)	Continuing annual improvements & efficiencies start of Yr 3

6.1.1 BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Maintaining business continuity during the transition and transformation of the Revenues and Benefits Service is something we recognise to be of significant importance. Detrimental service delivery at this time will have an impact on the Council's finances and confidence in the ongoing delivery of the Revenues and

Benefits Service. We will therefore utilise additional Capita resources to support the transfer, which includes;

- Staff in our network of Shared Service Centres supporting the day to day activities from the award of preferred supplier onwards, with the support continuing through the transformation activities
- Staff who are experienced in transitioning Revenues and Benefits Services
- Staff who are experienced in implementing transformation activities
- Supporting the day to day service as transferring staff become accustomed to working for Capita.

Although day to day risk management activity will help business units identify the impact/likelihood of a risk and the best way to manage that risk, it is widely acknowledged that some high impact risks cannot be predicted, and cannot be easily mitigated; hence the requirement for business continuity management and business continuity recovery plans.

Our approach to business continuity is closely aligned to the BS25999-1 standard 'Code of Practice for Business Continuity Management' and both our Business Continuity (BC) and Disaster Recovery (DR) strategies are based on key principles that form best practice. In addition, there is a requirement within the wider Capita organisation that Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery arrangements exist for all Capita sites and all essential systems, ensuring we have robust management and processes to minimise the likelihood of problems. This expectation is enunciated and underpinned by Capita's overarching Information Security Policy Charter.

In broad terms, the business continuity planning for Revenues and Benefits will follow the approach below:

- Understanding the range of risks facing the Council – working with 3rd party suppliers to assess the infrastructure in order to identify any single points of failure or areas of high risk
- Determining the likelihood of each of the risks materialising, and the potential business impacts should any of the risks materialise and developing associated strategies to avoid, minimise or mitigate these risks
- Developing a priority map of core infrastructure services and application services
- Determining the roles, responsibilities and escalation points and establishing the conditions for invocation of the Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plans
- Creation of detailed Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plans that is maintained on an ongoing cycle throughout the life of the contract.

The Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plans will include the following:

- How Capita and the Council will deal with the highlighted disaster recovery or business continuity scenarios

- Detailed communication plans and procedures to all involved parties including Council and Capita employees, customers and 3rd party suppliers
- Information technology back-up and recovery procedures to be invoked
- The location and the set-up, including any network links, of any Disaster Recovery site to enable priority staff to work following any Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Incident
- Review (quarterly) and testing (annually) requirements.

The disaster recovery planning and test process is part of the same pattern as that of Business Continuity. The two aspects are addressed together by Capita, to ensure integration in the overall plan between disaster recovery planning for IT systems, and business continuity planning for the associated business processes.

The Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plans and information will be regularly reviewed and updated in collaboration with the Council to take on board any lessons learnt and to ensure all risks are appropriately identified, assessed and mitigated (for example through the implementation of countermeasures or increasing the resilience of specific infrastructure components).

This information will be stored securely both on and off-site to ensure it can be easily retrieved regardless of the situation.

Every process will be reliant in some way on an activity or item, without which there could be a catastrophic and costly failure of the business. We will ensure that the critical areas are identified, how much we can afford to lose, and how long we can sustain an outage. Additionally, we will ensure awareness of the risks posed to these critical areas, so that the likelihood and impact of a risk event can be reduced and where required a recovery plan produced.

This Business Continuity Plan (BCP) will cover the activities related to an incident within the business operation and covers the following:

- Emergency Response Plans and initial response to an Incident (but not the incident management process)
- Building evacuation and staff safety
- Relocation of the operation to an alternative location
- Recovery plans and operational functional recovery activities
- 'Return to base'.

In particular we will:

- Develop Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans which will address the specific requirements through transition and transformation in consultation with the Council to meet its requirements and incorporate the BC/DR plans already in place for the in scope Support Services

- Develop these in line with our overarching Business Continuity Management Lifecycle which is fully aligned with BS25999-1:2006
- Annually assess the risk of an emergency occurring, and establish a mechanism for reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects
- Ensure that all sites which deliver services have DR and BC provisions in place - including the ability to transfer operational activity to an alternative location (e.g. utilising one of Shared Service Centres as a back-up site and source of back-up resource as appropriate)
- Enable remote working where appropriate
- Provide system access to another site to ensure continuity of service, during transition we will agree with the Council the minimum number of staff required to maintain service delivery
- Ensure knowledge transfer around the history of organisational change and restructure within the Council
- Through transition, ensure that appropriate levels of knowledge are documented to inform our comprehensive knowledge base including guidelines for matching and new evaluations
- Document all processes to ensure they are available to all service components ensure business resilience.

We assume that as part of the existing IT contract with Civica that the critical Revenues and Benefits systems already have appropriate Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity resilience plans in place, with appropriate data backup to ensure continuity of service delivery. However, we will work with you and your IT supplier to further develop these resilience plans to ensure an holistic approach to DR and BC exists for the Revenues and Benefits Service.

6.2 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Continued improvement over the course of the contract is critical to its ongoing success. Below are the innovations that will be implemented within the first 6 months of the contract commencing.

INNOVATION	WHY IT IS NEEDED
Provide access to additional support services, including Central Support Team (CST) and Assessment, Policy & Training (APT).	To ensure business critical support activities are maintained and that there is a continued investment in staff development and a continued awareness of legislative changes. It also supports cost effective delivery of efficiencies whilst maintaining performance levels and quality.
Capture for pro-active use all telephone numbers and email	To improve processing times, reduce white mail correspondence and improve collection and recovery while supporting our strategy for

INNOVATION	WHY IT IS NEEDED
addresses.	channel shift.
The implementation of SMS text reminders for customer appointments and payment reminders.	To reduce the instances of no shows for appointments and to provide customers with an additional reminder to pay balances prior to court costs being incurred. Supports channel shift strategy.
The use and ongoing development, interpretation, feedback and reinforcement of our developed customer insight via the Insight Engine.	To continuously improve and validate the insight used so as to develop a portfolio of initiatives and better understand which strategies and contact channels work best for which demographic in which situation. Proactive identification of potential changes.
Provide access to Capita's partners, working groups and innovative solutions.	Provides the opportunity for the Council to access best practice within other organisations and allows access to new technologies that will drive efficiency both within and outside the scope of the Barnet programme.
Provide access to Capita's Model Office Innovation Forum.	Provides the Council with an avenue through which potential improvements to the Revenues and Benefits Service can be identified and evaluated prior to implementation.
Promote the use of online and self-service options and provide a mediated service, where necessary, for new users.	To meet all aspects of the Output Specification. Supports channel shift strategy and supports customers in take-up of on-line services.
Implement a telephone based appointment system for completion of claims.	To maximise the effectiveness of Customer Services and meet all aspects of your Output Specification through the provision of an additional supported access channel.
Implement the Capita Process Automation tool.	To meet all aspects of the Output Specification, allowing for the streamlining and redesign of key processes in order to reduce turnaround times.
Implement the Local Government Services Internal Intelligence Infrastructure and provide LCD dashboards that display key	To allow for better informed decisions and to provide accurate and real-time updates on work positions, enabling Managers to prioritise

INNOVATION	WHY IT IS NEEDED
management information.	activities based on service need.

7 COMMITMENTS

We commit to developing and delivering services to meet the needs of the London Borough of Barnet as expressed in the Output Specification section 6. Our detailed commitments are listed in Schedule 35 - Service Provider Commitments and in the financial guarantees contained in Schedule 4, Part 2.

We will do this by:

What we will do	Why
Apply our market leading capability to deliver your Revenues and Benefit Services.	To meet all aspects of your Output Specification.
Implement a focused Service Delivery Model that provides the necessary concentration of skills in the right areas.	To meet all aspects of your Output Specification, delivering the level of service the customer expects in accordance with the KPIs.
Implement a robust mechanism for the verification, validation and review of all discount, relief and exemption awards.	To ensure that all claims are correctly awarded, thereby protecting the Council's finances.
Implement an inspection regime that meets the performance standards.	To meet all aspects of your Output Specification and integrate work processes with our London based inspection team so as to provide resilience to this aspect of the service.
Implement quality assurance and performance management regimes.	To meet all aspects of your Output Specification and ensures that the required quality and Performance Standards (KPIs) can be met. Supports staff development and performance monitoring.
Provide access to the LGS infrastructure of Shared Service Centres (SSCs).	To meet all aspects of your Output Specification and ensures that the required Performance Standards (KPIs) can be met. It also allows us to provide long and short-term assistance to the Revenues Service should it be required and provides full and assured Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery capability. Delivers service specialists as and

What we will do	Why
	when required and provides economies of scale.
Conduct a review of key elements of assessment process.	To meet all aspects of your Output Specification and ensures that the required Performance Standards (KPIs) can be met.
Subsidy and collection rate monitoring.	To meet all aspects of your Output Specification and to identify areas where income may be increased by targeting specific areas of administration for performance improvement.
Improve collection rates.	To provide the Council with assurances on collection rates, allowing for easier financial planning.
Reduce repeat and avoidable contacts by increasing the number of queries that are resolved at the first point of contact.	To meet all aspects of your Output Specification and improve customer satisfaction.
Engage with and utilise key stakeholders and wider community groups.	To provide a wider network of support where advice or assistance with online services can be delivered.

The Revenues and Benefits Service also handle a significant number of customer contacts, many from the most vulnerable members of the community, and these commitments should therefore be considered in conjunction with those in our Customer Services Method Statement.

8 COLLABORATIVE WORKING

A successful and sustainable partnership requires all parties to display the right behaviours to support partnership working that allows the objectives at both strategic and tactical levels to be achieved and to manage issues that will arise during the term of the contract.

As such, there are a number of operational areas where we expect to work collaboratively with Barnet staff on an ongoing basis, particularly in relation to those statutory functions which must remain with the Council or where Council policy dictates our approach:

- We will dovetail our own quality control procedures with the Council's statutory checking requirements and implement procedures that reinforce the overall quality regime across both organisations

- We will co-ordinate any recovery methods or initiatives with Barnet's policies for maximising collection without causing unnecessary hardship
- We will agree monitoring arrangements for counter fraud activity on an ongoing basis that will allow the Council to carry out their statutory functions as well as review progress on any specific case or investigation
- We will assist the Council with setting up the necessary contract governance and client-side arrangements.