



Benefits Service Improvement Plan

Original Report: February 2005

Updated: October 2005 HL, AS, AT

Sub Appendix 9.2

Table of contents

1.	<i>Introduction</i>	4
1.1	Existing Performance	4
1.2	Challenges	4
1.3	Purpose of this document	4
1.4	Relationship to other plans	5
2.	<i>Service Improvement Objectives</i>	5
3.	<i>Success Criteria</i>	6
4.	<i>Inputs to the Plan</i>	6
5.	<i>Method of Creation</i>	6
6.	<i>Governance</i>	9
7.	<i>Meeting National Standards</i>	10
7.1	Strategic Management.....	10
7.2	Customer Services.....	13
7.3	Processing Claims	16
7.4	Working with Landlords	18
7.5	Internal Security	19
7.6	Counter Fraud	19
7.7	Overpayments	22

8. *CPA Improvement Plan* 23

9. *Internal Audit Improvement Plan* 32

.....

1. Introduction

1.1 Existing Performance

Rossendale Borough Council is facing significant corporate challenges especially in the improvement of its customer services.

Weakness in key performance indicators for the Benefits Service has contributed to poor CPA ratings for successive years.

In addition self assessment in October 2004 against the DWP National Performance Standards shows RBC Benefits Service only attaining 46% against a target of 85%.

In recognition of these problems the RBC management team has already taken a positive stance in refocusing the corporate strategy around Rossendale's citizens and customer services and utilised external expertise, where this can add value.

1.2 Challenges

Some specific areas of improvement have already been forthcoming but the major challenges will be to extend this to all areas of the Benefits Service, specifically: -

- demonstrate that high performance can be sustained and improved on an ongoing basis, in particular:-
 - Attain "excellent" CPA score
 - Achieve top quartile BVPI
- achieve objectives through innovative means whilst still remaining within budget.
- Enter into partnership with other appropriate organisations who can facilitate: -
 - Quick wins
 - Long term sustainability and stability
- Maintain best value based on the Gershon principles of knowledge sharing economies of scale and simplified procurement.

1.3 Purpose of this document

This document sets out a "high level" service improvement plan to achieve the improvement objectives.

Low level, associated, plans also exist and these are referred to from this document as appropriate.

The most important challenge and first principle is to agree the services *Vision* and *Key Objectives*. Without this agreement no progress is possible.

1.4 Relationship to other plans

The overarching plan to which this Benefits Service Improvement plan belongs is the Benefits Service Operational Plan.

The Benefits Service Operational plan is published annually and sets out objectives, challenges, policies and plans for the service for the subsequent 12 months. The operational plan can be considered the business as usual plan. The format of the operational plan is outlined in Appendix 1 of this document.

This improvement plan can be considered a one-off project plan that supports the operational plan.

2. Service Improvement Objectives

The following represent the Services' SMART objectives:-

- 1. To attain National Standards as assessed by BFI by end 2005**
- 2. To achieve top quartile BVPI by end 2005-06**
- 3. To attain Excellent CPA assessment by 2008**
- 4. To demonstrate improved quality of service as measured by citizens**

3. Success Criteria

Success of the improvement plan will be reviewed against achievement of the objectives listed above.

4. Inputs to the Plan

There are several inputs to the plan each containing details of service gaps and/or recommended actions for improvement. These are: -

- RBC BFI Self assessment
- RBC BVPI returns
- RBC CPA report
- Internal Audit
- RBC Benefits Service Operational Plan

Expected additional inputs include: -

- BFI report and recommendations, published in June 2005
- New National Standards and self assessment tool

5. Method of Creation

The BFI self assessment is the single document that encompasses most of the gaps identified. As such this is the document which will be used to initiate the plan.

The process will be: -

1. The BFI self assessment tool will be modified to create a continuous improvement evaluation tool (see diag 6.1 below) This tool is a spreadsheet containing all 543 self assessment questions in seven modules and shows: -
 - A description of the standard

- o RBC self assessment answer as at Sept 2004
- o Any comments as at commencement of improvement plan in Jan 2005
- o Current status of achievement (Red, Amber, Green)
- o Improvement actions agreed
- o Responsibility for action (who)
- o Target date for completion of action
- o Actual date achieved
- o Evidence of completion
- o Quick win status

Diag 6.1 – showing extract from low level plan

Benefits Improvement Plan status as at 17 Feb 2005									
Processing Claims Standard	LA Self Assmnt Answer	Initial status as at Jan 05	RAG	Actions & latest status	who	target date	actual date achieved	Evidence	quick win?
Appendix 1									
New claims - speed of processing									
4.1 a) Does the LA decide 90% of claims within 14 calendar days of receiving all information?	No		No	Not currently monitored Would be enabled by DIP					
4.1 b) Is the average time to complete the processing of claims 36 calendar days or less?	No		Yes	This has been true for the Dec and Jan. trend indicates continuation	Dec-04				✓
4.2 Does the LA have systems in place to:									
a) request further information or evidence giving 4 weeks for the customer to respond	Yes	Copy of Further Information Letter (28 days)	Yes					PC 1 Copy of Further Information Letter (28 days)	
b) send a reminder or make other contact with the customer, before the expiry of the 4 week period within which the customer has been asked to supply further information or evidence	Yes	Reminder No Info letter, Reminder Part Info letter	Yes					PC 2 Reminder No Info letter, PC 2(a) Reminder Part Info letter	
c) identify when arrears of work are accruing; and	Yes	RBC Workload Management Tool	Yes					PC 3 RBC Workload Management Tool	
d) takes action to manage down any backlogs?	No	Backlog Policy under draft	Yes	Backlog policy now in place	Feb-05				✓

2. Workshops were initiated, for all Benefits team leaders, where each response was reviewed and actions agreed to resolve.

3. There have been workshops for each of the seven modules.

Diag 6.2 – showing continuous improvement monitoring tool

	Standard Score	Latest self assessment score	Percentage	Above standard score	BFI's Above standard assessment score	Percentage
Strategic Management	178	68	38%	41	10	24%
Customer Services	74	51	69%	17	9	53%
Processing of Claims	91	65	71%	20	1	5%
Working with Landlords	24	13	54%	7	3	43%
Internal Security	31	28	90%	11	3	27%
Counter-fraud	89	60	67%	6	0	0%
Overpayments	56	46	82%	12	5	42%
Total	543	331	61%	114	31	27%

LA SELF-ASSESSMENT

	Standard Score	LA Standard self-assessment score	Percentage	Above standard score	LA Above standard self-assessment score	Percentage
Strategic Management	178	51	29%	41	3	7%
Customer Services	74	33	45%	17	0	0%
Processing of Claims	91	33	36%	20	0	0%
Working with Landlords	24	8	33%	7	0	0%
Internal Security	31	21	68%	11	0	0%
Counter-Fraud	89	60	67%	6	0	0%
Overpayments	56	42	75%	12	0	0%
Total	543	248	46%	114	3	3%

4. Review high level plan to identify any costs or resource requirements (indicative)

5. When the new BFI standards have been analysed, these will be reviewed against the existing plan. A new plan will be created by the project manager and where there are any gaps identified against the new standards that are not covered by the existing plan then new actions will be agreed.

6. Governance

The improvement plan will be managed as a project and will therefore be managed as a normal project as follows: -

1. The project manager will be Angela Storey and Anita Tittensor until alternative resource identified.
2. The planning process will be completed by identifying actions in relation to CPA and internal audit recommendations that are not covered by responses to the BFI report and performance standards.
3. Action reviews meetings will be held monthly and will include all team leaders and managers who currently have actions outstanding. The objective will be to review the status of all agreed actions. This must include a senior management team member who should also be seen as project sponsor, having sufficient authority to make decisions and agree resources as necessary.
4. Actions will be delegated by the project manager to the most appropriate resource including Benefits Service managers and RBC senior managers. This will be in agreement with line managers ensuring that workloads are balanced against business as usual.
5. Communicating progress. A high level action report will be created based on the high level plan contained in this document. This will be distributed to staff, service managers and senior managers as requested. Summary reports will be created periodically for the Lead Member.
6. Issue management. Any blocking issues will be collated by the project manager for discussion with the Head Of Service.

7. Meeting National Standards

This section contains the high level plan for meeting national standards. This is based on the BFI self assessment tool. Low level details are contained in the continuous improvement spreadsheet that had been created from the BFI tool.

Key:

Acronym	Description
HOS	Head of Service
BSM	Benefits Service Manager
TL	Team Leader

7.1 Strategic Management

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
BSM1	Establish and adopt Benefits Service Vision & Policy Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree vision statement Approve by Executive Approve by members Incorporate in corporate plans 	Vision statement	Aug 05	HOS	HOS Lead Member	none	PS 2.1, 2.3, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9 BFI 2.3, 2.9	Vision statement drafted – to be agreed and approved (See CPA1 & 11)
BSM2	Create Benefits Operational Plan and annual planning review process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write contents as outlined in Appendix 1 Establish executive sign-off and acceptance policy and process Establish members sign-off and acceptance policy and process 	Annual Benefits Service Operational Plan	Aug 05	HOS	HOS Lead Member BSM	none	PS 2.14, 2.15, 2.16, 2.17, 2.18, 2.21, 8.1, 2.31, 2.46, 2.62 BFI 2.9, 2.46, 2.62	Plan drafted – to be agreed and approved
BSM3	Establish operational progress reporting governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish reporting process and format to Executive Establish reporting process and format to members 	Periodic update reports to all stakeholders – members, management, staff	July 2005 Start Aug 05	HOS	HOS BSM Lead Member	none	PS 2.22, 2.37, 2.38, 6.16, 2.62, 2.46 BFI 2.9, 2.46, 2.62	Work commenced on agreeing format and detail. (CPA 13)

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
BSM4	Establish Performance Management Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft performance management framework Agree and approve Construct reporting templates Train Service Managers in monitoring, review, improvement cycle Set SMART targets for teams and individuals 	PMF Reporting template	Dec 05	HOS	HOS BSM Lead Member	None	PS 2.28, 2.29, 2.31, 2.38, 2.39, 2.40, 2.75, 2.81 BFI 2.31, 2.46, 2.81	Some processes in place but needs formal review. PIAT team to assist July/August. (see CPA3 & CPA14)
BSM5	Establish Business continuity Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing policy Create annual testing and review procedure 	Business Continuity Plan	Nov 05	HOS	HOS BSM	Potential costs unknown at this stage	PS 2.23 BFI 2.31	To be developed. (see CPA 16)
BSM6	Establish change management for HB and CTB delivery procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change management control Within 10 days of receipt Cross reference Plain English 	Change management procedure and disciplines	Dec 05	HOS	BSM	none	PS 2.51, 2.52, 2.53, 2.54 BFI 2.81	To be developed
BSM7	Establish management assurance and local management information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of DMS required for comprehensive solution (e.g. work throughput, backlogs, incoming trends) Will be quick if partnership arrangements goes ahead otherwise lengthy 	Sophisticated workload MI	Dec 05 (if partnership working arrangements agreed)	HOS	HOS BSM partner	None if partner SLA dictates adequate workflow MI	PS 2.57, 2.58 BFI 2.81	Funding received through PSF for DMS system.
BSM8	Review training strategy, training plan and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review required to satisfy standards Review and document all procedures and ensure they are updated regularly Implement staff appraisal scheme and performance feedbacks 	Training strategy and resources SMART targets and review process	Nov 05 (if partnership)	BSM	BSM HR	Potential additional resource	PS 2.66, 2.67, 2.68, 2.69, 2.70, 2.71, 3.21, 2.120 BFI 2.86	In Lancashire Training Consortium (funded by PSF). Personal training records in place for all staff. Received PSF for TNA. Corporate training programme in place. Procedure review underway.
BSM9	Review job descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all employees have JDs Ensure SMART objectives 	JDs	Dec 05	BSM	BSM HR	none	PS 2.72, 2.74, 3.22	All staff have JD's. Review

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
								BFI 2.46	to be commenced.
BSM10	Review IT fallback and recovery plans and ICT security arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Vivista contract Review new user and security set up arrangements Agree testing programme Undertake full systems usage review 	Documented IT recovery plan	Nov 05	HOS	ICT (in-house support) Vivista	Unknown at this stage	PS 2.90, 2.136 BFI 2.136	Vivista contract under review. Urgent review taken place on security set-up/access arrangements and implemented. Formal security policy to be developed.
BSM11	Review internal audit scope and reconsider internal audit reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate 3 year rolling audit plan Assessment against national standards Counter Fraud Audit Reconsider audit reports and devise action plan 	3 year rolling audit plan	Dec 05 (current actions)	HOS	BSM Internal audit (Neil Kissock)	Unknown at this stage	PS 2.94, 2.95, 2.100, 2.150, 2.162 BFI 2.150, 2.162	The Initial meeting with Audit have taken place. Review to continue – action plan of all agreed O/S issues/actions to be completed by July 05. (see CPA31)
BSM12	Incorporate external audit findings in reporting to members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review external audit reports Incorporate in BSM3 above 	Reporting on external audit findings and progress to members	Dec 05	HOS	Lead member BSM	none	PS 2.107, 2.108 BFI 2.162	To be developed.
BSM13	Review current stance on calculating and reporting on cost of benefit service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing policy Assess effort required to produce Decide if feasible Review as part of partnership arrangements Review against new standards when published in May 	Cost of benefit service calculation	Dec 05	HOS	Finance Manager HOS	none	PS 2.110, 2.111, 2.112,	Discussion within Lancashire Benefits Group to agree process and benchmarking. Will also be addressed if partnership

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
									arrangements go ahead.
BSM14	Establish current level of conformance with Race Relations Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current status Review service actions depending on outcome, e.g. training, review processes 	Conformance with Act RES	Dec 05	HOS	HOS BSM	Unknown at this stage	PS 2.119, 2.120, 2.168 BFI 2.168	Corporate training programme commenced.
BSM15	Review internal working arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review internal working relationships (e.g. housing, finance, revenues, customer services) Review gaps Identify resolving actions (e.g. SLAs, performance reviews) Resolve issues with registration of council tax liabilities. 	Gap analysis and rectification plan	Sep 05	BSM	HOS BSM	none	PS 2.126, 2.127, 2.128, 2.129, 2.130, 4.25, 2.178, 2.203, 4.105 BFI 2.178,4.25	Meetings commenced with internal partners to agree processes and SLAs. Will be in place by Sep 05.
BSM16	Review external working arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all relevant SLAs with external parties are in place Identify gaps Rectify omissions 	Gap analysis and rectification plan	Sep 05	BSM	HOS BSM	None	PS 2.133, 2.135, 2.136, 2.137, 2.138, 2.203, 4.105 BFI 2.178, 2.203, 4.105	National SLAs in place and meetings held regularly (e.g. DWP, Rent Serv). Also SLA in place with CAB.
BSM17	Ensure compliance with standards where service contracted out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not yet relevant Review should partnership arrangements commence 	Contract embodiment	Nov 05	HOS	HOS BSM Director	Unknown	PS 2.141, 2.142, 2.143	Review should partnership occur.

7.2 Customer Services

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
BCS1	Quality and availability of all information leaflets and documentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all leaflets and documentation Review that sufficient stocks held Create process for checking that sufficient available at outlets Review of benefit notification letters 	Full range of leaflet and document availability and stock replenishment	Nov 05	BSM	BSM TL	Potential cost of leaflets/forms	PS 3.4, 3.15, 3.44, 3.60 BFI 2.15, 3.44, 3.60	Discussions within Lancashire Benefits Group about possible joint approach/shared leaflets etc.

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
									Joint form in place in East Lancs and currently being reviewed. Content and format of E-forms agreed within East Lancs and currently being designed. Testing of new benefit notification suite to commence in mid-July. (see CPA20)
BCS2	Actively ascertain public needs of the service and ensure maximum benefit take-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review against Customer Services Strategy Develop take-up strategy Will be included as part of partnership arrangements 	Customer needs assessment and increased take-up	May 06	HOS	HOS BSM	Potential cost of surveys	PS 3.6, 3.66, 3.7, 3.60 BFI 3.7, 3.66	BV survey requirement undertaken. Discussions within Lancs Shared Service Contact centre group about joint approach to survey work. East Lancs group also in place. (see CPA4)
BCS3	Answer 80% of calls within 10 rings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement customer services strategy for a call centre Will be addressed as part of the Lancashire Shared Service Contact Centre Project 	Monitoring and achievement of benchmark	Mar 06	HOS	BSM	Included in Call Centre business case	PS 3.7, 3.39 BFI 3.39, 3.7	SSCC development – go live readiness to commence in July (see CPA22) All staff have been issued with list of Customer Standards in

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
									Sept 05
BCS4	Provide evidence that meet appointment thresholds (i.e. 80%customers seen within certain time)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Customer services strategy provides measures and enablers Will be addressed as part of the Lancashire Shared Service Contact Centre Project 	Measures that meet standards	Mar 06	HOS	BSM	Included in OSS business case	PS 3.9	SSCC development – go live readiness to commence in July (see CPA22)
BCS5	Provide telephone appointment system that meets standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Customer Services Strategy Will be addressed as part of the Lancashire Shared Service Contact Centre Project 	Telephone based appointments system	Mar 06	HOS	BSM	Included in call centre business case	PS 3.11 BFI 3.39	SSCC development – go live readiness to commence in July (see CPA18)
BCS6	Monitor and target correspondence response within 14 days of receipt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement DMS system Dependency on partnership arrangements 	Measurement of correspondence response	Jan 06	HOS	BSM	Included in potential partnership arrangements	PS 3.13 BFI 3.39	PSF received for DMS Presently manually monitor correspondence and ensure work is dealt with within 14 days.
BCS7	Establish plans for assessment need of ethnic minority groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review RBC responsibilities, deliverables and timescales for ethnic minority needs Establish robust interpreting service Establish consultation with ethnic groups 	Ethnic minority assessment Interpreting service consultation	May 06	BSM	HR	Unknown at this stage	PS 3.34, 3.35 BFI 3.60	To be reviewed.
BCS8	Provide quality service for those in work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess needs of those in work (i.e. out of hrs contact, self serve etc) Extended hours available from customer services strategy Monitor Job Centre Plus SLA 	Extended hours service (call centre and OSS) Self serve on Website	May 06	HOS	HOS BSM	Included in customer services strategy business case	PS 3.38, 3.39, 3.7, 3.60 BFI 3.60, 3.7, 3.39	To be developed.
BCS9	Improve complaint procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review complaint process DMS will allow effective identification, monitoring and management 	Improved service and response times to complaints	Feb 06	BSM	TL	Included in partnership arrangements	PS 3.74 BFI 3.74	Corporate Complaints Procedure in Place.
BCS10	Monitoring standard of appeals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review processes Report outcome of appeals to members 	Improved quality of appeals.	Feb 06	BSM	TL	None	PS 3.83 BFI 3.83	Sign off process/quality check for

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
									submissions in place.

7.3 Processing Claims

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
BPC1	Ensure that 90% of decisions within 14 days of receipt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes to be reviewed and daily monitoring undertaken 	Measurement and monitoring	Jul 05	BSM	BSM TL	None	PS 4.1 , 4.25 BFI 4.25	Processes refined and documented. In place by July
BPC2	Ensure average time to process is under 36 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has been achieved for last 2 months of 2004-05 Ensure resource available to maintain into 2005-06 Will be enabled by Partnership arrangements 	Meeting BVPI standard	ongoing	BSM	HOS BSM TL	Potential agency to backfill for staff leavers until uncertainty over partnership is resolved	PS 4.1 , 4.25 BFI 4.25	New monitoring process being implemented in place July 05
BPC3	Enable meeting standard for payments on account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify process that meets standard 	Monitoring system Processing procedure Monthly analysis	Dec 05	BSM	BSM TL	None	PS 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.33 BFI 4.33	POA in place and meeting standards however formal monitoring arrangements not yet in place.
BPC4	Establish system for measuring and managing work outstanding for changes in circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires DMS to be fully effective To be resolved by partnership arrangements 	Measurement of incoming and outstanding changes of circumstances. Processing of changes within 9 days	Dec 05	HOS	BSM TL	Included in partnership working business case	PS 4.12, 4.13, 8.33 BFI 4.41, 8.33	Manual system in place – outstanding work monitored on weekly basis.
BPC5	Establish system to ensure that minimum monthly percentage of interventions processed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement VF plan 	Interventions monitoring	Jun 05	HOS	TL BSM	none	PS 4.19, 4.56 BFI 4.56	Process in place and targets being met. VF compliant from 27/6/05.

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
BPC6	Resolve minimum threshold of data matches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement VF plan 	Data matches monitoring	Jun 05	BSM	TL BSM	none	PS 4.20, 4.56 BFI 4.56	Process in place and targets being met. VF compliant from 27/6/05.
BPC7	Enable identification of trends and patterns from result of monitoring previous reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement VF plan 	Trends and patterns	Aug 05	BSM	TL BSM	None	4.22	Process in place and targets being met. VF compliant from 27/6/05. Analysis of data to be determined
BPC8	VF - identity Establish follow-up and resolution to cross-checking discrepancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement VF plan 	Cross-checking of information where discrepancies identified in VF	Jun 05	BSM	BSM TL	none	PS 4.29, 4.71 BFI 4.62, 4.71	VF compliant from 27/6/05.
BPC9	VF — residency and rent Record actions as a result of follow-ups on discrepancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement VF plan 	Recording system	Jun 05	BSM	BSM TL	none	PS 4.33, 4.71 BFI 4.71	VF compliant from 27/6/05.
BPC10	VF – IS/JSA/income/capital Follow- up and record actions as a result of discrepancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement VF plan 	Recording system	Jun 05	BSM	BSM TL	none	PS 4.39, 4.71 BFI 4.71	VF compliant from 27/6/05.
BPC11	VF – household members Follow- up and record actions as a result of discrepancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement VF plan 	Recording system	Jun 05	BSM	BSM TL	none	PS 4.45, 4.71 BFI 4.71	VF compliant from 27/6/05.
BPC12	VF compliancy including effective management checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement VF plan 	Recording system	Jun 05	BSM	BSM TL	none	PS4.50, 2.103, 4.62, 4.71, 4.91, 4.112, 7.135, 8.33, 8.39, 5.47 BFI 2.103, 4.91, 4.112, 7.135, 8.39	VF compliant from 27/6/05. Management check processes reviewed and in place. (see CPA5)
BPC13	Meet legal requirement for Rent Officer referrals within 3 days of receiving claim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review processes Implement VICTER 	Monitoring and recording of referrals	May 05 VICTER (Mar 06)	BSM	BSM TL	None	PS 4.71, 4.33, 4.117 BFI 4.117, 4.33	Processes in place to measure and monitor. Regular liaison with ROS
BPC14	Make decision on Rent Officer Decision within 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMS required to be effective VICTER will resolve – instant 	Monitoring and recording of referrals	Dec 05	BSM	BSM TL	Unknown	PS 4.74, 4.33, 4.117	Manual prioritisation

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
	days of receipt	update						BFI 4.117, 4.33	system in place.
BPC15	Ensure customers understand consequences of not reporting changes in circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure information included with all correspondence 	Effective management of changes in circs and communication with customers.	Jun 05	BSM	TL	None	PS 4.41 BFI 4.41, 4.62	In place

7.4 Working with Landlords

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
BWL1	Ensure landlords written once per year reminding them of their responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instigate annual procedure 	Annual letter to landlords	Aug 05	BSM	TL BSM	none	PS 5.4, 5.16 BFI 5.16	Work underway – will be issued by Aug 05 (See CPA28)
BWL2	Ensure letter to direct payment landlords meet regulatory requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review letter against regulations 	Conformant letters	May 05	BSM	TL BSM	none	PS 5.5 (b) BFI 5.16	In place
BWL3	Ensure that LA tenancy records are routinely checked when assessing rent rebate claim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review processes 	Proper checks	May 05	BSM	BSM TL	none	PS 5.8	In place
BWL4	Ensure that Landlord liaison arrangements are in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review processes Designate landlord liaison officer Review leaflets, information and letters Arrange attendance as landlord forums Develop fit and proper person test policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct payments made in accordance with regulations Provision to withhold payments in accordance with regs 11 and 13 Encourage landlords to make direct contact before court action 	Aug 05	BSM	BSM TL	none	PS 5.15, 5.16, 5.17, 5.25 BFI 5.16, 5.25	Landlord liaison officer in place. Liaison meetings taking place. Landlord info leaflet developed and in place (issued to landlords). Current review of direct

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy that landlord should not take enforcement action when arrears due to arrears of HB 						payment arrangements underway. Fit and proper landlord procedure being developed in place. (see CPA7)
BWL5	Apply regulations that prevent recovery from landlords who report suspected fraud in certain circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write procedure note 	Application of regulations	Dec 05	BSM	TL BSM	none	PS 5.20	Being developed.

7.5 Internal Security

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
BIS1	Vetting of employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR ensure that RBC vets employees in accordance with audit commissions recommendations Declarations of interest for employees 	Compliance with standards	Dec 05	HR	BSM HR	unknown	PS 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.20 BFI 6.20	Declarations of interest in place (Jan 05) (see CPA29)
BIS2	Reporting of progress on IA recommendations to members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure covered under strategic management actions on reporting to members 	Reporting process	Dec 05	HOS	HOS	none	PS 6.16	Being developed.
BIS3	Investigation of non cashed cheques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write procedures for investigating non cashed cheques after 6 months Full review of split of duties and iworld functionality required 	Procedure	Mar 06	BSM	TL BSM	none	PS 6.27, 6.46 BFI 6.12, 6.46	Procedures to be reviewed.
BIS4	Ensure post opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of procedures 	Procedure	June 05	BSM	TL	None	PS 6.12	Full review

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
	procedures are adequate							BFI 6.12	undertake and new procedure in place. (see CPA8)
BIS5	Ensure reconciliation procedure in place and security of cheques and payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of reconciliation procedure Review of cheque and payment security 	Procedure and improved security	Jan 06	P Seddon	Accountancy HOS BSM	None	PS 6.46 BFI 6.46	Initial discussions taken place. Full review and process to be agreed

7.6 Counter Fraud

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
BCF1	Create policy statement specifically for counter fraud operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create policy statement Align to RBC corporate policy Adopt at committee Communicate to staff and managers Include in CF operational plan 	Policy statement	May 05	BSM	LD HOS	none	PS 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.8, 7.10, 7.24 BFI 7.24	Completed to be approved end of July 2005.
BCF2	Create CF operational procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create procedures Communicate to staff 	Operational procedures	Jun 05	LD	LD TL	none	PS 7.5, 7.6, 7.56 BFI 7.56	Completed to be approved end of July 2005.
BCF3	Deal with fraud referrals in manner set out in Standards for Reviews and data matching. Monitor and analyse data and review risk-criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create procedure Communicate to staff 	Compliance with standards	Dec 05	LD	LD	none	PS 7.14, 7.56 BFI 7.56	Some progress been made but not completed.
BCF4	Provide fraud awareness sessions to all LA employees at induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slot into corporate induction plans Ensure annual refresher briefings for all staff in involved in HB/CTB admin, housing and ctax collection 	Fraud awareness	May 05	LD	HR LD	none	PS 7.16 (a), 7.56 BFI 7.56	Some completed in May/June and procedures being agreed. Senior Management Have now agreed to be done via handouts at

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
									induction – handouts completed. To take part in Corporate Induction in Sept 05.
BCF5	Provide quarterly feedback to relevant LA employees on activities and success of fraud investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create quarterly newsletter 	Communication on fraud activities and success	Jul 05	LD	LD	none	PS 7.16 (c), 7.56 BFI 7.56	In place – commenced June 05
BCF6	Improve procedural guidance on DNR. Record and receive post within one day of receipt in LA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review process and document • This is currently achieved but not recorded and fully monitored 	Recording and receipt of post within one day of receipt and effective procedure	Dec 05	BSM	LD	Included in partnership business case	PS 7.44, 7.64 BFI 7.64	One day response time now in place – part of post opening review. Details in SLA.
BCF7	Review appointments of authorised officers for relevance and need and ensure compliance with legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review process 	Reviews of appointments	Dec 05	LD	LD	None	PS 7.46, 7.72 BFI 7.72	Developed.
BCF8	Operate code of conduct for investigators that complies with appropriate legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review procedures and document 	Code of conduct	Dec 05	LD	LD	none	PS 7.99, 7.185, 7.199, 7.2047.46 (f) BFI 7.99	Developed
BCF9	Conduct management checks on investigations to ensure compliance with PACE, CPIA, RIPA, social security legislation, HRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs review of current procedures 	Compliance with standard	Oct 05	HOS	LD	None	PS 7.58, 7.204, 7.199, 7.185, 7.177, 7.135 BFI 7.135	Management checks in place.
BCF10	Provide guidance on when investigators should seek legal advise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently creating based on Liverpool template 	Guidance notes	Jun 05	LD	LD	none	PS 7.59	Actioned
BCF11	Create policy to provide ongoing , ad-hoc and formal training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write policy • Communicate • Will be included in operational plan 	Training policy	Oct 05	LD	LD	None	PS 7.58	Actioned policy to be presented July 05.
BCF12	Provide investigators with SMART objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in appraisal 	Guidance notes	Jun 05	LD	LD	none	PS 7.59	In place but will be reviewed under partnership arrangements

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
BCF13	Create policy to provide ongoing , ad-hoc and formal training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of process 	Training policy	Aug 05	LD	LD	None	PS 7.73	In op's plan and policy to be presented July 05.
BCF14	Provide investigators with SMART objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of overpayment procedures 	SMART objectives	Jul 05	LD	LD BSM	None	PS 7.76	In place but will be reviewed under partnership arrangements
BCF15	Collect and analyse management information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop management information processes and procedure 	Effective management and analysis of fraud work	Nov 05	LD	LD BSM	None	PS 7.135 BFI 7.135	Management Checks in place
BCF16	Improve sanction processes and operational procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full review of processes and documentation of procedures 	Procedures	Jan 06	LD	HOSLD	None	PS 7.99, 7.64, 7.135, 7.153, 7.177, 7.185, 7.199, 7.204 BFI 7.137, 7.177, 7.153, 7.185, 7.204, 7.99	Policy and procedures to be presented July 05.

7.7 Overpayments

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
BO1	Overpayments policy reflects corporate policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review wording of overpayments policy with regard to corporate policy set measurable targets in annual benefits plan ensure overpayments are brought under appropriate financial control cross reference to strategic management actions arrange to be approved to members and review programme 	Consistent policy targets financial control	Dec 05	HOS	HOS BSM	none	PS 8.1, 8.17, 8.89 BFI 8.13, 8.89	Performance Development Team assisting in Oct on overpayments and will work to recommendations of BFI report and PSF. (see CPA10)

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative Costs	PS & BFI gaps resolved	Actions to Date
B02	Budget set to achieve stretch target for recovery of outstanding debt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review 	Effective recovery	Dec 05	HOS	HOS BSM	None	PS 8.38, 8.89 BFI 8.89	Performance Development team assisting in Oct 05 on overpayments and will work to recommendations of BFI report and PSF
B03	Ensure overpayments are minimised and ensure effective monitoring of debt and set performance targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMS to effectively manage and prioritise changes Set SMART targets for action on reported changes, work and collecting debt Ascertain plans for monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of debt Level of debt Review to report of this to members 	Monitoring and reporting of debt	Dec 05	BSM	BSM	none	PS 8.33,8.39, 8.41, 8.42, 8.51, 8.77, 8.89 BFI 8.33, 8.39, 8.51, 8.77, 8.89	Performance Development Team assisting in Oct 05 on overpayments and will work to recommendations of BFI report and PSF.
B04	Targets for reducing the numbers and amount of inactive debt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of procedures and identification of debts 	Targets in place and effective recovery measures	Dec 05	BSM	BSM	none	PS 8.47, 8.89 BFI 8.47, 8.89	Performance development team assisting in Oct 05 on overpayments and will work to recommendations of BFI report and PSF (seeCPA37)
B05	Improve procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all procedures and document 	Procedures	Dec 05	BSM	BSM	None	PS 2.17, 8.89 BFI 8.89	Performance Development Team assisting in Oct 05 on overpayments and will work to recommendations of BFI report and PSF
B06	Develop, record and analyse management check process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop procedure 	Procedure	Jul 05	HOS	BSM TL	None	PS 8.33, 8.47 BFI 8.33, 8.47	In place (VF compliant from 27.6.05)
B07	Introduce management reports and systems to monitor and analyse creation and management of overpayments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review processes and document procedures DMS for effective workflow and management 	Effective debt management	Dec 05	HOS	BSM TL	None	PS 8.33, 8.39, 8.51, 8.77, 8.89 BFI 8.33, 8.39, 8.51, 8.77, 8.88	Being developed.

8. CPA Improvement Plan

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	Completion target	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative costs	CPA gaps resolved	Other gaps resolved
CPA1	Develop policies and strategies covering all areas of HB and CTB administration that are endorsed by elected members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree vision statement • Approve by Executive • Approve by members • Incorporate in corporate plans 	Vision statement	Aug 05	HOS	HOS Lead Member	none	1.8	Vision statement drafted – to be agreed and approved (see BSM1,2 & 3)
CPA2	Set performance targets that are realistic and achievable.	<p>Monitor staff output.</p> <p>Evaluate.</p> <p>Set achievable but stretching targets</p>	<p>Increased performance.</p> <p>Improved BVPI's</p>	Nov 04	BM	TP SF		1.8	Completed. Reviewed and increased after BF1 Inspection.
CPA3	Introduce performance monitoring systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft performance management framework • Agree and approve • Construct reporting templates • Train Service Managers in monitoring, review, improvement cycle • Set SMART targets for 	PMF Reporting template	Dec 05	HOS	HOS BSM Lead Member	None	2.28, 2.29, 2.31, 2.38, 2.39, 2.40, 2.75, 2.81	Some processes in place but needs formal review. Performance Development Team to assist Oct onwards (see BSM4 & CPA14)

		teams and individuals							
CPA4	Conduct meaningful surveys to determine the level of customer satisfaction with the service and to identify the needs of the minority.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review against Customer Services Strategy Develop take-up strategy Will be included as part of partnership arrangements 	Customer needs assessment and increased take-up	May 06	HOS	HOS BSM	Potential cost of surveys	1.8	BV survey requirement undertaken. Discussions within Lancs Shared Service Contact centre group about joint approach to survey work. East Lancs group also in place. (see BCS2)
CPA5	Introduce the Department's Verification Framework and comply with its minimum standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement VF plan 	Recording system	Jun 05	BSM	BSM TL	none	1.8	VF compliant from 27/6/05. Management check processes reviewed and in place. (see BCP12)
CPA6	Improve performance on claims processing so that it meets the standard for prompt payment.	<p>Run reports which highlight delays in claim processing.</p> <p>Act upon and feedback to staff.</p>	Compliance with Standards	March 06	HOS	BM	none	1.8	Improved from 62 days @ 3/04 to 43 days @ 04/05. Striving for continual improvement. 34 days @ 09/05
CPA7	Develop effective working relationships with its landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review processes Designate landlord liaison officer Review leaflets, information and letters Arrange attendance as landlord forums Develop fit and proper person test policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct payments made in accordance with regulations Provision to withhold payments in accordance with regs 11 and 13 Encourage landlords to make direct contact before court action 	Aug 05	BSM	BSM TL	none	1.8	Landlord liaison officer in place. Liaison meetings taking place. Landlord info leaflet developed and in place (issued to landlords). Current review of direct payment arrangements underway. Fit and proper landlord procedure being developed in place. (see BWL4)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy that landlord should not take enforcement action when arrears due to arrears of HB 						
CPA8	Develop and implement secure post opening arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of procedures 	Procedure	June 05	BSM	TL	none	6.12	Full review undertake and new procedure in place. (see BIS4))
CPA9	Conduct an annual IT security assessment	Review access levels.	Compliance with Standards.	Jan 06	HOS	JW	none	1.8	To be reviewed.
CPA10	Develop policies for the control and recovery of overpayments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review wording of overpayments policy with regard to corporate policy set measurable targets in annual benefits plan ensure overpayments are brought under appropriate financial control cross reference to strategic management actions arrange to be approved to members and review programme 	Consistent policy targets financial control	Dec 05	HOS	HOS BSM	none	1.8	Performance Development Team assisting in Oct 05 on overpayments and will work to recommendations of BFI report and PSF. (see BO1)
CPA11	Need a clear statement of intent to provide an effective and secure HB and CTB service as set	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree vision statement Approve by Executive 	Vision statement	Aug 05	HOS	HOS Lead Member	none	2.11	Vision statement drafted – to be agreed and approved

	out in Performance Standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve by members • Incorporate in corporate plans 							(See CPA1 & BSM1)
CPA12	Develop policies which cover all areas of the Benefit Service.	Review existing policies and update.	Compliance with standards.	May 06	HOS	BM	none	2.11	Some policies have been reviewed.
CPA13	Develop a Benefits Service Plan and ensure it is endorsed by elected Members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write contents as outlined in Appendix 1 • Establish executive sign-off and acceptance policy and process • Establish members sign-off and acceptance policy and process 	Annual Benefits Service Operational Plan	Aug 05	HOS	HOS Lead Member BSM	none	2.11	Plan drafted – to be agreed and approved (see BSM 3)
CPA14	Develop Performance Management System in order to report to elected members and senior managers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft performance management framework • Agree and approve • Construct reporting templates • Train Service Managers in monitoring, review, improvement cycle • Set SMART targets for teams and individuals 	PMF Reporting template	Dec 05	HOS	HOS BSM Lead Member	None	2.11	Some processes in place but needs formal review. Performance Development Team to assist Oct/Nov. (see BSM4 & CPA3)
CPA15	Introduce a staff appraisal Scheme which will assist in the monitoring of	HR to introduce scheme. Manager's	More informed and empowered staff.	Oct 04	HOS	HOS BSM	None	2.11	Completed

	performance targets for Benefit Staff.	implement. Appraise in line with Business objectives. Review at 12 1's	Staff feel valued. Improved morale. Improved performance.			TL's				
CPA16	Develop a Business Continuity Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing policy Create annual testing and review procedure 	Business Continuity Plan	Nov 05	HOS	HOS BSM	Potential costs unknown at this stage	2.11	Being developed. (see BSM5)	
CPA17	Ensure that reference to achieving \performance Standards is mentioned in any Plans produced.	Review draft plans	Operational Plan	Aug 05	HOS	BM	none	2.12	Completed	
CPA18	Provide an appointment facility for our customers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Customer Services Strategy Will be addressed as part of the Lancashire Shared Service Contact Centre Project 	Telephone based appointments system	Mar 06	HOS	BSM	Included in call centre business case	2.17	SSCC development – go live readiness to commence in July (see BCS5)	
CPA19	Provide adequate interviewing facilities.	Develop plans for One stop Shop.	Improved Customer Service. Improved Customer Satisfaction.	Mar 06	HOS	BSM	Further improvements part of proposals for one stop shop.	2.17	Interviewing facilities are available. BFI Inspection did not highlight any problems. Facilities will be greatly improved when one stop shop opens.	
CPA20	Provide leaflets in other formats and languages and display clearly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all leaflets and documentation Review that sufficient 	Full range of leaflet and document availability and stock replenishment	Nov 05	BSM	BSM TL	Potential cost of leaflets/forms	2.17	Discussions within Lancashire Benefits Group about possible joint approach/shared leaflets etc. Joint	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> stocks held Create process for checking that sufficient available at outlets Review of benefit notification letters 							form in place in East Lancs and currently being reviewed. Content and format of E-forms agreed within East Lancs and currently being designed. Testing of new benefit notification suite to commence in mid-July. (see BCS1)
CPA21	Ensure all staff have received Customer Service Training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify staff for training. Arrange for courses to be attended. 	Staff more Customer Focussed.	Aug 2005	HOS	BSM	Incorporated in Training Budget	2.17	Corporately all staff have received Customer Care Training.
CPA22	Monitor performance of caller waiting times, telephone response times and replies to correspondence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement customer services strategy for a call centre Will be addressed as part of the Lancashire Shared Service Contact Centre Project Ensure customer service strategy for a call centre Will be addressed as part of the Lancashire Shared Service Contact 	<p>Monitoring and achievement of benchmark</p> <p>Measures that meet Standards</p>	Mar 06	HOS	BSM	<p>Included in Call Centre business case</p> <p>Included in OSS business case</p>	2.17	SSCC development – go live readiness to commence in July (see BCS3 &BCS4)

		Centre Project							
CPA23	Targets set for the Performance of the Benefit Service should be in line with Performance Standards requirements.	Review targets set.	Improved performance.	Aug 2005	HOS	BM	none	2.23	Targets set are working towards top quartile performance.
CPA24	Develop procedural guidance for claims processing.	Review and update procedures.	Compliance with standards	Aug 2005	BM	BM TL	None	2.23	Procedures are in place. Reviewed in preparation for BFI Inspection. Procedures to be reviewed regularly.
CPA25	Develop Service Level Agreements with other Departments/Agencies.	Contact various agencies. Arrange meetings. Develop SLA's.	Closer Working. Problems highlighted and resolved quickly.	Jan 2005	BM	TL's	None	2.23	Completed
CPA26	Follow up action to be taken on any questionnaires issued to landlords.	Analyse results. Develop a plan of action.	Promotes better relationship with Landlords.	Dec 05	BM	LO	Unknown	2.26	Poor response from last questionnaire, two years ago. New questionnaire to be developed and issued to landlords' once up to date landlord list collated.
CPA27	Develop a Leaflet specifically for Landlords.	Develop a leaflet	Promotes better relationship with Landlords. Reminds them of obligations and responsibilities.	Mar 05	SF	SF	Printing costs	2.26	Completed. Leaflet has been developed it is due to be distributed to all landlords Aug 2005.
CPA28	Ensure that all landlords are written to at least	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instigate annual 	Annual letter to landlords	Aug 05	BSM	TL BSM	none	2.26	Work underway – will be issued by

	annually, giving up to date information and responsibilities.	procedure							Aug 05 (See 7.4 BWL1)
CPA29	Ensure all new staff are vetted as part of the recruitment process to minimise the risk of internal fraud.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR ensure that RBC vets employees in accordance with audit commissions recommendations Declarations of interest for employees 	Compliance with standards	Dec 05	HR	BSM HR	unknown	2.29	Declarations of interest in place, reviewed (Jan 05) (see BIS1)
CPA30	Declarations of interest should be obtained from all council employees.	Declaration of Interest forms for employees	Compliance with standards	Dec 05	TP	TP	None	2.29	Declarations of interest in place, reviewed (Jan 05) (see IA8)
CPA31	Make better use of Internal Audit Service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate 3 year rolling audit plan Assessment against national standards Counter Fraud Audit Reconsider audit reports and devise action plan 	3 year rolling audit plan	Dec 05 Jul 05(current actions)	HOS	BSM Internal audit (Neil Kissock)	Unknown at this stage	2.29	The Initial meeting with Audit have taken place. Review to continue – action plan of all agreed O/S issues/actions. (see BSM31)
CPA32	To publicise externally the council's Statement of Intent on Prosecution Policy.	Place advertisement in Local Pres	Customers aware of Consequences. Reduction in Fraud	Jul 2005	LD	LD		2.36	Completed
CPA33	To set achievable targets.	Monitor staff output Raise targets Monitor	Improve performance	Aug 2005	BM	TL	None	2.36	Targets set and updated after BFI Inspection.
CPA34	Introduce Management checks.	Run reports to produce list of work.	Prevents overpayments. Highlights training	Sept 2005	BM	CD	None	2.36	Completed

		Check 10% of work. Feedback to Staff any issues which training may be needed on.	issues.						(see IA9)
CPA35	Develop a Fraud Partnership Agreement with the Counter Fraud Investigations Service and sign off SLA with the Benefit Department.	Develop partnership. Develop SLA.	Closer working. Improved service	Jul 05	LD	LD	None	2.36	Completed
CPA36	Issue written guidance on making a fraud referral issued to all council employees – desk aides to Benefit staff.	Write and issue written guidance to staff. Develop desk aides.	Greater staff awareness	Jul 05	LD	LD	None	2.36	Completed
CPA37	Set an annual target for debt recovery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of procedures and identification of debts 	Targets in place and effective recovery measures	Dec 05	BSM	BSM	none	2.40	Performance Development Team assisting in Oct on overpayments and will work to recommendations of BFI report and PSF (see BO4)
CPA38	Utilise all available methods of overpayment recovery.	Review current methods. Explore other avenues of recovery	Effective recovery methods	Dec 05	CD	CD	None	2.40	Introduced new methods of recovery i.e. from DWP Benefits and Debt Recovery Agency. PIAT to review in July.

9. Internal Audit Improvement Plan

				Completion	Lead Officer	Key resources	Indicative	Internal Audit	Other gaps
--	--	--	--	------------	--------------	---------------	------------	----------------	------------

Ref	Issue	Actions	Deliverables	target			costs	Gaps resolved	resolved
IA1	The weaknesses identified in the CPA report should be acted upon to improve the services to local people in line with Corporate Improvement Priority number 9.	Identify weaknesses. Incorporate in Service Improvement Plan for action to be taken.	Improved performance Compliance with Standards.	Feb 05	AT	AT	None	Recommendation 1 Level 2	Completed.
IA2	The recommendations contained within Action plan dated 24 May 2004 should be actioned as soon as possible.	Review report and act if necessary.	Improved performance Compliance with Standards.	Feb 05	AT TP SF CD	AT TP SF CD	None	Recommendation 2 Level 2	All recommendations have been considered and acted on if appropriate.
IA3	The recommendation relating to the Service Level Agreement with BIU should be extended to include fraud awareness training for relevant staff.	Review and update SLA.	Compliance with Standards.	July 05	AT LD LO	AT LD LO	None	Recommendation 3 Level 2	SLA recently agreed and updated.
IA4	After the BFI Inspection further consideration should be given to introducing DIP and workflow Management for a full audit trail of correspondence received by the authority and to aid management review performance targets within the section.	Identify possible provider. Site visits to determine product choice. Appoint project manager.	Improved performance. Improved monitoring and gathering of statistical information. Improved performance monitoring.	Jan 06	HOS	HOS	Unknown	Recommendation 4 Level 2	Review should partnership occur.
IA5	Health and safety training should be arranged for staff responsible for opening post and post opening procedures should	Update post opening procedures. Arrange Health and Safety Training for staff.	Compliance with Standards.	Nov 05	HOS	HR TL's	Training Budget	Recommendation 5 Level 3	Procedures now in place. Managers have been trained. Health and Safety Training to be delivered by

	be drawn up which staff can refer to e.g. how to deal with tenders/returned housing benefit cheques/confidential items of post etc. These procedures should also be issued to reception staff who may also receipt similar items of post.								Managers to staff.
IA6	Health and Safety training should be arranged for members of staff who will be visiting customers in their own homes and a generic risk assessment carried out on lone working implications for intervention officers.	Identify staff who need training. Arrange for them to attend course.	Compliance with Standards.	Aug 2005	HOS	HR	Training Budget	Recommendation 6 Level 3	Lone Working Risk assessment completed. Health and Safety Training to be rolled out to staff. Manual handling Course completed by staff.
IA7	The position of IT Champion should be allocated within the benefits section to ensure that up-to-date information is available to customers on the website and to ensure that the section is contributing towards achieving the authority's corporate BVPI target on e-government.	Nominate a member of staff. Arrange appropriate web training.	Better access to service for our Customers.	June 2005	HOS	HOS	Unknown	Recommendation 7 Level 2	Corporate Web developer appointed June 05 and new web content management system being implemented.
IA8	Benefit management should ensure that all benefit personnel have signed a Declaration of	Declaration of Interest forms for employees	Compliance with Standards.	Dec 2005	TP	TP	None	Recommendation 8 Level 2	Declarations of interest in place , reviewed(Jan 05) (see CPA30)

	Interest form.								
IA9	The 10% control checks should recommence in line with the Audit Commission's recommendation.	Run reports to produce list of work. Check 10% of work. Feedback to Staff any issues which training may be needed on.	Prevents overpayments. Highlights training issues.	Sept 2005	BM	CD		Recommendation 9 Level 2	Actioned.
IA10	Control checks should continue on payments over £400, but staff should be reminded that they should e-mail through advanced notice of high value cheques to reduce the amount of time the control team have to spend on verifying the accuracy of these payments. For the future, the 'value' of the control check should be reviewed in line with rent increases within the valley and management should have the discretion to raise the limit to accommodate the average value of the local reference rent.	Check, every pay run, all cheques produced over the value of £400.	Prevent overpayments	Dec 2005	TP SF	TP SF	None	Recommendation 10 Level 2	It was decided to check cheques over £600. It was felt that £400 was too low.
IA11	In order to comply with the Audit Commission's recommendation, the benefit 'patches' should be rotated once training of the new staff has been completed.	Arrange for patches to be rotated. Inform Ctax section, Housing, Neighbourhood office staff and switchboard of changes and new telephone numbers.	Compliance with Standards.	June 2005	TP SF	TP SF	None	Recommendation 11 Level 3	All patches rotated 8 th June 2005. To be reviewed every 13weeks.

These recommendations have been graded according to their level of importance as follows:

Level 1 – This is a recommendation, which if not actioned will impact upon the Director of Finance’s responsibilities under Section 151 of the Local Government Act for the proper administration of financial affairs.

Level 2 – This is a recommendation which in the opinion of the auditor is essential to maintain the minimum levels of internal control in the system.

Level 3 – This is a recommendation which the auditor views as being desirable but not essential to maintain the minimum levels of internal control.

There are 124 actions within this document 9 red – outstanding, 44 amber - action ongoing and 71 green - completed.

Red actions can be found at: **BSM** 5, 12, 13, 17. **BSC** 7, 8. **BIS** 3. **CPA** 9, **IA** 4.

Amber actions can be found at: **BSM** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14. **BCS** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10. **BWL** 5. **BIS** 2, 5. **BO** 1, 2, 3, 4, 7. **CPA** 1, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 22, 26, 31, 37, 38.

Green actions can be found at: **BSM** 15, 16. **BPC** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. **BWL** 1, 2, 3, 4. **BIS** 1, 4. **BCF** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. **BO** 5, 6. **CPA** 2, 5, 7, 8, 15, 17, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36. **IA** 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

