

**Subject:** Capita Monitoring and Performance **Status:** For Publication

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**Report to:** Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009

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**Report of:** Head of Customer Services and ICT

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**Portfolio** Quality Services to Customers  
**Holder:**

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**Key Decision:** No

Forward Plan  General Exception  Special Urgency

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## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update to O&S on the Capita contract and review the performance for the current financial year to date.

## 2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.

- Delivering Quality Services to Customers (Customers, Improvement)

## 3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

## 4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 The Capita contract was implemented in September 2006; the contract covers the areas of Revenues, Benefits, Fraud and associated customer contact for these areas. Rossendale has implemented a highly resilient and robust contract monitoring process which has been adopted in the corporate Governance model. A copy of the governance process, originally developed in 2006, is attached for reference at Appendix 1.

The governance process includes provision to issue a Service Improvement Notice to Capita, requiring a structured, time limited response to an identified performance weakness. Two such improvement notices have had to be issued during the contract period, one in January 2007 and one in May 2007, as Capita was adjusting its approach to service delivery to meet Rossendale's requirements. A copy of the Service Improvement Notice, issued in May 2007 in relation to call centre performance, is attached for reference at Appendix 2. Appendix 3 is the paper to the Operational Board of May 2007, which sought Board approval to the improvement notice being issued, whilst at Appendix 4 is the paper presented to the next Operational Board meeting which shows the effect of that improvement notice on measured performance.

### 4.2 The Service Assurance Team role – Rossendale Borough Council

The Local Government White Paper Strong and Prosperous Communities published in October last year, committed to introducing a set of streamlined indicators that would reflect national priority outcomes for local authorities working alone or in partnership.

A single set of 198 national indicators was announced as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. The national indicators will be the only measures which central Government will performance manage outcomes delivered by local government.

These indicators have replaced all other existing sets of indicators including Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and have been reported from April 2008. However it was agreed by the SAT and Capita that certain BVPIs would be retained as Local Indicators.

The SAT continuously monitors performance for Revenues, Benefits, Fraud and Customer Services by measuring service delivery against agreed targets based on these Local and National Indicators.

### 4.3 Benefits Performance

Performance achieved in Benefit Fraud for the year 2008 to date, shows that all agreed Local Indicators have been met or exceeded. However, it should be noted that following a recent inspection by Lancashire Audit Services it has been agreed that the SAT will undertake further scrutiny of Benefit Fraud procedures and performance to provide further assurance to the Council. The SAT was already aware of a gap in its skills knowledge in relation to fraud and a member of the team is currently undergoing training by the Department for Work and Pensions to

achieve Professionalism in Security (PINS) accreditation. This will enable much more detailed monitoring of Benefit Fraud performance to be undertaken so that the Council can be assured that Capita's approach and service delivery is robust.

Performance achieved in Benefit processing times for the year to date is expected to be on target or exceed target:

**NI 180** - Number of change in circumstances is exceeding target.

**NI 181** - Time taken to process change in circumstances is 15.5 days, target is 17 days.

**PM 2** - New claims outstanding over 50 days is 3.75%, target is 5%.

**PM 3** - % of new claims decided within 14 days of receiving all required information is 93.36%, target is 90%.

**PM4** - % of rent allowance claims paid on time is 94.46%, target is 90%.

**PM17** - % of application for reconsideration & notified on time is 100%, target is 80%.

**LI 78a** - Speed of processing new claims is 20.3 days, target is 20 days (this has been slightly affected by the current economic climate which has caused an increased volume in new claims).

**LI79a** - Accuracy is at 94.48% and the target is 96%. This is slightly under target and Capita has agreed to undertake a further training needs analysis to improve performance in this area. The SAT has agreed that additional support and benchmarking with the East Lancs Benefit Managers group should also provide further assistance. The SAT will continue to monitor this indicator and has committed to undertake a full review of claims accuracy which will be reported at Operational Board.

**LI79b** - Until June 2008, the Systems team and the Service Assurance Team were able to run the RBE675 report, which calculated the monthly and quarterly outturns correctly. This allowed accurate information to be supplied for the total amount of debt outstanding, the total amount created in a period, the total amount recovered within a period and the total amount written off. However from June 2008 the reconciliation process for Housing Benefit overpayments changed and unfortunately the Northgate system has failed to supply accurate and reconcilable data, hence the ability to report on 79b(i). The dissatisfaction of Northgate clients is illustrated in the copy letter at appendix 5.

The problem does affect all Northgate users and has been consistently escalated. In respect of Rossendale it has been confirmed that this has been further escalated with Northgate's helpdesk in January 2009, but no updates/bug fixes have been issued to correct the overpayment reporting problems.

The new reporting suite has been written in line with the mandatory upgrade to version 6, it is expected that once the upgrade has been undertaken the reporting issue will be resolved as a matter of urgency.

Capita has confirmed that the overpayments manager continues to monitor the outputs (invoices and recovery notices), work items and individual members of staff working within the overpayments team.

#### 4.4 Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates Performance

The performance indicators for collection of Council Tax and NNDR are annual targets. In each case the reported figure represents the percentage of tax which is collected within the financial year that it falls due. Appendix 6 refers.

Ongoing Progress towards the year end target is monitored by comparing progress both with previous year's collection rate figures and with monthly milestones towards the annual target.

Currently, collection rate for Council Tax is exceeding the targeted rate and is more than half of one percent in advance of the collection rate at this point last year. The annual target of 98% was agreed as being a particularly stretching one. The incentive/penalty arrangement for the year is that an annual rate of less than 97.6% will result in the imposition of penalties, whilst a rate of 98% or above will result in an incentive payment being made to Capita. The current position suggests that the final collection rate will at least be in the 97.6 - 98% range which would represent a significant achievement in this area.

In order to put these figures into perspective, the national average collection rate for 2007/08 was 97.1%. National benchmarking shows that large improvements of more than one percent tend only to be achieved by authorities starting from a comparatively low base, below 95%.

In conclusion, it can be confidently expected that collection in Rossendale will again increase, a result which would represent an improvement for the sixth consecutive year.

The current collection rate for NNDR, based on the most recent returns (Jan09), is 94.66% 1.84% down on the rate at the same stage last year.

The annual target for NNDR collection is 97.5% was also set at a lower rate than last the 2007/08 outturn. The reasoning behind this decision was because of changes in legislation relating to unoccupied property rates for NNDR. These changes mean that empty properties, which have previously been subject to a 50% discount, are now be charged at the full rate. Moreover, unoccupied industrial property which had been exempted from payment indefinitely is now subject to payment of the full rate for the property.

It was agreed to set a lower target, without any incentive/penalty arrangements, partly in view of the anticipated difficulties in collecting rates in respect of these types of accounts, and partly since the new effects of the new circumstances were difficult to predict.

At the time of writing it appears the collection will be approximately in line with the target, meaning that there will be, as had been anticipated, a reduction in the collection rate in comparison with previous years.

Further changes to Government legislation will come into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 which will ameliorate some of the effects of this year's issues. The Council will also have the benefit of data from other local authorities subject to the changed legislation which will allow for targeting to be benchmarked.

It is therefore anticipated that targets will be agreed in March which will allow for progress in this area to be resumed. It should be noted that all monies collected in respect of NNDR is passed to a central pool for redistribution and therefore collection of NNDR has no direct financial implications for the authority.

#### **4.5 Customer Service Performance**

Performance against % calls answered within 20 seconds during the year, has consistently been above the target of 90% with out turn performance for quarter three being 93% and abandoned calls at 1.0% are now significantly better than target (<5%). This figure represents one of the highest service levels in the whole of Lancashire.

From a call quality perspective, in June 2007 the SAT began to monitor a small random selection of calls to the Call Centre and this has continued on a monthly basis. The results of this monitoring have been fed back to the Operational Board in September 2007 and January 2008. There were initially some concerns over the technical knowledge of the call centre staff and the provision of incorrect and incomplete advice. By working together, issues and problems have been identified early and plans put in place to resolve them i.e. refresher training. Throughout all the sampling it was evident that all call centre staff demonstrated excellent customer service skills. Calls continue to be sampled on a monthly basis and an update report will be presented to the Operational Board within the next six months.

Average waiting time in the One Stop Shop continued to improve throughout quarter 3 as the new staff, recruited in September, gained confidence and experience of systems and customer handling. Latest data, for January 2009, shows an average waiting time of 5 minutes 19 seconds, well within the target of 10 minutes. However, in the absence of a CRM system, it is still not possible to assess performance against the target of 90% of customers being seen within 10 minutes. Work to develop a usable CRM system continues in conjunction with Lancashire County Council and Northgate.

The performance of the RBC switchboard whilst still below the target of 90% has been consistently in the high 80's throughout the year. Third quarter performance was 85%. Performance for this quarter was adversely affected by the gas explosion in December 2008 which resulted in a greater number of calls to the council during this time.

#### **5. SECTION 151 OFFICER**

- 5.1 Financial matters are considered within the report, in particular, the consistent improvement in the C Tax collection rates. The consequence of this improvement has been the creation of a surplus within the Council's Collection Fund. This surplus has been used to fund contractual performance reward payments.

#### **6. MONITORING OFFICER**

- 6.1 No Monitoring Officer comments

## 7. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICES)

7.1 No HR Implications

## 8. CONCLUSION

The report has highlighted improvements in the areas of Revenues, Benefits and general customer contact over the last 12 months.

The ongoing monitoring and assurance activities carried out by the SAT demonstrate that as the contract reaches the end of its third year it continues to deliver service contract requirements.

## 9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

9.1 That members note the contents of the report and the improvement in performance of these services and endorse the Service Assurance Team in their work in striving for continuous improvement.

## 10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 N/A

## 11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required                      **yes / No**

Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached                      **yes / No**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
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Attachments:

- Appendix 1 - Strategic Governance and Operational Boards
- Appendix 2 - Service Improvement Notice of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2007
- Appendix 3 - 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2007 Operational Board paper
- Appendix 4 - 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007 Operational Board paper
- Appendix 5 - Letter to Northgate Information Solutions
- Appendix 6 - Council Tax & NNDR Collection Rates 2007/08 and 2008/09

# Strategic Governance and the Operational Boards: Terms of Reference

## Introduction

The Governance Model has been established to oversee and ensure that the partnership works effectively to meet the needs of the council as determined by the contractual obligations of both parties. Its purpose is to both monitor current performance and establish future direction.

This will be achieved through a three tier approach:

- Strategic Governance Board
- Operational Board
- Service Review

These three meetings are further described below.

## The Strategic Governance Board

The Strategic Governance Board has overall authority for ensuring that the partnership delivers the objectives and service standards as detailed in the contract. It has the responsibility for ensuring that both parties fulfil their obligations in this respect and has the authority to propose and approve changes to the contract to meet changing business needs. The Strategic Governance Board will meet every 6 months.

The Strategic Governance Board is the decision-making body in respect of all issues relevant to the delivery of the service contract and the development of the contracted services and service improvements. The Board will make recommendations for investment or service changes to senior officials and Elected Members.

Decision making powers lie with the Elected Members and Senior Council officers. They will take advice from the Council officers and from the Service Director and Service Manager from the supplier side. Decisions from the Strategic Governance Board will be referred to the council's other governance bodies where investment decisions are required, in line with the appropriate procedures and the councils constitution.

The Strategic Governance Board will comprise, as a minimum, representatives from the following three distinct areas: Executive; Client-side (Service Assurance) and Supplier-side (Service Delivery).

The Strategic Governance Board structure will be as follows:

The attendees will be 3 Members (including the Chair), Deputy Chief Exec and Head of Client function, Head of Finance, Supplier Service Director, Supplier Business Development Director.

## The Operational Board

Overall responsibility: To be responsible for the delivery of the service supported by the client side and the supplier side representatives.

The Operational Board reports to the Strategic Governance Board and is responsible for reviewing the service performance agreeing the work programme for the SAT Team and identifying opportunities for changes to the services. The Operational Board will meet every two months.

The Board has to ensure that the contracted service is delivering value for the time, effort, costs and resources being invested, confirming a cost-conscious approach to service delivery, balancing the demands of the council, service users and (any) specialist provider organisations.

The Operational Board structure will be as follows:

The attendees will be 3 Members (including the Chair), Service Assurance Manager and the Supplier Contract Manager. The Operational Board will represent the Council's interests and have final responsibility for the service delivered.

## Service Review Meeting

The Service Review Meeting will be the primary meeting responsible for the review of performance. Its remit is to undertake a detailed review of service performance and owning the continuous service improvement plan. It will have responsibility for, agreeing service credits and escalating issues to the Operational Board if appropriate.

The Service Review Meeting will be chaired by the Council's SAT Manager on behalf of the Council and the Supplier Contract Manager on behalf of the supplier. The Service Review meeting will be monthly.

## Calendar of all Meetings

| Meeting                    | Day         | Date                          | Time             | Venue                         |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Monthly Liaison Meetings   | Every month | Various                       | Various          | Rosendale/Blackburn alternate |
| Operational Board Meetings | Thursday    | 11 <sup>th</sup> January 2007 | 3.30pm to 5.00pm | Room 217, Futures Park, Bacup |

|                 |   |       |         |
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|   |           |                                    |                       |                                 |
|---|-----------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
|   | Wednesday | 7 <sup>th</sup> March 2007         | 10.30am to<br>12.30pm | Room 217<br>Futures Park, Bacup |
|   | Wednesday | 2 <sup>nd</sup> May 2007           | 10.30am to<br>12.30pm | Room 217<br>Futures Park, Bacup |
|   | Wednesday | 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2007         | 10.30am to<br>12.30pm | Room 217<br>Futures Park, Bacup |
|   | Wednesday | 19 <sup>th</sup> September<br>2007 | 10.30am to<br>12.30pm | Room 217<br>Futures Park, Bacup |
|   | Wednesday | 14 <sup>th</sup> November<br>2007  | 10.30am to<br>12.30pm | Room 217<br>Futures Park, Bacup |
| <b>Strategic<br/>Governance<br/>Board</b> | Tuesday   | 13 <sup>th</sup> March<br>2007     | 10am to<br>1pm        | Room 217<br>Futures Park, Bacup |
|   | Tuesday   | 25 <sup>th</sup> September<br>2007 | 10am to<br>1pm        | Room 217<br>Futures park, Bacup |

## APPENDIX

### The Business Manager – Rossendale Borough Council

The Business Manager (or Head of Service) is the individual accountable for the delivery of the client-side objectives. The Business Manager oversees and directs the Service Assurance Team, with the authority and responsibility for identifying and meeting the business needs.

*General role description:*

- management knowledge in a functional area affected by the service delivery
- May be a member of the senior management team.

*Specific responsibilities:*

- To lead and control a particular business or functional area within the client organisation. This may be a central area ‘serving’ others (e.g. finance, customer services), or a discrete and largely autonomous area
- accountable and responsible for the delivery of specific functions or services
- take decisions in respect of the delivery of specific functions or services
- to be a participative stakeholder
- to be a source of expert-level knowledge of their business area, as input to the development of the detailed requirements document that founded the procurement
- to be a source of expert-level knowledge on the transition to services delivered by the supplier, including acceptance testing
- To be a source of expert-level knowledge on the delivery of services delivered by the supplier, including performance standards.

*Skills and Attributes:*

- detailed knowledge of the council’s business and its wider operational context
- knowledge, expertise and experience in the council’s management infrastructure and its workings
- ability to influence and steer a higher-level decision, to meet an intended outcome
- Knowledge of the council’s products and services in general, and its functional areas’ products and services in particular, including their development.

### The Supplier-side Service Manager or Director - Capita

The supplier will appoint someone to take responsibility for day-to-day management of service delivery - the Supplier-side Service Manager. The communication lines between the SAT Manager and the Supplier-side Service Manager are the closest links between the two parties.

## The SAT Manager Role – Rossendale Borough Council

The SAT Manager is the individual responsible for delivering the client-side objectives. The SAT Manager leads and manages the Service Assurance Team, with the authority and responsibility to lead and direct the team on a day-to-day basis.

### *Specific responsibilities*

The SAT Manager, operating within agreed reporting structures, is responsible for:

- designing and applying an appropriate management framework for the team, including a regular review process, if required
- managing the delivery of team objectives
- planning and monitoring the work programme
- preparing and maintaining the work plan, reporting exceptions as required
- managing risks or assumptions, including the development of contingency plans
- liaising with senior officers and elected Members and other council departments or services to ensure that work is neither overlooked nor duplicated
- the overall progress and use of resources, taking corrective or intervention action, where necessary
- change control and oversight of changes allocated to suppliers
- reporting through agreed reporting lines on performance of supplier(s) through Performance Reports and staged assessments
- liaison with appointed suppliers to assure the overall direction and integrity of the service contract
- adopting relevant technical and quality standards required to ensure achievement of objectives
- identifying and obtaining any support and advice required for the management, planning and control of the work programme
- managing client-side administration
- conducting annual evaluations to assess how well the Service Assurance Team has achieved its objectives and preparing an evaluation report for senior officers
- preparing any follow-on action recommendations as required to improve the overall standard of the managed contract

### *Skills and attributes*

The SAT Manager should be able to:

- apply standard project management approaches to the specific requirements of the Service Assurance Team
- direct, manage and motivate the Service Assurance Team
- develop and maintain an agreed work programme and individual work packages for team members
- adapt and fit technical and expert knowledge to meet specific circumstances
- plan and manage the deployment of resources to meet team objectives or milestones
- build and sustain effective communications with the supplier(s), team members, other departments or services, as required
- Apply quality management principles and process.

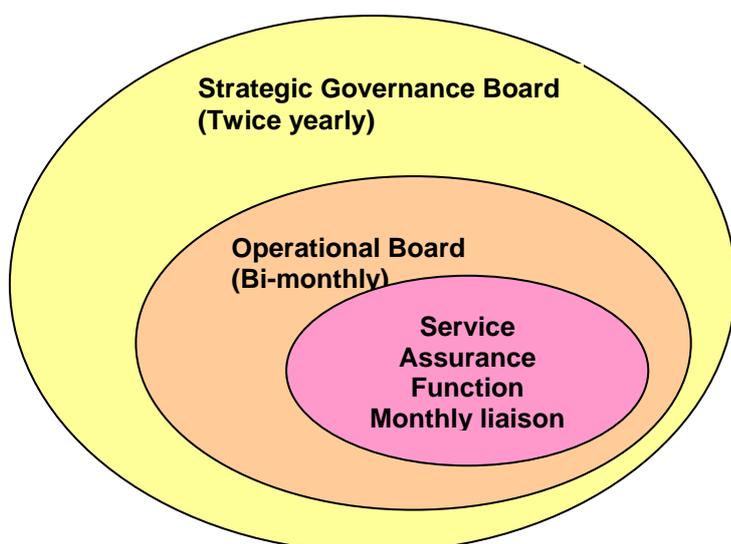
## The Service Assurance Team role – Rossendale Borough Council

To fulfil its obligations to manage the service contract, the council will have processes and procedures to manage the delivery of service, the relationship with the supplier, management of the risks associated with the performance of the contract and future changes in the business requirement. It will also ensure that there are good communication channels at all levels in both organisations – between the council's and supplier's service management staff; between contract management and the supplier's account managers; and between the users of the service and the supplier's operational staff.

The Service Assurance Team (SAT) is appointed to provide the council (client) with assurance that the supplier is meeting its contractual and legal obligations for the delivery of the Revenues and Benefits service. While the day-to-day service management responsibilities are with the supplier, the council still needs to have some level of involvement to gain assurance that the service is going well and that the supplier will deliver the performance levels expected.

The SAT will carry out a range of activities with the supplier and independently to monitor and control the delivery of service and ensure that that the supplier is performing in accordance with overall standards and approaches set out in the service contract and service level agreement and the specified service standards are met, or exceeded.

### The Service Assurance Structure



The Service Assurance Team is a group of individuals with relevant and complementary professional, technical or specialist skills who, under the direction of the SAT Manager, are responsible for carrying out the work detailed in the client-side work programme.

The team will carry out a range of functions and duties to provide assurance that the supplier is performing in accordance with overall standards and approaches set out in the service contract and service level agreement.

Its functions will include confirming or validating that the service products or outcomes from the supplier conform to their agreed quality criteria; that they perform in accordance with the council's statements of requirements; that agreed timescales and cost profiles are being met; and that the Business Case (Business Benefits) and Risks remains viable.

#### *Specific responsibilities*

The Service Assurance Team is responsible for:

- assisting the SAT Manager to deliver the team's objectives
- carrying out the elements of the work programme they are tasked with
- providing technical and administrative support to the SAT Manager
- advising the SAT Manager of any risks that are likely to affect the achievement of team or individual objectives and to be part of the risk mitigation process
- reporting results of analysis and other activities to the SAT Manager, as assigned
- Providing information for the Service Assurance Team, Service Management Board, elected Members, senior officials or the wider council, as required.

#### *Skills and attributes*

The Service Assurance Team should be able to:

- understand the overall aim of the Service Assurance Team and how their role and expertise contributes to that aim
- provide their technical expertise in support of the team's objectives
- understand and apply the performance and contract management standards used by the team
- maintain the team's information and documentation in line with the work plan
- understand how the services perform against specified and 'best of breed' performance criteria
- understand LA best practices in service delivery (benchmarking) and in the use of appropriate performance measurement methods and techniques
- understand and apply a range of data gathering and analysis methods and techniques, including:
  - selecting an approach to analysis which is logical and systematic
  - critically examining data with an enquiring and open mind and develops hypotheses for further investigation
  - identifies patterns and trends in the data set
  - looks for connections and linkages, and identifies root or underlying causes of observed performance
  - identifies key messages and important or influential facts and information
  - ability to present factual information in a way which is comprehensible and which highlights its relevance and importance
  - draws clear, focused, explicit conclusions and makes the reasoning clear
  - puts forward specific and measurable recommendations which are well supported by evidence and which add value

- ability to prioritise, and make appropriate trade-offs to achieve successful outcomes in the achievement of their work package
- interface with customers, council services, end-users and the supplier, as directed by the SAT Manager
- maintaining effective stakeholder relationships, including the ability to:
  - establish and maintain effective working relationships
  - be assertive; presents themselves as credible, convincing and competent
  - be aware of the impact on others and modify behaviour as necessary
  - confront difficult issues readily and constructively
  - stand their ground in the face of challenge or opposition
  - Ability to identify and realise opportunities for improvement.

Service Improvement

Ensuring service excellence

# Service Improvement Notice



Subject: Coventry Call Centre Performance  
 Authorised by: Anita Tittensor, Service Assurance Manager  
 Date: 02 May 2007

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Nature of the improvement to the Services (or any part of the services):          | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Operational Board requires Capita to urgently address resource needs at the Coventry Call Centre to ensure that key performance indicators concerning abandoned call rates and calls answered within 20 seconds are achieved by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007.</li> <li>2. The Operational Board requires Capita to develop an action plan showing target dates for achieving key steps in delivering a sustained improvement in Call Centre performance, the action plan to be available by 31/05/07 and shared with the SAT.</li> </ol> |
| Timescale for improvement:  | To have achieved required service levels by 31st July 2007.   |
| Confirmation of timescale for response to this Notice:                            | Service Improvement Action plan should be developed and submitted to SAT by 31 <sup>st</sup> May 2007.  |
| Additional comments or requirements for the response or Service Improvement Plan: | Capita should ensure that the SAT receive performance figures for the Coventry Call Centre on a weekly basis, until the conditions of the Service Improvement Notice have been met.   |
| Signed:   |   |
| Name:   | Anita Tittensor 02 May 2007   |
| Email:  | anitattittensor@rossendalebc.gov.uk   |
| Tel:  | 01706 252587  |

Paper No. 3

Ensuring service excellence

Operational Board: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2007

Subject: Coventry Call Centre Performance

Prepared by: Mike Gibbons

Date: 24 April 2007



## Coventry Call Centre Performance

### 1. Data

Data is gathered at the Coventry Call Centre against a number of targeted measures and is presented by Capita in a calendar month format. Relative data since November 2006 is as follows:

|               | Calls offered | % calls answered by agents | Calls abandoned | % calls abandoned | Calls to voicemail | % calls answered within 20 secs |
|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| November 2006 | 4,372         | 82%                        | 546             | 12%               | 263                | 60%                             |
| December 2006 | 2,986         | 92%                        | 187             | 6%                | 56                 | 75%                             |
| January 2007  | 4,119         | 94%                        | 212             | 5%                | 52                 | 76%                             |
| February 2007 | 3,788         | 92%                        | 259             | 7%                | 61                 | 68%                             |
| March 2007    | 5,184         | 89%                        | 461             | 9%                | 135                | 58%                             |
| Cumulative    | 20,449        | 89%                        | 1,665           | 8%                | 567                |                                 |
| Target        |               |                            |                 | <5%               |                    | >90%                            |

### 2. Analysis

The variation in the overall number of calls offered to the call centre each month is to some extent a factor of the number of working days in that month and this has varied from 19 in December, to 20 in February and 22 in November, January and March. Additionally, the number of calls in March is also significantly affected by the annual billing process, which caused a surge in customer contact.

Whilst such a surge is predictable – it happens every year when the new Council Tax bills are issued – the other indicators tend to show a mixed response from the Call Centre to the increased workload. The percentage of calls answered by agents in March was down to 89%, compared with 94% in January and 92% in February. However, the absolute number of calls answered in March was 4,589, compared with 3,855 in January and 3,468 in February, a marked increase.

More worryingly from the calling customer's perspective is the level of abandoned calls and the number of calls routed out to voicemail in March, both situations being aggravated by a further reduction, down to 58%, in calls answered within 20 seconds. The target for this is 90% of calls answered within 20 seconds, in line with the RBC customer service standards.

### **3. Conclusion**

At the Strategic Governance Board meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2007, Capita acknowledged that the Coventry Call Centre had had a comparatively slow start and that performance levels were below what was required. March results have shown a further deterioration in the face of a predictable upsurge in workload and key performance indicators show a disappointing level of staff alignment to traffic.

### **4. Recommendations**

1. The SAT recommends that the Operational Board requires Capita to urgently address resource needs at the Coventry Call Centre to ensure that key performance indicators concerning abandoned call rates and calls answered within 20 seconds are achieved by July 2007.
2. The SAT recommends that the Operational Board requires Capita to develop an action plan showing target dates for achieving key steps in delivering a sustained improvement in Call Centre performance, the action plan to be available by 31/05/07 and shared with the SAT.

Operational Board: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007

Subject: Coventry Call Centre Performance  
 Prepared by: Mike Gibbons  
 Date: 04 July 2007



## Coventry Call Centre Performance

### 1. Data

Data is gathered at the Coventry Call Centre against a number of targeted measures and is presented by Capita in a calendar month format. Relative data since January 2007 is as follows:

|               | Calls offered | % calls answered by agents | Calls abandoned | % calls abandoned | Calls to voicemail | % calls answered within 20 secs |
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| January 2007  | 4,119         | 94%                        | 212             | 5%                | 52                 | 76%                             |
| February 2007 | 3,788         | 92%                        | 259             | 7%                | 61                 | 68%                             |
| March 2007    | 5,184         | 89%                        | 461             | 9%                | 135                | 58%                             |
| April 2007    | 4,409         | 90%                        | 328             | 7%                | 92                 | 61%                             |
| May 2007      | 4,600         | 98%                        | 59              | 1%                | 161                | 95%                             |
| June 2007     | 3,367         | 97%                        | 28              | 1%                | 151                | 95%                             |
| Cumulative    | 25,467        | 93%                        | 1347            | 5%                | 652                | 74%                             |
| Target        |               |                            |                 | <5%               |                    | >90%                            |

### 2. Analysis

It is very pleasing to note that the changes to staffing levels, implemented in May 2007, have effected a sustained improvement in performance throughout May and June. The key measures of % calls abandoned and % calls answered within 20 secs have exceeded target in both months. The improvement has been so marked that the cumulative performance for % calls abandoned has now recovered to be at target for the year.

### **3. Conclusion**

Following the issue of a Service Improvement Notice after the last Operations Board meeting, the Capita team developed an action plan for achieving sustained performance improvement at the Call Centre and this was presented to the SAT by the due date. Progress against that plan is clearly evidenced by the latest performance results.

### **4. Next steps**

Now that the immediate staffing issues have been addressed, the SAT intends to move on to a study of the quality of call handling by Call Centre staff. Some preparatory work has already been undertaken, and the SAT is working closely with the Call Centre team to determine how best to access and use available call data.

### **5. Recommendations**

5.1 The Operational Board is invited to note the marked improvement in Call Centre performance during May and June 2007. The SAT recommends that the Capita team be congratulated on responding so effectively to the poor performance which had led to the issue of a Service Improvement Notice.

5.2 The Operational Board is invited to note the SAT's intention to examine the quality of call handling at the Call Centre as the next area of scrutiny.

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cc Mr J Frost  
(Northgate User Group)

11 November 2008

Dear Nigel,

As you may be aware, the South West User Group met in Bridgend on Thursday 23 October 2008, during which I chaired the Benefits portion. The attendees of the Benefits portion of the meeting have asked me to write to you regarding the new overpayments management module.

The authorities represented at the meeting have been struggling to obtain any reliable or meaningful data from the new module. The issues that have arisen can be categorised as follows:

- The Overpayment Management Information User Guide covers the implementation of the new module but provides little detailed guidance regarding how the overpayment data can be extracted
- The move to using Business Objects to extract information has caused concern, especially for those authorities that have little experience in using Business Objects
- The move to using Business Objects has caused licensing issues in some instances, for example where Business Objects is used corporately
- Although we recognise that the new reporting suite does not balance to the old reports, this has still caused problems. The old reports were used for performance monitoring and to brief Members. To move to a new set of figures, which are several thousand pounds different, without knowing the detail behind the discrepancy, is a source of concern. This may throw into question the validity of previous statistics when they are audited.
- The initialisation process has compromised some authorities when delivering a service due to the additional loss of system availability

It is unacceptable that we cannot provide Members and executive management with meaningful data concerning the level of debt outstanding and an age profile of the debt. Authorities are finding it difficult to provide data for bad debt provision. That the previous statistics have been made void exacerbates matters.

Councils require simple data such as total debt outstanding, recoveries via collection methods and the year this refers to.

The South West User Group wants to invite Martin Foley to our next meeting, to clarify the usage of the reports. However, our next meeting is not until 29 January 2009. We believe that this is too long to wait, so we wish to arrange a seminar so that Martin can provide training on how best to utilise the overpayment module and run reports that extract meaningful data.

The South West User Group also wants Northgate to issue a revised Overpayments Management Information User Guide that:

- Explains scheduling the reports
- Describes how to run the reports
- Explains how to interpret the data
- Describes the criteria used
- Provides examples

In addition, the South West User Group want Northgate to issue an updated Business Objects guide that refers to the new Overpayments and SHBE universes.

We were disappointed to learn that overpayment bugs are not due to be fixed as a priority. The bug fixes and the other changes we want are required before the end of the financial year. Can you please provide an indication of when we could expect these changes to be delivered?

It is fair to say that the majority of members of the South West User Group are extremely dissatisfied with their inability to use the overpayments management module, and that this dissatisfaction arises from the lack of training and documentation provided by Northgate. We recommend that Northgate study the submissions on the Forums page of the portal to see that users are struggling with the new functionality.

One of your customers has said:

'I am having no end of trouble with all this functionality. The Overpayments Guide is incomprehensible and gives no clear indication of what you have to do to get basic, ad hoc information. I have tried to run a report of overpayments created in June (as an example) and I think I have established that I have to choose a suitable high level monthly extract and refresh it. So far, so good, but then I get the same problems as others have encountered. The sums reported, however, bear no relation to reality'

Yours sincerely

Robert Bance

**COUNCIL TAX MONTHLY COLLECTION RATES 2007/08 & 2008/09**

|                | APR   | MAY   | JUN   | JUL   | AUG   | SEP   | OCT   | NOV   | DEC   | JAN   | FEB   | MAR   |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>2007/08</b> | 10.68 | 20.16 | 29.36 | 38.66 | 48.07 | 57.17 | 68.18 | 76.08 | 84.94 | 94.63 | 96.42 | 97.20 |

|                | APR   | MAY   | JUN   | JUL   | AUG   | SEP   | OCT   | NOV   | DEC   | JAN   | FEB | MAR |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|
| <b>2008/09</b> | 11.53 | 20.81 | 30.03 | 38.73 | 48.24 | 57.77 | 67.45 | 76.68 | 86.13 | 95.21 |     |     |

|                 |      |      |      |      |      |     |       |     |      |      |        |       |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|-----|------|------|--------|-------|
| <b>YR ON YR</b> | 0.85 | 0.65 | 0.67 | 0.07 | 0.17 | 0.6 | -0.73 | 0.6 | 1.19 | 0.58 | -96.42 | -97.2 |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----|-------|-----|------|------|--------|-------|

**NNDR MONTHLY COLLECTION RATES 2007/08 & 2008/09**

|                | APR   | MAY   | JUN   | JUL   | AUG   | SEP   | OCT   | NOV   | DEC   | JAN   | FEB   | MAR   |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>2007/08</b> | 12.08 | 21.40 | 30.64 | 39.70 | 53.34 | 62.20 | 71.53 | 79.96 | 87.20 | 96.50 | 97.88 | 98.81 |

|                | APR   | MAY   | JUN   | JUL   | AUG   | SEP   | OCT   | NOV   | DEC   | JAN   | FEB | MAR |
|----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|
| <b>2008/09</b> | 10.12 | 20.53 | 31.91 | 39.14 | 50.69 | 59.61 | 69.16 | 78.02 | 85.61 | 94.66 |     |     |

|                 |       |       |      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |        |        |
|-----------------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| <b>YR ON YR</b> | -1.96 | -0.87 | 1.27 | -0.56 | -2.65 | -2.59 | -2.37 | -1.94 | -1.59 | -1.84 | -97.88 | -98.81 |
|-----------------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|