



Service Plan 2007/08 (Stage 1)

Service Plan for: Public Services

Directorate: Resources

Service Plan Holder: James Drury

Workplans: Benefits, Revenues, Registration Services,
York Customer Centre, Systems Support,
Business Management

Director: Simon Wiles

EMAP : Corporate Services

1. Service description & objectives

The Public Services division covers six major functions:

Benefits Service

Calculate and pay Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit for 12,000 claimants totalling £33.2m. Maximise benefit take-up and provide a welfare benefits advice service. Prevent and detect fraud through regular interventions and visits. Provide an enquiry service to customers. Based at City Finance Centre with reception points in Library Square and Acomb.

Revenues Service

Bill and collect the Council Tax and Business Rates for 83,000 domestic and 5,600 business properties for debt totalling £70m and £76m respectively. Maintain accurate property valuation records. Pursue customers for non-payment. Provide a cash collection and banking service for the whole Council. Based at City Finance Centre.

Registration Service

Provide registration services for births (3,200 p.a.), deaths (2,800), marriages (850) and Civil Partnerships (100). Undertake baby naming, renewal of vows and commitment ceremonies. . Provide certificates for historic entries from 1837 onwards. Licence approved premises for marriages and civil partnerships. Service falls under the remit of the Council and the Registrar General. Delivered from 56 Bootham, ASDA superstore at Monks Cross and York Hospital.

York Customer Centre (YCC)

Centre will provide a single point of contact for telephone and email enquiries offering access to information, raising Service Requests and signposting callers to the appropriate destination. Currently providing a service for three functions: York Pride Action Line (over 6,000 calls per month), Switchboard (over 50,000 calls per month) and Planning & Building Control. Proposed extension to services include Revenues (late 2006/07) and Benefits services (in 2007/08). Based at Little Stonegate

Systems Support and Development

Provide user support for a number of corporate IT systems – FMS, Delphi, Northgate Revenues & Benefits and Anite @ Work document management system. Provide user support for Resources IT systems – QPR, Magique, Galileo, Incase, Radius Icon, Radius ARMS and Technology Forge. Departmental co-ordination/representation of Resources in key corporate activities – IT Strategy and Corporate Operations Group. Manage and maintain the Council's website, Content Management System and intranet, providing advice on web development work for all directorates. Provide support of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system used within YCC. Based at City Finance Centre and Swinegate Court East.

Business Management

Provide a departmental HR and administrative support service. Manage incoming and outgoing post and electronically scan items (700k p.a.). Handle controlled stationery. Co-ordinate Health & Safety and Admin Accommodation issues. Based at City Finance Centre.

Service Objectives:

SO1 To deliver continuous service improvement whilst working within the legislative framework and performing to the national benefit standards set by the DWP

SO2 To maximize the income due to the Council in the form of Government grants, taxation, subsidy and to secure DWP funding

SO3 To pay benefit to the right people, for the right amount at the right time

SO4 To promptly and accurately bill and collect money in respect of the Council Tax and Business Rates ensuring that customers claim discounts, exemptions and reliefs to which they are entitled

- SO5** To reduce benefit overpayments and improve the rate of recovery
- SO6** To monitor and maintain a high level of customer satisfaction with the service
- SO7** To maximize benefit take-up, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, with particular consideration to hard to reach groups and BME (black and minority ethnic) groups
- SO8** To be proactive in preventing and detecting fraudulent abuse of the benefits scheme
- SO9** To communicate with staff effectively and encourage staff development
- SO10** To use performance management to monitor workloads and productivity in order to maximise the use of resources and aid planning
- SO11** To be the premier civil ceremony venue in the country
- SO12** To develop and deliver improved customer service to customers covering a range of services within the York Customer Centre
- SO13** To lead on all corporate customer service initiatives
- SO14** Improve stakeholders accessibility to Council services
- SO15** Ensure that the IT resource is fit for purpose and that development, replacement and utilization is focused on key Council objectives.
- SO16** Make key contributions to change management projects, for example [easy@york](#) and Admin Accommodation review
- SO17** To provide support and guidance to staff on Health and Safety, within legislative guidelines
- SO18** To monitor and report sickness absence and provide HR support for the Resources directorate

2. Significant drivers for change and improvement

Driver	Affect on service delivery
<p>Easy@York Project and extended service provided by YCC (R)</p>	<p>Further service improvement work within Revenues and Benefits service to identify front/back office split and produce service level agreements. Efficiencies are expected to realise savings of £25k in 2007/08.</p> <p>Realignment of responsibilities for handling customer calls.</p> <p>Council will offer more customer access channels and self-service options. Increased level of knowledge by front-line Customer Service Representatives will increase first time resolution and improve customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Systems Support team need to support new technologies within YCC</p>
<p>Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) legislation changes including introduction of Local Housing Allowances (LHA) and changes to Performance Standards</p>	<p>LHA national roll-out starts April 2008 so Benefits Service needs to start implementation work in 2007/08 including extension of payments direct into bank accounts.</p> <p>All Performance Standards require close monitoring to ensure we maintain a “Good” CPA rating. Changes to the Security measures part of the standards need to be implemented and monitored.</p> <p>Note: From April 2009 Government intend to replace CPA with Comprehensive Area Assessment – see Local Government White Paper 2006</p>
<p>Key Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs) (R)</p>	<p>All Benefits BVPs are closely monitored to ensure service improvements are realised and CPA rating maintained. Further review of working practices and structure required to ensure that performance does not deteriorate.</p> <p>Improvements in the collection and recovery of both current year and arrears of Council Tax</p>

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	<p>ongoing to ensure increase in the collection rate and improve Collection Fund position (and consequent impact on level of Council Tax)</p> <p>Note: Government intend to replace BVPIs with new set of national indicators – see Local Government White Paper 2006</p>
Current budget position	<p>Budget savings of £228k identified for 2007/08 which will require a stringent review of existing activities and close monitoring of income collection rates and benefit subsidy maximisation.</p> <p>Reduction in staff levels could have detrimental impact on service delivery and key BVPI data</p> <p>Growth bid proposed of £190k for “loss” of subsidy arising from placement of Homeless B&B cases</p>
Development of Corporate Customer Standards and Delivery of Improvement Statements as part of Customer Access Strategy	<p>Review of existing Customer First standards required and development of revised corporate customer standards and measures. Links into delivery of services by YCC and the web.</p> <p>Growth bid (£50.8k in 2007/08) to create post to deliver this outcome has not been approved.</p> <p>Note: AD Public Services is champion for corporate priority that seeks to <i>Improve our focus on the needs of customers and residents in designing and providing services</i></p>
Sustainability Agenda	<p>Leading on the implementation of the Green Office Policy within Resources.</p> <p>Support for Director of Resources to achieve corporate priority on “improving efficiency and reduce waste”</p>
IT Development Plan and system replacement	<p>Systems team input or project management for FMS, ISIS, Payroll & HR and B stubs (Miscellaneous Income) replacement projects</p>
Registration On Line (RON) for Births, Deaths & Marriages - national implementation	<p>Experience of the introduction for Civil Partnerships (late 2005) indicates possible initial backlogs if systems are not robust. May need to handle public complaints.</p>
Implementation of Single Non-Emergency Number (SNEN) as part of Home Office/DCLG initiative	<p>Roll-out of national “101” number, in partnership with North Yorkshire Police, in 2008 with a 24/7 365 days service. Will extend the range of services offered by the YCC but there are long-term resource implications, though funding provided for 5 years.</p>
Lyons Inquiry into Local Government and response from Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)	<p>Potential changes in balance of funding, new basket of local taxes, Council Tax valuation and streamlining of Council Tax Benefit claims for pensioners.</p> <p>Depending on the outcomes this could have an impact on the structure and delivery of services within Council Tax, Business Rates and Benefits teams.</p>

3. Priority improvement for 2007/08 & beyond

Performance improvement	Reason why improvement is required
Improvement In administering benefits Change of Circumstances notifications and New Claims (R)	<p>Necessary to ensure (a) that BVPIs are not “qualified” in 2007/08 (b) to help maintain a Good Benefits CPA score, (c) to reduce the level of benefit overpayments and minimise the level of local authority error.</p> <p>There is a proposed legislation change to allow notification of changes to be accepted over the telephone which should positively impact on service delivery and BVPIs</p> <p>Note: BVPI 78b for Changes processed in 2005/06 was qualified by the Audit Commission and BVPI 78a for New claims qualified in the previous year.</p>
Increase in take-up of benefits for people aged 60+ (LPSA target)	Addresses objectives in the Council’s Equalities Strategy (see Thriving City theme). Helps secure funding under the LPSA scheme.
Other comments to note	
<p>Relocation of staff to YCC took place in June 2006. Implementation of Customer Relationship Management system, new telephony and transactional website due in December 2006. When systems are fully working and embedded it will possible to compile true metrics to assess performance and monitor admin queues.</p> <p>Restructuring of budgets will be required in 2007/08 across the Public Services division as operational costs of the YCC increase and staff transfer to the centre.</p>	

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4. New or changed actions for 2007/08 and beyond				
Action	Service plan outcome	New? / Change?	Links to note	Comments
Implement Local Housing Allowance scheme in accordance with DWP legislation	Legislative requirement Meets service objective SO3	New (by 2008)	National roll-out included in Welfare Reform Bill 2006	Project will include consultation with landlords, provision of advice to customers about bank accounts, gathering of bank details, system testing. Need to establish if implementation costs will be met by DWP.
Introduction of external speech server	Improves customer contact channels Meets service objectives SO12 & SO14	New (during 2007/08)	Links to corporate priority on customer focus	
Undertake work to increase benefit take-up of groups whose level of health is the poorest	Meets service objective SO7 on maximisation of benefit take-up	New (by 2009)	Included in Corporate Strategy 2006-2009 Healthy City theme. Also link to DWP Performance Standard enabler E39 on targeted campaigns.	Additional funding/resources will need to be sought to help meet this corporate objective. Co-ordinate with priority champion – AD Lifelong Learning & Leisure
Undertake targeted benefit take-up and awareness campaigns to support children, young people and families	Meets service objective SO7 on maximisation of benefit take-up	New (by 2009)	Included in Corporate Strategy 2006-2009 Inclusive City theme. Also link to DWP Performance Standard enabler E39 on targeted campaigns.	Additional funding/resources will need to be sought to help meet this corporate objective. Co-ordinate with priority champion – AD Children & Families
Implement a mobile working solution for benefits intervention visits. Consider extension to home visit assessments	Improves customer service and processing times Meets service objectives SO1, SO3 & SO8	Change	easy@york project	Joint Business Appraisal was carried out with Housing. Some integration issues identified but resolved. Project on hold pending decisions by easy@york project

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Key role in support, development and expansion of CRM and telephony solutions as part of easy@york project	Increase accessibility and service improvement Meets service objectives SO12-14	New (ongoing throughout 2007/08)	easy@york project Links to corporate priority on customer focus	CRM and telephony became responsibility of Systems Support & Development team in 2006/07.
Lead in the development, support and expansion of the Content Management System	Improve accessibility and communication with our customers Meets service objectives SO12-114	New (ongoing throughout 2007/08)	easy@york project Links to corporate priority on customer focus	Web team transferred to Public Services following Chief Executive's re-structure
Key role in the Business Appraisal for replacement Payroll & HR system as part of 2007/08 IT Development Plan	Meets service objective SO15	New Deadline for submissions June/July 2007	ITDP 2007/08	Work needs to start as soon as possible to ensure full and comprehensive appraisal carried out for next 2008/09 ITDP round
Develop full Quality Assurance role within Benefits service to improve accuracy, identify training needs, review procedures and inform policy	Service objectives SO2, SO3 & SO5 Improve BVPIs for processing times and accuracy	Change	BFI Action Plan (R)	4% risk based management checking was introduced Autumn 2006 following growth bid to secure additional post. Further work needed to ensure feedback loop working successfully and full benefits realised
Benefits Customer Satisfaction Survey – respond to any issues raised and implement actions	Improved customer satisfaction. Meets service objective SO6	New July 2007		BVPI80 Satisfaction Survey is currently in progress
Benefit Appeals and Revisions – review resources to ensure standards are met	Improved customer satisfaction Meets service objectives SO3 & SO6	New September 2007	BFI Action Plan (R)	

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5. Key Balanced Scorecard Measures 2007/08 to 2009/10

Customer Measures						Process Measures					
Measure		Current 06/07	Targets			Measure		Current 06/07	Targets		
			07/08	08/09	09/10				07/08	08/09	09/10
C1	Customer Satisfaction (YCC)	(1)				P1	Average days to process new claims	34 days	32 days	30 days	TBC
C2	% first time resolution (YCC)	(1)				P2	Average days to process change of circumstances notifications	14 days	15 days	9 days	TBC
C3	Customer Satisfaction (Benefits)	N/A (2)	No survey	No survey	TBC	P3	Accuracy of processing	97.6%	98.4%	98.5%	TBC
C4	% letters answered in 10 days	92.14%	95%	95%	TBC	P4	% of new claims outstanding > 50 days	7.8%	8%	7.5%	TBC
C5	% calls answered in 20 secs	75.38%	95%	95%	TBC	P5	% of new claims decided within 14 days of all information	72%	90%	92%	TBC
C6	% of revenues changes in 10 days	58%	85%	95%	TBC	P6	% of HB overpayments recovered as % of HB overpayments identified	68%	45%	50%	TBC
C7	% of Direct Debit take-up (Council Tax)	64.45%	66%	67%	TBC	P7	% of Council Tax collected (in-year)	97.1% (3)	97.5%	97.8%	TBC
C8	% of e-payments received for Council Tax	3.1%	4%	4.5%	TBC	P8	% of Council Tax arrears collected	50% (3)	55%	60%	TBC
C9	Scanning completed within set time period	12 hrs	11 hrs	10 hrs	TBC	P9	% of Business Rates collected	98.4% (3)	98.95%	99.0%	TBC
C10	Users set up with password and access within set timeframe	5 days of receipt	5 days	5 days	5 days	P10	Number of documents scanned per hour	690	700	700	TBC
						P11	Invoices paid within 30 days	100%	100%	100%	TBC
						P12	% of deadlines met for data input to QPR & extracted for inclusion in performance monitoring reports	100%	100%	100%	TBC

(1) Baseline for measures yet to be determined

(2) Satisfaction Survey currently in progress

(3) Target for 2006/07

5. Key Balanced Scorecard Measures 2007/08 to 2009/10

Finance Measures		Current 06/07	Targets		
Measure	07/08		08/09	09/10	
F1	% subsidy received against benefit paid	97%	94%	95%	TBC
F2	Service budget variance	+/- 0.6%	+/- 0.5%	+/- 0.5%	TBC
F3	% of court costs income collected	80%	80%	80%	TBC

Staffing Measures		Current 06/07	Targets		
Measure	07/08		08/09	09/10	
S1	Minimum number of training and development days per staff member	2.5 days	3 days	3 days	3 days
S2	% of staff days lost to sickness absence	3.92%	4%	3.75%	3.5%
S3	% of staff expressing satisfaction with their job	N/A	66%	No survey	TBC
S4	% of staff who have received an appraisal	90%	92.5%	95%	TBC