

Service Delivery Plan 2024-27

| Service | Revenues and Benefits | Head of Service | Jane Walker | | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|-------------|---------|--------------|---|---|
| Service Purpose and Core Functions | | | | | | | |
| <p>Revenues and Benefits is a shared service between Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) and Watford Borough Council (WBC)) since 2010. TRDC is the lead authority.</p> <p>Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the service has improved its service provision and was regularly in the top-quartile nationally for delivering processing benefit claims and has consistently improved its revenue collection rates despite over £500k of costs have been removed from the service. Now in Oct 2022 the service is once again moving back to top-quartile performance.</p> <p>Revenues and Benefits is by far the biggest service in both councils. It has a combined turnover of c£250m, paying out c£40m in benefits and collecting c£200m in Council Tax and Business Rates. Across the two councils there is around:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="194 766 2042 1149"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="194 766 1272 813">Watford</th> <th data-bbox="1272 766 2042 813">Three Rivers</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="194 813 1272 1149"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,934 HB customers • 6,027 Local Council Tax Support Customers • 41,838 Council Tax payers, and • 2,967 businesses <hr data-bbox="297 1149 958 1152"/> </td> <td data-bbox="1272 813 2042 1149"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,055 HB Customers • 3,977 Local Council Tax Support Customers • 39,150 Council Tax payers, and • 2,148 businesses <hr data-bbox="1279 1149 1977 1152"/> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | | | | Watford | Three Rivers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,934 HB customers • 6,027 Local Council Tax Support Customers • 41,838 Council Tax payers, and • 2,967 businesses <hr data-bbox="297 1149 958 1152"/> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2,055 HB Customers • 3,977 Local Council Tax Support Customers • 39,150 Council Tax payers, and • 2,148 businesses <hr data-bbox="1279 1149 1977 1152"/> |
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| Link to Corporate Framework | Key Action/Deliverable for 2023-26 | Lead Officer | Milestone (Specific and measurable) | Milestone date (Month/Year) | Internal/External Partners | Additional Capital or Revenue cost and/or saving |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|---|----------------------------|--|
| RRLL SC | Review Council Tax Support Schemes. prepare reports to suggest ways in which the schemes could be changed | Head of Revenues and Benefits | Scoping Proposals prepared Consultation Implementation | April 2023 May 2023 Summer 2023 April 2024 | Finance HCC | Potential savings will be worked out as part of the review exercise. |

Targets – Key Performance Indicators

| Ref | Targets* | Target 2023/24 | Projected 2022/2023 outturn | Target 2023/24 | Target 2024/25 | Target 2025/26 | Rationale for setting of target / changes to target |
|------|---|----------------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--|
| RB01 | Council Tax Collection | 98% | 98% | 98% | 98% | 98% | |
| RB02 | Business Rates Collection | 99% | 99% | 99% | 99% | 99% | |
| RB04 | Time take to process changes in circumstances | 5 days | 5 days | 5 days | 4 days | 4 days | Introduction of some automation |
| RB05 | New Claims – average time taken to process | 5 days | 5 days | 5 days | 5 days | 5 days | Introduction of some automation |
| RB06 | Accuracy of work processed | 92% | 92% | 92% | 95% | 95% | Target retained to reflect additional workload and pressure on the service as a consequence of C19 and CoL – and realistic level of year on year improvement |
| RB07 | Collection of Housing Benefit Overpayments | 92.5% | 92.5% | 92.5% | 92.5% | 92.5% | Target retained but it is difficult to predict impacts of CoL which may have an impact in 23/24 |

Service Volumes

| Activity / Process | Projected annual volume for 2023/2024 | Estimated annual volume for 2024/25 | Notes / explanation for estimated change | Impact (both service and corporate level) |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| New Claims for HB and CTS | 3,500 | 3,500 | New Claims for HB were expected to decrease as customer moved to Universal Credit. – this is now not scheduled to happen until 28/29 | |
| Changes in Circumstances Three Rivers Atlas Apr – Oct 2022 4,551 UC Apr – Oct 2022 12,603 Watford Atlas Apr – Oct 2022 8,600 UC Apr – Oct 2022 24,182 Other CIC's Three Rivers Apr – Oct 2,843 Watford Apr – Oct 6,371 | 9,100 25,206+ 17,200 48,300+ 5,686 12,742 | 10,000 35,000+ 17,000 60,000+ | | Increases in transfers to UC will impact on workloads in relation to Council Tax Support which may require a review of the current scheme and its administration. |
| Recovery of Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit Overpayments and Sundry Debts | Waiting on number of accounts and value of arrears | | | |
| Energy Rebate Grants Core Scheme Three Rivers Watford | 19,387 £2,908,050 32,164 £4,824,600 | Nothing expected at this time for 2023/24 | | The delivery of these schemes impacted BAU in the Revenues Team in 2022/23. There were over 4,000 documents outstanding, which has now |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------|
| | | | been brought back to BAU levels |
| Energy Rebate Grants Discretionary Scheme Three Rivers Watford | £205,050 £239,850 | Nothing expected at this time for 2023/24 | |
| CARF (Covid Additional Relief Fund) Three Rivers Watford | 592 awards to businesses with funding of £2,006,413 688 awards to businesses with funding of £3,020,840 | This scheme closed in 2022/23. | |

Key Risks to Service Plan delivery

1 = not likely/low Impact 4 = will definitely happen/major service changing impact

| No | Description of Risk | With no Mitigation | | | Mitigation | With Mitigation | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------|--|------------------|--------------|------------|
| | | Likelihood (1-4) | Impact (1-4) | Risk Score | | Likelihood (1-4) | Impact (1-4) | Risk Score |
| 1 | Insufficient Staff | 2 | 3 | 5 | Agency staff, assistance from CSC's, offer of overtime. | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 2 | Failure of IT systems | 2 | 3 | 5 | Battlebox, disaster recovery process, payments by cheque / cash if necessary, mobile phones for officers | 1 | 1 | 2 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Fraudulent activity (Internal and external) | 2 | 2 | 4 | Work alongside internal Investigations Team and DWP Fraud Team. Ensure staff up to date with I-learn training module. Internal and external audits. | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 4 | Recession / Pandemics / Cost of Livings Crisis - leads to greater take-up of benefits and added pressure on service. | 2 | 3 | 5 | Agency Staff, resource assistance from other departments, overtime | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 5 | Recession / pandemic / cost of living crisis leads to more non-payment of council tax and business rates. | 2 | 3 | 5 | Agency Staff, resource assistance from other departments, overtime | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 6 | Recession / pandemic / cost of living crisis means it is more difficult to collect sundry debts and HB overpayments | 2 | 3 | 5 | Agency Staff, resource assistance from other departments, overtime | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| 7 | Breach of Data Protection etc. Acts | 2 | 2 | 4 | Checking process in place before post is released internal quality and assurance checks | 1 | 1 | 2 |

Impact Assessments Required or Reviews Due

| Equalities & Diversity | Sustainability & Climate Change |
|---|--|
| Annual provision of equalities data on service delivery | |
| Review Council Tax Support Schemes. | |