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| Report to: Shared Revenues & Benefits Service - Joint Committee Meeting to be held on 26 July 2021 | Electoral Ward Affected: All |
| Report submitted by: Chief Officer (Revenues & Benefits) - Head of Shared Service | |
| Report title: SHARED SERVICE - BUSINESS PLAN 2021 - 2023 (Shared Revenues & Benefits Service) | |

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Lancaster City Council and Preston City Council entered into a formal shared service arrangement for a further 10 years, with effect from 1 July 2021 to provide a Revenues and Benefits service across both City Council areas.
- 1.2 In line with the agreement this report introduces a refreshed Business Plan for 2021/23, incorporating the key performance indicators for the service together with ongoing projects and future challenges.
- 1.3 The Business Plan also contains a financial appraisal of the 2020/21 outturn position, and the budget requirement for 2021/22, approved at the previous meeting of the Joint Committee.

2. DECISION REQUIRED

- 2.1 The Joint Committee is asked to consider and approve the Business Plan for 2021 – 2023 as set out in **Appendix 1** to this report.

3. INFORMATION

- 3.1 Revenues and Benefits have responsibility for a range of customer focused services, including the collection of local taxation and the administration of business grants and Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support.
- 3.2 The vision is to achieve the best results we can by continuing to challenge, develop and integrate the service areas, working with our customers and partners to deliver an accessible, responsive and cost effective Revenues & Benefits service to both Councils.
- 3.3 Appended to this report at **Appendix 1** is the revised Business Plan for the Shared Service, covering the period 2021/23. The business planning process is key to setting out the priorities for the coming year and provides direction as to how the service will achieve those priorities.
- 3.4 In developing this Business Plan consideration has been given to:

- Response to the Covid-19 pandemic
 - Service delivery in relation to customers and value for money principles
 - Future direction of both Councils in relation to the welfare reform agenda
 - The mitigation of identified risks
- 3.5 Budgets for both Councils have been formally approved and the Business Plan sets out the detailed budget position for the shared service for 2021/22, developed in line with these overall budget projections. It also contains a review of the Shared Services financial performance during 2020/21.
- 3.6 To develop future years' budgets, existing arrangements will continue as follows:
- This year's budget will be updated for pay and inflationary increases to provide base budget projections for the next three years
 - Any opportunities for further savings will be examined and agreed with Section 151 Officers and Portfolio Holders and built into future budgets
 - Linked to the outcome of consultation and other developments in the Government's planned welfare reforms, any re-allocation of resources or potential growth will be agreed in the same way
- 3.7 In terms of cost sharing, budget costs are shared equally across the two Councils and each year the Section 151 Officers of each Council consider the budget requirement for Joint Committee expenses for the following year, taking into account any changes in the caseload, work demand and other expenditure in relation to each Council, and report to the Joint Committee the appropriate proportions for sharing income and expenditure for the years after 2021/22. Should they be unable to reach an agreed position, the Joint Committee would be asked to make a decision based on the evidence presented to them.
- 3.8 Any agreed adjustments to Shared Service budgets will be fed into each authority's own budget process, ensuring that relevant Members and other officers are kept up to date with any issues arising and that these are considered and addressed in a co-ordinated way.

4. IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The shared service has built a strong record of business transformation and achieving efficiency savings. Savings to date have been achieved primarily by streamlining processes and reducing staffing costs, with reductions achieved by natural wastage and voluntary redundancy.
- 4.2 The shared service is currently focussing on responding to the needs of the two communities due to the impact of Covid-19, particularly in relation to business grants and other individual grants to those most in financial need.

4.3 Officers from financial services are involved in developing the business plan and advise as appropriate. At the same time, direct input from other support services should be recognised, in maintaining standards of service delivery.

4.4 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5. IMPACT STATEMENT

5.1 The operation as a shared service has no direct impact on service users and front line customer services continue to operate as normal through each individual Council.

5.2 Preston City Council's living wage and fair employment policy is applied in evaluating any newly created posts arising from the shared service structure.

6. REASON FOR DECISION

6.1 The approval of this Business Plan will focus attention on the key service objectives supporting improved service delivery, with resulting efficiencies at a lower overall cost to both Councils.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

7.1 It would be inappropriate not to reconsider and refresh the 'existing' Business Plan as planned, as to continue without review would ignore the impact the pandemic has had on service delivery and performance, and the changing priorities that have come to the fore.

8. REASON FOR INCLUSION IN PART B, IF APPROPRIATE

8.1 No applicable

Background Documents:

Background documents open to inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

| Paper | Date | Contact/Directorate/Ext |
|---|--------------|---|
| Report to Cabinet – Preston Shared Services for Revenues and Benefits | 30 June 2021 | Jackie Wilding Director of Resources 01772 906994 |
| Report to Cabinet – Lancaster Shared Services for Revenues & Benefits | 13 July 2021 | Sarah Davies Director for Corporate Services 01524 582660 |

Contact for further information:

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|---|
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**BUSINESS PLAN
2021-2023**

**REVENUES & BENEFITS
SHARED SERVICE**

**LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL
&
PRESTON CITY COUNCIL**

(This Plan will be refreshed annually)

June 2021

INDEX

| | Page |
|--|-------------|
| Vision Statement | 2 |
| Statement of Purpose | 2 |
| Service Overview | 2 |
| Customers & Stakeholders | 3 |
| Contribution to Council Policies | 4 |
| Key Service Objectives | 4 |
| Other Major Responsibilities | 5 |
| Key Projects | 6 |
| Financial appraisal | 7 |
| Equality Impact Assessments | 9 |
| Performance | 9 |
| Risk Analysis | 11 |
| Future Development | 11 |
| Two year Horizon | 12 |
| Appendix A (Establishment structures) | 13 |
| Appendix B (Equality Impact Assessment – Action Plan) | 16 |
| Appendix C (Performance Table) | 20 |
| Appendix D (Risk Log) | 21 |

VISION STATEMENT:

To achieve the best results we can by continuing to challenge, develop and integrate the service areas, working with our customers and partners to deliver an accessible, responsive and cost effective Revenues & Benefits service to the customers of both Councils.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The Revenues and Benefits service will:

- Bill and collect Council Tax and Non-Domestic rates;
- Administer Covid related grants and other Government initiatives
- Administer Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support;
- Administer welfare reforms and work in partnership with DWP
- Assist our customers to access financial advice and support.

SERVICE OVERVIEW:

The Business Plan outlines the way that management and staff work together to deliver necessary improvements and efficiencies. The service recognises the requirement to reduce spend and will create efficiencies by removing duplication and creating economies of scale.

The Revenues and Benefits service sits as part of the Customer Services Directorate within Preston City Council, and as part of the Resources Directorate within Lancaster City Council and features:

- Council Tax
- National Non Domestic Rates
- Benefits (Assessment & Control)
- Operations & Support

The current establishment for the existing service areas has contracted over time and totals 91.3 full time equivalent (FTE) posts, split as follows.

- 4.0 staff in Senior Management Team
- 35.9 staff in Benefits
- 27.1 staff in Council Tax
- 12.0 staff in Business Rates
- 12.3 staff in Operations and Performance

The following table provides a summary of the indicative staffing levels, shown as full time equivalents (FTEs), including transition levels from the original old to the new structure. This does not include any Customer Service staff as they do not form part of the shared service establishment.

Staffing Comparison:

| | Original Structure | | | Shared Service | |
|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------|
| | Preston | Lancaster | Total | Shared Service | Overall Reduction |
| Senior Managers | 3 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 2.0 |
| Managers | 5.8 | 10.8 | 16.6 | 7.9 | 8.7 |
| Team Leaders | 6.3 | 14 | 20.3 | 12.15 | 8.15 |
| Officers (*) | 19 | 13.7 | 32.7 | 12.05 | 20.65 |
| Processors (**) | 42.1 | 52.5 | 94.6 | 53.12 | 41.48 |
| Admin Staff (***) | 4.1 | 3.5 | 7.6 | 2.04 | 5.56 |
| Totals | 80.3 | 97.5 | 177.8 | 91.3 | 86.5 |

(*) includes Support Officers, QA Officer, Training Officer, Appeals Officer, Visiting Officers & Secretariat.

(**) includes Benefit Assessors and Council Tax/Business Rate processors.

(***) includes Admin staff and Sanction Support Officer

The organisational structure for the shared service is shown at **Appendix A**.

The service has a benefits caseload which currently standing at 25,532 (11,648 cases at Lancaster and 13,884 cases at Preston) and has an increasing number of households for Council Tax purposes at 131,449, (66,056 households in Lancaster and 65,393 households in Preston). In addition there are 11,688 business premises liable for business rates (5,320 in Lancaster and 6,368 in Preston).

CUSTOMERS & STAKEHOLDERS:

We continue to develop excellent working relationships with our customers and stakeholders, including:

- All residents of the two districts;
- The business community;
- Benefit customers;
- Landlords/Agents;
- Elected representatives.
- Other Council services;
- Valuation Office Agency;
- Department for Work and Pensions;
- Pensions Service;

- Jobcentre Plus;
- Rent Service;
- Tribunal Service;
- Estate Agents;
- Advice Agencies – CAB & Welfare Rights Service;
- Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government;
- Enforcement Agents;
- Solicitors;
- Other local authorities;
- Courts;
- Police;
- Rating Advisers

CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

This Business Plan is directly shaped by corporate priorities at both Councils:

- Delivering well run, value for money services, demonstrating good governance, openness and transparency.

We continue to contribute towards corporate priorities in our day to day work; by participating in corporate projects and by achieving our key service objectives. Our performance helps to ensure that Council priorities can be achieved. This is by ensuring that we maintain sufficient resources, and wherever possible streamlined and standard processes are in place alongside systems, that support new ways of partnership working.

KEY SERVICE OBJECTIVES:

In preparing the objectives and targets for this plan, the Shared Service management team has reviewed all of the known influences on the service. These include customer needs, staff needs/issues, the overall environment, performance issues and the various changes associated with improving the service provided.

Key Service Objectives for the Shared Service for 2021/22 are:

- To deliver cost effective services that provide value for money.
- To resource and manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and assist and support customers.
- To provide customer focussed accessible services, prioritising and publicising e-services and self-serve options for customers; reducing the need for customers to contact their Council in person or by letter/telephone/email.
- To implement service changes in line with welfare reform and manage the impact these changes have on our customers, offering advice and assistance to those affected by the changes.
- To resource and manage the impact of Universal Credit full service and assist customers throughout the process.

- To maximise income and minimise hardship under the Council Tax Support Scheme, paying the right amount of support to the right people at the right time.

General Service Objectives:

- To encourage a strong culture of good performance in relation to cost;
- To promote the principles of fairness, equality of opportunity, social inclusion and poverty reduction through service provision.

OTHER MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Collection and Administration of Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates

To provide a customer focussed, cost effective and accessible local taxation service that provides value for money and facilitates:

- the maintenance of accurate and up to date databases used to administer Local Taxation systems;
- the prompt issue of bills to all liable persons, net of entitlements, and to operate a fair and sensitive debt collection policy, acknowledging that there are instances of genuine need at this time, but also recognising that customers have a responsibility to pay their debts;
- the operation and development of efficient, cost effective collection and recovery procedures;
- work within Government guidelines and with outside agencies to help, advise and encourage the business community through the difficult economic climate.

Management and administration of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support

To provide a customer focussed, cost effective accessible benefits service that provides value for money and contributes to the broader objectives of reducing worklessness, homelessness and poverty by:

- ensuring prompt and accurate payment of housing benefit and council tax support;
- reducing the levels and risks of fraud and error and taking appropriate action;
- minimising housing benefit overpayments and maximising the recovery of those that occur, so as not to cause specific hardship to those most in need;
- building effective relationships with local landlords and outside agencies, aimed at assisting with affordable housing and minimising the risk of homelessness;
- working with the Dept. for Work and Pensions to administer Universal Credit
- maximising subsidy.

KEY PROJECTS

The Revenues and Benefits Service has an established Change Management process to identify, prioritise, resource and manage a range of projects.

Specific projects for 2021/22 include:

- Recovery from COVID19 in terms of both staffing (returning to the workplace) and customers.
- Supporting local businesses in the management and administration of the SBRR and RHL grants.
- The Government's breathing space scheme was launched on 4th May 2021. Procedures for dealing with breathing space have been developed and continue to evolve during roll-out. There is a possibility of a small impact on collection rates.
- Virtual courts for Council Tax & Business Rates using COVID safe procedures.
- Manage the requirements, ongoing changes and continued roll-out of Universal Credit and its impact on customers;
- Continue to publicise the availability of Capita Self-Serve/Connect to allow customers, stakeholders and partners to access and update documentation relating to benefits, council tax and non-domestic rates via the Council's website;
- Continually Review the Inform solutions to support Customer Services and encourage channel shift.
- The Verification Earnings and Pension alerts service (VEP) identifies changes in income (Pension Credit, Employment Support Allowance, Carers Allowance, Job Seekers Allowance and Income Support). Funding is still being made available to Local Authorities to administer these changes.
- Work with other Lancashire Authorities via benchmarking groups to formulate and implement a vulnerability policy that incorporates agreed best practice.
- Explore software solutions to interpret and analyse available information streams to reduce fraud and maximise income.
- Publicise the availability of discretionary/hardship funding for vulnerable customers.

FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

2020/21

The actual Shared Service expenditure for 2020/21 was £3,550k.

The Joint Committee approved a Shared Service expenditure budget for 2020/21 of £3,594k in December 2019. This has since been adjusted during the year for:

- Essential upgrades to IT systems due to legislation changes as a result of the pandemic, funded by a Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government grant (£30k).
- Further funding has been received from the Department for Work and Pensions for Local Authority Data Sharing. This has increased budgets by £17k and incurred matching costs for ICT projects.
- Savings due to vacant posts (-£200k)
- Additional 0.75% for pay award (£20k) agreed in August 2020
- Recruitment of four temporary Benefits Officer posts for two years, funded from the drawdown of grant income (£108k).

The final 2020/21 expenditure budget was £3,569k.

A comparison of budget to actual expenditure is set out below in Table 1:

Table 1: Outturn Position 2020/21

| | Latest Budget £'000 | Actual £'000 | Variance £'000 | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|------------|
| Service Expenditure | | | | |
| Management | 161 | 163 | 2 | (A) |
| Business Rates | 553 | 538 | (15) | (F) |
| Council Tax | 979 | 996 | 17 | (A) |
| Operations | 303 | 324 | 21 | (A) |
| Housing Benefits | 1,573 | 1,529 | (44) | (F) |
| Service Expenditure Total | 3,569 | 3,550 | (19) | (F) |
| Income | | | | |
| Preston City Council | (1,784) | (1,775) | 9 | (A) |
| Lancaster City Council | (1,785) | (1,775) | 10 | (A) |
| Income Total | (3,569) | (3,550) | 19 | (A) |
| Total | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

Notes to Table 1:

(F) - Favourable Variance

(A) - Adverse Variance

The outturn expenditure as at 31st March 2021 was £3,550k which resulted in an underspend of £19k against the latest budget, and an underspend of £44k compared with the original budget. Both these underspends were mainly due to four recently created temporary Benefits Officer posts in the Shared Benefits Service which had not been recruited to by 31st March 2021. All costs are under constant review to ensure that they are minimised, with budgets adjusted to reflect future anticipated spend.

2021/22

The 2021/22 budget approved by the Joint Committee on the 14th December 2020, together with prior year comparison, is shown below:

Table 2: Approved 2021/22 Budget

| | Original Budget 2020/21 £'000 | Budget 2021/22 £'000 |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Service Expenditure | | |
| Management | 160 | 126 |
| Business Rates | 556 | 514 |
| Council Tax | 974 | 1,010 |
| Operations | 301 | 419 |
| Housing Benefits | 1,603 | 1,699 |
| Service Expenditure Total | 3,594 | 3,768 |
| Income | | |
| Preston City Council | (1,797) | (1,884) |
| Lancaster City Council | (1,797) | (1,884) |
| Income Total | (3,594) | (3,768) |
| Total | - | - |

Notes to Table 2:

1. The 2021/22 budget is a net increase of £174k on the original 2020/21 budget.
2. The difference consists of:
 - Pay awards: an additional 0.75% agreed in 20/21 and an assumed 2% pay award in 21/22, and the impact of staff increments - £66k (A) ongoing
 - Four additional Temporary Benefit Officer posts, funded by government grants - £108k (A) ongoing
3. Grant funding and equivalent expenditure will adjust the 2021/22 budgets during the course of the year.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Shared Service is focussed on the prompt delivery of high quality accessible services to the people of Lancaster and Preston. The service seeks to proactively overcome barriers to participation faced by those not currently accessing its services. ie. translation of documentation and publishing information leaflets in an “Easy Read” format.

Staff are committed to working with partners and stakeholders to help make both areas a more equal and fair place to access services. The Benefits Manager and the Business Support Manager now sit on the Internal Equalities Group to ensure that equality issues are considered when making any service changes or decisions; and also to ensure that we minimise the impact these changes may have on equality affected groups.

Maximising income and minimising hardship are key objectives of the Service. By addressing these objectives there will be a positive impact on all residents and visitors to the districts from all backgrounds, as increased benefit take-up will help tackle poverty and deprivation, whilst putting money back into local communities.

An Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan is reproduced at **Appendix B**.

PERFORMANCE

Performance management is an important component of the shared service arrangement and is a key measure in terms of:

- Developing a sustainable operation;
- Maintaining a positive and pro-active partnership.

Performance standards are uniform where possible across the shared service organisation. The current deprivation ranking for Preston is (46) and for Lancaster is (112) out of 317 principal councils, including and unitary authorities, with the lowest number reflecting higher levels of deprivation. This deprivation ranking has an effect on collection rates and the targets for Council Tax and Business Rates are different for each authority to reflect this disparity.

Senior managers work with peers and stakeholders at both Councils and with external bodies, to measure and maintain performance levels.

Appendix C details general performance data for the service. However, in recognition of the economic situation, the service continues to set realistic targets for 2021/22 based on the effects of COVID19, staffing resources, local trends and previous year performance.

A financial target is to deliver a balanced budget for and as set out in the financial appraisal within this Business Plan.

Performance Appraisal

- **Local Taxation**

The Council Tax teams achieved 90.2% (Preston) and 94.6% (Lancaster) in-year collection for Council Tax.

A credible outcome, given the impact of Covid-19 which hit taxpayers' ability to pay, together with ongoing welfare reform changes. The cut in Council Tax Support (Preston) also has a negative impact upon collection.

With the assistance of new technology and data analysis the teams work hard to effectively target the "won't pays" as opposed to the "can't pays". Data analysis continues to show that the tax-payers affected by the welfare reform changes are the ones who are facing the most difficulty in paying their Council Tax, as expected. The teams are trialling new schemes to try to identify those taxpayers facing the greatest difficulties and proactively reaching out to them to assist. The results are constantly reviewed.

NDR collection rate for 2020/21 achieved 90.5% (Preston) and 97.2% (Lancaster).

Unfortunately, COVID19 has had a detrimental effect on the ability of businesses to make payment, but assistance has been provided for small businesses. Rate avoidance tactics in relation to empty rate charges in the form of claiming charitable and de-minimis occupation continue to have a significant impact upon collection rates and recent court decisions will have a significant impact in this area.

The focus is to optimise performance in what continues to be a difficult environment and to effectively manage new government initiatives and encourage businesses in both cities to take advantage of reliefs that may be available.

All BIDS have been renewed.

- **Benefits**

The Benefit Service gave a steady performance in 20/21 processing changes in circumstances in 4.6 days down from 5.2 days (Target 10 days), whilst new claims were processed in 17.4 days down from 20.4 days (Target 23 days).

The Control teams have worked tirelessly in a difficult environment to recover benefit overpayments from the poorer members of society.

The Revenues & Benefits Shared Service achieved a good level of performance in most operational areas during 2020/21 but 2021/22 promises to be a challenging year as we support customers through the recovery from COVID-19 and the continuing welfare reforms. In the circumstances realistic but challenging targets have been set for all teams.

RISK ANALYSIS

Risk management aims to keep the shared service programmes exposure to risk at an acceptable level.

A full risk analysis has been undertaken on all work areas and a risk log has been developed, with full details reproduced in **Appendix D**.

The table below identifies any key critical impact risks in this approach and suggests appropriate mitigating action to reduce these risks.

| No. | Risk | Mitigation |
|-----|--|--|
| 1. | ICT & Systems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance contracts in place with demanding service levels. • Dedicated Account Managers in respect of critical IT systems/providers. • Business continuity plans developed and tested. • Capita Remote Support contract in place for Academy systems. • Regular updates and de-briefs between project leaders, the project manager and Service Heads. |
| 2. | COVID19 – inability to meet statutory requirements and customer expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate staffing levels and structure • Budget monitoring and management • Contingency at each site • Flexible agile staff • Home working • Overview & Scrutiny • Partnership & collaborative working • Review of recovery policy • Robust policies |

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

• Universal Credit

Manage the requirements, ongoing changes and continued roll-out of Universal Credit and its impact on customers;

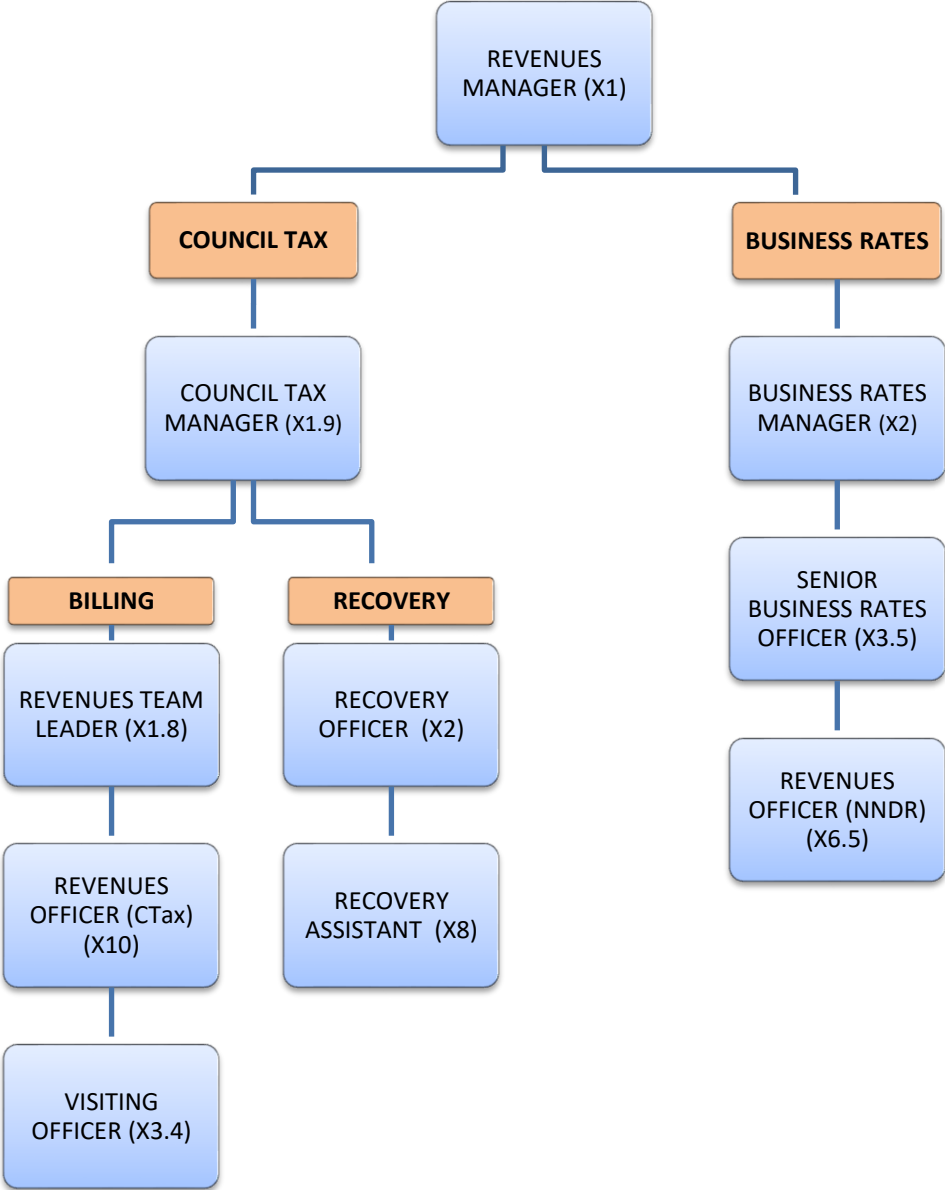
The official figure for the number of UC claims in Preston has been confirmed as 21,088 but the current number of actual claims affected by Universal Credit is 5,396.

The official figure for the number of UC claims in Lancaster has been confirmed as 13,859 but the current number of actual claims affected by Universal Credit is 5,183.

TWO YEAR HORIZON

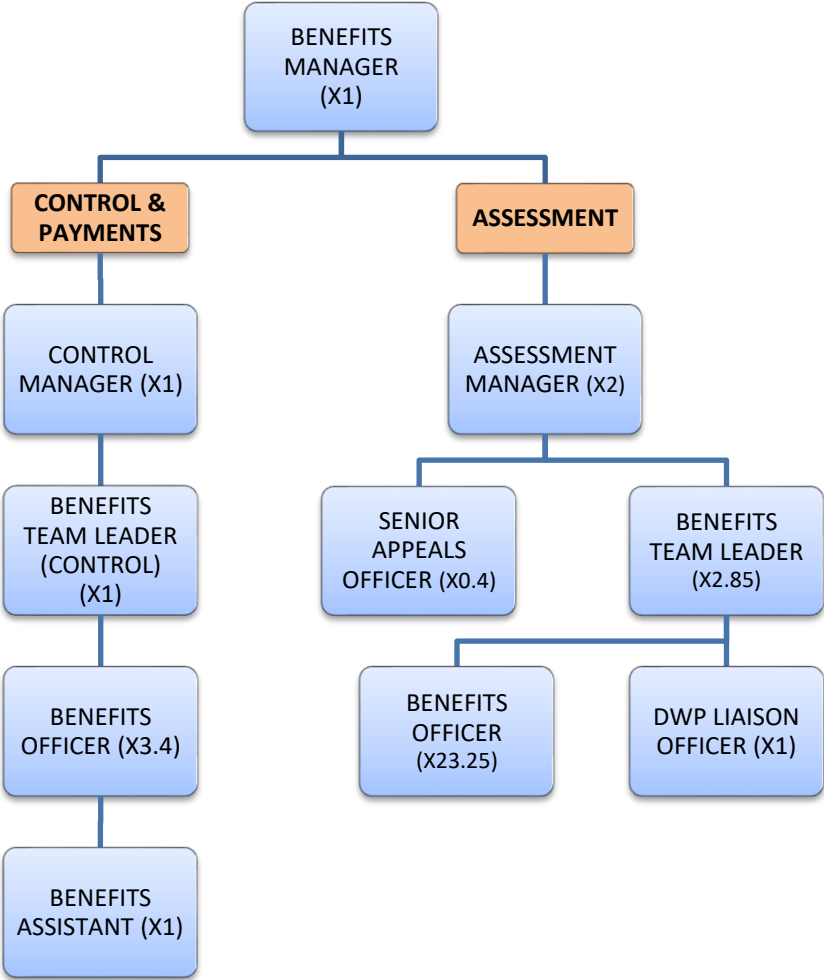
- To maintain a good standard of Benefits processing with ever reducing resources. However, ongoing welfare reforms and the difficulties with introduction of Universal Credit will continue to challenge the way in which the Benefits service is delivered.
- Progress and embrace new technology by developing and introducing e-solutions, mobile working, performance management, quality assurance and e-capture technology, in order to contribute to service efficiency targets.
- To ensure that staffing structures and resources are fit for purpose in our ever changing environment, shifting resources to areas of greatest need to achieve optimum results.
- The high rise in debt, in addition to that accrued during COVID, coupled with the Council Tax Support scheme for Preston and technical changes imposed at both sites, impacts on the ability to reach stretching in-year collection targets for Council Tax and Housing Benefit overpayments.

REVENUES SERVICE



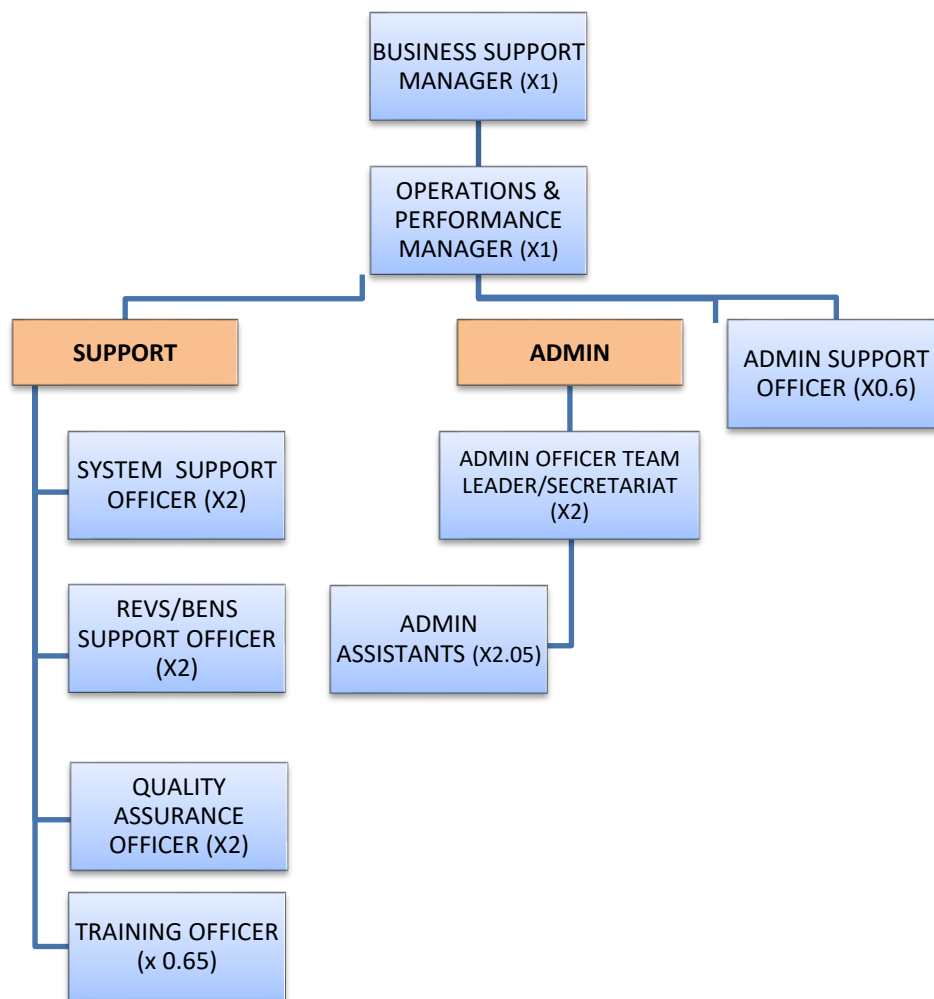
NOTE: (i) The structure roughly represents actual line management responsibility.
(ii) Total Staff = 40.1 FTE's

BENEFITS SERVICE



NOTE: (i) The structure roughly represents actual line management responsibility.
(ii) Total Staff = 36.9 FTE's

OPERATIONS SUPPORT SERVICE



NOTE: (i) The structure roughly represents actual line management responsibilities.
(ii) Total Staff = 13.3 FTE's

Action Plan

| Description of Concern | Adverse issues identified | Action Required | Targets / Measure | Date Due | Responsible Officer | Monitoring |
|---|--|--|---|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Lack of knowledge in the community. | Under-claiming of benefits. | Ensure communications are suitable ie: easy read, large font etc. To devise an easy read document for the exceptional hardship fund. | Produce & publicise information in a format that will reach members of the community that need it most. | Ongoing | Business Support Manager | |
| | Debt recovery processes. | Face to face and telephone advice as well as information published on-line. | | Ongoing | Revenues Manager | |
| | Hardship | Corporate Events | | As & when | Benefits Manager | |
| | | | | Ongoing | | |
| Reduction in benefits and impact on peoples finances and lifestyles | Work with Strategic Housing, Council Housing and other housing providers together with other agencies such as Lancashire | Ongoing | Benefits Manager supported by other services | | | |

| Description of Concern | Adverse issues identified | Action Required | Targets / Measure | Date Due | Responsible Officer | Monitoring |
|------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|------------------------|--|--|
| | | Wellbeing, Welfare Rights, CAB | | | | |
| Equality data | Gaps in knowledge | Continuing dialogue with Community Groups at each authority Monthly equality monitoring of the customers who apply for discretionary hardship and exceptional hardship payments. | Attend relevant meetings and forums | Ongoing | | |
| Potential Homelessness | As above | Work with Strategic Housing to ensure no greater risk of homelessness. Liaison Meetings Publicity on the new scheme. | Minimise the detrimental affects the scheme will have on people | Ongoing Ongoing | Benefits Manager Benefits Manager | Welfare Reform Group DHP Panels |

| Description of Concern | Adverse issues identified | Action Required | Targets / Measure | Date Due | Responsible Officer | Monitoring |
|---|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Ex Armed Forces Personnel are at increased risk of homelessness | As above | Work with Community Engagement & Homelessness Team to ensure and raise awareness of the scheme through relevant forums. | As above | As above | Benefits supported by the Community Engagement Team | Benefits supported by the Community Engagement Team |
| Child Poverty | As above | Work with VCFS and other partners including Children's Centre's and schools to promote CTS scheme | As above | As above | Benefits supported by the Community Engagement Teams | Benefits supported by the Community Engagement Teams |
| Disabled people are not aware of or use the CTAX Support scheme / do not apply to hardship fund if needed | As above | As above | As above | As above | Benefits supported by the Community Engagement Teams | Benefits supported by the Community Engagement Teams |

| Description of Concern | Adverse issues identified | Action Required | Targets / Measure | Date Due | Responsible Officer | Monitoring |
|---|---|--|--------------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Capacity for some groups to be incentivised to Work, including:- Ex-offenders Carers Disabled people | Some communities are disproportionately reflected in unemployment figures due to responsibilities / employment history etc. | Work with partners including DWP, Homeless Action, Carers Centre, Probation, BME Forum, PUKAR to tailor work clubs / promote CTAX Support scheme / Hardship fund | As above | As above | Benefits supported by the Community Engagement Teams | Benefits supported by the Community Engagement Teams |

Performance & Targets

| Performance Definition | Year 2020/21 Target | | Year 2020/21 Performance | | Year 2021/22 Target | |
|---|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| | Preston | Lancaster | Preston | Lancaster | Preston | Lancaster |
| Revenues | | | | | | |
| % of Council Tax collected in year | 93.6% | 96.4% | 90.2% | 94.6% | 91.5% | 95.0 |
| % of NNDR collected in year | 95.6% | 98.4% | 90.5% | 97.2% | 93.0% | 98.0 |
| Housing Benefits | Shared Service | | Shared Service | | Shared Service | |
| Average turnaround time for new claims (measured in days) | 23 | | 17.4 | | 23 | |
| Average turnaround time for changes in circumstances | 10 | | 4.6 | | 10 | |
| % recovered of Housing Benefit overpayments raised during the year | 85% | 90% | 131.8% | 142.9% | 100% | 110% |
| % recovered of Housing Benefit overpayments raised in previous years. | 26% | 30% | 25.4% | 24.0% | 25% | 25% |

REVENUES & BENEFITS SHARED SERVICE RISK LOG

| | Risk Description | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigation |
|----|--|------------|-------------|--|
| 1. | ICT & Systems | Low | Critical | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance contracts in place with demanding service levels. • Installation Procurement of improved new connection between the two Councils • Business continuity plans developed and tested. Resources utilised for home working arrangements. • PRINCE2 accredited ICT project managers. • Regular updates and de-briefs between project leaders, the project manager and heads of service. • Dedicated Account Managers for high profile systems. • Procured Capita Remote Support for Academy Systems. • Disaster Recovery testing frequently carried out |
| 2. | Reduction in quality of service and/or performance | Low | Significant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuously review staff structure ensuring it remains fit for purpose. • Contingency plans in place to enable input of additional resources from either site to minimise risk during early stages. • Set realistic performance targets. • Overview by Joint Committee and S151 Officers. |
| 3. | Welfare Reform | Medium | Significant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit (i.e. transferring responsibility for paying housing costs from the LA to DWP) when forecasting staffing numbers required to perform the residual tasks associated with UC. • Shortfall in income through the introduction of Localised Council Tax Support Scheme and not being able to collect from customers who have previously not paid Council Tax. Pressure on Revenues teams to maintain collection rates. • Lack of information on changes to the benefits systems from DWP and MHCLG poses a risk for Council's that they will not forecast income/ expenditure/resources accurately (in addition to grant cuts). |

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| 4. | COVID19 - Inability to meet statutory requirements and customer expectations | Medium | Significant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust policies in place to meet the needs of the Community and public information provided • Regular budget management of grant allocation • Continuously review staffing structure to ensure it remains fit for purpose. • Home working plans in place, adequately resourced • Contingency plans in place to enable input of additional resources from either site to minimise risk • Transfer of staff to priority tasks • Review recovery policy and set realistic performance targets in relation to collection • Partnership working with internal and external organisations and keep members onboard and informed • Overview by S151 Officers, Members, Joint Committee |
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