

NOTICE OF MEETING

MEETING	Ridgeway Shared Service Partnership Strategic Board
DATE/ TIME	Monday, 2nd February, 2009 8.30 am
PLACE	CONFERENCE ROOM 1, THE ABBEY HOUSE, ABINGDON
CONTACT OFFICER	Name: Steve Culliford Telephone: 01235 540307 E-mail: steve.culliford@whitehorsedc.gov.uk Websites: www.southoxon.gov.uk and www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk

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Membership

<i>Councillor</i>	<i>Representing</i>
Mrs E A Ducker	South Oxfordshire District Council
Mr I R Mann	South Oxfordshire District Council
Mrs M De Vere	Vale of White Horse District Council
Mr J Patterson	Vale of White Horse District Council



CAROLE NICHOLL
Head of Democratic Services
Vale of White Horse District Council

23 January 2009

AGENDA

Open to the Public including the Press

1. **Apologies for absence**

To receive apologies for absence.

2. **Minutes**

(Pages 3 - 6)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Ridgeway Shared Services Partnership Strategic Board meeting held on 3 November 2009.

3. **Declarations of interest**

To receive any declarations of interest.

4. **Minutes of the Operations Board**

(Pages 7 - 19)

To receive and note the minutes of the Ridgeway Shared Services Partnership Operations Board meetings held on 20 October, 17 November and 15 December 2008.

5. **Performance monitoring**

(Pages 20 - 25)

To consider the attached report.

6. **Any other business**

7. **Dates of forthcoming meetings**

To note that the next meeting of the Strategic Board will be held on Tuesday 5 May 2009 (avoiding May Day Bank Holiday Monday) at 8.30am in Conference Room 1, The Abbey House, Abingdon.



**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF THE RIDGEWAY SHARED SERVICE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC BOARD**

**HELD AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM 1, THE ABBEY HOUSE, ABINGDON ON MONDAY,
3RD NOVEMBER, 2008 AT 8.30 AM**

Open to the Public, including the Press

PRESENT:

MEMBERS: Councillor Mary de Vere (Chair), Rodney Mann (Vice-Chairman), Ann Ducker and Jerry Patterson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Steve Bishop, Steve Culliford, Paul Howden, William Jacobs and Matt Prosser

CAPITA: Simon Cockayne and Sue King

NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Nil

11. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

12. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 July 2008 were adopted as a correct record.

The Chair sought updates on several items that appeared in the minutes:

- In relation to brown bins, it was reported that reconciliation of account details between the customer relationship management system and the Agresso financial management system had to be completed, then all the processes documented to establish responsibilities. This work should be completed by the end of November
- South Oxfordshire was considering an improved automation system for Direct Debit payments for brown bins. The aim was to use the same system at both councils. It was suggested that similar automated systems should be rolled out across both councils for all Direct Debit payments, billing and invoicing, potentially resulting in savings for the two councils and Capita
- Shared e-mail systems between the two councils were being considered
- On the Capita contract, negotiations were proceeding on a revised pay and performance structure

13. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

14. **MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONS BOARD**

The minutes of the Operations Board meetings held on 15 July, 18 August, and 22 September 2008 were received and noted.

It was reported that no flooding money had been received but was due shortly. The Government had written to affected councils seeking further details; this had delayed payments.

15. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

The Strategic Board received several performance monitoring reports from Capita and council officers.

Vale and South Oxfordshire Financial Services Contract September 2008 Summary

Sue King from Capita highlighted the main points from her report. The benefits improvement plan was being implemented and the performance in processing new claims during September was inside the 24 day target for both councils. Capita was reviewing its management of benefits at its off-site locations to see whether further service improvements could be made. Members asked that monthly monitoring statistics against targets were compiled and sent to each Board Member in future. Benefits administration was considered to be a critical area requiring close management.

Council Tax collection rates were over 75% at both councils, up on last year. However, Capita expressed concern at impending parish boundary changes in the Vale and the problems this might cause in adjusting bills.

Business Rates staff had been concentrating their efforts on collecting rates for empty properties. However, it was considered that a change of focus to properties where there had been no payment might improve collection performance.

Payment of invoices by the councils within 30 days had been improving. Members considered that payment of all invoices should be made within 30 days; the councils should not accept a lower performance. Members asked to be presented with information of where the problems lay at the next Board meeting.

Consideration was given to the best way to manage telephone calls during peak times to the Contact Centre. Currently callers were held in a queue and at busy times a Capita call handler arranged a call back by Capita later, at a less busy time. Members had asked about alternatives. Capita suggested an engaged tone or a recorded message could be used when the telephone lines were busy. Capita asked to carry out an additional month's monitoring at its Swindon centre where a trial was being conducted to find the best method. Members agreed to Capita's suggestion.

RESOLVED

- (a) that additional monitoring data be provided for the Strategic Board Members on a monthly basis to allow more detailed assessment of benefits performance; and*
- (b) that data relating to the non-payment of invoices by the councils within 30 days be presented to the next Strategic Board meeting.*

Aged Debt Analysis

With regard to management of debtors, Capita was congratulated for the progress it had made in improving the service. Members agreed but warned against complacency as there were further improvements to make. It was suggested that better profiling of debt would show a more accurate picture. For example, mobile home park rents were not profiled across each month of the year but showed as a single large debt at the beginning of the year. It was noted that management of cost centres was improving all the time.

Internal Audit

It was noted that Internal Audit was on track to meet its Plan for 2008/09. However, there had been a number of unplanned audits this year which had taken more time than expected.

Investigations Team

An appointment had been made to the vacant Investigations Officer post. The Vale and South Oxfordshire's joint team was the best performing in the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire benchmarking group in 2007/08 and were currently aiming to complete 33 cases per officer for 2008/09, a high target compared to other authorities.

Accountancy

Both councils had been affected by the economic downturn and had investments in Icelandic banks. These investments had been made some time ago and until recently the banks in question had been given the highest ratings. The councils were now working to more stringent criteria when they lent money.

The two Chief Accountants were reviewing the structure of accountancy across the two councils to see if a better structure could be employed. This would also be affected by the outcome of the new shared senior management structure.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

17. DATES OF FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

It was noted that forthcoming meetings of the Strategic Board would be held on:

- Monday 2 February 2009

- Tuesday 5 May 2009 (avoiding May Day Bank Holiday Monday)

All of these meetings would be held at the Vale's offices at The Abbey House, Abingdon, and each meeting starting at 8.30am.

The meeting rose at 9.42 am

RSSP OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING

MONDAY 20TH OCTOBER 2008 AT VALE OFFICES

Present: Steve Bishop (SB), Matt Prosser (MP), William Jacobs (WJ), Paul Howden (PH), Nicky Davis (ND), Sue King (SK) Lisa Galvani (LG), Simon Cockayne (SC)

1. Apologies for absence

Trevor Hill

2. Review of the previous meeting – 22nd September 2008

Switchboard Statistics – SB handed round a copy of the Vale switchboard stats which were based on the same criteria as those for SODC. It was agreed that LG would take these away to consider.

LG

Right Time Indicator – PH confirmed that Ben Watson attended an officer meeting in Oxford and has obtained some benchmarking figures and he will arrange to circulate these to colleagues.

PH

Business Rates - LG confirmed that the empty property percentage figures have now been included in the summary report. It was also agreed that the last sentence of this minute should be deleted.

ND

Performance

Summary Report – LG confirmed that the report has now been updated to show side by side figures.

Council Tax Correspondence – LG also confirmed that the number of days that the outstanding correspondence figure represents had been added into the summary report.

Flooding Money – SB advised that Ben Watson has made enquiries about receipt of the flooding money but as yet this hasn't been received.

Exchequer Reports – It was confirmed that the (BVPI 8) figures which are included in the report are provisional figures and the actual figure is confirmed the following month.

Council Tax Collection Statistics – LG confirmed that the figures quoted are correct. LG to provide a breakdown as to how these sums are made up.

LG

Call Centre Statistics – Only the front sheets for these statistics are provided this month.

Agresso Implementation – LG to confirm that WJ will continue to receive the statistics on a monthly basis. SB confirmed that the final position report on Agresso will be completed this week and the letter to Capita will also be prepared. LG to provide SB with any comments on the draft copy asap.

LG

LG/SB

Brown Bins – SB confirmed that he has now met with Dave Wilson and Jim Rainsborough. They have both produced procedure notes and there is a need for them to plug any gaps in these. The procedure once finalised should be rolled out at SODC as well. LG

to provide a copy of Jim's plan to Louise Brown and Sally Wilson. **LG**

Any Other Business – Performance Report – It was confirmed that it isn't possible to add the old change in circumstances figures to the reports in future. The change in events figures can be added in though. **LG**

Audit Fees – LG confirmed that she hasn't yet provided the information but will do so within the next weeks or so.

Any Other Business – 10% Savings – MP/SB have spoken to William about this exercise. **LG**

Part 1 – Capita

3. Payroll

Trevor Hill was due to attend the meeting to update the meeting on a number of matters but has given his apologies due to sickness.

It was however confirmed that a Payroll meeting took place on the 16th October to discuss the Action Plan that had been prepared to deal with a number of year end issues. The Plan has been signed up to by all parties.

LG confirmed that one submission had been made to the Revenue for the end of year payroll. Unfortunately individual submissions should have been made and she confirmed that Julie Graham at Capita is now arranging for these to be made.

LG also confirmed that a weekly conference call will take place to deal with all outstanding issues.

4. Performance

BVPI 8 Report – It was agreed that from next month PH should share with Executive Members the report that is produced by Jim and sent to DD's to make them aware of these debts. **PH**

Business Rates Collection Rate – It was agreed that there is a need to keep an eye on the impact that empty properties is having. Several companies have also cancelled their DDs for business rates. **PH**

BVPI 78a and 78b – It was agreed that this meeting should be kept abreast of improvements on a monthly basis. These are still below target although lots of work has been undertaken to improve the figures.

Change Events – These don't compare on a like for like basis to the change in circumstances and it was agreed that the items should be split on the monitoring table with the change events for this year on one line and the change in circumstances figures for last year on another. An explanation should also be added to the table to explain the difference. LG also agreed to obtain comparison figures from similar authorities. **LG**

FMS – LG confirmed that there was a problem with the FMS availability because of a problem with the BT link. It was understood that this was the reason why a second line was purchased and it was agreed that LG would ascertain why this isn't being used. **LG**

Cash Office (SODC only) – Icon and PCI DSS software need updating – LG to speak to Andrew Down about the matter. **LG**

Contact Centre – LG confirmed that a report will be submitted to the Strategic Board about using the engaged tone on the telephones. **LG**

Assisted Travel – The number of new applications has increased considerably over the past few months.

Council Tax Collection Statistics – It was confirmed that there is a need to ensure that SODC write offs for previous years take place before the end of the financial year. The figures are reducing slowly. **PH**

Debtors Information Pack – It was confirmed that lots of data cleansing is taking place at SODC with action being taken on outstanding matters. PH also advised that he will raise the layout of the overpayments information report at his debtors meeting this week to see if it can be enhanced. LG to obtain the definitions for No. 5 Accounts by Status to simplify them and also place them on chronological order. **PH**
LG

Client Team visit to Bexley – PH advised that the Client Team visited the Local Authority in Bexley where similar services are also managed by Capita. He confirmed that the Team was very impressed with the amount of checking and the usefulness of the reports that were produced. The team brought back copies of some of these reports and it agreed that some of our reports needed refining. Also some of the reports that are currently produced differ for the Vale and SODC, there is a need to ensure harmonisation as much as possible. **PH/LG**

Aged Debt Analysis – The meeting was advised that the work that Jim Rainsborough is currently undertaking on the aged debt work is excellent. He is always very professional and helpful. The new structure at the Councils will obviously need to be taken into account when implemented, with old service areas remaining on the report until all items are cleared off. Cost Centre managers are now moving forward with old debt clearance but there is a need to keep up the pressure.

5. **Capita Delivery Quality Document**

It was confirmed that the original “Delivery Quality in the Housing Benefit Service” document has now been abandoned. A new

“SODC and VOWH Housing Benefits Quality Improvement Plan 2008” now takes its place. PH and LG are both committed to this document.

It was also agreed that PH would monitor the progress against the Action Plan and raise any areas of concern at this meeting.

PH

PH suggested that he thought there was a need for a full time benefits manager who should be located on site in an effort to deal with the number of complaints and problems that occur regularly. SK advised that she and LG will be looking at all matters concerning benefits.

SK/LG

6. Performance Notices

Updates were provided as follows:-

No. 4 – HMRC – LG confirmed that she has now authorised the payment of this invoice. This matter is now finalised.

No. 5 – Tenant Querino – Nightly Paid Accommodation – PH advised that this was a new notice which related to the fact that housing benefit payments which were being made to the Vale’s Housing Team had been switched without notice to the tenants direct. PH advised that he and LG have now met to discuss this matter. There is a need for the Vale’s Housing Team to raise invoices direct to the tenants to recover the overpaid money. It was agreed that PH would speak to Paul Staines about the matter. LG confirmed that controls have now been put in place to prevent this matter from re-occurring.

PH

7. Variations to the Contract

None

8. Agresso Post Recovery Development Plan

See update note from previous meeting.

9. Cash receipting software (Vale)

SB to check that the action plan is up-to-date and then circulate a copy to LG.

SB

10. Direct Debits – Brown Bins (Vale)

LG handed round an update note on the current position. SB advised that the reconciliations aren’t up-to-date and there is a need to progress this matter. SB to ensure this is moved forward.

SB

11. Audit Fees

As mentioned earlier in these notes, LG to circulate the evidence. **LG**

12. Commercial Contract Issues

Negotiations are ongoing with a further meeting due to take place this afternoon. Matters still hope to be concluded by the end of October.

13. Outstanding Invoices

PH circulated a list of outstanding invoices which Capita owe to the two Councils. Further copies of some invoices have now been requested. There was also a problem at SODC with invoices being raised with the wrong VAT code and for the wrong amounts by Facilities. MP to pick this matter up outside the meeting.

MP

SB agreed to pick up the outstanding Vale issues – LG to liaise direct if she needs further information.

SB/LG

14. Performance Standards

PH circulated a copy of a recently approved Vale Customer Service Charter. MP to check that this corresponds with that at SODC.

It was agreed that LG would look at possible implications for Capita and provide an update at the next meeting.

LG

SB also mentioned a draft Service Level Agreement that he has recently circulated. He reminded colleagues to advise him if any updates needed to take place.

All

15. Any Other Business – Capita

None

Part 2 – Non Contractual – Operational

16. Audit Fees – Accountancy Issues

It was agreed that there is a need to ensure that the correct procedure takes place when dealing with these fees. WJ to progress.

WJ

17. Audit Update

No issues were raised.

18. Accountancy

WJ advised that the teams were under pressure as there was lots going on. SODC are dealing with a problem on the Statement of Accounts following the audit.

WJ also confirmed that one member of staff has advised that they will be retiring in January and another has just handed in their notice. It was agreed that recruitment to both posts should be progressed.

WJ

The Teams are also involved in the savings proposals which are going to SMT this afternoon. They then go to the Joint SMT/Executive meeting at the Vale on Friday. The timings of meetings are SODC are slightly later.

Treasury Management - It was confirmed that lending should still take place to all organisations with an F1+ status in the first instance.

WJ

Bank reconciliations – WJ advised that he has extended the contract of one member of staff at SODC so that the reconciliations can be completed. There is a need to look at the process for moving these forward.

WJ

Cash Receipting – WJ advised that there would need to be significant input by Accountancy if the new solution is to be better than the current system. There will be a very limited Accountancy resource available during the budget setting process.

19. **Benefit Fraud**

Interviews have now take place and a Trainee Fraud Officer has been appointed who has come from the City Council. They will be on six months probation.

20. **Any Other Business**

None

21. **Date of Next Meeting- 17th November 2008**

RSSP OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING

MONDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2008 AT VALE OFFICES

Present: Steve Bishop (SB), Matt Prosser (MP), William Jacobs (WJ), Paul Howden (PH), Nicky Davis (ND), Sue King (SK) Lisa Galvani (LG), Simon Cockayne (SC)

1. **Apologies for absence**

None

2. **Review of the previous meeting – 20 October 2008**

Right Time Indicator – PH advised that he has now received the benchmarking figures but has yet to circulate these around to colleagues. **PH**

Business Rates – ND confirmed that the minutes were amended accordingly.

Agresso Implementation – SB confirmed that the final position report letter has now been sent to Capita.

Audit Fees – LG to provide hard copies of the evidence submitted. **LG**

BVPI 8 Report – The circulation of the reports to Executive Members was discussed again and it was agreed that WJ and PH would discuss this matter further outside the meeting. **WJ/PH**

Council Tax Collection Statistics – LG confirmed that Trevor Gaffney would speak to PH about the figures outside the meeting. **LG/PH**

Brown Bins – LG confirmed that Louise and Sally have been provided with a copy of Jim's plan.

Change Events – LG confirmed that she has obtained comparison figures from other authorities and once this has been collated, she will circulate the information around.

FMS – LG advised that she has spoken to their IT services and can confirm that the second line isn't being used because it is slow and has failed on a number of occasions. **LG**

Cash Office (SODC Only) – LG advised that the latest upgrade which was due in October was supposed to have fixed the PCI DSS problem, this is still outstanding. LG to ascertain which version SODC are currently running. **WJ/SB**

Contact Centre – It has been agreed that the engaged tone should not be implemented just yet, a few more months statistics should be obtained first. **LG**

Debtors Information Pack – The benefits overpayment report that Bexley currently use would require some input from Capita before it can be run. This attracts a cost of £450 as a one off charge. It was understood that the current report involves some manual intervention and that the new report would not need this. SK to look at this point and report back. **SK**

Client Team Visit to Bexley – There is still a need to look at the other reports that the Bexley Team use.

Part 1 – Capita

3. **Performance**

Switchboard Stats – LG confirmed that she has now looked at these but the abandonment rate for the two authorities is different. Both authorities need to have similar targets.

4. **Capita Delivery Quality Document**

PH

PH to monitor ongoing progress.

5. **Performance Notices**

No.5 is the only notice which is still outstanding- PH has spoken to the Housing Team. A payment arrangement for one tenant has been put in place. The others are being progressed by the Housing Team. It was agreed that lessons have been learned by both the Council and Capita regarding this notice and it was agreed by all parties that the matter should be closed.

6. **Variations to the Contract**

None

7. **Agresso Post Recovery Development Plan**

SB confirmed that he has now sent the draft Plan to Capita.

SB also reminded colleagues of the need to ensure that the new budget monitoring template is in place by the end of June. LG to pick up at her weekly meetings with Alice and Simon.

LG

8. **Cash receipting software (Vale)**

PH advised that Ben Watson was attending a meeting this morning regarding the new system so an update would be available. It was also understood that Simon Hewings has been involved with this sort of software implementation before so his advice should be sought. SB to challenge the project timetable.

WJ/SB

9. **Direct Debits – Brown Bins (Vale)**

An update report was circulated by Capita. SB advised that at present the procedure documents were being refined and that these should be in place before Christmas. SB to chase up.

SB

10. **Audit Fees**

The Audit Commission may require additional testing for the benefits audit.

11. **Commercial Contract Issues**

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SK confirmed that she forwarded papers to WJ on Thursday for consideration. WJ to look at as soon as possible.

WJ

12. **Outstanding Invoices**

A copy of the schedule of outstanding invoices was circulated.

MP advised that he has picked up the SODC matters.

SB confirm that he is dealing with all the queries identified as being dealt with by Derek Nutland.

13. **Performance Standards**

SK/LG are looking at the implications of Capita implementing the Council's standards and will feedback with findings at the meeting on the 15th December.

LG

14 **Government Connect Exemption Response**

LG confirmed that she sent an email on Friday requesting a three month extension to the end of June 2009. LG to check the position with Ann Sadler and Andrew Down as well.

LG

15. **Any Other Business – Capita**

Movement of AP and AR to Abingdon – Capita's wish to base AP and AR just in Abingdon was noted. SODC colleagues advised that they didn't have a problem with this so long as arrangements were in place to deal with any urgent matters. Capita advised that these arrangements are being put in place and that the move will take effect from January 2009.

Council Tax Base – It was commented that the figures at the moment show a significant surplus this year, Capita were asked to recheck the figures as it would be very embarrassing if the figures were incorrect. Parish Boundary changes at the Vale also need to be reflected in the new bills from April.

LG

New Councils Structures – The change in the location of Payroll to Finance under the new structure was mentioned.

Council Tax Leaflet and Billing – PH advised that Ben Watson, Nikki Malin, Alice Brander, Simon Hewings and Trevor Gaffney were all working on the Council Tax leaflet and were harmonising as much information as possible. It was agreed that a timetable needed to be produced with areas of responsibility highlighted.

PH

New Capita Business - Capita advised that they had just been awarded preferred supplier status for Sheffield Council and a bid has also been submitted for Westminster Council.

Part 2 – Non Contractual – Operational

16 **Audit Update**

The contents of the report were noted.

17. **Accountancy**

The contents of the report were noted.

18. **Benefit Fraud**

The contents of the report were noted.

19. **Any Other Business**

None

20. **Date of Next Meeting- 15th December 2008**

RSSP OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING

MONDAY 15th DECEMBER 2008 AT VALE OFFICES

Present: Steve Bishop (SB), Matt Prosser (MP), William Jacobs (WJ), Paul Howden (PH), Nicky Davis (ND), Sue King (SK) Lisa Galvani (LG), Simon Cockayne (SC)

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Review of the previous meeting – 17 November 2008

Right Time Indicator – PH confirmed that the benchmarking figures have now been circulated to Capita.

BVPI8 Report – PH advised that this is currently sent to Jerry Patterson and Rodney Mann but it was agreed that in future the report would be sent to all Executive and Cabinet Members.

PH

Council Tax Collection Statistics – Trevor Gaffney and WJ to speak outside the meeting.

LG/WJ

Cash Office (SODC only) –LG confirmed that the latest version of the software is 6.02b which is not compliant. The next update will be 8.2. LG to advise Andrew Down of the current software version being used. WJ to ask Andrew what timetable he is working to.

LG

WJ

Housing Benefit O/P Debtors Information Pack – LG confirmed that the requested report will now be produced free of charge.

Movement of AP and AR to Abingdon – LG advised that Jim Rainsborough has now met with the Admin Team at SODC and has addressed all of their concerns.

Part 1 – Capita

3. Performance

Change Events – LG advised that the deadline for receipt of the information from other Capita sites has only just passed. Once this information is collated LG will circulate it.

LG

Capita Delivering Quality Document - A request was made for a schedule as to how Capita plan on implementing the improvements so that this can be monitored on a regular basis.

LG

Payroll to be added to the agenda of the next meeting.

4. Vale Benefit Subsidy Audit 2007/08

The subsidy audit has now been finalised with the figures coming in over the threshold. An explanation is awaited from Lynn Kemp to explain the late adjustments. Concern was expressed that the Councils have been given lots of assurances by Capita over the last few months that the figures were going to be ok. A performance notice has been served on Capita as the Vale is looking at having to pay around £57k in costs.

LK

5. **Performance Notices**
All notices have now been signed off with the exception of the one for the above Subsidy Audit.
6. **Variations to the Contract**
The customer service standard is the only possibility at the moment.
7. **Agresso Development Plan**
SB to check the Plan and forward copies to all involved. Regular meetings need to be arranged in the new year. **SB**
8. **Cash receipting software (Vale)**
It was confirmed that weekly meetings are now taking place which Alice Brander is attending. WJ advised that Simon Hewings will be involved in some capacity as he implemented this system at WODC..
9. **Direct Debits – Brown Bins (Vale)**
The revised documents are still being worked on. SB to chase up progress. **SB**
An update was handed round at the meeting.
10. **Audit Fees**
LG to provide hard copy evidence. **LG**
11. **Commercial Financial Services Contract Issues**
WJ stated that he was unable to progress due to budget setting work. WJ to progress. **WJ**
12. **Outstanding Invoices**
SB confirmed that he is now dealing with this matter. **SB**
13. **Customer Service Standards**
It was agreed that Capita would have a quick look at the service standards of the two Councils and advise of any possible charges that would be incurred to a change of service. **LG**
14. **Government Connect Exemption Response**
LG to check with Richard Commery that the extension Capita have **LG**

applied for has been granted.

15. **Any Other Business – Capita**

The meeting was advised that LG is to leave Capita's employment from the middle of February.

Jim Rainsborough is liaising with Legal colleagues to move debtors work at SODC forward.

SB advised Capita about the shared SMT arrangements which are taking place. Future meetings will therefore only be attended by one Director. Changes are also due to take place at Deputy Director/Heads of Service level as well.

It was agreed that when requests for additional work to be undertaken by Capita are proposed that these should be fed through one central officer. It was agreed that PH should be that officer.

All

SK advised that Capita have incurred charges for the abortive work on the Council Tax Base report. It was agreed that it is important that an idea of such costs are flagged with the Councils ahead of the work being undertaken.

Part 2 – Non Contractual – Operational

16. **Audit Update**

No issues were raised.

17. **Accountancy**

WJ advised that a temporary systems accountant is to be employed at SODC only. Recruitment to a vacant accountant post at the Vale will commence in the new year.

18. **Benefit Fraud**

PH advised that there has been lots of good publicity surrounding a recent tagging order.

19. **Any Other Business**

A request was made that the fit for the future figures at SODC be confirmed.

20. **Date of Next Meeting- 19th January 2009**

**Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) &
South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)
Financial Services Contract
December 2008 Summary**

Highlights

Benefits (VWHDC) performance in respect of Private Tenant Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments recovered during the month of December, as a percentage of total Private Tenant HB overpayments identified during the month, was **85.18%**, which is a considerable improvement on November's performance of **39.32%**. Similarly, SODC performance against this measure for the month of December was **84.71%**, which is also a considerable improvement on November's performance of **50.91%**.

Council tax collection rates for both authorities remain ahead of target and significantly ahead of collections at this time last year.

Council collection rates for 2006 and 2007 continue to increase and stand at **99.45%** and **99.28%** respectively for VWHDC and **99.48%** and **99.24%** respectively for SODC.

Payment of invoices within 30 days has again shown improvement from last month and Capita created and issued over 2,000 invoices during December within 3 working days (VWHDC and SODC).

General Comments

Although the NNDR exercise Capita conducted last month, as a result of the dip in collection due to changes with empty property rate legislation proved a success, empty rate is still having a significant detrimental impact on the in-year collection level. This is further compounded by the current state of the economy, which many businesses are suffering from and has led to a current increase in the number of reminder notices being issued, direct debits being cancelled and Administration Orders and Liquidations being received. Woolworths and Pier Retail being just two examples of recent Administration Orders affecting collection.

In-year council tax collection currently remains strong and ahead of target, however, there has recently been a noticeable downturn in Direct Debit take-up, due to a significant increase in cancellations and payment rejections. This could be as a result of the "credit crunch" and is likely to impact on the in-year collection rate for both VWHDC and SODC during the final quarter of the financial year if the decline continues.

Benefit accuracy and quality continues to be a main focus for Capita and the improvement plan introduced in October 2008 continues to be worked on. A particular concern relates to the potential loss of subsidy through financial errors and this continues to be closely monitored.

Aged debtor and legal reports continue to be produced on a monthly basis and progress continues to be made with proactive Capita and legal team input resulting in positive active management of debts.

Council Tax

Percentage of council tax collected - In year collection to date is **87.52%** for VWHDC and **86.81%** for SODC against a year to date target of **86.70%**. This target is based upon the end of year collection rate target of **98.55%** for both councils.

The year to date collection for VWHDC is **0.66%** higher than at the same time last year (**86.86%**) whilst SODC is **1.04%** higher than at the same time last year (**85.77%**).

The collection rates for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 currently stand at **99.45%** and **99.28%** respectively for VWHDC and **99.48%** and **99.24%** respectively for SODC.

Direct debit take-up currently stands at **74.71%** compared to **74.92%** last month for VWHDC and **72.12%** compared to **72.31%** compared to last month for SODC.

VWHDC outstanding correspondence currently stands at **534** items (equates to approximately 9 days worth of incoming post) compared to **402** last month. SODC outstanding correspondence figures currently stands at **800** (which equates to approximately 9 days worth of incoming post) compared to **817** last month. All refund requests for both authorities continue to be processed within target.

There were no issues to report following the December 2008/09 recovery run for either council.

The cleansing of historical SODC debt is progressing and a third batch of write-off cases relating to unrecoverable debt from 1998 and 1999 have been selected.

Capita continues to monitor the remaining 'flooded' cases (**18**) in VWHDC.

Business Rates

Percentage of business rates collected - In year collection to date is **88.26%** for VWHDC and **88.37%** for SODC against year to date targets of **89.00%** and **88.00%** respectively. These targets are based upon the end of year collection rate target of **99.36%**

The December 2008 collection figure for VWHDC is **0.34%** lower than the percentage collected at the same time last year. In contrast the collection figure for SODC is currently up by **1.00%** on that of last year; however, this is not a like for like comparison due to the lack of recovery action taken at this stage last year because of the system conversion at SODC.

As at 31 December 2008 the in-year collection rate for occupied accounts for VWHDC and SODC is 88.80% and **88.69%** respectively, whereas, the collection rate for unoccupied accounts is much lower, **78.33%** and **81.57%**. The effect of the empty rate collection difference continues to have an overall impact on in-year collection, which continues to be more noticeable for VWHDC.

There were no issues to report following the December 2008/09 recovery run for either council.

Benefits

It has not been possible to report the December Benefit speed of processing statistics which require data from the Single Housing Benefit Extract file (SHBE).

% of overpayments outstanding recovered in year – The monthly performance is **85.18%** for VWHDC and **84.71%** for SODC, which marks a considerable improvement compared to November's performance of **39.32%** and **50.91%**, for VWHDC and SODC respectively.

The year-to-date figures for VWHDC and SODC are **69.39%** and **72.46%** respectively.

VWHDC outstanding new caseload figures currently stand at **636** items (equates to approximately 8 days worth of incoming assessments).
SODC outstanding new caseload figures currently stands at **879** (which equates to approximately 10 days worth of incoming assessments).

Regarding claimant correspondence figures there is an outstanding total of 16 items for VWHDC and 24 items for SODC.

Exchequer Services

Accounts Payable

Payment of invoices within 30 days – Provisional monthly performance for VWHDC is **97.22%** and **95.05%** for SODC. This is an improvement upon last month for both Councils (**96.35%** and **94.68%**). Capita is now providing both Councils with a weekly report identifying any invoices which are awaiting coding or approval by the Council. The year to date performance for VWHDC is **90.93%** compared to **93.55%** for SODC.

Capita target (100% of invoices paid within 5 working days of receipt of correctly authorised payment) – Performance for December 2008 is currently unavailable,

due to problems with the Authoriser Master Report, which is being investigated and checked by Capita's System Administration team.

Accounts Receivable

Invoices created within 3 working days - Monthly performance is **98.52%** and **99.56%** for both VWHDC and SODC with Capita creating **1272** and **901** invoices respectively during December within the 3 working day target. Capita continues to work with the councils to help maximise debtor collection.

Financial Management System (FMS)

99% system availability during supported hours – System availability was at 100% during December for SODC and 100% for VWHDC.

Payroll

Capita is working with the council staff to finalise the end of year reconciliations and other issues which are included in the payroll action plan. Payroll was processed on time for both councils.

Cash Office (South Oxfordshire only)

Continues to work well. Two outstanding issues relate to PCI-DSS compliance and upgrades to the (Civica) Icon cash receipting system. Capita is awaiting a decision from the Council regarding PCI DSS and confirmation of a date from CIVICA to undertake the upgrade to 8.2.

Contact Centre

Revenues and Benefits calls - the Coventry centre took **3,080** and **3,843** calls for VWHDC and SODC respectively. SLA (% of calls answered within 20 seconds) was **83%** and **87%**. Call backs generated amounted to **90** and **83** calls respectively. The longest wait times were **443** and **425** seconds and abandoned calls numbered **58** and **37** respectively. Payments totalling **£63,697.81** were collected from SODC council taxpayers.

SODC switchboard – **3,726** calls were answered with a further **103** abandoned. **89.0%** of calls were answered within 20 seconds whilst **95.01%** were answered within 50 seconds. The longest wait time was **589** seconds.

Assisted Travel – **141** calls were answered with a further **5** abandoned. **85%** of calls were answered within 20 seconds. A total of **124** new applications were received for the scheme with **4** pending further information.

	Dec-08				South Oxon	South Oxon	South Oxon	South Oxon	Vale of White	South Oxon
	Vale of White Horse December 2008	Vale of White Horse December 2007	Vale of White Horse YTD	Vale of White Horse Target	December 2008	December 2007	YTD	Target	Horse 07/08 Performance	07/08 Performance
BVPI 8 (payment of invoices within 30 days)	97.22%	79.04%	90.93%	95.94%	95.05%	90.49%	93.55%	95.94%	75.58%	76.78%
BVPI 9 (CTax Collection)	9.41%	9.26%	87.52%	86.70%	9.18%	8.79%	86.81%	86.70%	98.37%	97.97%
BVPI 10 (NNDR Collection)	8.43%	7.31%	88.26%	89.00%	8.41%	7.95%	88.37%	88.00%	99.32%	99.29%
BVPI 78a (new claims)	TBC	24.61 days	TBC	24 days	TBC	25.37 days	TBC	24 days	29.17 days	22.33 days
BVPI 78b (overpayments)	85.18%	54.83%	69.39%	79.46%	84.71%	24.17%	72.46%	79.46%	73.65%	55.85%
Change Events (Change Events)	TBC	New Indicator	TBC	TBC	TBC	New Indicator	TBC	TBC	New Indicator	N/A
Change in Circs (change in circumstances)	Old Indicator	10.14	Old Indicator	7.75 days	Old Indicator	11.97	Old Indicator	7.75 days	8.92 days	6.89 days
NI 181 (right time indicator)	TBC	New Indicator	TBC	TBC	TBC	New Indicator	TBC	TBC	New Indicator	N/A

as @ 31/12/2008

	Vale of White Horse	South Oxfordshire
NNDR Hereditaments	3,672 (3,657)	4,022 (4,004)
Council tax dwellings	49,900 (49,900)	55,936 (55,877)
Benefits caseload	5,501 (5,485)	5,874 (5,841)

Figs. In brackets are last month actuals

Council Tax collection statistics - Council Tax DECEMBER 2008

SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE D.C.

Position as at : 31/12/2008 Includes system credits

Financial Year	2003/04	% age	2004/05	% age	2005/06	% age	2006/07	% age	2007/08	% age	2008/09	% age
Net Total council tax due	57,436,791	100.00%	61,848,245	100.00%	64,648,392	100.00%	67,502,483	100.00%	70,427,220	100.00%	73,687,381	100.00%
Amount collected	57,230,660	99.64%	61,527,035	99.48%	64,275,509	99.42%	67,146,775	99.47%	69,890,380	99.24%	64,259,540	87.21%
Amount written off/on	42,964	0.07%	40,085	0.06%	16,450	0.03%	1,406	0.00%	975	0.00%	201	0.00%
Amount outstanding	163,167	0.28%	281,124	0.45%	356,434	0.55%	354,302	0.52%	535,865	0.76%	9,427,641	12.79%
Total	57,436,791	100.00%	61,848,245	100.00%	64,648,392	100.00%	67,502,483	100.00%	70,427,220	100.00%	73,687,381	100.00%

Vale of White Horse

Position as at : 31/12/2008 Includes system credits

Financial Year	2003/04	% age	2004/05	% age	2005/06	% age	2006/07	% age	2007/08	% age	2008/09	% age
Net Total council tax due	47,659,286	100.00%	51,545,599	100.00%	54,229,879	100.00%	57,267,408	100.00%	60,152,785	100.00%	63,206,798	100.00%
Amount collected	47,621,235	99.92%	51,470,107	99.85%	54,064,659	99.70%	56,951,056	99.45%	59,718,593	99.28%	55,622,168	88.00%
Amount written off/on									1,265	0.00%	0.03	0.00%
Amount outstanding	38,050	0.08%	75,492	0.15%	165,220	0.30%	316,352	0.55%	432,927	0.72%	7,584,630	12.00%
Total	47,659,286	100.00%	51,545,599	100.00%	54,229,879	100.00%	57,267,408	100.00%	60,152,785	100.00%	63,206,798	100.00%

Vale Write-off/on figures are already included in the 'Net total council tax due' column (row 22) and have only been separated out post 2007 (following Civica conversion to Academy).