

RSSP OPERATIONS BOARD MEETING

MONDAY 28TH APRIL 2008 AT VALE OFFICES

Present: Steve Bishop (SB), Matt Prosser (MP), William Jacobs (WJ), Paul Howden (PH), Derek Nutland (DN), Ann Sadler (AS), Nicky Davis (ND), Graham Hodges (GH), Lisa Galvani (LG),

1. Apologies for absence

Nikki Thomas

2. Review of the previous meeting – 11th February 2008

IT Facilities for Shared Service Team – (Ann Sadler was present for this item). AS advised that it is essential that Ridgeway maintains its identity. A solution has been identified with minimal costs. AS to work up the proposal further.

AS

WJ advise that NT has now returned to work on a staged approach just working 2 hours a day at present.

Performance – Vale

Late Payment List – PH advised that the list has yet to be received from Capita. It is essential that cost centre managers are able to look at this list to confirm where problems arise.

PH

Council Tax Write offs – LG confirmed that the write offs are not taken into account when producing the statistics. These should be included within the BVPI statistics. PH/WJ to discuss further outside the meeting.

PH/WJ

Creditors – It was confirmed that Michael Quinn has now produced the Coding Groups.

Debtors – GH confirmed that he provided a detailed spreadsheet to WJ a little while ago via an email on the 25th March. WJ to consider.

WJ

Debtors Monitoring Pack – This pack would be available from the end of April.

LG

Performance – SODC

Switchboard Statistics – LG confirmed that the figures had been revised.

Customer Satisfaction Survey – LG advised that this survey has not yet started as a Customer Consultation Specialist is just starting some work at SODC and she needs to be involved. It was confirmed that the Vale don't want to undertake the survey as well as a similar exercise took place last year.

3. Review of the Minutes of the Strategic Briefing (25th February 2008)

These minutes would be taken to the next Strategic Briefing meeting on the 12TH May for approval.

Part 1 – Capita

4. Performance

Vale – The following matters were discussed:-

Council Tax

BVPI9 – In year collection as at 31st March 2008 was 98.37% against a target of 98/55%. Good figures

200708 Cash Guarantee finished £384k ahead of the target. With the final collection being £59.4 against a target of £53.0m.

Schedule 18 – The 2006 arrears collection finished £153k ahead of target with an actual collection figure of £576k. The current collection rate for 2006 therefore stands at 99.27%

Direct Debit – The take up current stands at 74.31% which is ahead of last months figure.

Outstanding Correspondence – There are currently 418 outstanding items to be dealt with.

Business Rates

BVPI10 – The in year collection as at 31st March 2008 was 99.32% against a target of 99.36%.

Outstanding correspondence – The position remains good.

2007/08 Cash Guarantee – The collection was £54.2m against a target of £51.9m which is a good achievement.

Benefits

BVPI 78a (new claims) – Monthly performance was 23.92 days which is a slight drop on last month's figure although still within top quartile. The year end performance was 27.17 days which is second quartile position, the top quartile target was 24 days.

BVPI78b (change of circumstances) – Monthly performance was 1.86 days due to auctioning a large number of annual rent increases. The end of year performance was 8.92 days which is second quartile position, the top quartile target was 7.75 days.

BVPI79b (overpayments) – Performance is still being verified.

Exchequer Services

Creditors – BVPI8 (Payment of invoices within 30 days) – Monthly performance was 81.00% which continues to improve from last month. The end of year provisional figure is 75.58% which is outside the target of 95.94%.

Debtors (Outstanding debt over 46 days) – Capita has now submitted a report to the Council detailing how they think the

methodology should work. Once this is agreed figures will be included in monthly performance reports.

Debtors Information Sheet – LG handed round a revised sheet having taken on the comments from the last meeting. Any further comments on the sheet should be directed to LG.

All

SODC – The following matters were discussed:-

Council Tax

BVPI9 – In year collection as at 31st March 2008 was 97.97% against a target of 98.55%.

Direct Debit – The take up current stands at 70.22% which is ahead of last months figure. LG advised that call centre staff have a script to try to encourage those not currently on DD to switch over. Over the phone DDs at SODC are to come on line soon.

Outstanding Correspondence – There are currently 2,021 outstanding items to be dealt with. Vale staff are currently assisting SODC colleagues to help reduce this figure.

Payment Slip Problems – A problem has been identified which affects those customers who pay their bills with cash because of a bar code error on their annual bills which means that bar codes cannot be scanned. The error is being rectified and revised payment slips are being sent out to customers. A further problem has also been identified whereby duplicate bills or incorrectly addressed bills have been sent out. Revised bills and covering letters have now been sent out to those affected customers (approximately 600). There is a need to identify the reason why this happened.

Business Rates

BVPI10 – The in year collection as at 31st March 2008 was 99.29% against a target of 99.36%.

Outstanding correspondence – The position remains good.

Benefits

BVPI 78a (new claims) – Monthly performance was 19.26 days which is a slight drop on last month's figure although still within top quartile. The year end performance was 22.33 days which is top quartile position.

BVPI78b (change of circumstances) – Monthly performance was 2.38 days due to auctioning a large number of annual rent increases. The end of year performance was 6.89 days which is top quartile position.

BVPI79b (overpayments) – Performance is still being verified.

Exchequer Services

Creditors – BVPI8 (Payment of invoices within 30 days) – Monthly performance was 90.26%. The end of year provisional figure is 76.78% which is outside the target of 99.00%.

Debtors (Outstanding debt over 46 days) – Capita has now submitted a report to the Council detailing how they think the methodology should work. Once this is agreed figures will be included in monthly performance reports.

5. Variations to the Contract

Upfront Payments – PH advise that he has sent a revised copy of the change control document to SB/WJ. PH to pick up with SB//WJ after this meeting.

PH/SB/WJ

6. Agresso implementation

SB advised that that Recovery plan has now been finished with some 200 items being dealt with. A number of items have been moved off the plan e.g. bank reconciliations as these are ongoing problems. SB/DN/PB to produce a final copy of the Plan detailing the final position.

SB/DN/PB

All helpdesk calls are to go through Capita from the beginning of May. It was confirmed that problems can only be logged via email at the moment and it was suggested that a telephone number would be useful. It was agreed that the situation would be monitored for a while to review progress.

The amount of staff resources currently available on Agresso will reduce dramatically within the next week or so as staff move on to other projects. GH confirmed that Phil and Craig will be moving off site from the end of April but will be available via the phone.

It was agreed that there was a need to sit down and look at the bank reconciliation process in detail.

Thanks were expressed to all involved in moving the recovery process forward and in particular thanks to SB.

7. Academy conversion (SODC)

WJ confirmed that he has now met with Matt Wilson from Capita. A further meeting has been arranged for the 8th May to go through the figures.

WJ

The Audit Commission is currently in at the moment looking at system conversion issues. Internal Audit also have this on their worklist. PH is concerned that the same work is being done twice.

It was agreed that this item can be removed from future agendas.

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

AS advised that a meeting is taking place with Anite tomorrow. Terms and conditions have been agreed. A final decision on whether the Council is going to proceed with Anite therefore needs to be taken today. SB to consider the email from AS and advise her today of his decision.

SB

It was confirmed that AD/LG have now undertaken work looking at Payment Card Industry (PCI) compliance at SODC. A demonstration of a hosted service has now been provided and it has been agreed that matters should progress on this basis.. They have looked at the non compliant cases e.g. holding credit card details etc. Lots of issues have been highlighted and a number of current practices will need to be altered. MP/SB may want to look at this work on a broader basis. AD to form a view on the way forward.

The Vale is compliant as it uses the HSBC server.

LG has a list of compliant companies – SB/DN to look at this list.

9. **Local Housing Allowance**

The system is now in and working well. 5 Claims have been received which the Client Team are working on.

The grant moneys have now been received by both authorities. Capita are now invoicing for this money.

PH advised that he and LG were going to meet over the next few days to sign the paperwork off.

PH/LG

PH advised that the vulnerability paper has now been drafted and as this is an operational matter, no member decision is needed. PH to raise at next Board meeting.

PH

The meeting was advised that an Educational Support Allowance will be introduced with effect from October this year.

10. **Direct Debits – Brown Bins**

The 600 missing mandates have now been located – they had been erroneously filed away. Capita staff are now working with the Waste Team on this matter. Letters and new DD mandate forms are being sent out. There is also a need to look at the accrual position.

It was agreed that a reconciliation of the records needs to take place and responsibility issues need to be agreed between the Council and Capita.

11. Performance Notices

A draft of the notice has now been prepared by PH using the recent problems of sent out correspondence to a third party as an example. This was due to a software error but a control issue has been highlighted.

Two further notices need to be prepared for the bar code issue and duplicate bills. **PH**

It was agreed that as these notices relate to management issues they should be monitored via this meeting until all issues have been signed off. **All**

12. Audit Fees

LG advised that she had requested further information about the breakdown of the Audit Commission's fees. PH advised that no further information is available, following further contact with the Audit Commission. LG/GH to decide how they wish to proceed with this matter. **LG/GH**

13. Financial Services Contract (letter sent to Graham Hodges 28th February 2008)

GH advised that he has drafted a reply to latest letter which will be sent out shortly. **GH**

GH advised that a reply is needed from the Council's on the 46 day issue. **WJ**

It was agreed that following the receipt of the letter from Capita a meeting needs to be arranged between SB/MP and GH. **SB**

Other Matters

PH advised that he is concerned about the quality of responses being received from Capita. The speed is ok but there is a need to ensure that things are dealt with correctly first time around. The number of complaints being received is increasing. GH advised that Lynn Kemp, Capita's Benefits Manager, has produced a paper for GH which has highlighted a number of problems which need to be rectified. There a real need for quality of responses and letters that go out to be tightened up and for information to be provided by the deadlines provided. **GH**

Aged Debt Report – The aged debt report was discussed. PH advised that lots of work is currently ongoing and he personally has undertaken lots of work on benefits debts. General sundry debt cases have been passed to Legal colleagues who have been successful in recovering monies.

2 Year Anniversary – GH advised that on the 31st July, it will be two years since the contract commenced and Capita would like to do something but aren't sure what yet. It was agreed that GH should put some ideas forward. Who should be involved and what sort of thing e.g. seminar, reception etc. The event could take place after the end of July to avoid the main holiday period.

GH

SODC Scrutiny and Housing – LG and PH met on Friday to discuss the request from SODC's Scrutiny Committee to look at Housing Benefits. It was agreed that the exact nature of the request should be clarified and confirm who exactly needs to be involved. SB confirmed that the Vale does not want to be included in this review.

MP

14. Audit Update

The report was noted.

15. Accountancy

The report was noted.

16. Benefit Fraud

PH circulated a copy of the report. It was confirmed that interviews are being held this week for an investigations officer.

17. Any Other Business

Assisted Travel – Quotes have been received for the provision of this service as a whole. SB is currently working on the evaluation of these quotations.

18. Date of Next Meeting

16th June 2008