

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**