

**Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) &
South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC)
Financial Services Contract
June 2009 Summary**

Highlights

2009/10 council tax in-year collection rates for both authorities are ahead of last year. VWHDC is **0.40%** up on last June and SODC is **0.16%** ahead.

Council tax direct debit take-up has increased across both authorities, with SODC now over 74%. SODC currently stands at **74.14%**, compared to **73.83%** last month. VWHDC currently stands at **75.72%**, compared to **75.49%** last month.

NNDR collection is significantly ahead of last year for both authorities. VWHDC is currently **1.79%** up on June 2008 and SODC is currently **1.30%** ahead.

Account Receivable invoices, which totalled **1,349**, were all created within 3 working days for both VWHDC and SODC.

General Comments

Monthly council tax collection rate reports, monitoring collection progress for previous financial years (2007 and 2008 below), now reflect a collection percentage which excludes all system credits. This brings the ongoing monthly reporting methodology for previous years in line with the 'in-year' collection rate methodology. It does not affect any submitted government returns or end of year submitted collection statistics, such as QRC4 returns, but is merely to harmonise the way all years are reported to the council on a monthly basis.

NNDR collection for both councils continues to be closely monitored and analysed by Capita.

SODC Contact Centre Switchboard statistics were heavily affected during June, due to the changes with the council's refuse service. The call volume increased by over 5,000 compared to last month, which reflects a 75% increase. Despite extra resource being utilised the monthly SLA was considerably lower than normal.

SODC Information email enquiries dramatically increased during June, again as a result of the Refuse Services changes. SODC Customer Services received **392** emails compared to the monthly average of **150** emails (160% increase).

Council Tax

Percentage of council tax collected – In-year collection to date is **30.85%** for VWHDC and **30.92%** for SODC against a year to date target of **30.90%** and **30.95%** respectively. This target is based upon the end of year collection rate target of **98.60%** for both councils.

The year to date collection for VWHDC is **0.40%** higher than at the same time last year (**30.45%**), whilst SODC is **0.16%** higher than at the same time last year (**30.76%**).

The collection rates for 2007/2008 and 2008/2009 currently stand at **99.31%** and **98.77%** respectively for VWHDC and **99.06%** and **98.66%** respectively for SODC

Direct debit take-up has increased across both authorities from last month, with the continued improvement at SODC (since paperless direct debit was implemented) now reflecting a take-up of over 74% for the first time. Current take-up stands at **75.72%** compared to **75.49%** last month for VWHDC and **74.14%** compared to **73.83%** last month for SODC.

VWHDC outstanding correspondence currently stands at **497** items (equates to approximately **6** days worth of incoming post) compared to **396** last month. SODC outstanding correspondence figure currently stands at **565** (which equates to approximately **6** days worth of incoming post) compared to **554** last month.

All refund requests for both authorities remain within target.

There were no issues to report following the June 2009/10 recovery run for either council.

2 of the **5** remaining 'flooded' cases in VWHDC have had a further amount of discretionary relief applied for the 2009/10 financial year and confirmation letters have been issued. The other **3** have been refused relief and letters have been sent explaining why.

Business Rates

Percentage of business rates collected – In-year collection is **34.57%** for VWHDC and **33.13%** for SODC, against year to date targets of **33.50%** and **33.20%** respectively. These targets are based upon the end of year collection rate target of **99.40%**.

Currently VWHDC is **1.79%** ahead of this time last year (**32.78%**) and SODC is **1.30%** ahead (**31.83%**).

As predicted last month a number of May payments totalling **£410,000** for SODC were processed just after May's month-end and as such have now been reflected in the above collection figures.

There were no issues to report following the June 2009/10 recovery run for either council.

Benefits

New claims – Monthly performance (taken from the Single Housing Benefit Extract [SHBE] of 29 June 2009) is **34.98** days for VWHDC and **38.43** days for SODC. This is a significant improvement in performance for VWHDC from May's

figure of **40.19** days and for SODC from May's figure of **46.35** days.

The work carried out to bring new claims assessments up to date is still necessitating the assessment of some older claims, causing the June performance figure still to be affected.

The year-to-date performance, taken from the simulated SHBE of 30 June 2009, for New Claims for VWHDC and SODC is **39.16** days and **43.61** days, respectively.

The New Claim data is being cleansed due to erroneous stats being claimed for certain types of work. This will take some time due to the volume of work to be checked but will reduce all previously reported figures. The projected PI profile will be amended once the work is complete.

Change Events - Monthly performance (taken from the SHBE of 29 June 2009 is **24.09** days for VWHDC and **25.42** days for SODC. This is a decrease in performance for VWHDC from May's figure of **21.65** days and for SODC from May's figure of **15.88** days.

The work carried out to bring change assessments up to date is still necessitating the assessment of some older changes, causing the June performance figure still to be affected.

The year-to-date performance, taken from the simulated SHBE of 30 June 2009, for Change Events for VWHDC and SODC is **21.19** days and **19.86** days, respectively.

Right Benefit Indicator (NI 180) – The most recent monthly performance, taken from HoBOD and derived from the SHBE of 1 June 2009, is **5,764** changes for VWHDC and **6,364** changes for SODC.

Right Time Indicator (NI 181) - This indicator is a combination of processing times for new claims and change events.

Monthly performance, taken from the simulated SHBE of 30 June 2009, is **28.75** days for VWHDC and **30.09** days for SODC. This is a drop in performance on May's figure of **26.68** days for VWHDC and **21.54** days for SODC.

The year-to-date performance for N181 for VWHDC and SODC is **26.96** days and **26.08** days, respectively.

Outstanding Work Profile

VWHDC outstanding workload currently stands at **610** items (equates to approximately **9** days worth of incoming post) compared to **784** last month. SODC outstanding workload currently stands at **881** (which equates to

approximately **12** days worth of incoming post) compared to **874** last month.

Work is currently underway to shift the work profile so that the age of work more reasonably reflects the volume of work outstanding. Although older items of work will always appear from pending, Capita continue to work towards maintaining the age profile at no more than 10 working days.

Overpayments raised and recovered –

There has been **£351,327.26** of overpayment raised on SODC during the year 2009/10 with **£295,330.68** being recovered in the current year.

There has been **£232,784.92** of overpayment raised on VWHDC during the year 2009/10 with **£183,198.51** being recovered in the current year.

Accuracy

Financial accuracy for June was **81.2%** (May 84.5%) VWHDC and **71.4%** (May 80.1%) for SODC. The target is 95%.

Exchequer Services

Accounts Payable

Payment of invoices within 30 days – Provisional monthly performance for VWHDC is **93.56%** and **99.20%** for SODC with provisional year to date performance of **95.72%** for VWHDC and **98.78%** for SODC. The ELP team at SODC was again selected as team of the month for its performance. Capita is now providing both Councils with a weekly report identifying any invoices which are awaiting coding or approval by the Council.

Capita target (100% of invoices paid within 5 working days of receipt of correctly authorised payment) - Monthly performance is **99.76%** for VWHDC and **99.57%** for SODC. Capita have identified 3 invoices for both VWHDC and SODC which were authorised after the payment run and included in the following weekly payment run.

Accounts Receivable

Invoices created within 3 working days - Monthly performance is **100%** and **100%** for both VWHDC and SODC with Capita creating **503** and **846** invoices respectively during June within the 3 working day target.

Financial Management System (FMS)

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

Payroll

The payroll action plan is being progressed by all parties.

Payroll was processed on time for both councils.

Cash Office (South Oxfordshire only)

Continues to work well. Discussions between Capita and the council relating to PCI-DSS and upgrading the Icon system are continuing.

Contact Centre

Revenues and Benefits calls - the Coventry contact centre took **4,780** and **6,711** calls for VWHDC and SODC respectively. SLA (% of calls answered within 20 seconds) was **83%** and **84%**. Total call backs generated across both authorities amounted to **579**. The longest wait times were **556** and **613** seconds and abandoned calls numbered **86** and **74** respectively. Payments totalling **£82,050.48** were collected from SODC council taxpayers.

SODC switchboard – **11,891** calls were answered with a further **888** abandoned. **66.6%** of calls were answered within 20 seconds, whilst **79.6%** were answered within 50 seconds. The longest wait time was **946** seconds. Call volume during June was over **75%** higher than the previous month (6,780) and was as a result of the changes to the council's refuse services.

Assisted Travel – **150** calls were answered with a further **9** abandoned. **80%** of calls were answered within 20 seconds. A total of **133** new applications were received for the scheme with **13** pending further information.