

# Scrutiny Committee Agenda



Contact: Steve Culliford, Democratic Services Officer  
Telephone number 01235 540307  
Email: [steve.culliford@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:steve.culliford@whitehorsedc.gov.uk)  
Date: 19 October 2011  
Website: [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

A meeting of the  
**Scrutiny Committee**  
will be held on Thursday 27 October 2011  
at 7pm  
Council Chamber, Abbey House, Abingdon

## Members of the Committee:

### Councillors

Jim Halliday (Chair)  
Melinda Tilley (Vice-Chairman)  
Eric Batts  
Andrew Crawford  
Jane Crossley  
Tony de Vere

Charlotte Dickson  
Jason Fiddaman  
Bill Jones  
Sandy Lovatt  
Julie Mayhew-Archer  
Fiona Roper

A large print version of this agenda is available. In addition any background papers referred to may be inspected by prior arrangement.

Please note that this meeting will be held in a wheelchair accessible venue. If you would like to attend and have any special access requirements, please let the Democratic Services Officers know beforehand and they will do their very best to meet your requirements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Reed".

Margaret Reed  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Members are reminded of the provisions contained in the code of conduct adopted on 30 September 2007 and standing order 34 regarding the declaration of personal and prejudicial interests.

# Agenda

## Open to the Public including the Press

### Map and vision

(Page 4)

A map showing the location of the venue for this meeting is attached. A link to information about nearby car parking is [http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/transport/car\\_parking/default.asp](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/transport/car_parking/default.asp)

The council's vision is to build and safeguard a fair, open and compassionate community.

## 1. Notification of substitutes and apologies for absence

To record the attendance of substitute members, if any, who have been authorised to attend in accordance with the provisions of standing order 17(1), with notification having been given to the proper officer before the start of the meeting and to receive apologies for absence.

## 2. Minutes

(Pages 5 - 9)

To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the committee meeting held on 4 August 2011 (previously published).

## 3. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of personal or personal and prejudicial interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

## 4. Urgent business and chair's announcements

To receive notification of any matters, which the chair determines, should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances, which have made the matters urgent, and to receive any announcements from the chair.

## 5. Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting the Scrutiny Committee

Any statements and/or petitions from the public under standing order 32 will be made or presented at the meeting.

## **6. Financial services contract monitoring**

(Pages 10 - 48)

To consider report 35/11 of the head of finance.

If any councillor has any detailed questions on this paper, they are advised to contact Paul Howden before the meeting (email [paul.howden@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:paul.howden@southandvale.gov.uk)).

Also appended is a copy of the minutes from the committee's debate on this matter in 2010.

## **7. Recycling and waste collection contingency plan**

(Pages 49 - 62)

To consider the contingency plan for recycling and waste collections (attached). This document has been produced jointly with the council's contractor, Biffa. The Cabinet member responsible for this service offered to bring this paper to the committee.

If any councillor has any detailed questions on this paper, they are advised to contact Ian Matten, the service manager, before the meeting (email [ian.matten@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:ian.matten@southandvale.gov.uk)).

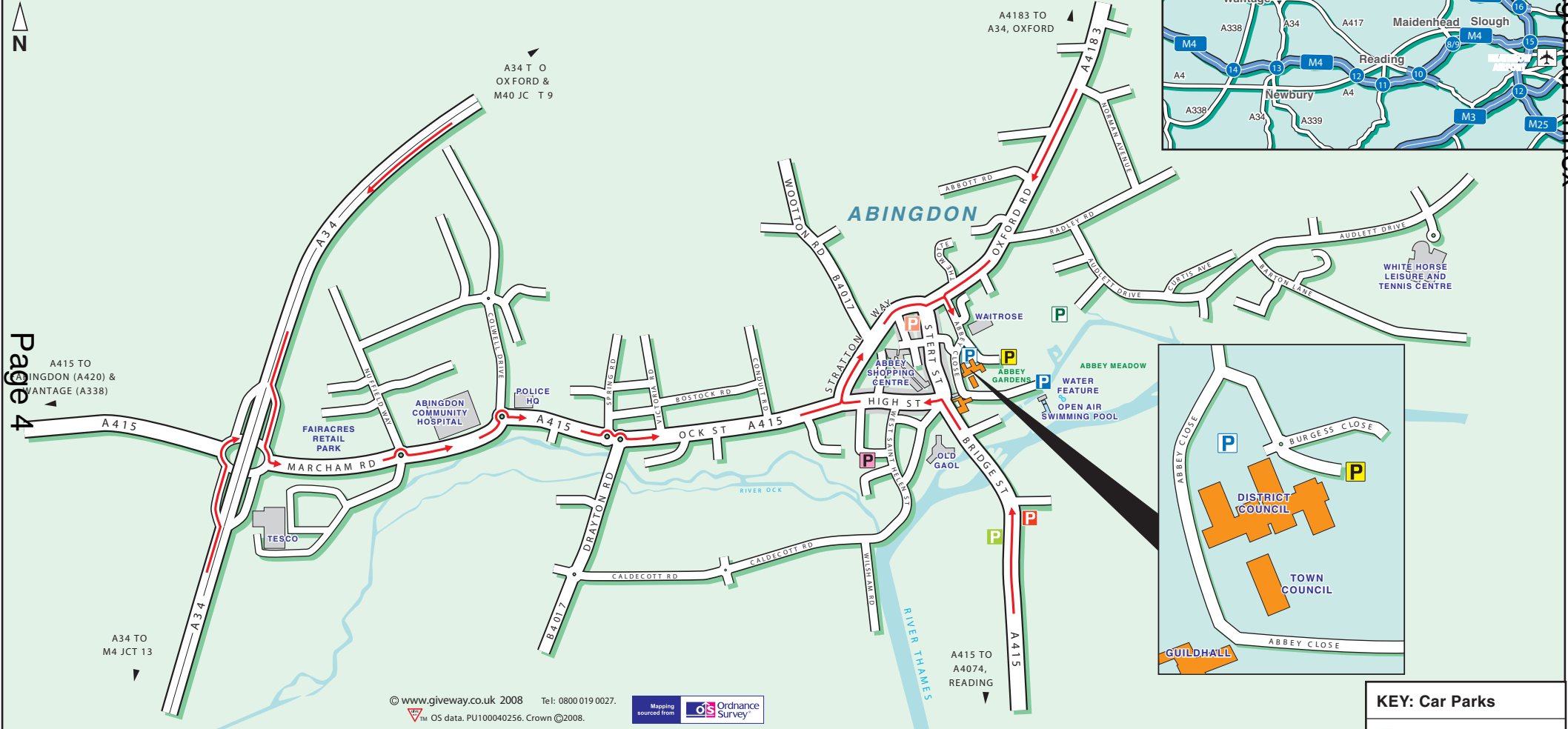
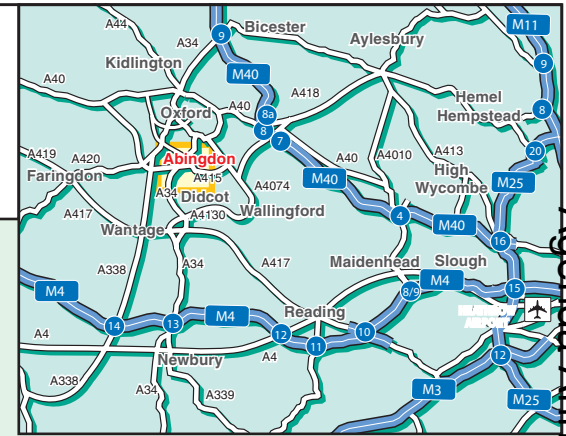
## **8. Scrutiny work programme**

(Pages 63 - 69)

To consider the attached scrutiny work programme, amend as necessary and recommend its approval to council.

## **Exempt information under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972**

None



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OS data. PU100040256. Crown ©2008. Mapping sourced from Ordnance Survey

**KEY: Car Parks**

	Abbey Close
	Cattle Market
	Charter Multi-storey
	Civic
	Rye Farm
	Hales Meadow
	Audlett Drive
	West St Helen Street

**By rail** – the nearest main line railway stations to Abingdon are either Didcot Parkway (seven miles) or Oxford (eight miles). Radley railway station is located on the main line between Oxford and Didcot and is three miles from Abingdon town centre. For details of train times visit [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk) or call 08457 484950

**By bus** – there are a number of bus routes serving Abingdon town centre. For details of services and timetables, visit Oxfordshire County Council’s website at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk). Contact details for bus operators can be found on the travel information pages on our website [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk)

**Parking** – details of car parks charges can be found on our website

# Minutes

of a meeting of the

## Scrutiny Committee

held at 7pm on Thursday 4 August 2011  
at the Abbey House, Abingdon



### Open to the public, including the press

#### Present:

Members: Councillors Jim Halliday (Chair), Melinda Tilley (Vice-Chairman), Eric Batts, Andrew Crawford, Jane Crossley, Jason Fiddaman, Bill Jones, Sandy Lovatt, Julie Mayhew-Archer, Kate Precious (as substitute for Fiona Roper), Janet Shelley (as substitute for Charlotte Dickson) and Richard Webber (as substitute for Tony de Vere)

Cabinet members: Councillors Matthew Barber and Elaine Ware

Officers: David Buckle, Steven Corrigan, Ian Price, Matt Prosser, Anna Robinson and Chris Tyson

#### **Sc.20 Notification of substitutes and apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted Tony de Vere, Charlotte Dickson and Fiona Roper.

#### **Sc.21 Declarations of interest**

Councillors Matthew Barber and Elaine Ware declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 5 call-in of cabinet decision as required by the councillors' code of conduct paragraph 11. As permitted by paragraph 12 of the code, they took part in the meeting to answer questions, then left before the committee debated the item.

Councillor Andrew Crawford declared a personal interest as a user of car parks.

#### **Sc.22 Urgent business and chair's announcements**

None

#### **Sc.23 Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting this meeting of the Scrutiny Committee**

None

## Sc.24 Call-in of Cabinet decision

Councillors Matthew Barber and Elaine Ware declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, as required by paragraph 11 of the councillors' code of conduct. As permitted by paragraph 12 of the code, they took part in the meeting to respond to questions, and then left before the committee debated the item.

Councillor Andrew Crawford declared a personal interest as a user of the council's car parks.

The committee considered Cabinet's decision made at its meeting on 8 July 2011 to introduce two hours free car parking (Minute CA.5 refers).

The specific reasons provided for the call-in were as follows:

- **An explanation of the options that were considered before a decision was taken, and the reasons for that decision** – *on the assumption that the aim is to stimulate town centre vitality, we are unclear about what other costed alternatives were considered, rejected, and why.*
- **Clarity of aims and desired outcomes** – *The precise aims of the policy are unclear as are the desired outcomes, how they will be monitored, and whether the scheme will be modified until the aims are fully achieved.*
- **The social, economic, and environmental well-being of the community** – *we are unclear about the practicality of the changes being proposed, why a differential increase in tariffs is being proposed, and are concerned that the effect of the period of free parking may be negated by the increase on post 3 hour fees and the extended changing period to 6pm.*
- **Proportionality ie the action must be proportionate to the desired outcome** – *We are concerned that the estimated cost of £250,000 is a dis-proportionately excessive cost to introduce an initial 2 hour free period of parking whilst at the same time removing the free period between 4pm and 6pm*
- **Due consultation and taking of professional advice from officers** - *we are unclear exactly what consultation has taken place about the policy, about the proposal to fund the scheme from the New Homes Bonus reserve, and about how the scheme should be funded in future years. We are also concerned that consideration of the item at Cabinet took less than seven minutes, particularly given the strong concerns expressed by the Officers in the report.*

Councillors Elaine Ware, Cabinet member for car parks, and Matthew Barber, Leader of Council, attended the meeting to respond to questions.

Committee members sought clarification on a number of issues the responses to which are set out below.

In response to questions, Councillor Matthew Barber confirmed that the aim of the two hour free car parking proposal was to stimulate town centre vitality.

He was unable to quantify the number of business which would benefit from the proposal but was of the view that all retail traders and businesses could potentially benefit from the increased footfall generated.

Ideally, all car parking would be free. However, due to capacity issues, Cabinet agreed the two hour period, although he did not believe there should be a limit on the consideration of a time limit.

In response to a question, Mr Chris Tyson, Head of Economy, Leisure and Property, advised that the existing free parking period between 4pm and 6pm was introduced to increase town centre visits. No data was available to evidence the success of this scheme.

Councillor Barber confirmed that the proposed scheme would be monitored and agreed that the scrutiny committee could comment on the proposed form of monitoring.

In response to a question, Councillor Matthew Barber agreed that the number and variety of shops was an important factor in attracting people into the towns. However, he believed free short stay car parking would benefit the market towns and that the offer of free car parking could potentially attract new retail traders to locate in the towns.

Although there was no firm evidence to show that free parking would increase footfall, local businesses had supported the measure as a means to encourage local people to visit the town centre shops and revitalise the local economy. He stressed that the proposal would form part of a range of measures to improve the economy and that, if successful, the next challenge could be the capacity of the car parks.

In response to questions, Councillor Matthew Barber confirmed that a number of monitoring options would be considered, including footfall surveys, vacant shop surveys and surveys of traders and businesses, together with anecdotal evidence. He confirmed that he would welcome the views of the committee on the retail trade survey prior to its circulation to local traders.

He confirmed that the requirement to obtain a ticket for the free parking period would be communicated via the media and signage in the car parks. Initially, non-enforceable tickets would be issued to offenders advising them of the new requirement to obtain a ticket. Whilst the ideal scenario, the capital cost of the required infrastructure and the revenue costs of monitoring made a payment on exit system costly.

He acknowledged that Abingdon residents would pay more to subsidise the free car parking due to higher increases in both short-term ticket prices and long-term resident and business permits. However, he stressed that resident car parking schemes already subsidised the car park account.

He acknowledged that Abingdon residents would pay more to subsidise the free car parking due to higher increases in resident permits. However, he stressed that resident car parking schemes already subsidised the car park account.

He did not believe that the proposals would lead to an increase in CO2 emissions. The proposal should attract users currently driving to towns outside the district and, therefore, would not increase car journeys. It could even reduce the number of miles travelled and, therefore, CO2 emissions, if people living in the district travelled to a local town. In response to a further question, he confirmed that the environmental officer had not been consulted on the likely effect of the proposals on air quality in Abingdon, although he reiterated that he did not believe the impact would be significant.

He confirmed that Oxfordshire County Council had not been consulted about the impact of the free parking scheme on the financial viability of their on street parking scheme. The existing arrangements whereby holders of Oxfordshire County Council Resident's Permits are able to park in Vale Car Parks overnight would continue from 4pm onwards.

He confirmed the continuation of the current free day car parking offered in the run-up to Christmas.

In response to questions relating to why cabinet viewed a two hour free car parking period as a better option than the current free parking period between 4pm and 6pm, Councillor Barber stated that the current offer was inconvenient for users, underused and that the revised proposal would achieve improved economic benefit.

He defended the proposed use of the Home Bonus Fund for funding the scheme initially, as it would benefit all communities living in the Vale, whether living in towns or the rural areas.

In response to concerns that the proposals to encourage people to shop in the towns could have a detrimental impact on local rural shops, Councillor Barber responded that the convenience offered by local rural shops should not be affected.

He confirmed that the Conservatives did not embark upon a fully costed budget exercise prior to the inclusion of the proposal in their election manifesto. However, they did have regard to budget information in the public domain. Advice had been sought from officers since the election. Whilst the s.151 chief finance officer strongly advised against the introduction of free car parking, councillors had previously acted against such advice, and in this case the decision was not based on purely financial factors. He believed the council could cover the loss of income.

David Buckle, Chief Executive, confirmed that he agreed with the s.151 advice. The council faced uncertain times with new initiatives impacting on resources. The loss of income as a result of the proposal represented a substantial commitment at a time of uncertainty over the medium term financial strategy and the financing of council services.

Whilst the committee did not refer the decision back to cabinet for reconsideration, members agreed that the committee would comment on the retail trade survey questionnaire and the method of monitoring the impact of the scheme and consider the monitoring reports in due course.

Officers undertook to ensure the Order and schedules detailing the fees and charges were accurate.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. not to refer the decision back to Cabinet for reconsideration
2. to review the retail trade survey at its meeting in September prior to circulation to retailers and the method of monitoring the impact of the scheme on town centre vitality
3. to consider the monitoring reports on the impact of the scheme on town centre vitality and consider whether, in light of experience, the scheme should be modified.



**Exempt information under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972**

None

The meeting closed at 9.15pm

# Scrutiny Committee report



## 27 October 2011

Report no. 35/11

Report of Head of Finance

Author: Paul Howden

Tel: 01491 823830

E-mail: paul.howden@southandvale.gov.uk

Cabinet Member responsible: Matthew Barber

Tel: 07816 481 452

E-mail: matthew.barber@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

To: Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 27 October 2011

## Performance review of CAPITA for the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011

### RECOMMENDATION

That the committee considers Capita's performance in delivering the six elements of the financial services contract for the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 and makes any recommendations to the Cabinet member for finance.

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to review the performance of Capita in providing financial services during the review period of 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

2. **Strategic Objective - “*managing our business effectively*”:** The financial services contract contains a number of key performance indicators and a payment and performance mechanism that details a system of bonuses and penalties relating to these indicators. The majority of services provided are also key front line services. The contract with Capita is therefore particularly significant in helping to achieve the corporate priorities of:
  - providing value for money services that meet the needs of our residents and service users; and,

- optimising access to our services.

## BACKGROUND

3. The financial services contract commenced on 31 July 2006 and is a joint contract between Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC), South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), and Capita. It was a ground breaking contract that included the creation of a shared services model created by VWHDC and SODC to modernise and achieve economies of scale in the provision of financial services. The partnership has enabled processes and procedures to be harmonised and efficiency savings to be made as a consequence.
4. The contract duration was for an initial term of seven years (ending on 30 July 2013) but an option to extend it for a further three years to 30 July 2016 was taken up in April 2011.
5. The specification for the financial services contract comprises the following elements:

Service	SODC only	VWHDC only	Joint
Council tax and non-domestic rates collection			✓
Benefits administration			✓
Accounts receivable (debtors) administration			✓
Accounts payable (creditors) administration			✓
Payroll system and system administration **			✓
Integrated financial management information system and system administration (general ledger, accounts payable & receivable, payroll)			✓
Collection of car park excess charges ***	✓		
Cashier services	✓		
Administration of assisted travel scheme			✓ ( July 09)
Customer contact services	✓		

\*\* The payroll service is managed by South Oxfordshire District Council on behalf of the council

\*\*\* Excess charges administration transferred to in-house provision from 1 November 2010

6. Although the contract is a joint one with SODC, this report only concentrates on performance in respect of VWHDC.

## PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF CAPITA

7. A system for the performance review of contractors has been devised which requires the following measures to be included in the evaluation:
  - measured performance against key performance targets (KPT's)
  - customer satisfaction with the total service experience, and
  - council satisfaction as client

8. For the purpose of this review the contract with Capita has been scored in five parts:
  - revenues
  - benefits
  - exchequer (accounts payable, accounts receivable)
  - financial management system
  - concessionary fares (assisted travel)
9. The Cabinet member for Finance will make the assessments of Capita's performance after consideration by the committee. The detailed officer assessments (based on the measures of excellent; good; fair; weak; poor) are as follows:

## REVENUES

### Dimension 1 – Key performance targets (KPTs)

10. Performance against performance targets is given in **Appendix 1** with the indicators that are key performance targets for the contractual payment and performance mechanism in bold.
11. The main points to note when assessing performance for the review period include:
  - Capita achieved an in-year collection rate of **98.68 per cent** (2009/10 98.63 per cent) for council tax collection against a target of 98.6 per cent. This was the best in-year collection rate recorded and considering the ongoing economic downturn, it was a tremendous achievement. It should also be noted that arrears continue to be collected after the end of the financial year. At the time of writing this report 99.08 per cent of last year's council tax debt has been collected.
  - Capita achieved an in-year collection rate of **99.07 per cent** (2009/10 98.94 per cent) for business rate collection against a target of 99.4 per cent (this target relates to the final year of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) in 2007/08). Performance was once again affected by the economic downturn but it was still a considerable achievement and was an improvement upon 2009/10.
12. Based on this performance the head of service has made a judgement on KPT performance for revenues and the cash office as follows:

KPT judgement

<b>Excellent</b>
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### Dimension 2 – Customer satisfaction

13. Customer satisfaction with council services is of high importance. Though the council is ultimately responsible for delivering customer satisfaction, the operational duty of providing customer service is delegated to the contractor. Taking customer satisfaction into account when evaluating performance ensures that Capita is focused on the outcome of performance for customers.

14. In accordance with the model for reviewing performance of contractors, measurement of customer satisfaction should be undertaken through:
- ongoing measurement by the contractor as part of the service
  - independent surveys and gap analyses commissioned by the council as part of its consultation process.
15. To meet the council's requirements, satisfaction is measured on a scale of 1-5 which is convenient and replicates the Audit Commission's previous BVPI measurements:
- 5 – very satisfied
  - 4 – satisfied
  - 3 – neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
  - 2 – dissatisfied
  - 1 – very dissatisfied
16. Due to its significant impact upon our more vulnerable customers, it is the benefits service (evaluated below) that is heavily scrutinised as far as the financial services contract is concerned. The revenues collection function rarely gets compliments due to the nature of the service, and although the council demands high collection rates it requires processes to be efficient and perceived as fair by the customer. However, during 2010 the council and Capita undertook a business rates satisfaction survey which produced the following results:
- Satisfaction with the service was very positive overall (73 per cent) and specifically in terms of accuracy of the bill (75 per cent); additional information that accompanied the bill (65 per cent); and, methods of payment available (88 per cent). However, three per cent said they encountered problems paying their bills (these were cheque payers); and eight per cent of those who contacted the council claimed that their query was not resolved on first contact
  - Respondents who contacted the service by telephone were very positive about the way their calls were handled (79 per cent) i.e. calls were answered quickly (83 per cent); queries were dealt with swiftly (75 per cent). However, 21 per cent felt it was difficult trying to get to speak to the right member of staff
  - Satisfaction with staff was 80 per cent, with staff being perceived as friendly; they treated respondents with respect; and, explained things in a way they could understand. However, 28 per cent did not always feel confident that what staff said was correct.
17. The council received 30 official (revenues) complaints during 2010/11. The majority of these complaints were dealt with promptly and although three council tax complaints were justified, all but one were resolved at stage one of the complaints procedure with the other being resolved at stage 2.
18. The annual billing process was once again carried out efficiently and the continuation of paperless direct debits offers a convenient facility for taxpayers to set up direct debits over the phone. By the end of the year the council was at its all

time highest direct debit take-up of in excess of 78 per cent. This is the highest achieved by Capita at any of its clients and is higher than most other councils. In addition, for the first time ever, benefit notifications were posted in the same envelope as council tax bills.

19. Capita undertook an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) of the council tax service in 2010/11 following on from a successful assessment carried out in 2007/08. EIA assessments help to achieve racial, disability and gender equality. It reviewed recent improvements in the service including the introduction of the PayPoint facility; the introduction of the second direct debit date; various articles that had appeared in the Unvaled publication; the use of visiting officers meeting disabled residents; and, the improvement in web forms. A further action plan was agreed which included looking at increasing awareness of council tax discounts/reliefs available for older people, people on low incomes and people with disabilities; increasing staff knowledge of the Human Rights Act; and, consideration of undertaking a satisfaction survey of the collection service. The action plan will be monitored during 2011/12.
20. Quarterly meetings with the Citizens Advice Bureaux did raise a few concerns with the bailiff service, which tends to be inevitable due to the nature of the work, but a presentation from Capita's bailiff company Equita, was very well received by bureaux staff.
21. Capita handled **34,581** council tax telephone calls at its Coventry contact centre during the year. It managed to answer **86** per cent of these calls within 20 seconds (the target being 80 per cent). In the first full year of the remote cashier facility it also managed to take £400,000 of payments over the phone. Unfortunately the council does receive some complaints about the service from time to time (usually when there have been unavoidable bulk mailings), but generally the service is good during calmer periods. The council received three official complaints during 2010/11. These complaints were dealt with promptly and although one call contact complaint was justified all three were resolved at stage one of the complaints procedure.
22. Based on this performance, the head of service has made a judgement on customer satisfaction for revenues and the cash office as follows:

Customer satisfaction judgement

**Good**

### **Dimension 3 – Council satisfaction**

23. Whilst customer satisfaction is an important priority, a further important dimension is the satisfaction expressed by the council as the client on whether the contractor is meeting its needs and expectations. These needs and expectations have been measured using the model for reviewing performance of contractors and are attached as **Appendix 2**.
24. This produced a score of **4.42** out of a maximum score of **5.0**. Based on this performance, the Head of Finance made the following judgement on Capita's delivery of council satisfaction.

Council satisfaction judgement

**Excellent**

## Overall assessment – Revenues

25. Taking into account the performance of Capita against KPTs, customer satisfaction and council satisfaction, the head of service has made an overall judgement as follows.

Overall assessment

<b>Excellent</b>
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## Strengths and areas for improvement

26. **Appendix 2** records strengths and areas for improvement relating to the performance of Capita during the review period. Where performance is lower than that expected the contract manager will agree an improvement plan with Capita. This has not been required for this element of the contract

## Contractor's feedback

27. A key feature of the process for reviewing the performance of contractors is that the council provides them with an opportunity to give their feedback on the assessment, including suggestions for improvements to the council processes. This is included in **Appendix 7**.

## BENEFITS

### Dimension 1 – Key performance targets (KPT's)

28. Performance against performance targets is given in **Appendix 1a** with the indicators that are key performance targets for the contractual payment and performance mechanism in bold.

29. The main points to note when assessing performance for the review period include:

- The figure for speed of processing new claims (the old BVPI 78a measure) came in at **20.28 days**, just marginally outside the **19 day target**, compared to 24.2 days in 2009/10. Although the target was not achieved, it was the best in-year performance since the inception of the contract. Changes in circumstances (the old BVPI 78b measure) came in at **11.53 days** against a very challenging target of **9.5 days**, compared to 14.73 days in 2009/10. **NI 181** (combined new claims and changes processing) came in at a very pleasing **12.6 days** and under the **13 day target**, compared to 16.38 days in 2009/10
- Capita's promised focus on getting benefit assessments "right first time" materialised during 2010/11. The financial accuracy performance rate for 2010/11 was **92.14 per cent** (based on the council's statutory checks), an impressive 6.68 per cent improvement upon the 85.46 per cent recorded in 2009/10. Although below the very challenging target of 95 per cent, it was by far the best performance since the inception of the contract (and compared favourably with our MKOB benchmarking group) and was what the council (through strict monitoring by the Partnership Board) and Capita have been striving for

- During 2010/11 the Audit Commission qualified the council's 2009/10 benefit subsidy grant claim: criticised the council's benefits arrangements (although it accepted that the improvements in quality and accuracy made during the current year would not be seen until the 2010/11 grant claim) and, initially adjusted the subsidy grant claim meaning the council would be penalised to the sum of £52,998 for breaching the local authority financial error threshold. This penalty was challenged however and was subjected to further audit work. The Department for Work and Pensions is currently considering revoking the penalty. Finally, the Audit Commission made two recommendations; to reduce the general level of benefit errors and, improve the accuracy of benefit classifications for subsidy purposes. Both recommendations were accepted at the Audit and Governance Committee meeting on 9 March 2011 and, as noted above, accuracy levels were on the increase during 2010/11 in any case
- Recovery of overpaid benefit, which was subject to close scrutiny by the Board, really improved during 2010/11. This was an area of performance which the council hoped would take off under Capita following the introduction of an incentive scheme and during the year saw old debt reduce by **£353,849** whilst **65 per cent** of all debts raised during 2010/11 were collected, amounting to **£886,615**. Benefit debt, which is predominantly claimant error and fraudulent overpayments, is notoriously difficult to collect and prompt; firm action is required to keep on top of it. Of the year end arrears, which totalled £1.338m, 50 per cent of the debt (45 per cent of debtors) was subject to arrangements. 2010/11 was the best performance in terms of managing and collecting the debt since the inception of the contract.

30. Based on this performance the head of service has made a judgement on KPT performance for Benefits as follows:

KPT judgement

<b>Good</b>
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## Dimension 2 – Customer satisfaction

31. As explained above, due to its significant impact upon our more vulnerable customers, it is the benefits service that is heavily scrutinised as far as the financial services contract is concerned. Capita is contracted to gauge customer satisfaction by conducting surveys (which is important following the previous BVPI surveys being abolished), and a survey carried out during 2010/11 produced the following results:

- Taking everything into account, 89 per cent of customers were satisfied with the service they received from the benefits office compared to 80 per cent in 2007
- 85 per cent of customers were satisfied with the amount of time it took to tell them whether their claim was successful or not, compared to 65 per cent in 2007
- 16 per cent of customers surveyed felt their benefit had been calculated incorrectly during the year
- 83 per cent of customers were satisfied with the ways in which they could contact the benefits office



- 71 per cent of customers were satisfied with the telephone service, with 68 per cent feeling their query was dealt with quickly (17 per cent disagreed) and 67 per cent agreeing that their call was answered quickly (18 per cent disagreed). However, 31 per cent felt it was difficult getting through to the right person
- 69 per cent of customers were satisfied with the claim form, but 32 per cent felt letters sent about their claim were difficult to understand
- Generally, the main improvements customers would like to see would be (i) the time taken to tell them whether their claim was successful or not, and (ii) improvements to the claim form.

32. The financial services contract with Capita is heavily weighted towards achieving good performance and high levels of customer care and satisfaction. It also specifies building up good working relationships with stakeholders – both internal (e.g. the council's Housing Services Team who share approximately **200** mutual customers at any one time) and external (e.g. Registered Social Landlords – RSLs – who share approximately **3,150** mutual customers at any one time), to promote joint working where appropriate to improve the end customer experience. To this end Capita has:

- Conducted joint visits with both Housing and RSL staff where this has been requested and held surgeries at RSL offices
- Trained Housing and RSL staff to verify benefit applications (which avoids unnecessary duplication)
- Held regular meetings with Housing staff where required to address working practices to improve efficiency and effectiveness, end customer experience, and, service level agreements
- Held benefit surgeries around the district. This increases customer access to the service and is an alternative to home visits.

33. Generally, positive feedback has been received from RSL's and the CABx via regular liaison meetings. This is always a good yardstick as these organisations predominantly represent the most vulnerable of our customers. However, the RSLs in particular (who represent over 60 per cent of the benefit customer caseload) have voiced concerns about the quality and accuracy of benefit notifications.

34. Capita handled 17,850 benefit telephone calls at its Coventry contact centre during the year. It managed to answer 85 per cent of these calls within 20 seconds (the target being 80 per cent). Unfortunately the council does receive some complaints about the service from time to time (usually when there have been unavoidable bulk mailings) and where there seems to be a lack of understanding with complex queries, but generally the service is good during calmer periods. As explained above, three official complaints were received during 2010/11. These complaints were dealt with promptly and although one contact centre complaint was justified all three were resolved at stage one of the complaints procedure. Capita undertook an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) of the benefits service in 2008/09 which was especially well received by the external disability panel. EIA assessments help to achieve racial, disability and gender equality. Although there

were no major issues some recommendations were carried forward to 2010/2011 and most were implemented, such as increasing the number of surgeries; publicising legislative changes; and promoting benefits to minority groups. This should help improve customer satisfaction in certain areas.

35. There were 43 official complaints, 24 of which were justified (compared to 24 and seven in 2009/10). All except three were dealt with at stage one of the complaints procedure with one progressing to stage three. Compensation totalling £640.34 was paid by Capita.

36. Based on this performance, the head of service has made a judgement on customer satisfaction for benefits as follows:

Customer satisfaction judgement 

<b>Fair</b>
-------------

### Dimension 3 – Council satisfaction

37. Whilst customer satisfaction is an important priority, a further important dimension is the satisfaction expressed by the council as the client on whether the contractor is meeting its needs and expectations. These needs and expectations have been measured using the model for reviewing performance of contractors and are attached as **Appendix 3**.

38. This produced a score of **3.95** out of a maximum score of **5.0**. Based on this performance, the Head of Finance made the following judgement on Capita's delivery of council satisfaction.

Council satisfaction judgement 

<b>Good</b>
-------------

### Overall assessment – Benefits

39. Taking into account the performance of Capita against KPT's, customer satisfaction and council satisfaction, the head of service has made an overall judgement as follows.

Overall assessment 

<b>Good</b>
-------------

### Strengths and areas for improvement

40. **Appendix 3** records strengths and areas for improvement relating to the performance of Capita during the review period. Where performance is lower than that expected the council will agree an improvement plan with Capita. This was already in force following the 2009/10 report and was being monitored through the governance processes during 2010/11. However, it was signed off as completed in June 2011.

## **Contractor's feedback**

41. A key feature of the process for reviewing the performance of contractors is that the council provides them with an opportunity to give their feedback on the assessment, including suggestions for improvements to the council processes. This is included in **Appendix 7**

# EXCHEQUER – ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

## Dimension 1 – Key performance targets (KPTs)

- 42. In August 2009 Capita decided to move the majority of Exchequer functions to its Mendip site, so 2010/11 was the first full year of operations from the remote site. The problems encountered following the transfer which were eradicated by the end of 2009/10 did not return during 2010/11 and the service provided continued to improve.
- 43. **Accounts Receivable** – maximising sundry debts was a key theme of the financial services procurement and during 2010/11 the council (its legal representative and cost centre managers), assisted by Capita, finished the end of the year with its lowest ever recorded arrears levels over 30 days – to the sum of £186k compared to the previous year’s best ever of £290k. If it wasn’t for the problematic brown bin debt which totalled £85k, the year-end position would have been even better.
- 44. Capita’s performance in issuing (18,873) invoices within 2 working days of instructions from cost centres was 100 per cent apart from January when it was 99.9 per cent. Capita also hit 100 per cent performance for the production of (5,293) reminders after 14 days and (785) final notices after 28 days. In addition, important aged debt reports (required for monitoring debt progress) and legal lists (required to determine recovery action) were issued promptly throughout the year and write-off’s of unrecoverable debts were processed promptly.
- 45. As with other issues, this service area continues to be closely monitored by the Board and we are now seeing real progress, with cost centre managers taking more responsibility in recovering the debts that they raise.
- 46. **Accounts Payable** - Capita continued 2010/11 where it left off at the end of 2009/2010. 99 per cent of (6,169) invoices received were scanned and distributed to service teams within 48 hours and 100 per cent of (258) urgent payment requests (within the same day) were met. In addition, 100 per cent of purchase order requests were met.
- 47. Payment of invoices within 30 days (the old BVPI8 measure) is not a contractual target upon Capita, but it is greatly influenced by the operation and understanding of the Agresso system and by Capita ensuring that invoices are scanned and distributed in a timely manner. Performance in 2010/11 was an all time best of **97.31 per cent** compared to 94.46 per cent in 2009/10.
- 48. Based on this performance the head of service has made a judgement on KPT performance for exchequer as follows:

KPT judgement 

<b>Excellent</b>
------------------

## Dimension 2 – Customer satisfaction

- 49. **Accounts payable** – Capita’s performance in the accounts payable process was much improved in 2010/11. Capita worked closely with the on-site council staff (especially through the Agresso Superuser group during the year) to discuss any problems that arose and make service improvements.

- 50. Capita now has processes in place to provide the council with weekly and monthly reports of invoices waiting to be paid or those that were paid late, which have contributed to the significant improvement in payment of invoice performance.
- 51. **Accounts receivable** – As explained above, due to its significant impact upon our more vulnerable customers, it is the benefits service that is heavily scrutinised as far as the financial services contract is concerned. However, complaints are monitored through the council’s complaints procedure and during the year two complaints were received with one justified. Both were dealt with at stage 1 of the process.
- 52. Training and access issues for internal customers (cost centre managers) to enquire on the status of debts raised and income collected were good with Capita becoming more proactive generally. The exchequer manager continued to attend meetings with the legal representatives and the client manager and was generally more accessible for staff.
- 53. Based on this performance, the head of service has made a judgement on council satisfaction for exchequer as follows:

Customer satisfaction judgement **Good**

**Dimension 3 – Council satisfaction**

- 54. Whilst customer satisfaction is an important priority, a further important dimension is the satisfaction expressed by the council as the client on whether the contractor is meeting its needs and expectations.
- 55. The council’s needs and expectations have been measured using the model for reviewing performance of contractors and are attached as **Appendix 4**.

56. This produced a score of **4.35** out of a maximum score of **5.0**. Based on this performance, the Head of Finance made the following judgement on Capita’s delivery of council satisfaction:

Council satisfaction judgement **Excellent**

**Overall assessment**

57. Taking into account the performance of Capita against KPT’s, customer satisfaction and council satisfaction, the head of service has made an overall judgement as follows.

Overall assessment **Excellent**

**Strengths and areas for improvement**

58. **Appendix 4** records strengths and areas for improvement relating to the performance of Capita during the review period. Where performance is lower than that expected the contract manager will agree an improvement plan with Capita.

## **Contractor's feedback**

59. A key feature of the process for reviewing the performance of contractors is that the council provides them with an opportunity to give their feedback on the assessment, including suggestions for improvements to the council processes. This is included in **Appendix 7**.

# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (FMS)

## Dimension 1 – Key performance targets (KPTs)

- 60. System availability. The availability of the Agresso system has remained satisfactory throughout the period; there have been no major unannounced periods of system non-availability that have inconvenienced users. Printing problems from the FMS are better than previous with only isolated printing issues for some users.
- 61. Systems administration. The service to upload to the system, setting up new codes and new users/removing users, has proved responsive and there are no issues with this part of the contractor’s performance. The contractor has been of assistance in supporting the council’s internal transfer of responsibilities to the finance team, and in providing help and guidance to the team member who has taken on this role.
- 62. Training for report writing. The level and depth of training given to assist the team in writing system reports has not really improved. Notes are yet to be supplied to complement the training. The contractor’s attitude still seems to be that as council officers were trained when the system was initially set up, there is no further requirement to provide support from Capita in trying to get reports written – this unfortunately is a flawed premise – staff turnover means that there are now some newer team members who have had no formal training on the systems. That said, the ability to use Excelerator has allowed the accountancy staff to work more efficiently, however the contractor has not provided any training on this facility.
- 63. Upgrade of Agresso. The upgrade to Agresso version 5.5.3 has seen a marked improvement in the level of support and functionality available to the council’s accountancy service. There was an impressive level of work undertaken by the contractor’s team to ensure that this upgrade was initiated, pursued and installed with the minimum of disruption to services. This dedication and commitment to the upgrade was not unnoticed and shows what can be achieved when working proactively and as one with the client.
- 64. Although no KPTs are laid down for the FMS part of the contract, the estimated assessment of this dimension is “good”, and represents a vast improvement on the previous years.

KPT judgement

<b>Good</b>
-------------

## Dimension 2 – Customer satisfaction

- 65. The council is the customer for the financial management system. Service departments only use the web based version of Agresso. There has been no negative feedback from the service departments and they remain satisfied with the general service provided, system availability and response to queries.
- 66. Accountancy services are the principal users of the “back-office” live system. Routine use of the financial management system causes no issues. The previously identified printing problems have reduced throughout the year. With the reconciliations, clarification over the timetables and reporting terminology has

improved the statistics and there has been a marked improvement in the reconciliation response times.

67. Taking the whole year's performance into account, the performance is "good". Again, as with dimension one above, the direction of travel is one of continued improving performance.

Customer satisfaction judgement

**Good**

### Dimension 3 – Council satisfaction

68. Whilst customer satisfaction is an important priority, a further important dimension is the satisfaction expressed by the council as the client on whether the contractor is meeting its needs and expectations. These needs and expectations have been measured using the model for reviewing performance of contractors and are attached as **Appendix 5**.

69. This produced a score of **3.90** (last year was **2.55**) out of a maximum score of **5.0**. To put this into some context, last year the assessment was "poor". This year the contractor is on the cusp of the "fair" and "good". Based on this performance, and in recognition of the effort made in the upgrade to version 5.5.3, the Head of Finance made the following judgement on Capita's delivery of council satisfaction:

Council satisfaction judgement

**Good**

### Overall assessment

70. Performance is improving. The level of commitment and proactive working to ensure the upgrade to Agresso 5.5.3 was achieved with the minimum of disruption. The prompt identification of issues and more importantly, the development of solutions and willingness to put in the extra effort to deliver the project to the specified deadlines was an example of what can be achieved. Whilst it is acknowledged that the upgrade was a team effort, special mention must go to the project manager, Craig Richmond; without his sterling efforts and dedication the project may well have floundered.
71. It is extremely encouraging that this year has seen a quantum leap in the contractor's performance and consequently the satisfaction rating has increased accordingly. The management of the upgrade played a significant part in the improved score. It is hoped that this level of performance is sustained and is maintained for the remaining life of the contract (to July 2016) – a standard has been set and needs to be maintained – possibly by extra effort on the training of staff and the report writing element of the FMS.
72. As previously stated, the client accountancy team consider the staff and support from the contractor's team in Mendip to be helpful, polite and efficient (when in their control) in dealing with issues, problems and queries raised by the client



team. The client accountancy team would once again like to pass on their thanks to the contractor's staff at Mendip.

73. A concern remains as to whether the contractor has adequate resources attributed to support the FMS and at the right level, particularly in regard to resilience and continuity plans.

74. Taking into account the performance of Capita against KPT's, customer satisfaction and council satisfaction, the Head of Finance has made an overall judgement as follows. .

Overall assessment

**Good**

## **Strengths and areas for improvement**

75. **Appendix 5** records strengths and areas for improvement relating to the performance of Capita during the review period. Where performance is lower than that expected the contract manager will agree an improvement plan with Capita.

## **Contractor's feedback**

76. A key feature of the process for reviewing the performance of contractors is that the council provides them with an opportunity to give their feedback on the assessment, including suggestions for improvements to the council processes. This is included in **Appendix 7**

## CONCESSIONARY FARES (ASSISTED TRAVEL)

### Dimension 1 – Key performance targets (KPTs)

77. Capita administers the national bus pass scheme on behalf of the council. It also administers the hospital appointments scheme. Generally, the national scheme is administered from the contact centre in Coventry, whilst the arrangements for lost bus passes and the hospital appointments scheme is administered in the council offices.
78. As far as the national bus pass scheme is concerned, Capita is required to (i) order new passes within three working days of a completed application being received; (ii) update the customer database records within three working days of changes being received; (iii) request replacement bus passes within three days of a request being made. In relation to the hospital appointments scheme, Capita is required to pass completed documentation to the council within five days of receipt to enable it to reimburse the user. Against all these KPT's Capita generally achieved full compliance during 2010/11.
79. Capita handled 2,621 telephone calls at its Coventry contact centre during the year. It managed to answer 94 per cent of these calls within 20 seconds (the target being 80 per cent).
80. Based on this performance the head of service has made a judgement on KPT performance for concessionary fares as follows:

KPT judgement

**Excellent**

### Dimension 2 – Customer satisfaction

81. No customer satisfaction survey was undertaken during the year so it was not possible to gauge satisfaction levels on service administration.
82. However, no customer complaints were received in respect of the assisted travel service during the course of the year.
83. Based on this performance, the head of service has made a judgement on customer satisfaction for concessionary fares as follows:

Customer satisfaction judgement

**Good**

### Dimension 3 – Council satisfaction

84. Whilst customer satisfaction is an important priority, a further important dimension is the satisfaction expressed by the council as the client on whether the contractor is meeting its needs and expectations. These needs and expectations have been measured using the model for reviewing performance of contractors and are attached as **Appendix 6**.

85. This produced a score of **4.36** out of a maximum score of **5.0**. Based on this performance, the Head of Finance made the following judgement on Capita's delivery of council satisfaction:

Council satisfaction judgement

**Excellent**

### Overall assessment

86. Taking into account the performance of Capita against KPT's, customer satisfaction and council satisfaction, the head of service has made an overall judgement as follows.

Overall assessment

**Excellent**

### Strengths and areas for improvement

87. Capita generally provides a good concessionary fares service. The team leader keeps the client team well informed and always demonstrates a desire to offer a high quality service.

### Contractor's feedback

88. A key feature of the process for reviewing the performance of contractors is that the council provides them with an opportunity to give their feedback on the assessment, including suggestions for improvements to the council processes. This is included in **Appendix 7**.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

89. The contract with Capita incorporates a payment and performance mechanism. Issues around the exact application of the mechanism and the changes going forward are the responsibility of the Strategic Board.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

90. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## CONCLUSION

91. The Head of Finance has assessed Capita's performance as follows for its delivery of the financial services contract:

- Revenues – **excellent** (09/10 – good)
- Benefits – **good** (09/10 – weak)
- Exchequer (accounts payable, accounts receivable) – **excellent** (09/10 – fair)
- Financial management system – **good** (09/10 weak)

- Concessionary fares (assisted travel) – **excellent** (09/10 good)

92. There has been a tremendous improvement in the quality of the financial services provided by Capita during 2010/11 – it has definitely been the best year since the inception of the contract and Capita should be congratulated. Benefits is still an area where improvements could be made – especially where customer service is concerned. The governance process will continue to vigorously monitor the contract, and this, along with the commitment pledged by the Capita management should help improve service provision in the future.

<b>Performance Targets</b>	<b>2009/10 Target</b>	<b>2009/10 Achieved</b>	<b>2010/11 Target</b>	<b>2010/11 Achieved</b>
<b>Percentage of Council Tax collected</b>	<b>98.60%</b>	<b>98.63%</b>	<b>98.60%</b>	<b>98.68%</b>
<b>Percentage of NNDR collected</b>	<b>99.40%</b>	<b>98.94%</b>	<b>99.40%</b>	<b>99.07%</b>
<b>Average time (days) for processing new benefit claims.</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>24.20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20.28</b>
<b>Average time (days) for processing benefit changes in circumstances</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14.73</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>11.53</b>
NI181 Average time (days) for processing new claims and changes in circumstances	-	<b>16.38</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12.6</b>
<b>Financial accuracy of benefit assessments</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>85.46%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>92.14%</b>

## Council satisfaction – Revenues

This assessment allows the council (as a client) to record its own satisfaction with aspects of a contractor's performance which lie outside Key Performance Targets and customer satisfaction. Each officer with direct knowledge and who frequently interacts with the contractor should complete this form. Questions can be left blank if not relevant to a contract or contractor.

Contractor / supplier / partner name | Capita

From (date) | 1 April 2010 | To | 31 March 2011

### SERVICE DELIVERY

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
1 Understanding of the client's needs	✓				
2 Response time	✓				
3 Delivers to time		✓			
4 Delivers to budget	✓				
5 Efficiency of invoicing		✓			
6 Approach to health & safety	✓				
7 Supports the council's plans for joint working	✓				
8 *					

\* These spaces are deliberately left blank for the addition of any performance criteria which are specific to this particular contract / service.

### COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONS

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
9 Easy to deal with	✓				
10 Communications / keeping the client informed		✓			
11 Quality of written documentation	✓				
12 Compliance with Council's corporate identity		✓			

## Appendix 2

13	Listening	✓			
14	Quality of relationship	✓			

### IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION

Attribute		(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
15	Offers suggestions beyond the scope of work		✓			
16	Degree of innovation			✓		
17	Goes the extra mile		✓			
18	Supports the Council's sustainability objectives		✓			
19	Supports the Council's equality objectives	✓				
20	Degree of partnership working		✓			

### KEY DOCUMENTS

If required, has the contractor provided the Council with annual updates of the following documents?

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Annual Corporate Governance Assurance Statement? (Yes / No) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Updated risk register (Yes / No)                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Annual business plan (Yes / No)                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Updated business continuity plan (Yes / No)                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Strengths	Revenues management and support to the manager
	Knowledge and commitment of staff

Areas for improvement	Innovation – particularly around “on-line” initiatives
	Liaison with the benefits department

## COUNCIL SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT

	Very satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Neither (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very dissatisfied (1)	Votes cast
	9	9	1	0	0	19

Rating	Range	Votes	Weighting	Total weighted
Very satisfied	<b>5.0</b>	9	X 5	45
Satisfied	<b>4.3</b>	9	X 4	36
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<b>3.9</b>	1	X 3	3
Dissatisfied	<b>3.4</b>	0	X 2	0
Very dissatisfied	<b>3.0</b>	0	X 1	0

Total		<b>19</b>		<b>84</b>
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**Calculation:  $84 \div 19 = 4.42$**

For reasons of consistency with previous assessments, and for fairness between contractors, the following is a rough guide to the assessment of contractors on customer satisfaction:

Score	<b>4.3 – 5.0</b>	3.9 – 4.3	3.4 – 3.9	3.0 – 3.4	<3.0
Classification	<b>Excellent</b>	Good	Fair	Weak	Poor



## Council satisfaction –Benefits

This assessment allows the council (as a client) to record its own satisfaction with aspects of a contractor's performance which lie outside Key Performance Targets and customer satisfaction. Each officer with direct knowledge and who frequently interacts with the contractor should complete this form. Questions can be left blank if not relevant to a contract or contractor.

Contractor / supplier / partner name | Capita

From (date) | 1 April 2010 | To | 31 March 2011

### SERVICE DELIVERY

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
1 Understanding of the client's needs		✓			
2 Response time		✓			
3 Delivers to time			✓		
4 Delivers to budget	✓				
5 Efficiency of invoicing	✓				
6 Approach to health & safety	✓				
7 Supports the council's plans for joint working	✓				
8 *					

\* These spaces are deliberately left blank for the addition of any performance criteria which are specific to this particular contract / service.

### COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONS

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
9 Easy to deal with		✓			
10 Communications / keeping the client informed		✓			
11 Quality of written documentation			✓		
12 Compliance with Council's corporate identity		✓			

## Appendix 3

13	Listening	✓			
14	Quality of relationship	✓			

### IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION

Attribute		(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
15	Offers suggestions beyond the scope of work			✓		
16	Degree of innovation			✓		
17	Goes the extra mile			✓		
18	Supports the Council's sustainability objectives		✓			
19	Supports the Council's equality objectives		✓			
20	Degree of partnership working		✓			

### KEY DOCUMENTS

If required, has the contractor provided the Council with annual updates of the following documents?

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Annual Corporate Governance Assurance Statement? (Yes / No) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Updated risk register (Yes / No)                            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Annual business plan (Yes / No)                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Updated business continuity plan (Yes / No)                 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

### STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Strengths	Equality awareness
	Surgeries/home visiting
	Keeness of off-site team
	Liaison with housing

Areas for improvement	Off site operations/staff including inter –site communication
	General benefits quality regarding written documentation


## COUNCIL SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT

	Very satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Neither (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very dissatisfied (1)	Votes cast
	4	10	5	0	0	19

Rating	Range	Votes	Weighting	Total weighted
Very satisfied	<b>5.0</b>	4	X 5	20
Satisfied	<b>4.3</b>	10	X 4	40
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<b>3.9</b>	5	X 3	15
Dissatisfied	<b>3.4</b>	0	X 2	0
Very dissatisfied	<b>3.0</b>	0	X 1	0

Total		<b>19</b>		<b>75</b>
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**Calculation:  $75 \div 19 = 3.95$**

For reasons of consistency with previous assessments, and for fairness between contractors, the following is a rough guide to the assessment of contractors on customer satisfaction:

Score	4.3 – 5.0	<b>3.9 – 4.3</b>	3.4 – 3.9	3.0 – 3.4	<3.0
Classification	Excellent	<b>Good</b>	Fair	Weak	Poor

## Council satisfaction – Exchequer

This assessment allows the Council (as a client) to record its own satisfaction with aspects of a contractor's performance which lie outside Key Performance Targets and customer satisfaction. Each officer with direct knowledge and who frequently interacts with the contractor should complete this form. Questions can be left blank if not relevant to a contract or contractor.

Contractor / supplier / partner name | Capita

From (date) | 1 April 2010 | To | 31 March 2011

### SERVICE DELIVERY

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
1 Understanding of the client's needs		✓			
2 Response time		✓			
3 Delivers to time		✓			
4 Delivers to budget	✓				
5 Efficiency of invoicing	✓				
6 Approach to health & safety	✓				
7 Supports the Council's plans for joint working	✓				
8 Contingency plans		✓			

### COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONS

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
9 Easy to deal with	✓				
10 Communications / keeping the client informed		✓			
11 Quality of written documentation		✓			
12 Compliance with Council's corporate identity		✓			
13 Listening			✓		
14 Quality of relationship	✓				

## IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
15 Offers suggestions beyond the scope of work		✓			
16 Degree of innovation		✓			
17 Goes the extra mile		✓			
18 Supports the Council's sustainability objectives	✓				
19 Supports the Council's equality objectives	✓				
20 Degree of partnership working		✓			

## KEY DOCUMENTS

If required, has the contractor provided the Council with annual updates of the following documents?

1. Annual Corporate Governance Assurance Statement? (Yes / No)
2. Updated risk register (Yes / No)
3. Annual business plan (Yes / No)
4. Updated business continuity plan (Yes / No)

## STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Strengths	Processing of standard basic functions for AP and AR
Areas for improvement	Management resilience
	System administration

**COUNCIL SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT**

	Very satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Neither (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very dissatisfied (1)	Votes cast
	8	11	1	0	0	20

Rating	Range	Votes	Weighting	Total weighted
Very satisfied	<b>5.0</b>	8	X 5	40
Satisfied	<b>4.3</b>	11	X 4	44
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<b>3.9</b>	1	X 3	3
Dissatisfied	<b>3.4</b>	0	X 2	0
Very dissatisfied	<b>3.0</b>	0	X 1	0

Total		<b>20</b>		<b>87</b>
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**Calculation:  $87 \div 20 = 4.35$**

For reasons of consistency with previous assessments, and for fairness between contractors, the following is a rough guide to the assessment of contractors on customer satisfaction:

Score	<b>4.3 – 5.0</b>	3.9 – 4.3	3.4 – 3.9	3.0 – 3.4	<3.0
Classification	<b>Excellent</b>	Good	Fair	Weak	Poor

# Council satisfaction – FMS

This assessment allows the Council (as a client) to record its own satisfaction with aspects of a contractor's performance which lie outside Key Performance Targets and customer satisfaction. Each officer with direct knowledge and who frequently interacts with the contractor should complete this form. Questions can be left blank if not relevant to a contract or contractor.

Contractor / supplier / partner name

From (date)  To

## SERVICE DELIVERY

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
1 Understanding of the client's needs		√			
2 Response time		√			
3 Delivers to time		√			
4 Delivers to budget		√			
5 Efficiency of invoicing		√			
6 Approach to health & safety		√			
7 Supports the Council's plans for joint working		√			
8 *Contingency plans		√			

\* These spaces are deliberately left blank for the addition of any performance criteria which are specific to this particular contract / service.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONS

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
9 Easy to deal with		√			
10 Communications / keeping the client informed		√			
11 Quality of written documentation		√			
12 Compliance with Council's corporate identity			√		
13 Listening		√			

## Appendix 5

14	Quality of relationship	√			
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### IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
15 Offers suggestions beyond the scope of work			√		
16 Degree of innovation		√			
17 Goes the extra mile		√			
18 Supports the Council's sustainability objectives		√			
19 Supports the Council's equality objectives		√			
20 Degree of partnership working		√			

### KEY DOCUMENTS

If required, has the contractor provided the Council with annual updates of the following documents?

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1. Annual Corporate Governance Assurance Statement? (Yes / No) |     |
| 2. Updated risk register (Yes / No)                            |     |
| 3. Annual business plan (Yes / No)                             |     |
| 4. Updated business continuity plan (Yes / No)                 | Yes |

### STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Strengths	<p>Good relationships with System Administration team at Mendip</p> <p>Generally helpful, pleasant staff – this is not to be underrated as a strength. The goodwill generated by the Capita staff, both locally at Vale and also at Mendip is often indispensable to the smooth running of the systems</p> <p>Upgrade to v.5.5.3 in May 2011 has produced improvements – especially for Web clients.</p>
Areas for improvement	<p>To continue to build on the improvement made in year, in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>working with the client;</li> <li>proactive development of the FMS;</li> </ul>




## COUNCIL SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT

	Very satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Neither (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very dissatisfied (1)	Votes cast
	0	18	2	0	0	20

Rating	Range	Votes	Weighting	Total weighted
Very satisfied	<b>5.0</b>	0	X 5	0
Satisfied	<b>4.3</b>	18	X 4	72
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<b>3.9</b>	2	X 3	6
Dissatisfied	<b>3.4</b>	0	X 2	0
Very dissatisfied	<b>3.0</b>	0	X 1	0

Total		<b>20</b>		<b>78</b>
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**Calculation:**  $78 \div 20 = \underline{\underline{3.90}}$

For reasons of consistency with previous assessments, and for fairness between contractors, the following is a rough guide to the assessment of contractors on customer satisfaction:

Score	4.3 – 5.0	<b>3.9 – 4.3</b>	3.4 – 3.9	3.0 – 3.4	<3.0
Classification	Excellent	<b>Good</b>	Fair	Weak	Poor

# Review of Concessionary Fares (Assisted Travel)

## SERVICE DELIVERY

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
1 Understanding of the client's needs	✓				
2 Response time	✓				
3 Delivers to time	✓				
4 Delivers to budget	✓				
5 Efficiency of invoicing	✓				
6 Approach to health & safety	✓				
7 Supports the council's plans for joint working	✓				
8 *					

\* These spaces are deliberately left blank for the addition of any performance criteria which are specific to this particular contract / service.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND RELATIONS

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
9 Easy to deal with	✓				
10 Communications / keeping the client informed	✓				
11 Quality of written documentation		✓			
12 Compliance with Council's corporate identity	✓				
13 Listening			✓		
14 Quality of relationship	✓				

## IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION

Attribute	(5) Very satisfied	(4) Satisfied	(3) Neither	(2) Dis-satisfied	(1) Very dissatsfd
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## Appendix 6

15	Offers suggestions beyond the scope of work			✓		
16	Degree of innovation			✓		
17	Goes the extra mile		✓			
18	Supports the Council's sustainability objectives		✓			
19	Supports the Council's equality objectives		✓			
20	Degree of partnership working			✓		

## COUNCIL SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT

	Very satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Neither (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very dissatisfied (1)	Votes cast
	11	4	4	0	0	19

Rating	Range	Votes	Weighting	Total weighted
Very satisfied	<b>5.0</b>	11	X 5	55
Satisfied	<b>4.3</b>	4	X 4	16
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	<b>3.9</b>	4	X 3	12
Dissatisfied	<b>3.4</b>	0	X 2	0
Very dissatisfied	<b>3.0</b>	0	X 1	0

Total	<b>19</b>			<b>83</b>
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**Calculation:**  $83 \div 19 = 4.36$

For reasons of consistency with previous assessments, and for fairness between contractors, the following is a rough guide to the assessment of contractors on customer satisfaction:

Score	<b>4.3 – 5.0</b>	3.9 – 4.3	3.4 – 3.9	3.0 – 3.4	<3.0
Classification	<b>Excellent</b>	Good	Fair	Weak	Poor

# Contractor 360° feedback

## CONTRACTOR'S REACTION / FEEDBACK ON COUNCIL'S ASSESSMENT

Capita is pleased to be given the opportunity to feedback on the findings of this annual report. The contents whilst not always positive are a very valuable tool to:

- Enable key service areas to meet and reflect across a whole year
- Understand, in the context of an overall contract, the positives and negatives
- Identify learning points from both organisations' point of view, to enable the service to be developed and improved as time progresses
- Document, for councillors, a good picture of the overall contract.

Capita is fully committed to this process, and believes it can be one very important tool for improving service to customers.

The Revenues service has again delivered the best ever collection rates for the Council despite the continued financial pressures on residents and businesses. This is due to the excellent teamwork and dedication shown by the whole team. Capita will however continue to look at how it can improve the overall service to its customers and will be working closely with the Council to deliver more electronic service solutions to those residents who are keen to exploit technology for speed of response and the benefit of the environment.

The Benefit service has really moved forward over the last 12 months and with the appointment of a new benefit manager further improvements have already been seen during the current year. The progress on performance indicators is steady and we will continue to do everything we can to drive the numbers as low as possible for the benefit of our customers. Our work on the recovery of overpayments has been complicated and lengthy at times as many of the debts relate to very aged periods of time where the relevant data is held on an old Council system which few people actually even remember how to use! We have however been able to ensure that all debts prior to 2007 have now been actively addressed and the appropriate actions taken, whilst we have also been able to maintain focus on current year debts to keep things in good order. We will continue to move the age profile of these debts nearer and nearer to this year in order to give us the best chance of recovering the monies and thereby maximise the income raised for the Council. As with Council Tax Capita will continue to look at how it can improve the overall service to its customers and will be working closely with the Council to deliver more electronic service solutions to those residents who are keen to exploit technology for speed of response and the benefit of the environment.

It is pleasing that the hard work of the Exchequer team in Mendip has been acknowledged and we will continue to drive service improvements wherever we can. We were surprised by the area of improvement highlighted by the Council but as this review was of the whole year we assume that the views expressed are historic as the management and team concerned have just delivered a successful and seamless

finance system upgrade.

The feedback on the FMS is generally positive but again has comments which Capita do not really understand. The comments around more training have been argued back and forth for years, however, following recent discussions with the Council a way forward has been agreed that satisfies all parties and which will hopefully allow the Council's staff to further develop their report writing skills. The Council's concerns around staffing levels and continuity have absolutely no basis and should not exist. The fact is that the team at Mendip is now twice the size it was when it was run onsite and should there be an unfortunate drop in staffing for reasons of absence we have available resources who can just plug the gaps. The management structure has been improved and overall system knowledge is now better than it has ever been. Capita cannot see how it will ever be able to change the Council perception if the above facts are still deemed as inadequate in some way.

Concessionary fares has had another very good year and continues to provide an excellent service to the residents of the area.

Overall Capita is very pleased with the report and we look forward to working closely with the Council to make further improvements in the coming 12 months.

### **ANY AREAS WHERE CONTRACTOR DISAGREES WITH ASSESSMENT**

For Council Tax, liaison with benefits is listed as an area for improvement, Capita believe that there is a very close working relationship with the benefit team and that joined up working is continually happening, i.e. members of the Havant team do council tax moves, discounts etc. This means both sides are dealt with at the same time and prevents memos and emails flying back and forth between sections. Separate processes are also in place for other situations, such as deceased cases. It is accepted that there have at times been isolated errors but on the whole Capita do not feel that there are any big gaps to fill.

For Benefits, offsite staff and communication has been raised as an area for improvement. Given the major improvements in accuracy and performance all of which are down to the offsite staff and the very regular daily/weekly/monthly service reviews (dependant on subject matter) Capita feel that significant steps have already been taken in this area but would welcome any feedback which may assist us in further improving what we believe is now a robust service.

For FMS, this is only a minor point but your scoring on line 12 'Compliance with Council's Corporate Identity' seems wrong as we cannot understand how it can be anything other than satisfied, since we comply entirely with the above.

**WHAT COULD / SHOULD THE COUNCIL DO DIFFERENTLY TO ENABLE THE CONTRACTOR TO DELIVER THE SERVICE MORE EFFICIENTLY / EFFECTIVELY / ECONOMICALLY?**

Capita is very happy with the current relationship which has become much more of a partnership approach to service delivery. We believe the positive approach from both sides can only benefit the local community in the coming year.

Feedback provided by     D Keen    

Date     9 September 2011

# **EXTRACT OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

## **16 SEPTEMBER 2011**

### **Sc.29 Financial Services Contract**

The committee considered the report of the head of finance on the performance of Capita in providing financial services during the review period of 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

Mr Bishop (Strategic Director) introduced the report.

Mr Howden (Revenues and Benefits Client Manager), Mr Watson (Chief Accountant), Mr Bishop and Mr Keen (Capita Contract Manager) answered questions from the committee.

The report set out an evaluation of performance based on three measures, set out below, and also included Capita's feedback on these assessments.

- Measured performance against key performance targets (KPTs)
- Customer satisfaction with the total service experience, and
- Council satisfaction as client.

The contract is assessed on five areas of performance, scored separately and aggregated to an overall score. The committee discussed each area separately.

#### **Revenues**

The committee agreed with the officers' assessment of performance as **good**.

#### **Benefits**

A number of councillors expressed concern regarding the accuracy of benefit payments and the lack of progress in the recovery of overpaid benefit. Mr Keen acknowledged the continued poor performance during the period of the review and offered no excuses for this poor performance.

In response to questions the committee was advised that the current level of debt was £1.4 million covering a period of 14 years. There were approximately 1900 debtors with two frauds accounting for a £20,000 and £15,000 debt. Arrangements were in place with approximately fifty per cent of the debtors to repay the overpayments. The legal department was targeting the major debtors and good progress was being made in the recovery of debts over £5,000. However, due to system changes tracing some debtors had proven difficult.

Councillors also expressed concern that Capita had again failed to undertake the surveys it was contractually obliged to undertake to gauge customer satisfaction. The committee was advised that surveys were undertaken in April/May 2010 (outside the review period) and the results were favourable. The surveys would be undertaken annually and form part of the annual performance review.

Whilst acknowledging the concerns of councillors that the failure to undertake the surveys was a breach of contract, the committee was advised that Capita had concentrated its resources on seeking to address the processing and accuracy of benefits as these had a direct impact on their performance and contractual payment penalties.

The committee received an assurance from Mr Keen of ongoing improvements with current performance in the upper quartile.

The committee agreed with the officers' assessment of performance as **weak**.

#### **Exchequer (accounts payable, accounts receivable and excess charge collection)**

The committee noted that the officer rating for this area of the contract was lower than last year's assessment. The committee was advised that Capita's decision to move the majority of the Exchequer functions to its Mendip site, without adequate contingency plans and trained staff, had adversely affected its performance which was on track for a good rating prior to the move. Mr Keen assured the committee that Capita had learnt from the experience and now had the staff and systems in place to provide greater resilience.

The committee agreed with the officers' assessment of performance as **fair**.

#### **Financial management system**

The committee noted that areas of weakness identified in the previous assessment persisted. In response to questions the committee was advised that Capita would absorb the cost of upgrades to Agresso.

The committee was advised that Capita had treated improvements to this area of the contract as less of a priority and directed resources to those areas that had targets and penalties for under performance. However, performance was improving due to increased partnership working between officers and Capita.

The committee agreed with the officers' assessment of performance as **weak**.

#### **Concessionary fares (assisted travel)**

The committee agreed with the officers' assessment of performance as **good**.

A number of councillors expressed concern that those areas of the contract which did not have targets or financial penalties for poor performance received less attention and therefore had continued to perform badly. However, the committee was advised that non payment performance mechanism areas were covered at meetings of the Ridgeway Shared Services Partnership Strategic Board (RSSPB). These were public meetings at which councillors could attend.

Whilst noting areas of concern the committee welcomed Capita's performance in collecting national non-domestic rates (NNDR) and council tax and assurances provided by Mr Keen and councillors Richard Webber and Mary de Vere, both members of the RSSPB, that performance was improving during the current year.

The committee thanked Mr Keen for his attendance and constructive comments.





**Adverse weather plan**



December 2010 – Biffa vehicles queuing at the Sutton Courtenay landfill site.



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## Introduction

This document is intended to provide guidance on how the councils waste management team and waste collection contractor, Biffa operate in circumstances of adverse weather conditions. It is intended primarily to address the issues associated with disruption caused by snow and ice but can equally be implemented in other situations such as flooding.

## Aim and objectives

### Aim

The purpose of this plan is to set out the alert procedures, actions and communication actions which will be used by the council and Biffa in the event of disruption to the waste collection service as a result of adverse weather.

### Objectives

The objectives of this plan are to:

- set out the procedure for activating the adverse weather plan
- describe the council's and Biffa's role and responsibilities in responding to adverse weather
- provide guidance on what resources are available and how they will be deployed
- identify clear communication routes that will be used to inform all stakeholders
- provide information on possible additional actions that the council may wish to implement.

## 1.0 Alerts

### 1.1 Advance warnings

Warnings of adverse weather are received from the Met Office by email to the emergency planning officer and shared waste and parks manager. The following key members of staff will be notified if the advance warning is likely to result in disruption to the waste collection service:

- strategic director for corporate strategy
- head of corporate strategy
- shared communications manager
- Biffa's business manager (or nominated substitute)



- local services point at Abingdon
- Capita.

## 1.2 Weather forecasts

Where there is no specific warning but cold weather is expected the shared waste and parks manager and Biffa's business manager will be responsible for checking weather forecasts to ensure that precautionary actions are taken and the plan is activated if required.

## 1.3 Activation

The plan will be activated in situations where a suspension in service is necessary following consultation with the strategic director, head of corporate strategy, portfolio holders for waste and Biffa's business manager.

Any operational decisions need to be made by 8.00am for that days work programming.

## 2.0 Staffing

### 2.1 Biffa's inclement weather policy

Biffa employees are expected to make every reasonable effort to get to work, adapting their means of travel if necessary.

Biffa recognises the need to safely maintain services during adverse weather conditions, whilst properly discharging its duty of care to employees.

All employees are expected to present themselves for duty, this may mean, with management approval, alternative duties being given where it is not safe to carry out normal duties.

### 2.2 Re-deployment of resources

Where the plan has been activated and collections suspended, staff may be deployed to help clear snow/ice from pavements, walkways and the council's car parks in the main town centres. This will involve utilizing Biffa's fleet of street cleansing vehicles to carry the equipment and grit/sand.

Where possible Biffa will organise central working points close to where individual staff live to restrict unnecessary travel.



The garden waste collections are suspended for the ten working days following Christmas Day. The vehicles and crews are used to help collect extra waste that is presented by householders during this period. Should adverse weather occur at other times of the year, this option could be deployed after consultation with the strategic director and portfolio holders.

### **3.0 Communications**

#### **3.1 General provision of Information**

Residents are informed of their normal collection days and any changes to those days as a result of Bank holidays, through the published calendar. The calendar is also on the councils website.

We provide updates of pre agreed changes to collection days in the local press and council newsletter and text messaging.

#### **3.2 Providing information during adverse weather**

During periods of disruption, particularly in times of heavy snow or flooding some areas of the district may be cut off which presents an access problem. When this impacts on collections we will use the following communications to ensure that as many residents as possible are made aware of any changes to the collection arrangements:

- regular website updates
- weekly press releases
- internal staff updates
- parish and town council updates
- posters in main towns and villages
- 'text' alerts
- pre-recorded phone messages
- radio updates (Heart, Radio Oxford, Jack fm)
- OWP radio adverts and updates
- liaison with Oxfordshire County Council.



### 3.3 Communications action plan

The following actions will be followed

<b>Communication</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
daily website updates	update web-site at 8.00am, midday and 4.30pm	council
weekly press releases	ensure press releases are supplied in time to meet deadlines	council
internal staff updates for all staff both Biffa and councils	daily staff briefings with Biffa to go through scripts to ensure a consistent message is delivered	Biffa/council
parish and town council updates	email daily updates to all district councillors, town and parish councils	council
posters/information – sent to parishes and district councillors	emailed to parishes and district councillors to encourage door stepping	Biffa/council
text and email alert system	See attached (appendix 1 – text alerts review)	council
phone system updates	daily updates a.m and p.m to the phone system with recorded messages informing residents of current situation	Biffa/council
radio adverts and updates	use radio to update residents	council/OWP
liaise with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)	liaise with OCC to identify gritted routes to enable crews to collect from cleared roads	council



## **4.0 Operational Action Plan**

### **4.1 Winter Preparation**

The council will arrange for all council owned salt/grit bins to be filled in advance of the winter period.

Additional stock will be stored indoors in the contractors depot at Culham for use in clearing pavements, walkways and council car parks. This stock of salt/grit can be used by Biffa to assist collections.

Biffa will ensure that sufficient personal protective clothing is available to enable staff to operate in adverse weather.

### **4.2 Priority**

In periods of disruption priority will be given to waste services in the following order:

- refuse/food (one collection)
- clinical waste
- recycling/food (one collection)
- litter bin emptying
- garden waste
- bulky waste
- street cleansing.

Litter bin clearance has been given a relatively high priority as officers consider that during disruption to household collections residents are likely to dispose of their refuse in public bins.



### 4.3 Action Plan

In the event of adverse weather conditions that affect the waste collection service the following action plan will be implemented:

number of days disrupted	service	action	additional actions
less than one	recycling/food clinical waste litter Bins refuse/food garden waste bulky waste	crews will catch up on same day or complete the following day	Biffa to email the council a list of any outstanding roads/areas by the end of the day so this can be fed into the communications plan
one	recycling/food clinical waste litter bins refuse/food garden waste bulky waste	collections one day late with catch up on following Saturday  where certain roads remain unsafe to access, these will be collected on the next scheduled collection	arrange for disposal sites to be open on Saturday (Biffa)  deploy staff to clear pavements, walkways and council car parks in the main town centres, the list of sites to be treated will be provided by the council
two	recycling/food clinical waste litter bins refuse/food garden waste bulky waste	collections two days late in the initial week with catch up of one day on following Saturday  one day late in the next week with catch up being on the following Saturday  where certain roads remain unsafe to access, these will be collected on the next scheduled collection	arrange for disposal sites to be open on following two Saturdays (Biffa)  undertake collections where it is safe to do so  deploy staff to clear pavements, walkways and council car parks in the main town centres, the list of sites to be treated will be provided by the council  suspend street cleansing and deploy staff to assist collections where possible





			email council list of any outstanding roads/areas by the end of the day so this can be fed into the communications plan
three - ten	recycling/food clinical waste litter bins refuse/food garden waste bulky waste	revert back to published calendar when collections resume	<p>additional side waste will be picked up at next two collection</p> <p>street cleansing service suspended and staff utilized on catch up</p> <p>garden waste service may be suspended and used to assist with collections</p> <p>deploy staff to clear pavements, walkways and council car parks in the main town centres, the list of sites to be treated will be provided by the council</p> <p>ensure disposal sites are available for use</p> <p>use supervisor vans to deploy more staff and snow clearing equipment</p>
ten or more	recycling/food clinical waste litter bins refuse/food garden waste bulky waste	revert back to published calendar when collections resume	<p>street cleansing service remains suspended and staff utilized on catch up and collect additional side waste</p> <p>ensure disposal sites are available for use</p> <p>garden waste service suspended and used to assist with collections</p>



			<p>use supervisor vans to deploy more staff and snow clearing equipment</p> <p>deploy staff to clear pavements, walkways and council car parks in the main town centres, the list of sites to be treated will be provided by the council</p> <p>consider arranging for agency staff and additional vehicles if available to be commissioned at an additional cost</p> <p>consider setting up strategic collection points throughout the districts for residents to take their waste for disposal, establish locations in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council gritting routes</p> <p>provide residents with sacks for use and storage of waste and recycling, residents will need to collect sacks from location points throughout the district</p>
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**4.4 Christmas Period**

If catch up can not be achieved prior to the Christmas calendar starting then collections will revert to the published Christmas calendar. All excess waste and recycling for the next two weeks will be collected from properties that have missed collections.



## APPENDIX 1

### Text Alert System

**Review of how the waste text service worked during the disruptions to collections over Christmas and New Year 2010/11 and the actions which have been put in place for future occurrences**

Text message	Problem	Action/Recommendation
<p>We've had to cancel today's bin collections. Please put this week's waste out with your next collection. Sorry for the inconvenience.</p> <p>Same message sent out later that day advising that the following day's collections were also cancelled.</p>	<p>Message is not clear. It means you can put out this week's waste next time you are due a collection of the same type of waste (i.e. if your recycling had been missed you can put out extra recycling when this is next collected in a fortnight) but could be interpreted as put both bins out with your next collection</p>	<p>All texts should clearly state which bin or kind of waste we are referring to</p> <p>"We've had to cancel today's bin collections. Please put this week's recycling out with your next recycling collection. Sorry for the inconvenience."</p>
<p>We will do our best to collect bins missed on Mon and Tue on main routes over the next few days. If it is safe to do so please leave your bin out.</p>	<p>Texts contradicted information on our websites (probably because the website was updated with the latest update following these texts being sent).</p>	<p>Need to ensure we keep text subscribers informed if plans change. This means we may need to send out update texts if we are no longer able to do what we said.</p> <p>For example: "Conditions remain dangerous so only a few collections will go ahead today. Please leave your bins out and we will update you when we know when your next collection will be."</p> <p>All web updates should also be marked with a date and time so it's clear how current the update is</p>



<p>Apologies if we didn't empty your bins today due to the road conditions. We will collect side waste with your next green bin collection.</p>	<p>Message is not clear. Many residents may not understand the term 'side waste' and again the text does not specify what kind of side waste we will take (people could think this meant they could put out extra rubbish with their next recycling collection)</p>	<p>As above, all texts should clearly state which bin or kind of waste we are referring to.</p> <p>"Apologies if we didn't empty your bins today due to the road conditions. We will collect extra recycling with your next green bin collection."</p>
<p>Please don't put your bins out tonight, your usual collection has moved to Wednesday 29th December this week. Put them out on Tuesday night instead.</p>	<p>Message is not clear as they do not state which bin to put out</p>	<p>All texts sent out will clearly state which bins to put out.</p> <p>We also now send one text the night before the usual collection saying do not put your bins out tonight your collection has changed with a follow up text the night before the revised collection advising residents they can now put out their bins (previously we just sent out one the night before the revised collection which could have meant bins being put out a day too soon).</p>
	<p>Message did not reflect what was happening in reality</p>	<p>In future Biffa will let us know if some collections have not been completed on certain days we will send a text out to say that, and to advise people to leave their bins out so collections can be finished off the following day.</p>
	<p>No information given to inform subscribers that garden waste collections had been temporarily suspended</p>	<p>The decision has been taken to suspend garden waste collections for two weeks over Christmas in the future which we are communicating to customers.</p> <p>However if there is disruption to collections at any other time we will communicate by other means. We will communicate specific news about garden waste collections to all brown bin customers (including but not only text subscribers)</p>



	Timing of texts.	Texts should not be sent out too late. No later than 4:30pm.
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# SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME



containing scrutiny work to be undertaken 1 September 2011 - 30 April 2012

The scrutiny work programme belongs to the council's Scrutiny Committee and sets out a schedule of scrutiny work due to be carried out over during period shown above. It is a rolling plan, subject to change at each Scrutiny Committee meeting; however, the scrutiny work programme and changes to it are subject to the council's approval.

Representations can be made on any of the following issues before an item is considered by the Scrutiny Committee. Representations must be made to the relevant contact officer shown below by 10am on the day the Committee is due to meet. The meeting dates are shown below.

Item title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Why is it here?	Scope	Notes
<b>Financial services contract monitoring</b>	Scrutiny Committee 27 Oct 2011	William Jacobs, Head of Finance Tel. (01235) 540455 Email: <a href="mailto:william.jacobs@southandvale.gov.uk">william.jacobs@southandvale.gov.uk</a>	To conduct an annual review of the contractor's performance	Relates to council tax collection, business rates, benefits, payroll, accountancy, accounts payable, financial management system, and assisted travel	To consider whether to accept the report or whether to interview the service manager and contractor at a future meeting and recommend any corrective actions or improvements.
<b>Recycling and waste collection contingency plan</b>	Scrutiny Committee 27 Oct 2011	Ian Matten Tel. (01235) 540373 Email: <a href="mailto:ian.matten@southandvale.gov.uk">ian.matten@southandvale.gov.uk</a>	To review the Cabinet member's contingency plan for the recycling and waste collection service.	The Cabinet member to attend.	

Item title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Why is it here?	Scope	Notes
<b>Community safety annual report</b>	Scrutiny Committee 24 Nov 2011	Liz Hayden Tel. (01235) 540309 Email: <a href="mailto:liz.hayden@southandvale.gov.uk">liz.hayden@southandvale.gov.uk</a>	The Police and Justice Act 2006 gave the Council powers to scrutinise the crime and disorder reduction partnership, known as the community safety partnership	To scrutinise the Vale community safety annual report and recommend any corrective actions or improvements. Police authority co-optee to be invited to attend	Invite the Cabinet member for community strategy
<b>Corporate plan review</b>	Scrutiny Committee 24 Nov 2011	Sally Truman, Policy and Community Engagement Manager Tel. (01235) 540707 Email: <a href="mailto:sally.truman@southandvale.gov.uk">sally.truman@southandvale.gov.uk</a>			
<b>Budget 2011/12</b>	Scrutiny Committee 22 Dec 2011	William Jacobs, Head of Finance Tel. (01235) 540455 Email: <a href="mailto:william.jacobs@southandvale.gov.uk">william.jacobs@southandvale.gov.uk</a>			

Item title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Why is it here?	Scope	Notes
<b>Recycling and waste contract monitoring</b>	Scrutiny Committee Not before 31st Dec 2011	Clare Kingston, Head of Corporate Strategy Tel. (01235) 540356 Email: <a href="mailto:clare.kingston@southandvale.gov.uk">clare.kingston@southandvale.gov.uk</a>	To conduct an annual review of the contractor's performance	Relates to recycling and waste collection services	To consider whether to accept the report or whether to interview the service manager and contractor at a future meeting and recommend any corrective actions or improvements.
<b>Election review</b>	Scrutiny Committee 22 Mar 2012	Margaret Reed, Head of Legal and Democratic Tel. (01235) 540407 Email: <a href="mailto:margaret.reed@southandvale.gov.uk">margaret.reed@southandvale.gov.uk</a>	To consider the recommendations from the review of the management of the elections held in May 2011	To request the returning officer and his deputy returning officers to attend.	
<b>Fit for the future annual review</b>	Scrutiny Committee September 2012	Anna Robinson, Strategic Director Tel. (01235) 540523 Email: <a href="mailto:anna.robinson@southandvale.gov.uk">anna.robinson@southandvale.gov.uk</a>	To receive an update on the fit for the future programme.	To consider a summary report and to question the Cabinet member.	



## Councillor Training Sessions - 15th and 20th September 2011 - Topics for scrutiny

Category	Comment
Abbey Centre	Abbey centre - progress, consultation, overall economic development aims, balancing short term and long term (remember what is done will last 30-40 years)
Abbey Centre	Abbey Shopping Centre - economic vitality
Abbey Centre	I'd like to see the evidence that the idea of a departmental store was turned down by Scottish Widows in favour of a food store. Should we accept Scottish Widows analysis
Air Quality in Abingdon	Air Quality Action Plan in Abingdon
Air Quality in Abingdon	The impact of free parking on air quality in the centre of Abingdon.... As a result of more cars circulating looking for free spaces.
Air Quality in Abingdon	Effectiveness of "free parking" / air quality etc
Air Quality in Abingdon	The role of air quality and Abingdon AQAP in forming our Corporate Priorities
Benefits	Finance : Housing / Council tax benefits
Benefits	Benefit fraud management interesting to understand how it is tracked down, pursued, managed, and what return for work done here
Benefits	Benefits changes - challenges to address the program of change for 2013. Lead time, planning needed to impliment and manage the changes
Brown Bins	Brown Bins (billing)
Brown Bins	Brown bins - collection of fees etc
Budgeting	Budget outturn predictions
Committee System	Go back to the Committee system when Localisms Bill becomes law
Committee System	Look at the actual working of the Scrutiny Cttee. Do they have enough support from officers and general council members. Should the Cttee nos be increased ?
Committee System	Given effectiveness over Planning/housing/Land supply etc - are we educating members in Development Control adequately
Communication	Communication with residents given Unvaled is being cancelled - electronic and non-electronic
Community grants	Community grants process. Is the present system fair and equal in the current climate
Community safety	Look at success of the Community safety Plan (interesting to know what return for spend in that area)
Community safety	Community safety. To review the effectiveness of the liaison with the Police in tackling anti-social behaviour. In particular to "scrutinise" the success or otherwise of the Designated Public Places Order in Abingdon, frankly with a view to keeping it going, but also to re-visit the use of dispersal orders if necessary.

## Councillor Training Sessions - 15th and 20th September 2011 - Topics for scrutiny

Economic Development	Economic Development in particular process for involving the business community outside the market towns and tourism promotion district wide
Economic Development	Economic development because it is vital to our country's recovery from the recession
Economic Development	Tourism for the same reason (because it is vital for our country's recovery from recession) - it links into market towns renewal - all our market towns need help. Abingdon has made a great start last weekend - need to share good practice
Economic Development	Tourism -Vale needs to publish (more frequently) and monitor "footfall" in market towns. Faringdon Town footfall is reducing. Hence need to look at effectiveness of development plans
Elections	and still final view on ensuring perfect election services in future!
Energy Efficiency	Co2 and cost saving
Energy Efficiency	Green cost savings within Council (many depts)
Energy Efficiency	How can we encourage carbon cutting by Vale residents and businesses etc
Housing	Very concerned about the effect on the Vale of the new HMO regs, and Oxford's early adoption - landlords prob will spill over to Vale. Planning Policy.
Housing	ways to improve allocation of "council" housing to make system more transparent to users
Housing	What method is the housing department introducing a weighting factor into the calculation when allocating housing to local people ?
Housing	What plans do we have to cope with a possible influx of homeless people in the next year or two ?
IT	Value of IT projects vs business benefits - I'm not clear if IT project's are achieving their stated objectives.
IT	IT changes : To ensure innovation and changes are being made to systems to advance, be efficient and work across the 2 councils effectively
IT	Progress of the mapping systems used by planning and the impact of the Orcella system on improving efficiently
Parks	Parks. My hobby horse is the apparent low priority in dealing with invading species such as Himalayan Balsam, particularly in Abbey Meadows, though I know there have been sessions in Besseleigh.
Performance - Payroll	payroll outsource ? Capita. Needs to be a carefully constructed contract
Performance	The various groups who gather data and report on performance metrics. I think that whatever is measured is what improves and it's important to consider carefully unintended consequences of metrics

<b>Councillor Training Sessions - 15th and 20th September 2011 - Topics for scrutiny</b>	
Performance	"Internal Structures" HR etc - continued review of how the authority works internally, is it efficient ? Are targets being met ? Are budgets used effectively ? Staying accountable to both the corporate plan and public
Performance - Shared Accommodation	Economy. Leisure and property - especially important given the "current economic climate" - move towards shared accommodation with SODC ?
Performance - recharges	Internal re-charges have an impact on areas that charge for services ie planning and building control. How can these can be reduced. Perhaps renting out under-used accommodation at both sites
Performance - Leisure Contracts	Renewal of leisure centre contracts - the priorities for a contract -thinking ahead, but 2014 will come quickly
Planning	Planning : regardless of applications being assessed on its own merits, can planning demonstrate consistency with applications with determining a planning outcome
Planning	How officers can encourage and work with parishes to write "Parish type plans" re new Govt Localism Bill possibly difficult yet as there is not much to actually scrutinise)
Planning - exception sites	Housing - to research and discuss ways and means of identifying exception sites and to develop clear and simple communication with residents
Planning - exception sites	Rural exception sites are being considered for abolition under the Localism Bill. This is a concern and needs to be fed back through the consultation process
Planning	Planning - keep watching brief on upcoming new legislation to ensure that the Vale residents receive the best advice and guidance
Planning	What work is done at strategic level to promoted new housing developments
Planning - Section 106 agreements	When will the backlog of Section 106 agreements be published ? What method will be used to track payments
Science Vale UK - Enterprise Zone	Enterprise Zone : can we demonstrate that we "will" live up to expectations of ministers
Science Vale UK - Enterprise Zone	The New Harwell/Milton etc enterprise Zone
Science Vale UK - Enterprise Zone	Enterprise Zone
Science Vale UK - Enterprise Zone	Business development and Enterprise Zone and Didcot Science Vale UK - marketing strategy to promote this.
Science Vale UK - Enterprise Zone	Science Vale UK : optimisation of the opportunity - economic growth, housing/leisure, Joined up initiatives continue across partners
Service delivery	Handling service delivery in the future
Staff	HR and how well and happy staff are. Given austerity and may be limited promotion and pay rises, what is offered instead

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Street Cleaning	street cleaning in relation to areas outside the main towns and in rural village and roadside verges
Street Cleaning	Street cleaning
Street Cleaning	Street cleaning - need to improve overall perception of that Vale are getting value for money from 3rd parties. Vale also need to better communicate street cleaning performance
Street Cleaning	Street cleaning - although I understood that this is a current priority
Waste	Waste - potential to be more flexible with bins. Dependant on need.
Waste	waste - make sure service is maintained
Waste	waste services - after a fairly successful introduction of the new recycling/waste collection service, it would be good to review to ensure standards are kept and continued best value
Waste	Recycling - simply to keep up the pressure to do even more and whether something can be done about polystyrene packaging and containers. Also, may be litter picking, if resources are limited should be used in reports or complaints