



WEAR
VALLEY
DISTRICT COUNCIL

CENTRAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

29 MARCH 2006

Report of the Director of Central Resources
CENTRAL RESOURCES SERVICE PLAN 2006/07

purpose of the report

1. To seek Member approval for the Department's Service Plan.

background

2. The Department has produced a service plan in line with the corporately agreed framework. The plan is shown at Annex A.

consultation

3. Staff have been consulted on the Plan, especially in relation to the setting of performance indicator targets and action plans.

human resources/financial implications

4. The Department considers that there are sufficient resources (staff, asset, money etc.) to deliver the performance levels and targets set out in the Service Plan. The plan will be monitored by members after 6 months.

RECOMMENDED that Members agree the Central Resources Service Plan at Annex A.

Officer responsible for the report

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CENTRAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

SERVICE PLAN 2006/07 - 2008/09

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1 INTRODUCTION

This Departmental Plan sets out the activities of the Central Resources Department and how they relate to corporate objectives. It covers the 3 year period 2006/07 to 2008/09.

It follows the corporately agreed format contained within the Performance Management Framework, which seeks to achieve the Authority's corporate objectives which are:

- The Council will use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population, across the whole of Wear Valley.
- The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure in Wear Valley.
- The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles.
- The Council will design its services to increase community safety and crime prevention and work closely with key partners to improve crime reduction.
- The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment.
- The Council will encourage the development of continuous lifelong learning in Wear Valley.

DIRECTOR'S AND COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTARY

To become the "best District Council", Wear Valley's Central Resources Department must provide services, both internally and externally, which encompass the concepts of economy, efficiency, effectiveness and quality as a means of achieving corporate objectives. This is achieved through articulating in this plan the targets, plans and actions to be undertaken during the period covered by the plan.

The vision for the Department is to ensure service delivery which:

- (i) Is customer focused**
- (ii) Is speedy and accurate**

- (iii) Seeks to reduce the risk of errors and fraud**
- (iv) Is accessible**
- (v) Encourages good performance**
- (vi) Is accountable to stakeholders.**

Within this the following standards will apply:

- (i) The principles of customer care will be applied
- (ii) Services will be provided objectively
- (iii) Due care and competence will be applied at all times
- (iv) Constructive relationships will be fostered
- (v) Confidentiality will be observed.

The aims of the Departmental Service Plan document are:

- (i) Clarify the Department's contribution to the Council Plan.
- (ii) To clarify to our customers, both internal and external, the services which we provide and the standards of service that they can expect. This is achieved through the setting and monitoring of challenging yet realistic targets.
- (iii) To make the department's performance more visible to all stakeholders so as provide a platform for service improvement.
- (iv) To make staff aware of the wider environment in which they fulfill their duties and responsibilities and how their role contributes to achieving departmental objectives.
- (v) To give staff ownership of the processes and procedures which they operate.

The above can only be achieved by:

- (i) Measuring where we are today.
- (ii) Deciding where we want to be in the future.
- (iii) Planning on how to get there.

A key element of achieving the above is via customer surveys which will give the Department invaluable feedback in terms of service delivery and also identify areas for improvement. All key service areas will carry out customer surveys during the lifetime of this document. This will ensure that a customer care focus is embedded into the culture of the Department.

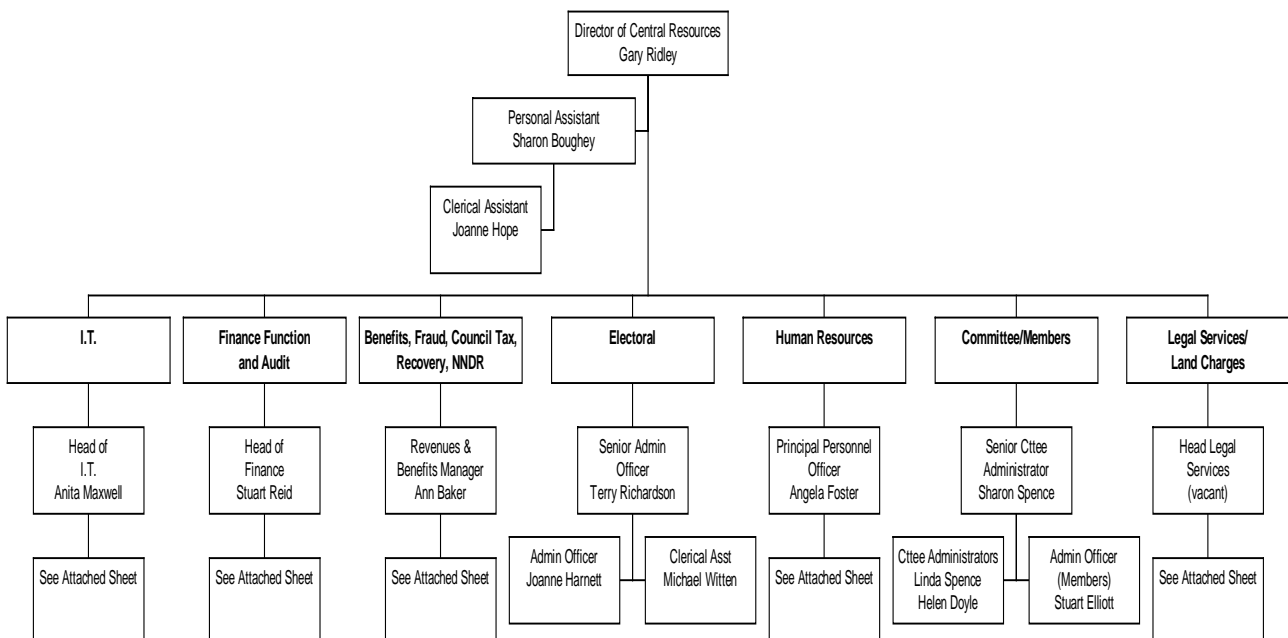
The performance targets that are set are challenging and based upon the ethos of seeking continuous improvement in the efficiency and quality of service delivery.

Staff commitment is a key to continuous improvement. As part of the corporate move to attain the Investors in People Standard, the Department will continue to induct all new members of staff and produce Personal Development Plans for all staff annually. Departmental Training Plans will also be produced annually and used in helping to achieve our goals. Training budgets will reflect the development needs of staff, who will also be supported in attaining external/professional qualifications relevant to their post.

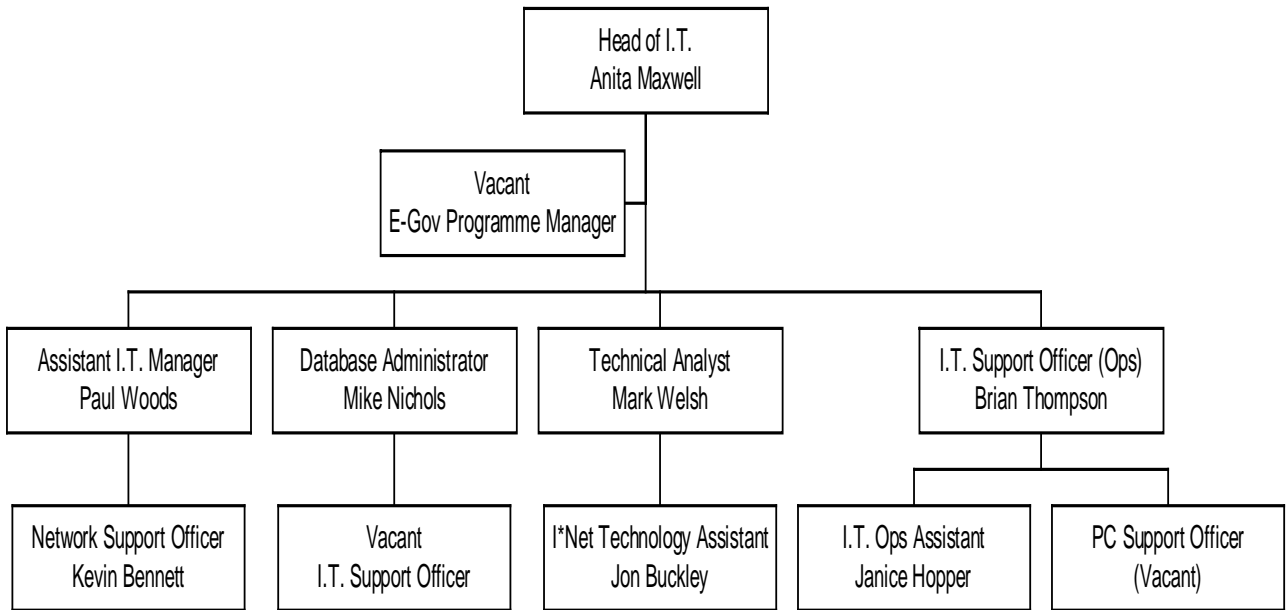
2 DEPARTMENTAL PROFILE

2.1 Activities

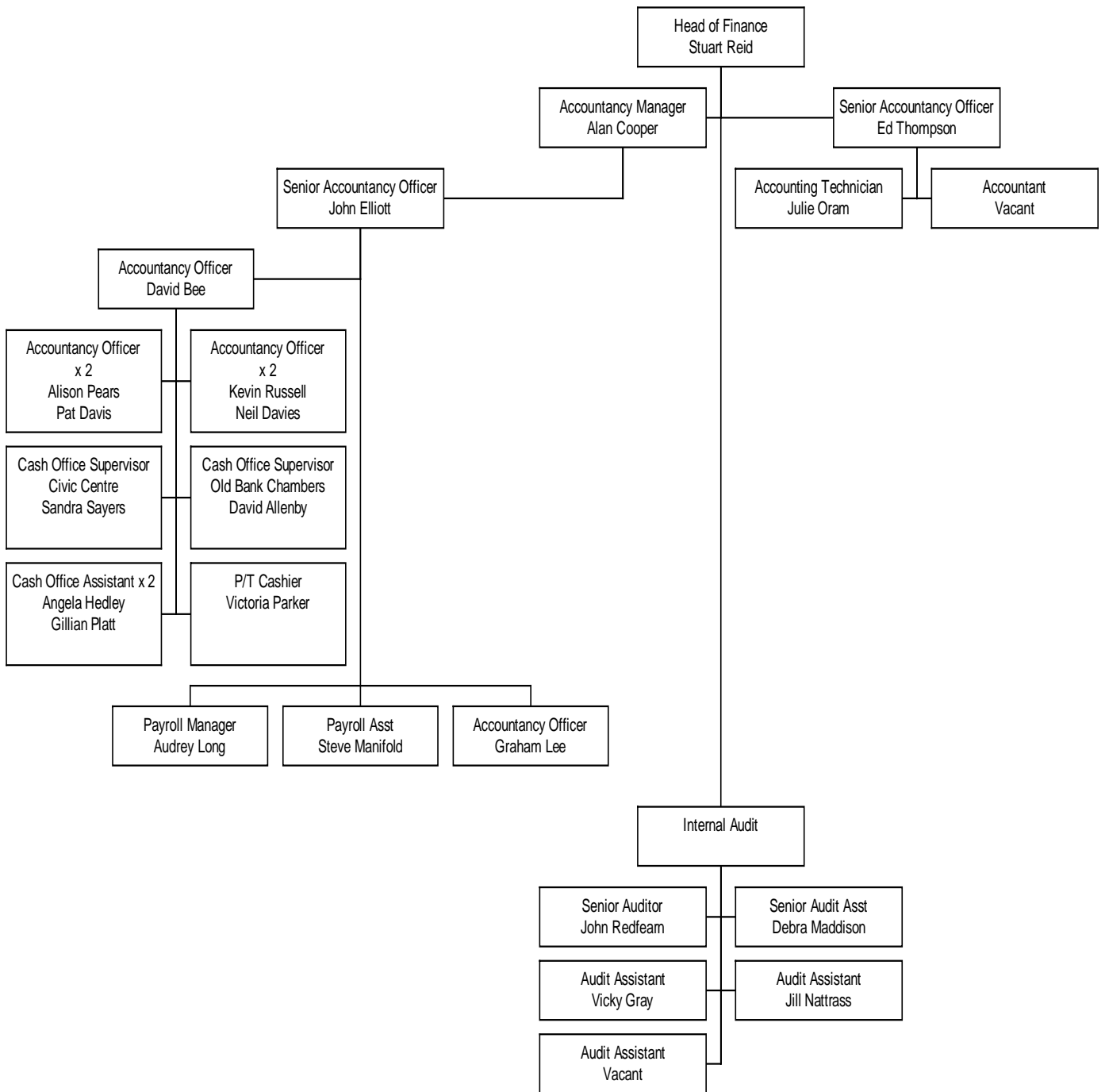
The basic structure of the Department is shown in the following diagram:



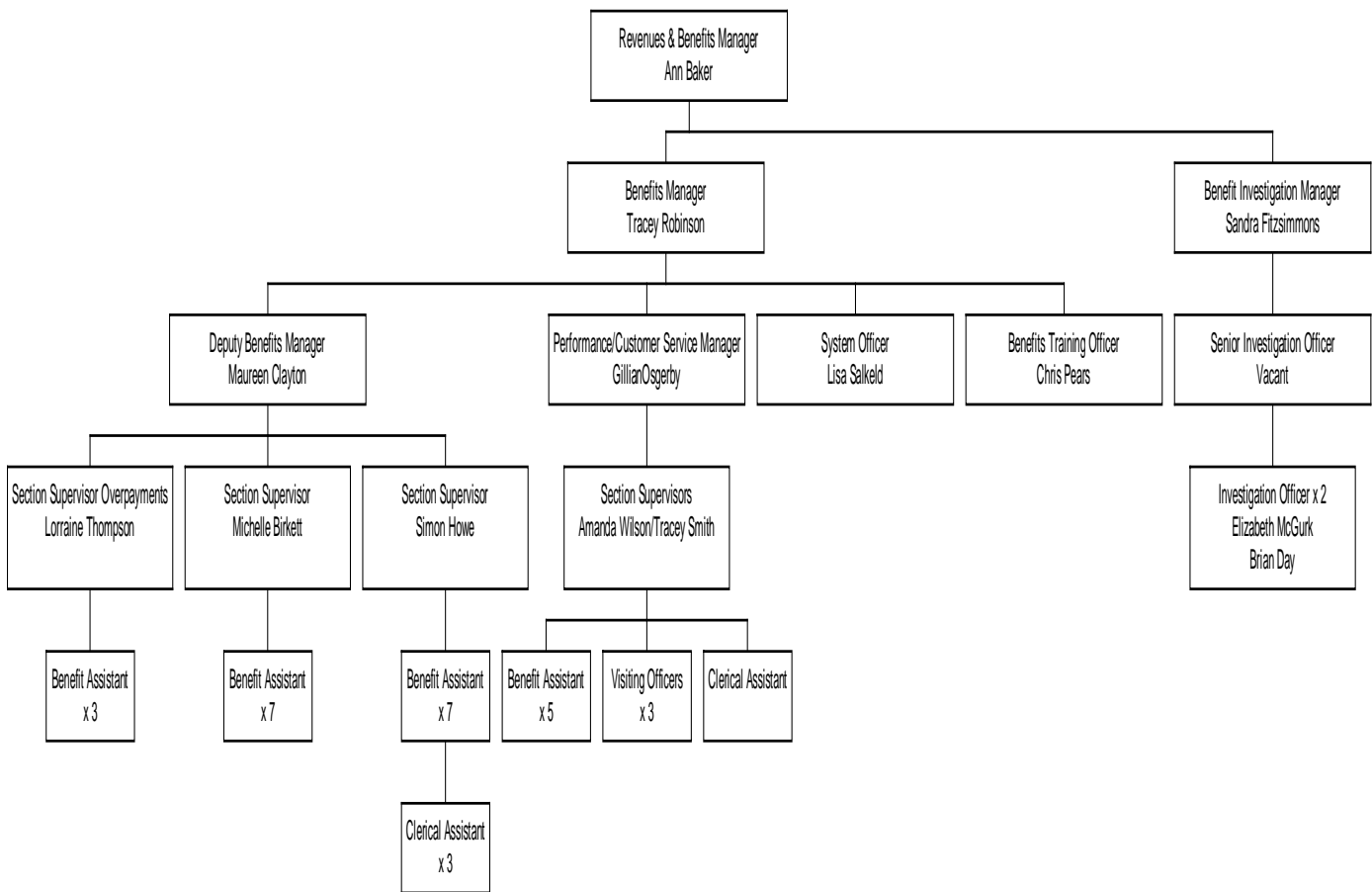
I.T SECTION



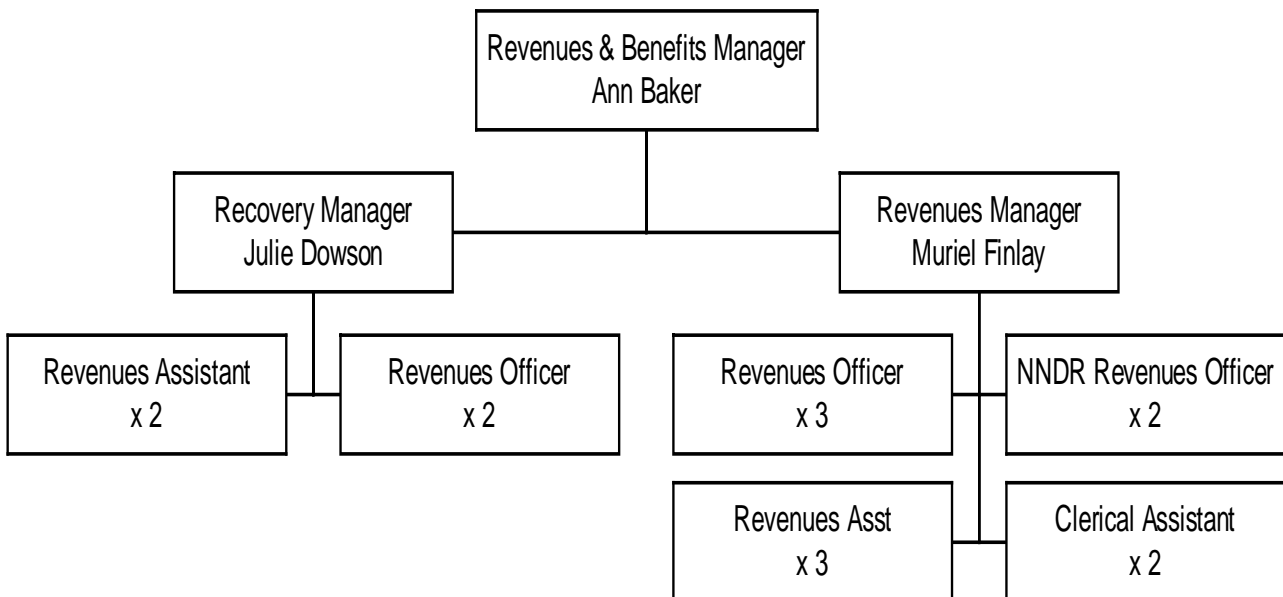
FINANCE FUNCTION AND AUDIT



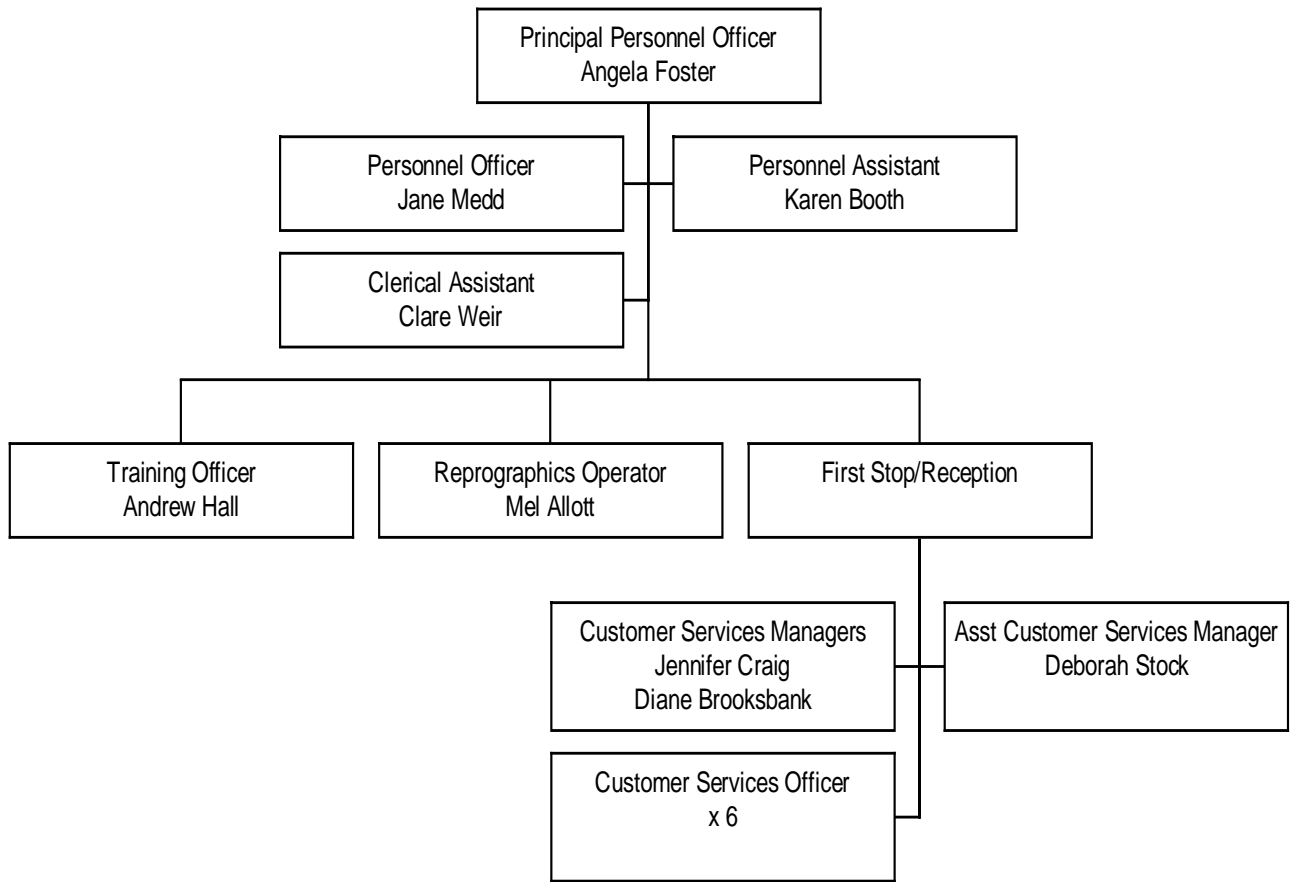
BENEFITS, FRAUD, COUNCIL TAX, RECOVERY AND NNDR



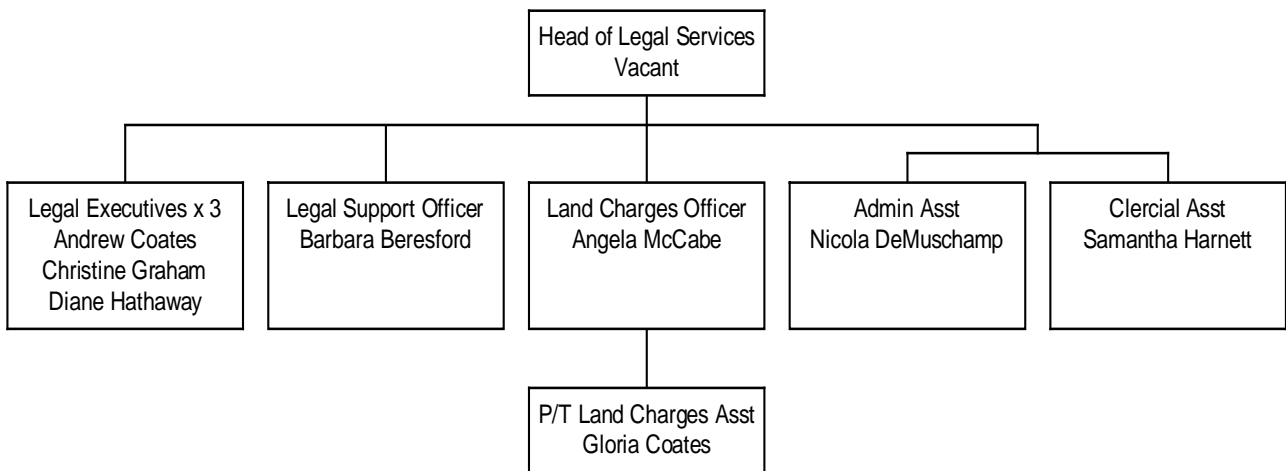
COUNCIL TAX, RECOVERY AND NNDR



HUMAN RESOURCES



LEGAL SERVICES/LAND CHARGES



The Department provides a varied range of services, which are either statutory or discretionary, some, of which cover all households and businesses within the District.

The majority of staff are however engaged in front line service delivery which includes:

- Council tax and non-domestic rate collection
- Benefits administration and fraud investigation
- Cashiers
- Electoral registration
- Land searches
- First Stop Shop.

The remaining staff are engaged in providing support services to other departments and to Members.

Each main service within the Department has a vision and objectives. These are outlined below.

Service	Vision/Objectives of Service	Supporting Documents	Corp. Obj. Supported
Benefits	To provide a high quality, efficient and customer focused service that seeks to maximise benefit entitlement where possible whilst also minimising the incidence of benefit fraud	Benefits Business Plan	Well Being/ Economy
Council Tax/ NNDR and Recovery	To provide a customer focused and efficient service that balances the legal requirements of the Council to recover sums due whilst treating individuals in a fair and reasonable manner	Debt Management Framework	Citizen/ Community
I.T.	To assist departments in the delivery of their services via the provision of economic, efficient and effective ICT, and to assist departments in achieving 100% capability in electronic service delivery, in ways that stakeholders want.	Draft e-government strategy.	Management Excellence

Service	Vision/Objectives of Service	Supporting Documents	Corp. Obj. Supported
Accountancy/ Internal Audit/ Exchequer	To provide a customer focused and efficient service that supports the effective stewardship of the Council's financial resources and assists in the provision of Council services	SLA's/ insurance framework/ treasury management practices/ Constitution/ Medium Term Financial Plan	Management Excellence
Asset Management	To maximise the benefit from the Authority's asset portfolio and to maximise assets contribution to achieving corporate objectives	Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan	Management Excellence
External Funding Management	To maximise the opportunity available from external funding and to maximise its utility to the Council	Medium Term Financial Plan	Management Excellence
Committee/ Member Services	To provide for the efficient and effective servicing of the Council's democratic processes, including advice and assistance to Members in their role within the community and the Council. To support the Council's community (quality of life) objective by ensuring appropriate policies and procedures are in place to allow the public to participate, where possible, in the decision making process as part of democratic renewal.	Constitution	Citizen/ Community
Legal Services	To provide a high quality legal service to the Authority.	Constitution	Management Excellence

Service	Vision/Objectives of Service	Supporting Documents	Corp. Obj. Supported
Human Resources	To deliver a high quality human resources function which contributes to the achievement of the Council's objectives	Draft Human Resources Strategy	Management Excellence
Electoral Registration	To maximize the opportunities for the public to participate in the democratic process.		Citizen/Community
First Stop Shop	To provide a customer focussed service to all citizens regardless of means of access.		Citizen/Community

The above service vision and objectives all support the overall Authority aim to become 'the best District Council in England'. Action plans included in this service plan support the above objectives.

2.2 Staff

The following tables outline staff numbers and resources used against each service.

Service	Staff No (FTE)
Council Tax and Recovery	16
Benefit Administration/Fraud	45
Cashiers	3.5
Electoral Registration	3
Land Searches	1.9
I.T.	8
Accountancy/Financial Management/Directorate	14.8
Internal Audit	4
Legal/Committee	10.5
Reception/Telephony	6.5
Human Resources	4.5

2.3 Financial Resources

The table below shows the total departmental net revenue cost of providing services.

Cost Centre Description	Estimate 2006/07 £000
Corporate Management	448
Members Allowances	370
Members Support	140
Treasury Management	11
Council Tax Administration	455
NNDR – Administration	(18)
Land Charges	(113)
Community Organisations	102
Local Elections	14
Electoral Registration	102
Concessionary Travel	773
Housing Advances	1
Housing Benefit Administration	453
Benefit Investigation Unit	99
Housing Benefit Rent Allowance	(15)
Housing Benefit - Rent Rebates	(15)
A.M.R.A.	(229)
Precepts and Levies	82
Personnel	214
Central Postage	72
Legal Services	219
Property Management	10
Main Copier	38
On Floor Copiers	9
Reception	137
Telephone	57
Rent Accounting	33
Human Resources	242
Cashiers	182
Exchequer – Miscellaneous Services	197
Accountancy	261
Internal Audit	108
IT	520
Central Resources – Departmental Overheads	65
Unapportionable Overheads	294
Miscellaneous	21
Investment Income	(744)
Consolidated Revenue Account	(250)
	4,346

2.4 Assets

The table below gives information relating to assets used by the Department.

Asset	Corporate Objective	Date Purchased	Est. Life	Usage	Maintenance Strategy	Replacement Strategy
Revenues/ Benefits/ IT System	Wellbeing/ Economy	2003/04	5-10 years	All revenues and benefits staff – approx. 60 users supported	Provided by system supplier with in-house support	Capital Bid
Financial Management System	Management Excellence	2003/04	5-10 years	Approx. 200 employees in all departments and cost centres supported	Provided by system supplier with in-house support	Capital Bid
Personal Computers (approx. 350)	Management Excellence	Ongoing	4 years	350 PCs supported	Provided by system supplier with in-house support	PC replacement programme within Council capital budget
Cash Receipting System	Management Excellence	2000/01	5-10 years	Approx. 15 employees	Provided by system supplier with in-house support	Capital Bid
Telephony System	Management Excellence	2004/05	7 years	All desk based employees and 350 telephones supported	Provided by system supplier with in-house support	Capital Bid

Asset	Corporate Objective	Date Purchased	Est. Life	Usage	Maintenance Strategy	Replacement Strategy
Customer Relationship Management System	Management Excellence	2004/05	5 years	Currently revenues, benefits and first stop shop with potential to expand to all Council functions and 25,000 entries per year	Provided by system supplier with in-house support	Capital Bid /external funding

The table below sets out the 3 year capital programme for the department with links to outcomes and corporate objectives.

Name	Description	2006/07 Value (£000)	2007/08 Value (£000)	2008/09 Value (£000)	Corp. Obj./Values Supported	Outcome
IBS migration	The technology used to provide the computer systems that are used by the revenues, benefits and housing services will soon be no longer supported by the supplier. Consequently, the Council have to transfer to different technology, which is supported by the supplier.	21	-	-	Wellbeing/Economy	To enable the continued processing of benefit claims and accounting for income collected e.g. rent and council tax

Name	Description	2006/ 07 Value (£000)	2007/ 08 Value (£000)	2008/ 09 Value (£000)	Corp. Obj./Values Supported	Outcome
PC Replacement Programme	It is important that staff have access to sufficiently powered PC's in order for them to carry out their duties. Failure to replace PC's will result in them becoming increasingly slow due to age and the introduction of new software thus leading to reduced staff efficiency.	90	90	90	Management Excellence	To enable staff to carry out their duties in an efficient manner
I.T. server replacement	A number of servers have reached the end of their maintenance agreements and require replacement. These servers provide the lotus notes intranet service used by all staff and the facility to provide electronic links to provide homeworking.	14	14	14	Management Excellence	To enable staff to provide services in an efficient manner
Council Chamber - Sound System Micro-phones	The acoustics in the Council Chamber are poor and complaints have been received from Members and the public that they find it difficult to hear the debate. It is proposed that a portable system be purchased which can be moved to other venues in the District.	24	-	-	Citizen/ Community	To maximise the effectiveness of the democratic process within the Authority

Name	Description	2006/ 07 Value (£000)	2007/ 08 Value (£000)	2008/ 09 Value (£000)	Corp. Obj./Values Supported	Outcome
Human Resources & Payroll System	The current system does not have an adequate reporting facility nor able to provide BVPI information without manual input. The purchase of the relevant hardware and software would be done in conjunction with neighbouring authorities to achieve economies of scale.	67	-	-	Management Excellence	To enable effective management in terms of information held, recorded and analysis of human resources within the Authority
Asset Management Backlog (Category C Properties)	To carry out backlog maintenance of corporate properties designated as below acceptable standard (category C). The monies will be used to carry out works such as replacement of windows, doors, central heating systems, roofs and external structural repairs	245	151	143	Citizen/Community	To maximise the availability of assets to assist in providing services to the community
	DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL	462	255	247		

The Department also uses the following assets to provide services:

- (i) Civic Centre: all departmental services provided from this location.
- (ii) Royal Corner: IT services provided from this location.
- (ii) Old Bank Chambers: cash receiving service and benefits outreach service provided from this location.

3 REVIEW OF 2005/06

This section of the plan falls into 2 parts. The first part examines the performance of the department in relation to Best Value Performance Indicators. Of the 22 BVPI's which are covered by the department, 9 relate wholly to the department and 13 are corporate. These corporate indicators are indicated as such in the table below. They include BVPI's which relate to Human Resources. This function is no longer part of the Department.

2005/06 performance is compared against:

- The target set for 2005/06.
- The previous year's performance.

The second section outlines the initiatives/service improvements, which have been achieved, and also emerging issues for the Department to respond to.

Part 1

The following tables show the Departmental Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) performance for 2005/06 against target.

BVPI		2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Probable
2a	Equality	1	1	1
2b	Equality Race Relations		-	-
8	Invoice Payments	97%	100%	98%
9	Council Tax collection	98.8	98.1	98.9
10	NNDR collection	99.2	99	99.2
11a	Senior Women in post	14%	16%	16%
11b	Senior Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) in post	0%	0%	0%
12	Sickness days	10 days	9 days	8 days
14	Early Retirement	1%	1%	1%
15	Ill Health	0%	0.6%	0.6%
16a	Disabled staff	3%	2.4%	3%
16b	Active Disabled Population	21%	-	-
17a	BME staff	0.35%	1%	0.6%
17b	Active BME Population	0.9%	-	0.9%
76a	No of benefit claimants visited/per 1,000 caseload	234	204	242
76b	No of fraud staff/per 1,000 caseload	0.2	0.3	0.3
76c	No of fraud investigations/1000	20	26	31
76d	No of prosecutions/sanctions/ 1000	0.5	0.8	2.8

BVPI		2004/05 Actual	2005/06 Target	2005/06 Probable
78a	Process Days – benefit	32	30	20
78b	Change in Circumstances – benefit	9	8	8
79a	Accuracy – benefit	99	98	99
79b	Benefit overpayment recovery	60%	60%	52%
157	E-government	100	100	100
177	Legal Advice - %	50	50	50
179	Local Land Searches - %	97.95	95	95
226a	Total amount spent by the local authority on advice & guidance services provided by external organisations	-	£73,000	£73,000
226b	% of monies spent on advice & guidance services provision which was given to organisations holding the Community Legal Service (CLS) Quality Mark at General Help level and above	-	93%	93%
226c	Total amount spent on advice & guidance in the areas of housing, welfare benefits and consumer matters which is provided directly by the authority to the public	-	£915,000	£915,000

The above shows that 12 indicators are forecast to have improved compared to 2004/05 actual. Against this, 3 have worsened, whilst 9 have remained the same. This shows that the majority of indicators are improving in line with the continuous improvement aspiration. Regard will continue to be given to poorly performing indicators in order to identify areas for improvement. Monitoring procedures exist to identify problem areas, which then leads onto an action plan to improve performance.

Part 2

The following table shows service improvements/important initiatives and achievements carried out in 2005/06:

- (i) E-government progress with the following services now available on-line:
- Leisure centre bookings
 - Internet payments for council tax, rents etc.
 - GIS
 - Planning applications
 - CRM

- DIP/Workflow in benefit administration and revenues.
- (ii) I.T. security awareness training given to staff.
- (iii) Diversity training/impact assessment training given to staff.
- (iv) Extension of homeworking into benefits/recovery sections.
- (v) Joint working in relation to benefits management with Teesdale.
- (vi) Joint working in relation to IT management with Sedgefield.
- (vii) Produced an unqualified audit set of accounts.

4 PARTNERSHIP PROFILE

The Department recognises that partnership/joint working is the way forward in certain areas and has developed a joint working framework which can be used to develop proposals in this area.

The Department's main partnerships are in the following areas:

Name of Partnership	Purpose	Specifying/ monitoring arrangements	Inputs	Outputs	Risks	Mitigating Actions
County Durham e-Government Partnership (CDeGP)	To progress the e-government agenda across County Durham	Wear Valley is part of the partnership covering all Durham Authorities. Its aims and objectives are set out in the CDeGP Constitution which has been agreed by the Authority	£15,000 per annum plus staff time plus £120,000 capital	Assist in meeting Government Priority Service Outcomes and improving access to services	1. Lack of buy in 2. Lack of funding 3. Reputation 4. Sustainability	1. Officer bids and Member Cttee 2. Budget bids made in time to be considered 3. Members/ Communication Strategy to be delivered 4. Funding agreed to 2008

Name of Partnership	Purpose	Specifying/ monitoring arrangements	Inputs	Outputs	Risks	Mitigating Actions
County Durham Partnership Against Poverty (CDPAP)	To maximise benefit take up	Annual report produced by Partnership	Staff time	Increased benefit take up, approx. £100,000 in 2005/06	1. Failure to work in partnership 2. Failure to increase take up	1. Attendance at CDPAP Officer groups 2. Regular attendance at events/venues plus publicity given out

Other partnerships include:

(i) Internal Audit

The Council's external auditors (District Audit as from November 2002) place high reliance upon the work of Internal Audit especially in assessing whether the Council has effective systems of internal control. The annual audit plan is prepared in co-ordination with the planned work of external audit.

(ii) Benefit Administration

The service is working with Teesdale District Council to improve Teesdale's service whilst at the same time providing benefits to Wear Valley such as enhanced reputation and future reductions in unit costs.

(iii) Agresso Financial Management System

Six local authorities in County Durham and one in Northumberland continue to work closely together on developing use of the Agresso financial system through various user groups.

5 CUSTOMERS

The Department has established regular customer consultation as a means of improving service delivery. The following table outlines the results of consultation:

Service Area	Results	Action Taken
Council Tax (September 2004)	74% satisfied with facilities to get in touch with the office 79% agreed staff friendly and polite 66% satisfied with clarity of bills, leaflets etc 80% satisfied with visiting the office	System of telephone payments improved to ensure no missed calls. Improved information placed on web site about council tax.

Service Area	Results	Action Taken
E-government (September 2002)	64% still have the telephone as the preferred medium to contact the Council. 21% would contact the Council via e-mail if they had the capability to do this. 19% would like extended opening hours (either one late night and/or Saturday opening)	Ongoing development of e-government

Support service users are currently being surveyed and the results are not yet available.

Service Area	Results	Action Taken
Internal Audit	80% of respondents thought that Internal Audit made a positive contribution to their service. Scored 4.5 out of 6 on overall performance.	Clearer guidance to clients on the audit process and more frequent reporting to members. Greater accountability to clients through charging process.

Service Area	Results	Action Taken
Legal	Service quality scored 4.5 out of 5. Staff helpfulness scored 4.5 out of 5	

The above shows that:

- (i) The public is generally satisfied with the levels of customer service although there are improvements that we can make in a number of areas. Repeat surveys will be conducted to ensure that a high level of service continues to be delivered and we respond to changing customer demands.
- (ii) Whilst action has been taken in response to survey results, there are some instances where action has been delayed. This will be rectified in order to support the credibility of the survey process especially with internal customers.

During 2006 a survey of housing benefit claimants will be carried out. Targets have been set for this area of service and are shown elsewhere in this document.

6 BEST VALUE/EXTERNAL INSPECTION

The Department has yet to undertake any best value reviews. However, staff from within the department have played a full role in assisting existing reviews.

For 2006/07 departmental staff will be assisting in the carrying out of a Best Value Review of Regeneration.

In relation to external inspection the Audit Commission undertook an inspection of the Council's Use of Resources during 2005. The results of this inspection are as follows:

Theme	Score	Comment
Financial Reporting	3 out of 4	This theme considered the effectiveness of the production of the Council's Annual Accounts and the effectiveness of external accountability
Financial Management	2 out of 4	This theme considered the medium term financial planning arrangements of the Authority, budget monitoring and management of the Council's asset base
Financial Standing	2 out of 4	This theme considered how the Council manages its spending
Internal Control	2 out of 4	This theme considered how the Council manages its business risks and review the effectiveness of internal control arrangements
Value for Money	1 out of 4	This theme considered current and future value for money arrangements
Overall Score	2 out of 4	

The scoring is as follows:

1. Inadequate
2. Adequate performance
3. Performing well
4. Performing strongly.

The Audit Commission will carry out an annual review of the above to ensure continuous improvement. During 2006 actions will be undertaken to improve the above scores.

These actions are shown below:

7 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND TARGETS

The following table shows the Departmental Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI's) targets for 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08 and 2008/09.

BVPI	2005/06 Probable	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
8 Invoice Payments - %	97	100	100	100
9 Council Tax collection - %	98.9	98.8	98.9	99.0
10 NNDR collection - %	99.2	99.2	99.2	99.3
76a No of benefit claimants visited/1000	242	271	294	294
76b No of fraud staff/1000	0.3	0.35	0.35	0.35
76c No of fraud investigations/ 1000	31	49	50	51
76d No of prosecutions/ sanctions/1000	2.8	4.7	5.3	5.9
78a Process Days – benefit – days	20	25	24	23
78b Change in Circs – benefit – days	8	7	6	6
79a Accuracy – benefit - %	99	99	99	99
80a Access – satisfaction - %	-	85%	-	-
80b Benefits Office satisfaction - %	-	85%	-	-
80c Telephone service – satisfaction - %	-	85%	-	-
80d Staff – satisfaction - %	-	85%	-	-
80e Forms – satisfaction - %	-	75%	-	-

BVPI	2005/06 Probable	2006/07 Target	2007/08 Target	2008/09 Target
80f Speed of service – satisfaction - %	-	85%	-	-
80g Overall satisfaction - %	-	85%	-	-
157 E-government - %	100	100	100	100
177 Legal Advice - %	50	50	50	50
179 Local Land Searches - %	95	96	97	98
Overpaid housing benefit - % recovered in current year	80	82	84	85
Overpaid housing benefit - % recovered all debt	52	60	62	65
Overpaid housing benefit - % written off	10	9	8	7
226a Total amount spent by the LA on advice & guidance services provided by external organisations	£77,000	£77,000	£77,000	£77,000
226b % of monies spent on advice & guidance services provision which was given to organisations holding the Community Legal Service (CLS) Quality Mark at General Help level and above	93%	93%	93%	93%
226c Total amount spent on advice & guidance in the areas of housing, welfare benefits and consumer matters which is provided directly by the authority to the public	£915,000	£942,000	£970,000	£1,000,000

The above targets will be monitored as outlined in Section xxx. They have been subject to consultation with staff as part of performance management arrangements within the Department.

The department has produced the following local performance indicators, which will be monitored and reported to Committee:

Service Area	Local P.I.	Target 2006/07	Responsible Officer	Comment
Benefits	% of visitors who are dealt with within 15 minutes	95%	T Robinson	This will measure our level of customer care
Financial Management	% of in year sundry debts collected	95%	A Cooper	This will measure our effectiveness in debt collection
Council Tax	% of bills and refunds issued within 10 and 7 working days respectively	90%	M Finlay	This will measure our level of customer care and efficiency
Financial Management	% of in year sundry debts written off	2%	A Cooper	This will measure our effectiveness in debt collection
I.T.	Average satisfaction score	3 out of 5	A Maxwell	This will measure our level of customer care

8 CORPORATE MAPPING

The Department's frontline services links to the Authority's corporate themes in a number of ways. The table below shows the linkages. In addition to this, support services contribute to all objectives via their delivery and support to frontline services.

Objective 1:	The Council will use its statutory powers, resources and influence to help create a balanced, vibrant and growing population across the whole of Wear Valley District	
Council Tax Benefits		Timely provision of benefits reduces “ill will” towards the Council and level of Council tax bills which may reduce levels of net out migration.
Housing Advances		Provision of mortgages as lender of last resort will have encouraged people to remain domiciled in the area.
Housing Benefit Rent Allowances		Provision of safety net which allow residents to live in more expensive areas/remain in area and does not create barriers to work.
Womens Refuge		Provision of safety net for vulnerable women thus reducing likelihood of seeking support outside the District.
Concessionary Travel		Establish vibrant and energetic communities by increasing potential travel area of elderly residents.
Council Tax Administration		High collection rate reduces non payment provision therefore maximising service delivery. Underpins the objective through the collection of council tax which funds service provision.
Land Charges		Increased efficiency in dealing with information required for property purchase will facilitate sales and acquisitions and create an initial positive impression of the Council.
Electoral Registration		Those on electoral roll will feel have some say in determining Council policies and thus increased affinity towards the area.

Objective 2:	The Council will enable the development of a continuously improving economic infrastructure and environment in Wear Valley	
	Council Tax Benefits	Payment of CTB increases net disposable income of households and thus ability to support local economy.
	Housing Benefit Rent Allowances	Payment of RA increases net disposable income of households and thus ability to support local economy. Linked to service objective of increasing benefits take-up.
	Womens Refuge	Womens refuge will support jobs within the local community.
	Concessionary Travel	Increases potential travel area thus increasing potential customer base of local businesses. Supports the provision of local transport services through subsidy thus boosting local economy and maintaining transport links.
	Council Tax Admin.	Tackling non payment increases well being of those who pay.
	Land Charges	Efficient processing of information increases likelihood of successful sale and increases business to solicitors, estate agents and longer term tradesmen when home improvement is undertaken.
	Electoral Registration	Increased affinity to area from being on electoral roll and thus use any purchasing power locally.

Objective 3:	The Council will use its services to help improve the health and well being of Wear Valley residents and promote healthy lifestyles	
	Council Tax Benefits	Payment of CTB increases net disposable income of households available to spend on health and well being.
	Housing Benefit Rent Allowances	Payment of rent allowances increases net disposable income of households available to spend on health and well being. Links to service objectives of allowing people to live in decent housing and preventing eviction through rent arrears.
	Womens Refuge	Provision of refuge will assist well being by providing accommodation and support to residents whose health is endangered by their partner. It may also alleviate alcohol and drugs problems which are exacerbated by an individual's domestic situation.
	Concessionary Travel	Increases the mobility of the elderly and infirm and thereby improving their general health. Also supports the well being of carers, relatives etc. by increasing independence of travel. Increases ability of residents to access services e.g. leisure facilities, support groups which may be based outside walking distance.
	Land Charges	More efficient property acquisition/disposal should reduce stress associated with that transaction.
	Electoral Registration	Less frustration by being able to influence local democracy.

Objective 4:	The Council will design its services to increase community safety and crime prevention and work closely with key partners to improve crime reduction	
	Council Tax Benefits	Prompt payment of CTB will reduce poverty amongst households and thus propensity towards crime.
	Housing Benefit Rent Allowances	Prompt payment of RA will reduce poverty amongst households and thus propensity towards crime. Also links to service objective of preventing and deterring fraudulent claims.
	Womens Refuge	It may alleviate alcohol and drugs problems which are exacerbated by an individual's domestic situation which give them a greater likelihood to commit crime.
	Concessionary Travel	Reduces fear of crime as residents feel less trapped in their homes.
	Land Charges	Recent property purchasers more likely to undertake home improvements including additional security measures.
	Electoral Registration	Participation in local democracy leading to reduced feeling of social exclusion and thus reduced propensity to commit crime.

Objective 5:	The Council will aim to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment	
	Council Tax Benefits	Prompt payment of CTB will help to offset increased council tax bills arising from regeneration within the District.
	Housing Benefit Rent Allowances	Creation of wider potential pool of tenants for landlords thus giving them an incentive to renovate their property in preparation for letting as opposed to leaving it vacant. Links to service objectives of providing speedy and accurate assessment of benefit and treating all claimants courteously and with respect.
	Womens Refuge	Will assist in reducing domestic strife and increase likelihood of householders maintaining attractiveness of their property.
	Concessionary Travel	Allows residents to travel to other scenic areas and thus increase support and appreciation for the built and natural environment.
	Land Charges	Greater property turnover leads to increased home improvements thus benefiting the environment.
	Electoral Registration	Able to influence local policies on environment.

Objective 6	The Council will support the LSP's aims of supporting lifelong learning	
	Human Resources	As part of the e-government agenda staff are being trained in the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) qualification and Project Management training.

9. PEST AND SWOT ANALYSIS

The following tables form the results of a PEST and SWOT analysis carried out by the senior departmental managers:

PEST Analysis – reviews the external environment that may impact on the provision of the service

Political

Issue	Action
1. Benefit Fraud Inspectorate/ Performance Standards 2. E-Government 3. Impact of new legislation 4. Almo	1. E-government – PEG (Promoting Electronic Government) (self assessment), FMS/Open Revenues & Benefits 2. Legislation – prepare/publicise for legislation/staff training 3. Almo – support Housing Department in achieving 2 star rating

Environmental

Issue	Action
1. Interest rates exposure 2. Pay Inflation/non-pay inflation 3. Job evaluation 4. Funding due to population decline 5. Collection rates on Council Tax and NNDR	1. External advice/benchmarking of treasury management 2. Budget monitoring within Departments 3. Include in Medium Term Financial Plan 4. Medium Term Financial strategy updated annually 5. Benefits/improvement plan (on-going monitoring)

Sociological

Issue	Action
1. Demography 2. Transient population 3. Unemployment 4. Fraud/non-payment culture	1. Service planning in conduction with Medium Term Financial planning 2. Health, crime etc. has links to the Benefits service. Therefore need to maximise benefit take up whilst countering fraudulent activity

Technological

Issue	Action
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Potential IT failures 2. Emerging technologies (payment methods) 3. Access to Services 4. New working methods 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disaster Recovery Planning/partnership working 2. Monitor new methods 3. E-enabling/telephone access in partnership with other organisations 4. Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)/benchmarking support given to Departments

SWOT Analysis – review of the internal environment which may impact on service delivery

Strengths Analysis

Strength	Actions to Optimise
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience/knowledge/ Commitment of staff 2. Workforce stability 3. Low cost base 4. Introducing best practice in certain areas 5. Improved IT 6. Performance monitoring (benchmarking) 7. Customer satisfaction surveys 8. Adaptable to change 9. Strategic views given to issues 10. Members support for staff and for change 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training 2. Keep staff informed/valued/ provide feedback 3. “Manage” new initiatives 4. Customer interface needs to improve 5. Procedural reviews carried out

Weaknesses Analysis

Weaknesses	Actions to Improve
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sickness levels 2. Service disparity 3. Communication is poor 4. Lack customer focus 5. External communications 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train Managers on sickness procedures/inform staff of problem 2. Improved working/awareness 3. More staff meetings/team briefings 4. User groups 5. Customer opinions/liaison meetings to be sought

Opportunities Analysis

Opportunities	Actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Knowledge becomes more important depending on problem 2. Partnerships 3. Build on staff commitment/knowledge 4. National priorities 5. New IT systems 6. External funding opportunities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publicise services 2. Maximise use of IT 3. Maximise external funding opportunities (and develop exit strategies) 4. Keep up to date with changing priorities

Threats Analysis

Threats	Action to turn into opportunity or to neutralise
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Staff turnover 2. Local Government Re-organisation 3. Almo 4. IT system failure 5. Poor performance 6. Legislation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build on staff commitment, succession planning 2. Pro-active approach to Local Government Re-organisation 3. Demonstrate value of services provided/develop SLA's 4. Disaster Recovery Planning 5. Identify and implement action plan (performance monitoring/improvement plans) 6. Plan for new legislation to be introduced

10 RISK ANALYSIS

The following table shows the main departmental risks to be managed.

Financial – S Reid	Response	Actions
<p>1 Asset Management and Capital Investment</p> <p>Failure to effectively manage/ Maintain assets leading to reduced efficiency and increased costs</p>	<p>Develop Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy</p>	<p>Action Plan established</p>

Financial – S Reid	Response	Actions
<p>2 Budgetary Control and Financial Management</p> <p>Lack of effective budgetary control leading to poor allocation and control of resources</p>	Develop a financial control framework and effective budget process	Report agreed at Management Team. New financial management system (Agresso) introduced
<p>3 Treasury Management</p> <p>Risk of losing investment leading to monetary loss and loss of reputation</p>	Adopt CIPFA treasury management practices	Agreed at committee Regular bank reconciliation carried out
Revenues and Benefits – A Baker		
<p>1 Staff Security</p> <p>Possibility of staff assault/accident whilst working alone</p>	Review lone worker policy	Done by Health and Safety Officer
<p>2 Benefit Payment</p> <p>Failure to process benefit on time</p>	Additional resources received via budget process	Improved performance management arrangements put in place
<p>3 Collection Rates</p> <p>Failure to collect NNDR and Council Tax leading to financial loss</p>	Effective recovery procedures necessary/staff training	Improvement plan developed and agreed

I.T. – A Maxwell	Response	Actions
<p>1 Physical Damage to Computer Room Equipment</p> <p>Flood, fire, sabotage etc. resulting in loss of service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce effect of disaster • Control access to computer room • Disaster Recovery Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire detection system with Inert gas extinguisher system • Access control devices on computer room doors • Devise and test a plan which provides alternative hardware solutions • Off-site storage of backup tapes
<p>2 Security</p> <p>Corruption of data and/or programs via malicious or accidental means</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security Policy • Security Handbook for Users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the network(s) is controlled by passwords which are required to be changed regularly (by the user) • Access to system functions is controlled by passwords setup by system administrators • IT Section are informed immediately when staff leave Council employment – user ids and passwords deleted
<p>3 Systems Implementation Failure</p> <p>Systems not installed on time/ budget and/or not producing required functionality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements Specification • Project Planning • Acceptance Testing • Post Implementation review(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper business case required • Follow agreed methodology e.g. Prince2 • Sign off only once acceptance testing completed

Work is on-going to manage the risks identified above.

11 ACTION PLANS

Council Plan

The Department's contribution to the 2006/08 Council Plan is shown below:

Ref	Priority Action	Comments
2f	Map transport issues	This remains a priority objective and much work has been undertaken. Transport in rural areas has been given an even greater profile through the Community Plan and Local Public Service Agreement 2 strategy
3c	Land assembly	Work is due to commence on this priority objective during 2006/07
5a	Money advice campaigns	We have undertaken much work on this priority with an additional 300 people now claiming benefit. We have developed an outreach programme to access the hard to reach groups See Revenues and Benefits Action plan in Annex A
6b	Modern Apprenticeships	Work is progressing on this priority. It is now the intention to expand the programme beyond craft apprenticeships and into other areas See Human Resources Action plan in Annex A
7e	Financial management	Although much work has been undertaken there is still scope to improve the Council's financial management and align strategies further See Accountancy and Internal Audit Action plan in Annex A

7i	E-government	<p>Work progressing in this area and will continue to progress in 2006/07</p> <p>See I.T. Action plan in Annex A</p>
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The above will be monitored in line with the corporately developed monitoring procedures.

12. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Department recognises the importance of monitoring and managing performance as a means of improving service delivery and accountability and motivating staff.

Monitoring and review of this service plan will be as follows:

- (i) Targets agreed at Committee.
- (ii) Six monthly performance reported to Committee for all Best Value and local PI's.
- (iii) Outturn performance reported to Committee for all Best Value and local PI's.
- (iv) Quarterly monitoring of key PI's reported to Departmental Management Team and Corporate Management Team.
- (v) Progress report to Departmental Management Team quarterly on action plans.
- (vi) Performance discussed at every section meeting.

Where performance is found to be below target, remedial action is taken as appropriate. This includes a diagnosis of the problem/reason for poor performance and a consideration of how improvements can be brought about and sustained.

13 WORKFORCE STATISTICS

The following tables show workforce statistics for each service:

Area	Total Staff	Sick Days in 2005/06 per employee	Turnover Rate 2005/06	BME Staff	Disabled Staff	Women in Senior Positions
Admin	29	1.4	1	0	2	1
I.T.	9	4.3	1	0	0	1
Financial Management etc.	28	1.5	0	0	0	0
Benefits/Council Tax/NNDR	61	8	5	0	2	1

Sickness is regarded as a key risk within the Authority therefore a departmental target of reducing sickness by 10% during 2006/07 has been set.

14. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The Council are requested by accounting regulations to produce annually a Statement of Internal Control. This statement demonstrates how the Council manages its internal control environment through policies and procedures such as the Constitution, Council Plan, Financial Regulations etc.

Whilst a corporate document, the Internal Audit Section play a major role in its compilation.

The main sources of assurance are as follows:

Service	Assurance	Officer Responsible
Committee/ Members	1. Members sign declaration of interest register 2. Application of constitution	Sharon Spence
Legal	1. Application of constitution	Andrew Coates
Benefits	1. Audit of subsidy claims 2. Audit of claims to ensure accuracy 3. NFI data match	Ann Baker

Revenues	1. Application of Valuation Office schedules/listings	Muriel Finlay
Financial Management	1. Reconciliation of feeder systems to General Ledger 2. Bank reconciliation 3. Annual external audit	Alan Cooper
I.T.	1. Limited level of communication audit 2. Disaster Recovery planning	Anita Maxwell
Departmental	1. Performance management arrangements in relation to BVPIs and Council Plan	Gary Ridley

ANNEX A

The following actions are planned for the forthcoming 12 months.

Accountancy Action Plan 2006/07

No.	Objective	Action	Responsible Officer	Success Measures
1	To integrate business planning with financial planning	To update medium term financial strategy with clear links to Council Plan	Stuart Reid	Audit Commission approval on Use of Resources assessment
2	To update the Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy	Update to include planned action to improve asset use	Asset Management Group	Completion of document and approval by Members
3	Risk Management	Develop training/improve reporting	Gary Ridley	Training carried out and report on regular intervals to Committee
4	To support revised arrangements for demonstrating Value for Money in the Council's budget	To provide and analyse comparative data on service costs	Stuart Reid/ Alan Cooper	Audit Commission approval on Use of Resources assessment
5	Completion and reporting of Final Accounts by end of June 2006	Close down on high level estimates and carry out early reconciliation of data	Alan Cooper	Completion by deadline and accounts unqualified after audit

No.	Objective	Action	Responsible Officer	Success Measures
6	More efficient processing of sundry debt	To assess potential to collect sundry debts by direct debit and ensure debt management procedures are followed	Alan Cooper/ John Elliott	Percentage of sundry debt invoices collected by direct debit
7	More efficient collection of rents	To increase %age of payers using direct debit	Dave Bee	To reduce costs of rent collection
8	To provide financial support to service Departments	Monthly attendance at departmental management teams	Stuart Reid/ Alan Cooper/ Ed Thompson	Percentage attendance
9	To ensure proper accounting arrangements following changes to the Council structure and the commencement of the ALMO	To maintain appropriate budgetary control with clear lines of responsibility and accountability	Stuart Reid/ Alan Cooper/ Ed Thompson	Expenditure maintained within budgets
10	To provide management accounting information that meets the needs of budget holders	To consult with budget holders on information required to manage their budgets	Stuart Reid/ Alan Cooper/ Ed Thompson	Percentage attendance at departmental management teams
11	To further streamline the process of accounting for income received	To integrate data from different systems e.g. Financial Director and leisure management	Ed Thompson /Julie Oram	Reduce cost of processing
12	To maximise the efficiency of the procure to pay cycle	To review existing processes and support corporate initiatives e.g. procurement cards	John Elliott/ Julie Oram	Reduce cost of procure to say cycle

No.	Objective	Action	Responsible Officer	Success Measures
13	To replace outdated technology	To implement new computerised payroll system	John Elliott/ Ed Thompson	Improved quality of management information

Revenues and Benefits Action Plan 2006/07

No.	Objective	Action	Responsible Officer	Success Measures
1	To improve customer service to all benefit claimants	As per Benefits Business Plan.	Tracey Robinson	Increase customer satisfaction rating
2	To improve the recovery of benefit overpayments	As per Benefits Business Plan.	Maureen Clayton	Increase percentage recovered
3	To attain above average performance for all benefit fraud performance measures	As per Benefits Business Plan.	Sandra Fitzsimmons	To achieve Pi targets
4	To encourage payment of council tax and NNDR by most cost efficient methods	To increase %age of payers using direct debit facility	Muriel Finlay	To achieve target
5	To provide excellent customer service to our council tax and NNDR customers	Conduct survey and act upon results	Muriel Finlay	Percentage satisfaction rating
6	To ensure council tax and NNDR billing is adhering to best practice	To increase compliance with best practice guidelines	Muriel Finlay	Percentage satisfaction rating

No.	Objective	Action	Responsible Officer	Success Measures
7	To ensure recovery of council tax and NNDR is adhering to best practice	To increase compliance with best practice guidelines	Julie Dowson	Percentage best practice criteria met
8	To improve responsiveness to customer enquiries and management of information	To implement document image processing and workflow within revenues function	Julie Dowson /Muriel Finlay	Percentage satisfaction rating

I.T. Action Plan 2006/07

No.	Objective	Action	Responsible Officer	Success Measures
1	Further develop CRM system	Rollout CRM to agreed timetable	CDeGP Partnership	E-enable service requests as per E-government Partnership timetable
2	Further develop IT security/ disaster recovery	As outlined in external audit reports	Paul Woods	Disaster Recovery system introduced and tested
3	Deliver Capital Programme	Includes PC replacement, IBS migration, payroll and HR systems	Anita Maxwell	Programme delivered on time to budget

Internal Audit Action Plan 2006/07

No.	Objective	Action	Responsible Officer	Success Measures
1	To comply with CIPFA Code on Internal Audit	Ensure 90% of audit recommendations are implemented	All audit staff	To meet target

No.	Objective	Action	Responsible Officer	Success Measures
2	To comply with CIPFA Code on Internal Audit	To conduct gap analysis and source necessary skills	Stuart Reid/ John Redfearn	Audit Commission approved on Use of Resources assessment
3	To support revised arrangements for demonstrating Value for Money in the Council's budget	To support Value for Money studies	John Redfearn	Audit Commission approved on Use of Resources assessment
4	To contribute towards improved assessment under CPA	To support improvement work relating to Use of Resources Assessment especially internal control	John Redfearn	Audit Commission approved on Use of Resources assessment
5	Raise internal Audit profile and demonstrate effectiveness to internal customers	Promote work through reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Management Team	Stuart Reid/ John Redfearn	Number of reports to Corporate Management Team and Overview and Scrutiny
6	To maximise completion of annual Audit Plan	Improve speed of turnaround of reports from draft to final stage	All audit staff	Ensure 95% completion

Human Resources Action Plan 2006/07

No.	Objective	Action	Responsible Officer	Success Measures
1	Deliver Human Resources strategy	Implement individual action plans	A Foster	Individual Human Resources strategy action plans delivered on time as per plans



CENTRAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

29 MARCH 2006

Report of the Director of Central Resources

BUSINESS PLAN – WEAR VALLEY BENEFITS SERVICE (WVBS)

purpose of the report

1. To advise members of the details of the business plan for the Benefits Service.

background

2. The Council's Benefits service, which is responsible for the processing and payment of housing and council tax benefit to some 8,500 households within the District, employs approximately 42 full time equivalents. This is a vital service to the public as it provides financial support to many vulnerable people in assisting them to live in affordable housing.

business plan

3. The WVBS business plan for 2006/07 is presented as Annex 1. The plan sets out the service's twelve objectives and a list of key actions. The plan also lays out the performance management and monitoring arrangements for the service. This allows all stakeholders to hold the service accountable.
4. The plan provides a framework for focussing upon areas of relative weakness such as combating benefit fraud and customer service and sets out the actions we intend to carry out during the year to address these. It also sets out achievements in the last financial year.

conclusion

5. The targets set out in the business plan for performance standards and best value performance indicators are ambitious but achievable. Enormous progress has been made in claims processing times and meeting Government performance standards. The introduction of Document Imaging and Workflow will achieve further efficiency gains and improvements to customer service will be pursued with renewed vigour.

RECOMMENDED that Members endorse the business plan presented in Annex 1.

Officer responsible for the report

Gary Ridley
Director of Central Resources
Ext 227

Author of the report

Stuart Reid
Head of Finance
Ext 258

WEAR VALLEY BENEFITS SERVICE

BUSINESS PLAN - 2006/07

Introduction

1. This Business Plan will cover the activities of the Wear Valley Benefits Service (WVBS) during 2006/07. It will form the basis of the work carried out by the section. The views of external stakeholders including customers, Citizen Advice Bureau, and staff have been sought in forming this plan. The plan integrates with the departmental wide service plan that is updated annually. The main purposes of this business plan are to:

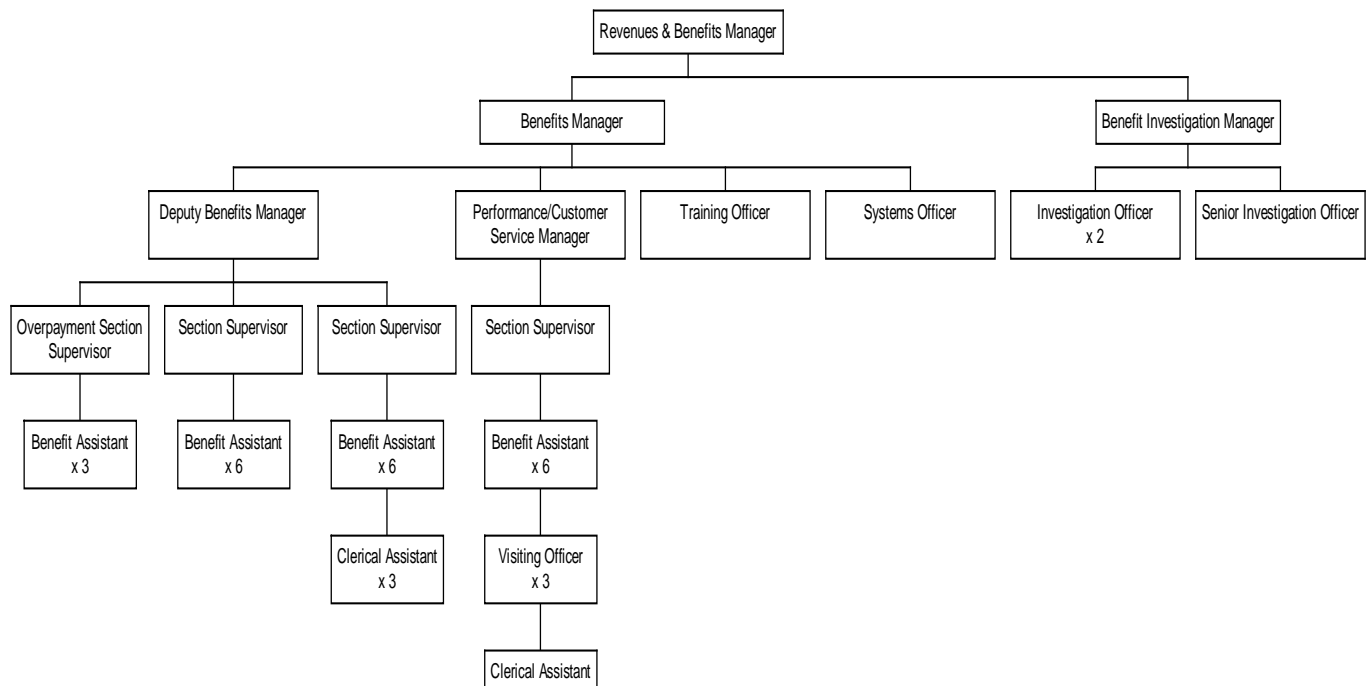
- serve as an instrument for continuous improvement
- focus upon our priorities
- make the service accountable to our stakeholders

Links to Corporate Objectives

2. The WVBS links to all the corporate objectives. The primary link is to improving the well being of residents. The payment of benefit increases the net disposable income of households, allows them to live in affordable housing and prevents eviction due to rent arrears.

Structure of Service

3. There is 42 full time equivalent staff within the Benefits Section dealing with a caseload of approximately 8,600 customers. The current staffing structure is as below:



Statement of Intent

4. Prior to setting courses of action for improvement, the service must be clear on what it is trying to achieve. This is expressed in the WVBS "Statement of Intent". Stakeholders have endorsed the Statement of Intent that sets out twelve objectives as below:

Objective 1:	<i>To be customer-focussed, modern, efficient and take account of the views of all stakeholders</i>
Objective 2:	<i>To treat all claimants courteously and with respect</i>
Objective 3:	<i>To be timely and accurate by ensuring that claimants receive the correct benefit at the correct time</i>
Objective 4:	<i>To have the resources required to deliver the intended service</i>
Objective 5:	<i>To be accessible to everyone in the community</i>
Objective 6:	<i>To ensure claimants receive the benefits to which they are entitled</i>
Objective 7:	<i>To minimise barriers to work</i>
Objective 8:	<i>To help customers to live in affordable housing</i>
Objective 9:	<i>To recover overpayments promptly without bringing undue pressure to bear</i>
Objective 10:	<i>To reduce the risk and level of fraud and error by a genuine commitment to its prevention, deterrence and detection</i>
Objective 11:	<i>To investigate potential fraud and take action against offenders</i>
Objective 12:	<i>To encourage a strong culture of performance amongst employees of the service</i>

Performance Targets

5. In order to continuously improve, it is essential that we monitor performance against targets that if met will contribute significantly to meeting our objectives. Targets have been set for measures of performance as below:

	<u>2004/05</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2005/06</u> <u>Target</u>	<u>2005/06</u> <u>Probable</u>	<u>2006/07</u> <u>Target</u>	<u>2007/08</u> <u>Target</u>	<u>2008/09</u> <u>Target</u>
Days to process New Claims	32	30	20	25	24	23
Days to process changes of circumstances	9	8	8	7	6	6
%age claims paid on time	N/A	90	89	90	91	92
%age of benefit overpayments recovered (against	N/A	N/A	80	82	84	85

	<u>2004/05</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2005/06</u> <u>Target</u>	<u>2005/06</u> <u>Probable</u>	<u>2006/07</u> <u>Target</u>	<u>2007/08</u> <u>Target</u>	<u>2008/09</u> <u>Target</u>
created in current year)						
%age of benefit overpayments recovered (all debt)	60	60	52	60	62	65
%age of benefit overpayments written off	N/A	N/A	10	9	8	7
%age accuracy of assessment	99	98	99	99	99	99
No. of Benefit visits	2,008	1,800	2,060	2,300	2,500	2,500
No. of Investigators	1.8	2.6	2.6	3	3	3
No. of Investigations	172	223	260	420	430	440
No. of Prosecutions and sanctions	4	7	24	40	45	50
No. of referrals for investigation	N/A	N/A	400	500	510	520

Review of 2005/06

6. Performance in 2005/06 has continued to improve building upon the progress made in 2004/05. Processing times are amongst the top 25% of authorities in the country for new claims and above average for changes of circumstances. The highlights of the year were:

- Extension of home working scheme to further boost productivity
- Implementation of benefit take up strategy resulting in over £100,000 additional benefit payments to customers
- Commencement of implementation of document image processing and workflow which will replace manual records
- Use of the Corporate Customer Relationship Management system to record and track customer enquiries
- The first successful prosecution initiated by the Council of a customer for benefit fraud

7. Areas where we need to improve next year:

- Improving the service to customers when contacting the Council
- Altering customer correspondence produced by the computer system to make it more user friendly
- Increasing the accessibility of the service to customers
- Increasing the volume of fraud investigations undertaken
- Increasing the number of sanctions applied to perpetrators of benefit fraud
- To become more pro-active in the recovery of overpayments

Key Actions – 2006/07

8. The following are the key actions for next year:

Action	By Whom	Link to Objectives
To carry out statutory Best Value survey	Revenues and Benefits Manager	Obj. 1
To carry out local survey of benefit customers	Benefits Manager	Obj. 1
To review all correspondence to customers	Performance and Customer Services Manager	Obj. 1, 5, 7
Review provision of caller services to customer access points	Performance and Customer Services Manager	Obj. 1,2, 5
Ensure customers receive correct advice at first point of contact	Training Officer	Obj. 1,2, 6, 7,8
Ensure claims are dealt with fully before pending	Assessment staff	Obj. 1,3, 8
Ensure management checks carried out on 10% of all assessment prior to notification	Supervisory staff	Obj. 1,3,6,7,8
Review outreach service to customers	Performance and Customer Services Manager	Obj. 1, 5
Review visiting officer function	Performance and Customer Services Manager	Obj. 1,3,5, 6,7,8
Ensure supply of appropriate information leaflets to customers and other agencies	Performance and Customer Services Manager	Obj. 1, 5, 6,7,8
To encourage and promote take-up of benefits at every opportunity	All staff	Obj. 1, 3, 6
To be pro-active in the recovery of overpayments	Overpayments Staff	Obj 9
To seek reasonable timescales	Overpayments Staff	Obj 9

Action	By Whom	Link to Objectives
for recovery by instalments		
To continue and develop fraud awareness training for staff	Benefits Investigation Manager	Obj 10, 11
To maximise referrals for benefit investigation	Benefits Investigation Manager	Obj 10, 11
Ensuring our standard of performance reaches the highest level in all DWP performance measures	All	Obj 12
Ensuring best practice set by performance enablers is achieved	All	Obj 12
To reduce sickness rates from 2005/06 to ensure resource is available to make service improvements to our customers	All	Obj 4, 12

Performance Standards

9. The WVBS has embraced the concept of performance standards whereby every aspect of the benefits service must improve from its present level. Adherence to performance standards ensures that focus is given to issues other than processing times such as customer service and counter fraud.

	<u>Target March 2006</u>	<u>Actual March 2006</u>	<u>Target March 2007</u>
	%age achieved	%age achieved	%age achieved
Claims Processing	80	94	100
User Focus	80	75	100
Security	80	90	100
Resource Management	80	94	100

10. An action plan has been formulated to ensure full compliance with performance standards by March 2007.

Performance Management

11. All Best Value performance targets are measured on a monthly basis. These are discussed at section and departmental team meetings, actions agreed and minuted. A report is provided bi-annually to members on performance of the benefits sections against these targets. These are communicated to staff verbally. These support objective 12 of encouraging a strong culture of performance.
12. Performance standards are reviewed quarterly. The results are communicated to staff in the same manner as Best Value performance targets above. Performance against targets are also reported to committee.

Staff Development

13. Staff training needs are identified through regular communication with more senior officers. This is supported by a formal annual process; the Personal Development Plan. Annual assessments are reviewed during the year to ensure that training requirements are met. Training is geared towards meeting both employee needs and the objectives of the service as outlined in this plan. The Service has now in place a full-time dedicated training officer.
14. Performance issues determine training requirements and therefore there will be a feedback loop from performance back to training.

Training requirements for 2006/07 are:

- Fraud awareness refresher course
 - Use of document imaging and workflow systems
 - Benefit administration for newly recruited staff.
 - Improved assessment knowledge for visiting officers
 - Understanding overpayment recovery
 - Letter writing
15. Upon full implementation of document image processing and workflow, an extension to the current home working scheme will be evaluated. This could bolster productivity, increase morale, support retention of key staff and ease accommodation difficulties.

Backlogs

16. The section recognises the importance of maintaining a high level of output so that outstanding items of work do not build up. This leads to poor customer service, delay in processing claims, award of incorrect benefit and threats of eviction to customers. Statistics on outstanding work i.e. new applications, change of circumstances and unlinked post are collected and monitored on a weekly basis by the Deputy Benefits Manager to identify "hot spots". These are resolved through re-allocation of tasks, temporary additional resources such as agency staff, casual employment and process review.
17. To ensure continuity of the service in times of emergency, the computer applications supporting the service are to be included within the Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan, which is currently being compiled.

Resources

18. The budget for the WVBS is as below:

	2005/06 PROV. OUTTURN	2006/07 BUDGET
	£000	£000
Staff	618	691
Info Tech.	102	105
Offices	21	21
Other Support Services	77	80
Miscellaneous	18	18
Total	836	915

19. In comparison with other authorities, the section has an average cost per claim.
20. The opportunity to transfer monies from other budgets will be accepted where additional resource is justified. Conversely, cost efficiencies will be made where resources are no longer required. The service recognises that costs must be held down and efficiency maximised. Agency staff are employed during times of peak workload and budget provision is also made for overtime.
21. Major changes in resource allocations will be reported to members. The budget manager for the service is the Revenues and Benefits Manager.

Capital Investment

22. The Service will continue to seek funding for service improvements from the Council and the Department for Works and Pensions for technological advances to improve customer services. This includes mobile working, seamless transfer of data input by customers through our web site to determine and award of benefit, and developments to customer correspondence issued through our computer system.

Future Developments

23. The Service is currently in discussion with Teesdale District Council (TDC) concerning a partnership arrangement in which WVBS may process claims on behalf of TDC.

Plan Review

24. This business plan is a living document to be used as a tool for continuous improvement. It is not a document to be left on a shelf gathering dust whilst it becomes outdated. Consequently, it will be updated annually in line with the Central Resources Departmental Plan so it remains relevant to the service.



CENTRAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

29 MARCH 2006

Report of the Director of Central Resources
ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY

purpose of the report

1. To inform members of proposed amendments to the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.

background

2. The Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy was approved at the Central Resources committee meeting on 26 September 2002. The strategy sets out a series of measures to deter and identify fraud and corruption. It also details the actions to be followed in the event that a fraud or corrupt act is discovered.
3. It is good practice that the strategy is reviewed periodically and any changes or amendments brought to this committee for approval.

changes to strategy

4. The Council's responsibilities under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Money Laundering Regulations 2003 are now included under the strategy.
5. The role of managers in alleviating the risk of fraud and corruption in their particular area has been strengthened.
6. It is acknowledged that the strategy helps to evidence the Council's Statement of Internal Control that is produced annually with the Authority's accounts.
7. A copy of the strategy is attached at Annex 2 with changes highlighted.

RECOMMENDED that the revised Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy attached at Annex 2 be approved.

Officer responsible for the report

Gary Ridley
Director of Central Resources
Ext 227

Author of the report

John Redfearn
Senior Auditor
Ext 445

ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Authority aims to provide strong leadership and quality services.
- 1.2 In carrying out its functions and responsibilities, the Authority has always adopted a culture of openness and fairness and has expected that elected members and employees at all levels will adopt the highest standards of propriety and accountability. This will be achieved by leading by example and by an understanding of and adherence to rules, procedures and agreed practices. These standards will also be expected from organisations that have dealings with the Authority (e.g. suppliers/contractors). To date, the Authority has not had cause to raise any concerns with the external auditor.
- 1.3 It is important that the Authority formalises these accepted standards and practices and develops an anti-fraud and corruption strategy. The Authority is currently in a strong position due to the controls that have already been put in place, i.e. standing orders, financial regulations, **officers' code of conduct** and the members' code of conduct, but there is no room for complacency.
- 1.4 The Authority therefore must demonstrate clearly that it is firmly committed to dealing with fraud and corruption and will deal equally with perpetrators from inside (members and employees) and outside the Authority. In addition, there will be no distinction made in investigation and action between cases that generate financial benefits and those that do not.
- 1.5 This strategy document embodies a series of measures designed to frustrate any attempted fraudulent or corrupt act and the steps to be taken if such an act occurs. For ease of understanding, it is separated into five areas:
- Culture Section 2
 - Prevention Section 3
 - Deterrence Section 4
 - Detection & Investigation Section 5
 - Awareness & Training Section 6
- 1.6 The Authority is also aware of the high degree of external scrutiny of its affairs by a variety of bodies such as the Audit Commission, inspection bodies, the Local Government Ombudsman, HM Customs & Excise and the Inland Revenue. These bodies are important in highlighting any areas where improvements can be made.
- 1.7 **This document provides evidence for the Statement of Internal Control (SIC) which has to be produced annually with the Authority's accounts.**
- 1.8 Fraud and corruption are defined by the Audit Commission as:

Fraud – “*the intentional distortion of financial statements or other records by persons internal or external to the Authority which is carried out to conceal the misappropriation of assets or otherwise for gain*”.

In addition, fraud can also be defined as “the intentional distortion of financial statements or other records by persons internal or external to the Authority which is carried out to mislead or misrepresent”.

Corruption – “the offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward which may influence the action of any person”.

In addition, this strategy covers “the failure to disclose an interest in order to gain financial or other pecuniary gain.”

2. **CULTURE**

- 2.1 The culture of the Authority has always been one of openness and the core values of fairness, trust and value support this.
- 2.2 The prevention/detection of fraud/corruption and the protection of the public purse are everyone’s responsibility.
- 2.3 The Authority’s elected members and employees play an important role in creating and maintaining this culture. They are positively encouraged to raise concerns regarding fraud and corruption, immaterial of seniority, rank or status, in the knowledge that such concerns will, wherever possible, be treated in confidence.
- 2.4 Concerns must be raised when members or employees reasonably believe that one or more of the following has occurred, is in the process of occurring or is likely to occur:
 - A criminal offence
 - A failure to comply with a statutory or legal obligation
 - Improper unauthorised use of public or other funds
 - A miscarriage of justice
 - Maladministration, misconduct or malpractice
 - Endangering of an individual’s health and safety
 - Damage to the environment
 - Deliberate concealment of any of the above.
- 2.5 The Authority will ensure that any allegations received in any way, including by anonymous letters or phone calls, will be taken seriously and investigated in an appropriate manner. Please refer to the Authority’s confidential reporting procedure.

- 2.6 The Authority will deal firmly with those who defraud the Authority, or who are corrupt, or where there has been financial malpractice. There is, of course, a need to ensure that any investigation process is not misused and, therefore, any abuse (such as employees raising malicious allegations) may be dealt with as a disciplinary matter. Please refer to the Authority's disciplinary procedure.
- 2.7 When fraud or corruption have occurred because of a breakdown in the Authority's systems or procedures, Directors will ensure that appropriate improvements in systems of control are implemented to prevent a reoccurrence.

3. **PREVENTION**

ELECTED MEMBERS

3.1 **The Role of Elected Members**

- 3.1.1 As elected representatives, all members of the Authority have a duty to citizens to protect the Authority from all forms of abuse.
- 3.1.2 This is done through the anti-fraud and corruption strategy and compliance with the national code of conduct for members, the Authority's financial regulations and standing orders and the relevant legislation.
- 3.1.3 Elected members sign to the effect that they have read and understood the national code of conduct when they take office. These conduct and ethical matters are specifically brought to the attention of members during induction and include the declaration and registration of interests. The Head of Legal Services advises members of new legislative or procedural requirements.

EMPLOYEES

3.2 **The Role of Managers**

- 3.2.1 Managers at all levels are responsible for the communication and implementation of this strategy in their work area. They are also responsible for ensuring that their employees are aware of the Authority's ~~managers' and~~ staff handbooks, financial regulations and standing orders, and that the requirements of each are being met in their everyday business activities. Managers are expected to strive to create an environment in which their staff feel able to approach them with any concerns they may have about suspected irregularities.
- 3.2.2 The Authority recognises that a key preventative measure in dealing with fraud and corruption is for managers to take effective steps at the recruitment stage to establish, as far as possible, the honesty and integrity of potential employees, whether for permanent, temporary or casual posts. The Authority's equal opportunities policy will be adhered to during this process.
- 3.2.3 The Authority has a formal recruitment procedure, which contains appropriate safeguards on matters such as written references and verifying qualifications held. Further checks will be introduced in areas where an increased risk of potential fraud and corruption has been identified.

3.2.4 **Managers should be looking at ways to alleviate risk of fraud and corruption in the environments they work in. This could be by ensuring they have good systems of internal controls or minimising risks by altering the methods they use.**

3.3 Responsibilities of Employees

3.3.1 Each employee is governed in their work by the Authority's standing orders and financial regulations and other codes of conduct and policies (health and safety, IT regulations). They are also governed by the officer code of conduct regulations. Included in these are guidelines on gifts and hospitality and codes of conduct associated with professional and personal conduct and conflicts of interest. These are issued to all employees when they join the Authority or will be provided upon request.

3.3.2 In addition to paragraph 3.3.1, employees are responsible for ensuring that they follow the instructions given to them by management, particularly in relation to the safekeeping of the assets of the Authority. These will be included in induction training and procedure manuals.

3.3.3 Employees are expected always to be aware of the possibility that fraud, corruption or theft may exist in the workplace and be able to share their concerns with management. If for any reason, they feel unable to speak to their manager they must refer the matter to one of those named below. **This also includes any complaints they receive about the service from external sources e.g. members of the public, external agencies etc. where fraud or corruption is implied.**

3.3.4 Concerns must be raised, in the first instance, directly with the supervisor/business unit manager, or, if necessary, anonymously (by letter or telephone), and via other routes, in accordance with the Authority's confidential reporting procedure:

- Heads of Service, Directors, the Chief Executive, and the Head of Legal Services, who will report such concerns to the **Senior Auditor**.
- Directly to the **Senior Auditor**.
- External Auditor, who, depending upon the nature of the concern, will liaise with the **Senior Auditor**.

3.4 Conflicts of Interest

3.4.1 Both elected members and employees must ensure that they avoid situations where there is potential for a conflict of interest. Such situations can arise with externalisation of services, internal tendering, planning and land issues, etc. Effective role separation will ensure decisions made are seen to be based upon impartial advice and avoid questions about improper disclosure of confidential information.

3.5 Money Laundering

3.5.1 Under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and the Money Laundering Regulations 2003, staff must report suspicions of money which involves the proceeds of any form of crime to the nominated officers as stated in 3.3.4. above.

3.6 Official Guidance

3.6.1 In addition to financial regulations and standing orders, there may also be audit reports that recommend methods to minimise losses to the Authority. Managers and employees must be made aware of these various sources of guidance and alter their working practices accordingly.

3.7 Role of Internal Audit

3.7.1 Internal Audit is within the Central Resource Department and it plays a vital preventative role in trying to ensure that systems and procedures are in place to prevent and detect fraud and corruption. Internal Audit investigates all cases of suspected irregularity, except benefit fraud investigations (see below). They liaise with management to recommend changes in procedures to prevent further losses to the Authority.

3.8 The Role of the Benefits Investigation Team

3.8.1 The benefits investigation team is responsible for all benefit fraud investigations. In cases where employees are involved, they will work with Internal Audit, Personnel and appropriate senior management to ensure that correct procedures are followed and that this strategy is adhered to.

3.9 The Role of External Audit

3.9.1 Independent external audit is an essential safeguard in the stewardship of public money. This role is delivered through the carrying out of specific reviews that are designed to test (amongst other things) the adequacy of the Authority's financial systems, and arrangements for preventing and detecting fraud and corruption. It is not the external auditor's function to prevent fraud and irregularity, but the integrity of public funds is at all times a matter of general concern. External auditors are always alert to the possibility of fraud and irregularity, and will act without undue delay if grounds for suspicion come to their notice. The external auditor has a responsibility to review the Authority's arrangements to prevent and detect fraud and irregularity, and arrangements designed to limit the opportunity for corrupt practices.

3.10 Co-operation with Others

3.10.1 Internal Audit has arranged and will keep under review procedures and arrangements to develop and encourage the exchange of information on national and local fraud and corruption activity in relation to local authorities with external agencies such as:

- police
- district audit groups
- external audit service
- Audit Commission
- Benefits Agency
- Government departments.

4. **DETERRENCE**

4.1 Disciplinary Action

4.1.1 Theft, fraud and corruption are serious offences against the Authority and employees will face disciplinary action if there is evidence that they have been involved in these activities. Disciplinary action will be taken in addition to, or instead of, criminal proceedings, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, but in a consistent manner, after consultation with the Chief Executive and/or the Director of Central Resources. (The police will pass valid cases to the Crown Prosecution Service.)

4.1.2 Members will face appropriate action under this strategy if they are found to have been involved in theft, fraud or corruption against the authority. Action will be taken in addition to, or instead of, criminal proceedings, depending on the circumstances of each individual case, but in a consistent manner. Matters involving members, if not referred to the police, will be referred to the standards committee or appropriate group leader, as appropriate.

4.2 Publicity

4.2.1 The Authority's Communications Manager will optimise the publicity opportunities associated with anti-fraud and corruption activity within the Authority. The Communications Manager will also try to ensure that the results of any action taken, including prosecutions, are reported in the media.

4.2.2 In all cases where financial loss to the Authority has occurred, the Authority will seek to recover the loss and advertise this fact.

4.2.3 All anti-fraud and corruption activities, including the update of this strategy, will be publicised in order to make the employees and the public aware of the Authority's commitment to taking action on fraud and corruption when it occurs.

5. **DETECTION AND INVESTIGATION**

5.1 Internal Audit plays an important role in the detection of fraud and corruption. Included in their three-year plan are reviews of system financial controls and specific fraud and corruption tests, spot checks and unannounced visits.

5.2 In addition to Internal Audit, there are numerous systems controls in place to deter fraud and corruption, but it is often the vigilance of employees and members of the public that aids detection.

- 5.3 In some cases frauds are discovered by chance or 'tip-off' and arrangements are in place to enable such information to be properly dealt with.
- 5.4 All suspected irregularities are required to be reported (verbally or in writing) either by the person with whom the initial concern was raised or by the originator, as per the Authority's confidential reporting policy. This is essential to the strategy, and:
- ensures the consistent treatment of information regarding fraud and corruption
 - facilitates a proper and thorough investigation by an experienced audit team.
- 5.5 This process will apply to all the following areas:
- (a) fraud/corruption by elected members
 - (b) internal fraud/corruption
 - (c) other fraud/corruption by Authority employees
 - (d) fraud by contractors' employees
 - (e) external fraud (the public).
- 5.6 Cases under a), d) and e) would normally be referred directly to the District Auditor, Ombudsman or the police.
- 5.7 Any decision to refer a matter to the police will be taken by the Chief Executive, the Director of Central Resources, Director/Head of Service and Head of Legal Services. The Authority will normally wish the police to be made aware of, and investigate independently, offenders where financial impropriety is discovered.
- 5.8 Depending on the nature of an allegation under b) to e), the **Senior Auditor** will normally work closely with the Director concerned to ensure that all allegations are thoroughly investigated and reported upon.
- 5.9 The Authority's disciplinary procedures will be used to facilitate a thorough investigation of any allegations of improper behaviour by employees. The processes as outlined in paragraph 4.1.2 will cover members.

6. **AWARENESS AND TRAINING**

- 6.1 The Authority recognises that the continuing success of this strategy and its general credibility will depend in part on the effectiveness of programmed training and an awareness of elected members and employees throughout the Authority.
- 6.2 To facilitate this, positive and appropriate provision will be made via induction and for employees via their development plans.
- 6.3 A copy of the confidential reporting policy will be distributed to all employees and members, and full copies of this strategy and the fraud and corruption guide **can be found on the lotus notes database 'Financial Regulations and Policies' and the Authority's website.**

7. **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The Authority has always prided itself on setting and maintaining high standards and a culture of openness, with core values of fairness, trust and value. This strategy fully supports the Authority's desire to maintain an honest Authority, free from fraud and corruption.
- 7.2 The Authority has in place a network of systems and procedures to assist it in dealing with fraud and corruption when it occurs. It is determined that these arrangements will keep pace with any future developments in techniques to both prevent and detect fraudulent or corrupt activity that may affect its operation.
- 7.3 The Authority will maintain a continuous review of all these systems and procedures through Internal Audit.
- 7.4 This strategy will be reviewed annually.



CENTRAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

29 MARCH 2006

Report of the Director of Central Resources
COUNTY DURHAM E-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

purpose of the report

1. To consider changes to the constitution of the above partnership.

background

2. Members will be aware that the Authority is a member of the County Durham e-Government Partnership (CDeGP) along with the County Council and other Durham Districts. The purpose of the partnership is to progress e-government across County Durham.
3. Members will recall that a constitution was agreed at Committee in September 2003 which outlined the Partnership's aims and objectives and governance arrangements. Generally, the governance arrangements have operated well since then and the Partnership continues to make progress. The Chair of the Central Resources Committee is a Member of the Joint Steering Committee for the Partnership.
4. The current constitution and funding lapses on 31 March 2006 and work has been ongoing to agree a revised constitution. A revised constitution is shown at Annex 3. Only minor changes have been made to it and these are shown as either bold or striked through to denote deletion.

financial implications

5. The Authority's contribution is set at £15,000 per annum for 2006/07 and 2007/08. This is included in the Authority's budget.

RECOMMENDED that Members agree to the changes to the constitution as per Annex 3.

Officer responsible for the report

Gary Ridley
Director of Central Resources
Ext 227

Author of the report

Gary Ridley
Director of Central Resources
Ext 227



Dated

2005

**The County Durham e-Government
Partnership Joint Committee**

Agreement

**Director of Corporate & Legal Services
County Hall
Durham**

CDeGP Constitution V2



Document Control

Document Name CDeGP Constitution

Revision History & Approvals

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<u>1</u>		<u>Helen Jubb</u>	<u>First version of constitution was called H MVJ(V4 which was created in 2003 and renamed by Ruth Harmer 5th October 2005</u>
<u>2</u>	<u>5th October 2005</u>	<u>Ruth Harmer</u>	<u>First full draft</u>
<u>2.1</u>	<u>13th October 2005</u>	<u>Ruth Harmer</u>	<u>Amendments added for assets & replace para 19</u>
<u>2.2</u>	<u>19th October 2005</u>	<u>Ruth Harmer</u>	<u>Amendment to annual contribution</u>
<u>2.3</u>	<u>1st December 2005</u>	<u>Ruth Harmer</u>	<u>Final amendments as agreed at Joint Committee 30/11/05 and inserted initial commencement date 27/11/2005 (date last council agreed version 1)</u>

Full document name and path of current version:

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AN AGREEMENT made the day of
 Two thousand and three **BETWEEN CHESTER-LE-STREET DISTRICT COUNCIL**
 whose office is at Civic Centre Newcastle Road Chester-le-Street County Durham
 DH3 3UT **THE CITY OF DURHAM COUNCIL** whose office is at 4 Saddler Street
 Durham DH1 3NZ **DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT COUNCIL** whose office is at Civic
 Centre Medomsley Road Consett County Durham DH8 5JA **DURHAM COUNTY
 COUNCIL** of County Hall Durham DH1 5UL **DISTRICT OF EASINGTON COUNCIL**
 whose office is at Seaside Lane Easington Peterlee County Durham SR8 3TN
SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL whose office is at Green Lane Spennymoor
 County Durham DL16 6JQ **TEESDALE DISTRICT COUNCIL** whose office is at
 Teesdale House Galgate Barnard Castle DL12 8EL and **WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT
 COUNCIL** whose office is at Civic Centre Crook County Durham DL15 9ES

WHEREAS

- (1) The Authorities wish to establish a Joint Committee of the Authorities with the aims powers functions objectives and duties hereinafter referred to
- (2) The Authorities have agreed to enter into this Agreement to give effect to those wishes

1. -INTERPRETATION

1.1 Expressions in the left hand column of the interpretation table below shall be construed in accordance with the right hand column

Interpretation Table	
Broadband Consortium	A consortium of Derwentside District Council and Durham County Council entered into under an agreement dated 12 May 2003 for the development and management of broadband nodes in County Durham
<u>Asset</u>	<u>Assets held by the Authorities on behalf of the Joint Committee as set out in the Asset Register</u>
<u>Asset Register</u>	<u>List of all Assets as set out in appendix 5</u>
Budget	The Budget and the Programme Budget in any year
Commencement date	2003
Contract Standing Orders	The Contract Standing Orders of the Joint Committee set out in Appendix 9 to this Agreement

Core Budget <u>Programme Office Budget</u>	The Budget (including Overheads) relating to expenditure on Core Services and Non-Core Services
Core Services	The professional management of the Services to be undertaken by or on behalf of the Joint Committee
e-Government Vision	Working together and across all boundaries to deliver quality joined up customer focused services regardless of personal means locality and circumstances by establishing a common technology infrastructure, developing an opening of access channels, maximising the takeup of electronic transactions exploiting integrated business systems and procedures and promoting cultural change and organizational development
Financial Regulations	The financial regulations of the joint committee set out in Appendix 8 to this Agreement
Functions	The functions of the Joint Committee as set out in paragraph 3.3
IEG	The Government's "Implementing Electronic Government" Initiative
Joint Committee	The County Durham e-Government Partnership Joint Committee
Non-Core Services	Those services provided by seconded members of the Programme Team <u>Programme Office</u> or directly by an Authority together with any administrative financial training supplies publications consumable and other resources and services provided by that authority
Objectives	The objectives of the Joint Committee as set out in paragraph 3.2 to this Agreement
Officer Board <u>Programme Board</u>	The Durham e-Government Joint Officer Board <u>Programme Board</u>

Overheads	The employee costs (including on costs) of the members of the Programme Team <u>Programme Office</u> ; the costs of administration insurance training supplies publications consumables and re-charges; and the costs (direct and indirect) associated with the management operation and administration of the Joint Committee and the Officer Board <u>Programme Board</u>
Programme Budget	The budget in any year which is intended for the projects to be carried out by the Joint Committee directly or on behalf of one or more Authorities or Supporters during the year as part of its programme
Programme Team <u>Programme Office</u>	The team of officers responsible to the Officer Board <u>Programme Board</u> for the delivery of the Services
Services	The work and activities of the Joint Committee in developing and delivering facilities which will enable the Authorities directly or indirectly to promote the e-Government Vision and the Objectives
Standing Orders	The standing orders of the Joint Committee as set out in Appendix 2 to this Agreement
Supporter	An organisation body or person with whom links are implemented in accordance with Section 18 of this Agreement
Work Programme	The programme of work approved by the Joint Committee to be carried out in the year to which the budget relates

- 1.2 Except where the contrary intention appears, references in this Agreement to the singular shall include the plural and vice versa and references to the masculine gender shall be taken as meaning both masculine and feminine genders
- 1.3 References to sections are to the sections 1 - 20 of this Agreement and references to paragraphs are to paragraphs within those sections

1.4 References to “year” and “years” are to the financial year or years of the Authorities commencing on 1 April in any year and finishing on 31 March in the following year. The last year shall however end on the date upon which this Agreement terminates

1.5 This Agreement shall have effect from the Commencement Date and shall continue in force in accordance with the provisions of Section 11

2.- THE JOINT COMMITTEE

2.1 The Authorities, in exercise of their powers under Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 20 of the Local Government Act 2000 and all other powers enabling them in that behalf, hereby establish and agree fully to participate in the Durham County e-Government Partnership Joint Committee to promote the e-Government Vision and commit themselves to promoting that vision, to achieving the Objectives through the Functions set out herein and, subject to Section 10, to the provision collectively and individually to the Joint Committee of sufficient resources to realise those ambitions

2.2 The Joint Committee shall be constituted and conduct its business in accordance with the Standing Orders [at appendix 2](#)

2.3 The Joint Committee shall comprise the following membership:

2.3.1 Each Authority will appoint one member

2.3.2 Each Authority may nominate to the Secretary to the Joint Committee a named substitute for the Councillor appointed under paragraph 2.3.1 Each such substitute must be a member [and may vote when attending meetings of the Joint Committee as such substitute](#). Such substitute may also attend meetings of the Joint Committee as observer in a non-voting capacity

2.3.3 Clause 2.3.1 shall only apply where the Joint Committee comprises five or more Authorities

2.3.4 If the Joint Committee comprises four or less Authorities then the Joint Committee shall hold a meeting to determine how the membership of the Joint Committee shall be comprised

2.4 The Joint Committee shall from time to time approve the Joint Committee’s Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders applicable to the discharge of the Objectives and Functions but pending adoption by the Joint Committee of such Financial Regulations and contract standing orders the financial regulations and Contract Standing Orders of the Lead Authority shall apply

3.- OBJECTIVES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE

- 3.1 The Authorities hereby constitute the Joint Committee for the purpose of promoting the e-Government Vision for the users of the services for which the Authorities are responsible and, subject to the Budget approved in accordance with Section 8, the attainment and realisation of the Objectives on behalf of the Authorities and the Supporters and to this end to provide the Core Services for all Authorities and to make available additional services where there is agreement to do so between the one or more Authorities concerned and the Joint Committee
- 3.2 The Objectives of the Joint Committee are to promote and pursue the e-Government Vision so that by working together the Joint Committee achieve for the benefit of the users of the services for which the Authorities are responsible
 - 3.2.1 accessible services in locations, at times and in ways that ensure social inclusivity
 - 3.2.2 customer choice: giving customers the freedom to access services through their choice of medium
 - 3.2.3 joined up: seamless access to locally delivered services
 - 3.2.4 consistent reliable and efficient access to services whatever channel used
 - 3.2.5 the raising of customer expectation through the promotion of e-Government
 - 3.2.6 the best use of technology
 - 3.2.7 citizen participation in e-democracy
 - 3.2.8 value for money and sustainability
- 3.3 The Functions of the Joint Committee in relation to the Objectives are
 - 3.3.1 to adopt the e-Government Vision, to keep it under review and to amend it as necessary
 - 3.3.2 to determine after consultation with the Authorities the Budget and the Work Programme of the Joint Committee;
 - 3.3.3 to determine the standards of the discharge of the Objectives and the Functions in accordance with any appropriate external standards from time to time for e-Government
 - 3.3.4 to consider actions, make recommendations to the Authorities and others and to determine policy relating to the effective pursuit of the e-Government Vision and the attainment of the Objectives
 - 3.3.5 to carry out undertake procure or implement in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement and within the Budget available for the

purpose such projects or schemes or proposals as the Committee shall determine as being appropriate or relevant to the effective pursuit of the e-Government Vision and the attainment of the Objectives

- 3.3.6 to monitor performance by means of a quarterly report sent to the Authorities for scrutiny
 - 3.3.7 to review regularly and to scrutinise regularly the decisions and actions taken by the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board
 - 3.3.8 to undertake such public and other consultation as the Joint Committee shall consider necessary or desirable about the Joint Committee's priorities, the provision of services by electronic means and to collate and share with Authorities and others the results of such consultation in determining the Work Programme
 - 3.3.9 to undertake any relevant and related activities which the Joint Committee deem to be of benefit to the pursuit of the e-Government Vision
- 3.4 Subject to paragraph 3.5 below the Joint Committee will have delegated powers from the Authorities and in accordance with paragraph 3.3.4 above to implement the Budget and the Work Programme for that year previously approved by the Joint Committee subject to the financial and resources implications of those decisions being contained within the Budget of the Joint Committee for the then current financial year or within the financial commitments approved by the Authorities
- 3.5 The Joint Committee shall refer to the Authorities any matter which falls outside the Joint Committee's delegated powers or where the Joint Committee consider that the matter is one which for any reason should properly be decided upon by the Authorities and not by the Joint Committee
- 3.6 The Joint Committee shall not have power to borrow
- 3.7 Subject to paragraphs 3.4 and 3.5 above the Authorities also empower the Joint Committee to arrange for the discharge of the Functions by the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board as herein set out and Subsection 2 of Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 shall apply in relation to the Functions as it applies in relation to the functions of the Authorities
- 3.8 The Joint Committee shall appoint the Secretary to the Joint Committee and the Treasurer to the Joint Committee. The Secretary and the Treasurer shall have respectively the functions powers and duties set out herein and as set out in Appendix 3
- 3.9 The Joint Committee shall not employ any employees.
- 4.- ~~OFFICER BOARD~~PROGRAMME BOARD**

- 4.1 The Authorities will establish the Officer-BoardProgramme Board which, subject to paragraph 4.2 below, shall comprise one nominated officer representative of each Authority
- 4.2 The officer of each Authority nominated to serve on the Officer-BoardProgramme Board shall be a senior officer of that authority having responsibility at officer level for, or close senior level involvement in, e-Government
- 4.3 Each officer nominated under paragraph 4.1 shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Joint Committee but not to vote thereat
- 4.4 Each officer nominated under paragraph 4.1 shall have the delegated authority to act on behalf of their parent Authority and be entitled to attend meetings of the Officer-BoardProgramme Board and to vote thereat according to the mandate in appendix 4
- 4.5 The Secretary to the Joint Committee and the Treasurer to the Joint Committee or their respective nominees shall be able to attend meetings of the Joint Committee and the Officer-BoardProgramme Board in an advisory capacity
- 4.6 If the officer nominated under paragraph 4.1 is unable to attend a meeting of the Joint Committee or the Officer-BoardProgramme Board, the Authority which nominated him may nominate a substitute of comparable seniority to attend that meeting who shall have the like rights to vote as the officer for whom he is substitute. The nomination of such officer shall be made to the Secretary to the Joint Committee
- 4.7 The officer nominated under paragraph 4.1 may be accompanied by up to two other officer advisers at meetings of the Officer-BoardProgramme Board but such advisers shall have no power to vote
- 4.8 The Officer-BoardProgramme Board will report to and be accountable to the Joint Committee
- 4.9 The functions of the Officer-BoardProgramme Board will be
- 4.9.1 to recommend the strategic direction of the e-Government Vision to promote the Objectives of the Joint Committee and to develop policies for those purposes to make recommendations
- 4.9.2 to consider the recommendations proposed by the Programme TeamProgramme Office and to make recommendations to the Joint Committee where the Programme TeamProgramme Office's proposals are outside the powers delegated to the Officer-BoardProgramme Board
- 4.9.3 to make recommendations to the Joint Committee about the programme of work and projects to be undertaken by the Joint Committee in the year in question

- 4.9.4 to make recommendations to the Joint Committee about the Joint Committee's Budget, proposals for joint commissioning, joint ventures and the establishment of partnership agreements and service level agreements
- 4.9.5 to support in all practicable respects the promotion of the e-Government vision and the attainment of the Objectives
- 4.9.6 to carry out implement and deliver the policies and decisions of the Joint Committee
- 4.9.7 to scrutinise the recommendations and decisions made by the chief executives of the Authorities under their advisory and delegated decision making powers pursuant to this Agreement
- 4.10 The ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board will have the following delegated powers from the Joint Committee to implement the decisions of the Joint Committee where acting under the powers delegated to the Joint Committee subject in all cases to
- (i) any decisions involving expenditure being within the financial allocation for the purpose approved by the Joint Committee
 - (ii) any decisions involving controversial or contentious matters being first referred to the Joint Committee (who may themselves decide the matter)
 - (iii) reference to the Joint Committee of any proposals for significant change in the programme of work for the year which has previously been approved by the Joint Committee for that year
- 4.11 The ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board shall comply with the Joint Committee's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- 5.- PROGRAMME TEAMPROGRAMME OFFICE**
- 5.1 The ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board will be supported by a ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office which will be based at the offices of the Lead Authority where practical to do so
- 5.2 The ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office will comprise
- 5.2.1 a core team comprising full and part-time secondees from one or more _____ Authorities as the Joint Committee may approve after-consultation with the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board, all the direct and indirect _____ costs and overheads of whom will be met from within the Core-Budget, together with
 - 5.2.2 such secondees from one or more Authorities or Supporters as the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board may approve , the direct and indirect

costs of whom will be met from within the resources of the
seconding Authority or Supporter

- 5.3 The ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office will be led by a person seconded under paragraph 5.2.1 as programme manager (“Programme Manager”)
- 5.4 The ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office will be responsible to the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board and to the Joint Committee and will
- 5.4.1 co-ordinate the day to day activities of the Joint Committee in promoting and attaining the e-Government Vision and the Objectives
- 5.4.2 liaise between the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board, the Joint Committee, the Authorities, the Government, Supporters and other agencies and ———persons
- 5.4.3 monitor progress and expenditure on individual projects and prepare draft plans policies and strategies as necessary for consideration, and may make recommendations thereon
- 5.4.4 appraise individual projects for funding including the assessment —of the sufficiency and adequacy of the financial and management ———controls in place for each such project
- 5.4.5 monitor progress and expenditure on individual projects and -evaluate and report at least quarterly to the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board and Joint Committee on the —outcomes and effectiveness of such projects
- 5.4.6 maintain an accurate record of the assets held by the authorities on behalf of the Joint Committee in the Asset Register
- 5.5 The members of the ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office seconded under paragraph 5.2.1 or paragraph 5.2.2 shall continue to be employees of the Authority by whom they are seconded and accordingly their terms and conditions of service shall be those of their employing Authority. Such secondments shall be for such term as the employing Authority and the Joint Committee may agree
- 5.6 The members of the ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office seconded under paragraph 5.2.2 shall be assigned to the ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office to support and deliver the ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office’s objectives set out in paragraph 5.4.
- 5.7 All members of the ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office shall comply with the Joint Committee’s Standing Orders and Financial Regulations
- 5.8 The Programme Manager shall have the following delegated powers –

- (a) To implement the decisions of the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board where acting under the powers delegated to the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board
- (b) To take decisions on the day to day activities of the ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office within the ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office's terms of reference set out in paragraph 5.4
- (c) To manage the ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office in the delivery and performance of the terms of reference in paragraph 5.4

5.9 Other support services for the Joint Committee shall include the provision of financial, legal and administrative services and such support services to the Joint Committee (to the extent that they are not provided by the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board or secondees) shall be through arrangements made by the Lead Authority. The cost of the provision of these services shall be allowed for in the ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget.

6.- DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 The delivery structure roles and responsibilities detailed at Appendix 1 are indicative of the delivery arrangements the Authorities wish to implement but do not prevail over the specific provisions and/or delegations set out in this Agreement

7.- CONTRACTS

7.1 Every contract for the execution of work for or the supply of goods or services to the Joint Committee and the procedures relating thereto shall comply in all respects with the Financial Regulations and Contract

Standing Orders unless in any particular case the Joint Committee decide that the contract standing orders or financial regulations of another Authority shall apply

8.- FINANCIAL

8.1 Subject to the provisions of this Section 8, all expenditure incurred by the Joint Committee each year in promoting the e-Government Vision and attaining the Objectives and discharging the Functions will, having regard to the nature of the expenditure in question, be met from and contained within the ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget or the Programme Budget or within financial commitments approved by the Authorities

8.2 The ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget will be funded from the Annual contribution of each Authority

8.3 Annual Contribution

- 8.3.1 The ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget shall be funded from the Annual Contribution as detailed in Clause 8.3.4 to meet the cost of the provision of the Core Services and the Non-Core Services and the Overheads and the amount required to be expended pursuant to paragraph 8.3.7 together with such reasonable contingency or other revenue provision as the Joint Committee may consider appropriate provided that unless the Authorities otherwise consent, such amount shall not exceed the total of the amounts specified under clause 8.3.4 as adjusted pursuant to clause 8.3.5.
- 8.3.2 The ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget (net of any contribution thereto received from a Supporter under section 18) shall be shared ~~equally between~~among the Authorities which product shall be the "Annual Contribution". The Annual Contribution for each Authority will be agreed annually by the Programme Board.
- 8.3.3 The Joint Committee shall (save in exceptional circumstances) consider the proposed ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget and notify each Authority of the required Annual Contribution for the following year before 30 November in the year preceding that in which it is due.
- 8.3.4 The Annual Contribution for each Authority for 2003/04, 2004/05, ~~and 2005/06,~~ 2006/07 and 2007/08 is £20,000.00
- 8.3.5 Throughout the duration of this Agreement each Authority will, unless the Annual Contribution notified under paragraph 8.3.3 is a lesser sum, maintain its Annual Contribution at the level referred to in clause 8.3.4 unless the contribution has been increased by agreement of the Joint Committee plus such additional amount as is equal to the increase in that sum indexed in line with the Retail Prices Index in accordance with the provisions of Appendix 4
- 8.3.6 Each Authority which seconds a member of its staff to the team component of the ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office under paragraph 5.2.1 above shall be paid by and receive from the Joint Committee that proportion of the ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget attributable to that secondee/those secondees together with a fair proportion of the Overheads attributable to that secondment/those secondments. Such payment shall be made by the Joint Committee in four equal quarterly instalments payable in arrears
- 8.3.7 Where an Authority undertakes during a year the provision of Non-Core Services in support of the Joint Committee, the ~~Officer~~BoardProgramme Board, or the ~~Programme Team~~Programme Office the Authority shall invoice the Joint Committee on a quarterly basis for the reasonable costs incurred by the Authority during that quarter for the provision of the Non-Core Services. The estimated amount of such payment shall be budgeted for in the ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office

Budget of the Joint Committee for the year following that in which the Non-Core Services were provided and shall be paid by the Joint Committee as soon as practicable after the closure of the accounts of the Joint Committee for the year in which the Non-Core Service was provided

8.4 Programme Budget

8.4.1 ~~The Programme Budget of the Joint Committee for each year will contain a rolling three-year programme for the Joint Committee's work during the three-year period. The Programme Board will submit to the Joint Committee a Programme of Work and a budget for a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 3 years commencing 1 April of that year and will contain provision for the Work Programme where that extends beyond the Core Services and the Non-Core Services and the Overheads and for funding the implementation of projects in that programme related to the e-Government Vision in County Durham and the Objectives to be carried out principally in that period~~

8.4.2 The Programme Budget shall comprise the contributions of Authorities pursuant to paragraph 8.4.3 below together with Government external funding paid to the Programme Budget pursuant to paragraph 8.5 and such other funds as may be paid or credited to the Programme Budget under other provisions of this Agreement

8.4.3 Each Authority ~~may will~~ contribute to the Programme Budget ~~the amount that has been agreed by the Joint Committee for their Authority. The Programme Budget will identify the following costs:~~

~~(i) Initial project scoping and research~~

~~(ii) Project development, including software and hardware~~

~~(iii) On-going revenue as it thinks fit including without limitation the IEG funding (or part thereof) it receives from Government in any year~~

8.4.4 The Programme Budget shall first be expended on the specified projects measures or initiatives to which the funding is intended to relate (if any are so specified) before any part is expended on other projects measures or initiatives within the purview of the Joint Committee

8.5 Government External Funding

8.5.1 The Programme Budget of the Joint Committee will contain ~~separate provision for funding received from~~ Government external bodies which ~~is to be spent on specific projects or initiatives or measures approved by~~ Government the funding body

8.5.2 The funding to which paragraph 8.5.1 applies may be received by ~~an Authority on behalf of the Joint Committee and to the extent that it relates to projects measures or initiatives within the purview of the Joint Committee such funding will be credited to~~ the Programme

Budget of the Joint Committee by that Authority — as soon as practicable after receipt

8.6 Capital Expenditure

8.6.1 The Joint Committee may incur expenditure in respect of items which must (or, in the Joint Committee's discretion may), properly be determined as capital expenditure in accordance with the requirements from time to time of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Regulations made thereunder

8.6.2 Since the capital expenditure of the Joint Committee will be funded from the Programme Budget without borrowing, any capital expenditure implications will be a matter for each Authority contributing to the Programme Budget

8.7 Administration of the Budget

8.7.1 Subject to the preceding paragraphs of this section 8, the proposed Budget comprising the ~~Core Budget~~ Programme Office Budget and the Programme Budget for each year of this Agreement shall be prepared by the Treasurer to the Joint Committee in conjunction with the Treasurer of each Authority

8.7.2 The proposed Budget shall be considered by the Joint Committee at the earliest practicable date in the year preceding the year to which the Budget relates and in any event by not later than 30 November

8.7.3 Before the Budget is submitted for the approval of the Joint Committee, the proposed Budget will be copied to each Authority by the Treasurer to the Joint Committee for prior consideration so that each Authority ~~is briefed~~ agrees on the level of funding which the Joint Committee are to be asked to consider for the following year.

8.7.4 ~~The Budget for 2003/04 at the Commencement Date is the total cost set out in Appendix 5. The posts listed in Appendix 5 are the core team posts under paragraph 5.2.1 for which provision is made from the Commencement Date in respect of the provision of Core Services~~

8.7.45 A scheme of management for the establishment of an appropriation reserve is set out at Appendix 6. The scheme provides a facility to carry forward into the next year any underspend of the Budget but requires firstly that (unless otherwise stipulated as a condition of ~~IEG funding or government~~ external funding) the funding of any overspend of the Budget is met in any year by transfer from the appropriation reserve. If the appropriation reserve is insufficient to meet the overspend in any year, then unless the Authorities agree to provide an additional sum to fund the deficit in equal shares, or in such other shares as the Joint Committee shall consider in all the circumstances to be fair and equitable, the Joint Committee will consider any

necessary adjustment in the Budget for the following year including any cash flow loss to the Lead Authority

8.7.56 A scheme of management for a capital reserve is set out at Appendix 7. This reserve may be increased by donations, by any underspending of the Budget or by transfer of funds from the appropriation reserve

8.7.7 Interest will be credited to both the appropriation reserve and the capital reserve by the Lead Authority at the Lead Authority's average rate earned on investment

8.8 Payments

8.8.1 Any payment due from an Authority to the Joint Committee in any year in respect of the Annual Contribution shall be made on 1 April based on the amount notified under paragraph 8.3.3 or ~~(for 2003/04)~~ under paragraph 8.3.4. The invoice will be in official form and will meet Customs and Excise VAT requirements

8.8.2 All sums payable by any Authority pursuant to this Agreement are exclusive of VAT. Each Authority shall pay any VAT properly chargeable on any supply made under this Agreement

8.8.3 The amount of any payment due from the Joint Committee to an Authority or from an Authority to the Joint Committee may not be set off against any other payment due from an Authority to the Joint Committee or from the Joint Committee to an Authority (as the case may be)

8.9 Records

8.9.1 The Treasurer to the Joint Committee will be responsible for keeping records of income and expenditure relating to the Services and will produce quarterly monitoring reports to the Joint Committee. The Treasurer or other financial officer of each other Authority will provide any necessary financial information for this purpose. The Treasurer to the Joint Committee will prepare and submit for the approval of the Joint Committee final closure accounts by not later than 30 ~~May~~ June in the year following the year to which the accounts relate. Final claims from any authority must in respect of the previous financial year must be submitted to the Lead Authority by no later than 30 April. Any claims received after the 30 April will be processed against the subsequent year's accounts

8.9.2 The accounts of the Joint Committee will be included in the accounts of each Authority for audit purposes

8.10 Mutual Understanding

The Authorities agree that this Agreement may give rise to situations in which one or more Authorities (each “a Contributing Authority”) may invest in or take part in a particular project or projects within the Programme Budget for a year the costs of which are not being shared with or contributed to by the other Authority or Authorities (each “a Non-contributing Authority”). Each Authority accordingly agrees that if it does not invest or take part in any particular project, but subsequently at a later date decides to do so or wishes to derive benefit therefrom then it will contribute to the Programme Budget or reimburse to the Contributing Authority or Contributing Authorities such amount as shall represent a fair and equitable proportion of the cost of that project as may be agreed between the Non-contributing Authority and the Joint Committee or the Contributing Authority (as the case may be)

9.- LEAD AUTHORITY

9.1 The Lead Authority shall (unless the Joint Committee otherwise in exceptional circumstances so decide) be Wear Valley District Council

9.2 Accordingly Wear Valley District Council is hereby appointed on the date hereof as the Lead Authority for the purposes mentioned in paragraphs 9.3 to 9.11 below

9.3 The role of the Lead Authority shall be exercised subject to the approval of the Joint Committee and shall be as follows:-

9.3.1 to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the Lead Authority referred to in the Agreement

9.3.2 to act on behalf of the Joint Committee when authorised to do so (or in circumstances of urgency) to achieve Best Value or to add value to the e-Government Vision or to promote the attainment of the Objectives or the performance of the Functions or in order to attract or secure financial or other resources from outside the Authorities and/or;

9.3.3 to make and provide all appropriate banking accounting and audit arrangements and services required for the due and proper receipt, holding and application of the Joint Committee’s funds and/or;

9.3.4 to be the legal point of contact with suppliers for all joint procurements and/or;

9.3.5 subject to paragraph 5.9, to provide such administrative resources as shall be reasonably necessary to enable the Joint Committee to discharge their respective roles, duties and functions and which are not otherwise provided for under this Agreement

9.3.6 to ensure that the assets listed in the Asset Register are secured and insured

9.4 Each of the other Authorities shall (and hereby duly undertake with the Lead Authority to) indemnify the Lead Authority against and/or contribute and pay in

equal shares all or any liabilities claims costs and/or expenses of or reasonably incurred by the Lead Authority in or in connection with or in the course of or as a result of:-

- 9.4.1 properly performing or discharging its roles and/or responsibilities in paragraph 9.3 of this Agreement as the Lead Authority: and/or
 - 9.4.2 undertaking any contract or commitment on behalf of the Joint Committee for the purposes of or pursuant to this Agreement **PROVIDED THAT** such indemnity on the part of the other Authorities shall not extend to liabilities or claims arising or costs and/or expenses incurred by reason or in consequence of any of the following on the part of the Lead Authority that is to say, negligence or misconduct or breach of this Agreement to a material degree, persistent breach of law or duty (that is to say persisted in after the same shall have been brought to the attention of or known to the Lead Authority), act or omission known to the Lead Authority to be contrary to proper local government practice or local government law or substantial or persistent failure (after due notice) to redress performance of the duties of the Lead Authority which shall not comply with the requirements or the standards of or set by this Agreement
- 9.5 The Lead Authority shall owe no duty of care to the other Authorities and have no liability or responsibility in respect of or in relation to the performance or discharge of (or omission to perform or discharge) any role or function referred to in Clause 9.3 the discharge or exercise of which requires the approval of the Joint Committee (save to the extent that such role or function is discharged or exercised by the Lead Authority negligently or in a manner known to the Lead Authority to be contrary to proper local government practice or local government law) or which is otherwise carried out or to be carried out in the manner requested or required by, (or which is omitted to be performed on the instruction or request of) the Joint Committee
- 9.6 The Lead Authority shall owe no duty of care to the other Authorities or any of them (whether in contract or in tort) in respect of the roles and responsibilities of the Joint Committee
- 9.7 The Lead Authority may resign as such by giving at least three calendar months' notice in writing to each of the other Authorities expiring at the end of any financial year and shall so resign if so required by notices in writing given to the Lead Authority by a simple majority of the Authorities and expiring at the end of any financial year. In the event that the Lead Authority shall so resign the Joint Committee shall having regard to the provisions of paragraph 9.1 above appoint another Authority to act as and be the Lead Authority with effect from the date upon which any such resignation as aforesaid shall itself take effect **PROVIDED THAT** in the event of disagreement as to which of the Authorities should be appointed as the Lead Authority this shall be the Authority agreeing to act as such if enjoying the majority vote of the Joint Committee

- 9.8 Any documentation held by the Lead Authority which remains relevant after it had ceased to act as such shall (on the request of the new Lead Authority or the Joint Committee) be handed over or copied to the new Lead Authority or the Joint Committee
- 9.9 The Authorities agree that the Lead Authority shall be entitled to call on the funds of the Joint Committee to pay any redundancy or other claim arising in respect of the termination of the employment of any officer wholly or mainly employed by the Lead Authority in a post to the creation of which the Joint Committee had previously given approval for the purposes of carrying out or terminating this Agreement PROVIDED THAT the Lead Authority shall FIRST consult with the Joint Committee, such consultation to include discussion on any suitable alternative employment for the officer concerned
- 9.10 If the Joint Committee funds shall not be sufficient to meet the loss, costs or damages incurred by or claims against the Lead Authority the other Authorities shall each indemnify the Lead Authority in equal shares against the amount incurred by or claimed against the Lead Authority (to the intent that the Lead Authority shall likewise be liable for such an equal share) subject to Clause 9.2.4

10.- PROVISION OF NON CASH RESOURCE

- 10.1 The Authorities agree that they will consider providing any non-monetary resources and assistance and in-kind support to the e-Government project as shall be reasonably requested by the Joint Committee from time to time
- 10.2 No requirement or request shall be made of an Authority under Clause 10.1 which shall have the effect of compelling that Authority Member to incur unbudgeted expenditure for the purposes of making available to the Joint Committee any such resources, assistance or support as are referred to in Clause 10.1
- 10.3 Provision of support under this Section 10 may if the Joint Committee so agree be included in the calculation of the Annual Contribution for the following financial year in paragraph 8.3.1

11. -DURATION AND TERMINATION

- 11.1 Unless and until it is determined by notice under paragraph 11.4 or by mutual consent under paragraph 11.5, this Agreement shall continue in force for an initial period terminating on 31 March 2006 (“the Initial Period”)
- 11.2 Upon 31 March 2006 the period of the Agreement shall be extended automatically for a period of two years and the Agreement shall then continue in force from 31 March 2006 for a period of two years from that date unless, prior to that date, the Authorities have agreed to its being terminated by mutual consent under paragraph 11.5 or notice has been served pursuant to paragraph 11.4.

- 11.3 Upon the expiration of the subsequent period of two years from 31 March 2006 the period of the Agreement shall be extended automatically for a further period of [two years] commencing on the 31 March 2008 and thereafter on each second 31 March thereafter unless, prior to the expiration of each successive period of two years, the Authorities have agreed to its being terminated by mutual consent under paragraph 11.5 or notice has been served pursuant to paragraph 11.4
- 11.4 An Authority may on or after 31 March ~~2004-2006~~ serve notice on the other Authorities not less than one year's notice in writing to terminate this Agreement expiring on ~~31 March 2006 or on~~ 31 March in any year thereafter. Any notice served by an Authority under this paragraph 11.4 may be withdrawn at any time prior to the expiration of the notice with the consent in writing of the other Authorities
- 11.5 The Authorities may agree in writing at any time during the currency of this Agreement to terminate this Agreement by mutual consent with effect on such date as they shall specify. The Authorities may agree to terminate this Agreement by mutual consent under this paragraph 11.5 whether or not notice to terminate the Agreement has been served previously under paragraph 11.4
- 11.6 Following service of any notice under paragraph 11.4, or as part of any termination by mutual consent under paragraph 11.5, the Joint Committee shall make the necessary arrangements and/or make any necessary recommendations to give effect to such termination and in particular to address the following:-
- (a) in accordance with paragraph 8 of this Agreement, the division and distribution of any resources available in the Budget of the Joint Committee on termination
 - (b) how the obligations and liabilities of the Joint Committee and Authorities under this Agreement which are ascertainable prior to the termination or which subsequently arise shall be met by the Authorities
- 11.7 In the event of the Parties not having determined the terms for the termination of this Agreement three months before the termination is to take effect pursuant to this section 11 then the arbitration provisions of Section 16 shall be invoked

11.8 On termination under paragraph 11.5 any assets remaining on the Asset Register shall be disposed of as the Joint Committee see fit

12. MISCELLANEOUS

Insurance

- 12.1 Save as otherwise provided for in Section 9 (Lead Authority) and Section 11 (Termination), any necessary compensation or other essential financial

payment or legal obligation to the payment or fulfilment of which any Authority or any third party may become entitled as a result of or in connection with the discharge of any of the Objectives or Functions shall as between the Joint Committee and the Authorities be paid or fulfilled wholly by the Joint Committee and the Joint Committee shall accordingly ensure that adequate insurance cover is effected and maintained in respect of any such liability

- 12.2 The cost of such insurance shall be an Overhead and accordingly part of the ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget
- 12.3 The Lead Authority shall be responsible for making all necessary insurance arrangements on behalf of the Joint Committee and (where given) in accordance with the Joint Committee's instructions

Civil Litigation

- 12.4 The institution and defence of necessary civil litigation by the Joint Committee arising from the exercise of the Objectives or Functions shall be undertaken in a representative capacity by the Lead Authority

Criminal Proceedings

- 12.5 The conduct of any criminal proceedings in the Magistrates Court or the Crown Court brought by or against the Joint Committee arising out of the discharge of the Objectives or the Functions shall be undertaken in a representative capacity by the Lead Authority unless the Joint Committee, having regard to the circumstances giving rise to the proceedings, agree that another Authority should do so

13.- VARIATION OF AGREEMENT

This Agreement may be varied at any time upon such terms as the Authorities after consultation with the Joint Committee may agree

14.- NOTICES

Any notice to be served under this Agreement upon any Authority will be served at the principal offices for the time being of that Authority for the attention of the chief executive or head of the paid service of that Authority

15. -INTERESTS OF MEMBERS IN CONTRACTS AND OTHER MATTERS

- 15.1 Every member and substitute member of the Joint Committee shall at all times comply with the principles specified by the Secretary of State under Section 49 of the Local Government Act 2000 which are to govern their conduct
- 15.2 Any member and substitute member of the Joint Committee who has an interest defined in the members' code of conduct of his or her Council shall comply with the requirements of that code as regards the disclosure of that

interest and as regards withdrawing from participation in consequence of that interest

- 15.3 The Secretary of the Joint Committee shall keep a record of particulars of any disclosures by members which shall be open during normal office hours for public inspection

16. ARBITRATION

- 16.1 If at any time any dispute or difference shall arise between the Authorities in respect of any matters arising out of this Agreement or the meaning or effect of this Agreement or anything herein contained or the rights or liabilities of any of the Authorities the same shall be referred to and settled by a single arbitrator to be appointed by the Authorities but, if they cannot within two months agree the appointment, to be nominated by the President of the Law Society for the time being
- 16.2 Any such reference to arbitration shall be deemed to be a submission to arbitration within the meaning of the Arbitration Acts 1950 and 1996 or any statutory re-enactment or amendment of them for the time being in force
- 16.3 Each Authority shall bear its own costs of arbitration

17.- FORCE MAJEURE

- 17.1 The Authorities shall be released from their respective obligations under the Agreement if national emergency, war prohibitive government regulations or any other cause (except strike action) beyond the control of the Authorities or any of them renders the performance of this Agreement impossible

18.- SUPPORTERS

- 18.1 For the purpose of realising the E Government Vision the Authorities wish to encourage the Joint Committee to promote and foster links with other organisations bodies and persons to support the Objectives and Functions of the Joint Committee
- 18.2 Such links shall normally be with other organisations bodies and persons in the geographical area of County Durham including the ~~Broadband Consortium~~ ("Supporter")
- 18.3 The form of such links with a Supporter shall be at the discretion of the Joint Committee, but shall subject to paragraph 18.4 below accord so far as reasonably practicable with the wishes of the Joint Committee and the Supporter
- 18.4 Nothing in this Agreement or otherwise shall require or oblige the Joint Committee to, nor shall the Joint Committee without the approval of the Authorities, enter into links with commercial or trading organisations bodies or persons where the nature or business of that commercial or trading

organisation body or person gives rise or could give rise to, any conflict of interest (for example without limitation by reason of the possible procurement or use by the Joint Committee of equipment or services provided by a particular business)

- 18.5 Subject to paragraph 18.4 above the Joint Committee may form links under this Section with a Supporter who is prepared to provide financial or in kind support to the Joint Committee in the furtherance of the E Government Vision and the Objectives and Functions of the Joint Committee
- 18.6 Where a link is established pursuant to paragraph 18.5 above, then, provided that the financial or in-kind support given by the Supporter in question to the ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget is, in each financial year in which such support is given, of equal value to or greater than the Annual Contribution for an Authority for that year, the Joint Committee shall invite to the meetings of the Joint Committee for that year a representative of that Supporter (who shall not be a member or officer of an Authority) who shall have the right to speak but not to vote thereat
- 18.7 Where and for so long as pursuant to paragraph 18.6 a Supporter is entitled to send a representative to meetings of the Joint Committee, that Supporter shall also be entitled to send a representative to meetings of the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board which representative shall have the right to speak thereat
- 18.8 Where pursuant to paragraph 18.6 a Supporter is for the time being entitled to send a representative to meetings of the Joint Committee, that Supporter shall give to the Joint Committee not less than six months' notice expiring at the end of the year in question of the wish of that Supporter to cease thereafter to provide the support at the level referred to in the proviso in paragraph 18.6. Such notice shall, if not withdrawn, be binding on the Supporter giving it who shall at the end of the year in which such notice was given cease to be entitled to exercise the powers in paragraphs 18.6 and 18.7
- 18.9 Notwithstanding any of the foregoing provisions of this Section, it shall be for individual Authorities to determine what links each wishes to have into its own local strategic partnerships
- 18.10 A Supporter may contribute to the Programme Budget of the Joint Committee if it wishes to do so but such contribution shall not entitle it to participate at meetings of the Joint Committee unless paragraph 18.6 above also applies

19.- SEVERANCE

- 19.1 If any provision of this Agreement is prohibited by law or judged by a court to be unlawful, void or unenforceable, the provision shall, to the extent required, be severed from this Agreement and rendered ineffective as far as possible without modifying the remaining provisions of the Agreement, and shall not in any way affect any circumstances of or the validity or enforcement of this Agreement.~~If any provision of this Agreement is declared by any judicial or~~

~~other competent authority to be void voidable illegal or otherwise enforceable or indications to that effect are received by the Authorities from any competent authority the Authorities shall amend the provision in such a reasonable manner as achieves the intention of the Authorities, without illegality or if agreed between the Authorities it may be severed from this Agreement but the remaining provisions shall remain in full force unless the Authorities agree that the effect of such declaration is to defeat their original intention~~

20.- AGREEMENT TO REMAIN IN FULL FORCE

Any failure by an Authority to insist upon the performance of any of the conditions of this Agreement or to exercise any right under it shall not be construed as a waiver by such Authority and this Agreement shall continue and remain in full force and effect notwithstanding any such failure

Appendices

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APPENDIX 1 - The Programme Delivery Structure

THE PROGRAMME DELIVERY STRUCTURE

Responsibilities	Joint Committee	Officer <u>Programme Board</u>	Programme Manager/ <u>Team Office</u>	Individual Local Authority
Strategic				
Agreeing Policy	✓			
Scrutinising <u>Performance</u> Members <u>Monitor Performance</u>	✓	<u>✓</u>		
Promoting Cultural Change	✓	✓		✓
Implementation of <u>eE</u> -govt Strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Forming Strategic Partnerships	✓	✓		
Liaison with Key Stakeholders e.g. <u>e.g. DTLR</u>		✓	✓	
Partnerships	✓	✓		
Resources				
Securing Funding Streams		✓	<u>✓</u>	✓
Securing Local Authorities' Resources		✓		✓
Evaluation of Bids for Funding	✓	✓	<u>✓</u>	
Budget Management		✓	✓	
Communications Planning		✓	✓	
Projects				
Co-ordination of E-govt projects		✓	✓	
Prioritisation of Projects	✓	✓	✓	
Monitoring Projects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Managing Projects		✓	✓	✓
<u>Managing Programme</u>		<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>	
Programme QA		✓	✓	✓
Project QA			✓	✓
Standards QA			✓	✓
Reporting			✓	✓
Working with Partners		✓	✓	✓
Production of Project Business Care			✓	✓
Realising Project Benefits				✓
Undertaking Post-implementation Review			✓	✓

The ~~officer~~ Programme Board will be serviced by a Programme ~~Team~~ Office initially consisting of (other skills) will be co-opted as necessary:

- Programme Manager (full-time)
- ~~Deputy Manager (full-time)~~
- Administrative Support (full-time)

**STANDING ORDERS FOR THE
COUNTY DURHAM e-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE**

1. Interpretation

- 1.1 The decision of the Chairman of the meeting as to the interpretation of any standing order or on any question of procedure not provided for by these standing orders shall be final. No debate may ensue thereon.

2. Meetings

- 2.1 The annual meeting of the Joint Committee in each year shall be held as soon as practicable after 1 June in each year and not later than 30 June and shall amongst other things receive the closing accounts for the preceding year
- 2.2 The Joint Committee shall between each annual meeting normally meet at appropriate quarterly intervals and shall meet on such day and at such time and place as they may determine provided that a meeting shall be held as soon as practicable after November of each year for the purpose of considering the Joint Committee's budget for the following year
- 2.3 A schedule of meetings shall be agreed in April of each year and unless special circumstances apply, the Joint Committee shall meet every two months at the offices of the Authorities on a rotating basis
- 2.4 With the exception of the annual meeting and the budget meeting, the Secretary with the agreement of the Chairman and Vice Chairman may cancel any meeting of the Joint Committee if in his or her opinion insufficient business has arisen for consideration
- 2.5 A special meeting of the Joint Committee shall be convened at any time by the Secretary upon the instructions of the Chairman and Vice Chairman
- 2.6 Subject to the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, meetings of the Joint Committee will be held in public.

3. Notice of Meetings

- 3.1 At least 5 clear days before a meeting of the Joint Committee:
- 3.1.1 a summons to attend the meeting specifying business proposed to be transacted shall be sent by post by the Secretary to the Joint Committee to the last address given for that purpose by each member of the Joint Committee and to the Chief Executive of each Authority; and

- 3.1.2 notice of the time and place of the intended meeting shall be published at the offices each Authority by the Chief Executive of that Authority
- 3.2 Lack of service on a member of the Joint Committee of the summons referred to in paragraph 3.1.1 above shall not affect the validity of a meeting of the Joint Committee
- 3.3 Except in the case of business required by this standing order to be transacted at a meeting of the Joint Committee and other business to be brought before the meeting as a matter of urgency, of which the Chairman Vice Chairman and the Secretary shall have prior notice and which the Chairman, Vice Chairman and the Secretary consider should be discussed at the meeting, no business shall be transacted at a meeting of the Joint Committee other than that specified in the summons relating thereto

4. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

- 4.1 At its annual meeting the Joint Committee shall determine from amongst its members a Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Committee for a period of twelve months such determination to apply until the next following annual meeting.
- 4.2 Each person proposed for any office shall be duly nominated and seconded by members attending the meeting before his or her name is submitted to the vote of the meeting. When there are more than two persons nominated for any appointment and of the votes given there is not an overall majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote shall be taken and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person
- 4.3 In the event of a vacancy arising in the office of a Chairman or Vice Chairman appointed under paragraph 4.1 above, the Joint Committee shall appoint another member to hold such office for that meeting until the commencement of the next following meeting .

5. Membership of the Joint Committee

- 5.1 Subject to paragraph 2 of this Constitution, each elected member of the Joint Committee shall be a Councillor of the Authority by whom he or she shall have been appointed who shall hold office until the next annual meeting of the Joint Committee following his or her appointment unless he or she ceases to be a representative of the Authority appointing him or her or resigns his or her membership of the Joint Committee or his or her appointment is revoked by the Authority appointing him or her
- 5.2 Each Authority may fill any casual vacancy during any year in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and shall advise the Secretary to the Joint Committee within 7 days of such appointment

- 5.3 A substitute appointed in accordance with the Constitution of the Joint Committee shall, when acting as a substitute but not when acting as an observer have full voting rights at meetings of the Joint Committee
- 5.4 Where paragraph 18.6 of this Agreement applies the Joint Committee shall invite the representative of the Supporter in question to attend meetings of the Joint Committee. Such representative shall not be a member or officer of an Authority
- 5.5 The Joint Committee may from time to time co-opt one or more advisers to attend such meeting or meetings of the Joint Committee as the Joint Committee may specify having regard to the knowledge or skill of the co-opted adviser, and the contribution he may make to the business of the Joint Committee at that meeting or those meetings. Such co-opted adviser(s) shall be entitled to speak but not to vote

6. Chairman of Meeting

- 6.1 At each meeting of the Joint Committee the Chairman, if present, shall preside
- 6.2 If the Chairman is absent from a meeting of the Joint Committee the Vice Chairman if present, shall preside
- 6.3 If both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee are absent from a meeting of the Joint Committee such member of the Joint Committee as the members present shall select shall preside

7. Quorum

- 7.1 No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the Joint Committee unless ~~five~~four Local Authority members are present
- 7.2 If during any meeting of the Joint Committee the Chairman, after counting the number of members present, declares that there is not a quorum for the meeting then the meeting shall stand adjourned to a date and time fixed by the Chairman or, in the absence of a date and time being fixed, to the next ordinary meeting of the Joint Committee to which the consideration of any business not transacted shall be referred

8. Order of Business

- 8.1 At every meeting of the Joint Committee the order of business shall be to select a person to preside if the Chairman or Vice Chairman are absent and thereafter shall be in accordance with the order specified in the notice of the meeting except that such order may be varied either by the Chairman at his or her discretion or on a request agreed to by the Joint Committee

9. Minutes

- 9.1 Minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of the Joint Committee shall be drawn up and entered into a book kept for that purpose and shall be signed at the next meeting of the Joint Committee by the person presiding thereat and any minute purporting to be so signed shall be received in evidence without further proof
- 9.2 Notwithstanding anything in any enactment or rule of law to the contrary, the minutes of the proceedings of meetings of the Joint Committee may be recorded and distributed in electronic form
- 9.3 Until the contrary is proved a meeting of the Joint Committee, a minute of whose proceedings has been made and signed in accordance with this paragraph shall be deemed to have been duly convened and held and all members present at the meeting shall be deemed to have been duly qualified
- 9.4 The Chairman shall move "That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on...be signed as a correct record". If the accuracy is not questioned the Chairman shall sign the minutes

10. Discussion Affecting Persons Serving or Under the Control of the Joint Committee

- 10.1 If any question arises at a meeting of the Joint Committee as to the appointment, promotion, dismissal, salary, superannuation or conditions of service or as to the conduct of any officer serving or under the control of the Joint Committee, such question shall not be the subject of discussion until the Joint Committee has decided whether or not the power of exclusion of the public under Sections 100A to 100K of the Local Government Act 1972 shall be exercised

11. Voting

- 11.1 The mode of voting at meetings of the Joint Committee shall be based upon the principle of consensus. If a unanimous decision cannot be reached, the matter being considered will be deferred for a period of [a fortnight] when a further meeting will be convened to determine the matter. At this meeting, the matter will be determined by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the voting members of the Joint Committee who are representatives of the Authority and who are present at the meeting in question
- 11.2 Any proposal to change a policy, or an amendment to the constitution or the Annual Contribution shall not be effective unless it is a unanimous decision of voting members of the Joint Committee who are representatives of the Authorities and who are present at the meeting in question

12. Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters

- 12.1 (a) Every Member and substitute Member of the Joint Committee shall at all times comply with the principles specified in law, including those specified by the Secretary of State under Section 49 of the Local Government Act 2000, which are to govern their conduct
- (b) Any Member and substitute Member of the Joint Committee who has an interest as defined in the Members' Code of Conduct of his or her Council shall comply with the requirements of that Code as regards the disclosures of that interest and as regards withdrawing from participation in consequence of that interest
- 12.2 The Secretary to the Joint Committee shall keep a record of particulars of any disclosures by members which shall be open during normal office hours for public inspection

13. Interests of Officers in Contracts

- 13.1 The Secretary to the Joint Committee shall keep a record of particulars of any notice given by an officer of the Joint Committee under Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 of a pecuniary interest in a contract which records shall be open during normal office hours for public inspection. Any officer having such interest shall also give notice to his or her own Authority thereof.

14. Expression of Dissent

- 14.1 No expression of dissent shall be entered in the minutes of the Joint Committee. Any three members may demand that a named vote be taken

15. Disturbance at Meetings

- 15.1 If a member of the public interrupts the proceedings of any meeting the Chairman shall warn that person. If the interruption continues the Chairman shall order the person's removal from the meeting room
- 15.2 In the case of general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public the Chairman shall order that part to be cleared.
- 15.3 If a member of the Joint Committee in the opinion of the Chairman behaves improperly or offensively or deliberately obstructs business the Chairman shall warn that person. If the member continues to behave improperly the Chairman or any member may move that either the member leave the meeting or that the meeting is adjourned for a specified period

16. Variation and Revocation of Standing Orders

- 16.1 Any addition, variation or revocation of these Standing Orders shall when proposed and seconded stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Joint Committee, provided that this standing order shall not apply to any review of standing orders at the annual meetings of the Joint Committee. Any such addition, variation or revocation shall be first referred to each Authority for their approval

17. Suspension of Standing Orders

- 17.1 Any standing order may be suspended for all or part of the business of a meeting of the Joint Committee at which suspension is moved. Such a motion cannot be moved unless three members are present nor can such a motion be moved if the effect of suspending standing orders would be in conflict with the terms of any agreement entered into by the Authorities

18. Rescission of Previous Resolutions

- 18.1 No motion to rescind any resolution passed within the preceding six months nor any motion to the same effect as any motion negative within the preceding six months shall be in order unless the notice of such motion shall have been given and specified in the summons and the notice shall bear, in addition to the name of the member who proposed the motion, the name of three members. When any such motion has been disposed of by the Joint Committee it shall not be open to any member to propose a similar motion within a further period of three months

19. ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board

- 19.1 The ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board shall meet not less than six times in each year
- 19.2 Each meeting of the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board shall be chaired by and the meeting shall be held at the offices of, such member of the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board as the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board shall at their meeting prior to the annual meeting of the Joint Committee fix on a rotational basis amongst the Authorities for the following twelve month period
- 19.3 The ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board will have delegated powers to commit expenditure on behalf of the Joint Committee in respect of projects to which the Joint Committee have given approval and for which provision has been made in the Joint Committee's Budget provided that such expenditure shall at all times remain within the budget approved by the Joint Committee for that project.
- 19.4 Agendas reports and minutes of the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board shall be circulated amongst the members of the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board electronically but Minutes shall also be recorded in writing and if approved

shall be signed by the Chairman of the meeting at which the Minutes are presented

- 19.5 Agendas for meetings of the ~~Officer-Board~~Programme Board shall normally be distributed one week in advance of the ~~Officer-Board~~Programme Board meeting at which they are to be considered. After consultation with the Chairman of the time being, the Secretary to the Joint Committee may decline to circulate items for consideration at an ~~Officer-Board~~Programme Board meeting if not received by him at least ten working days before the meeting in question

DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY AND THE TREASURER

1. Secretary to the Joint Committee

1.1 In addition to any other powers and duties referred to in this Agreement the Secretary to the Joint Committee shall:

1.2.1 prepare and circulate Agendas reports and Minutes for consideration by the Joint Committee and/or by the ~~Officer Board~~Programme Board

1.2.2 sign on behalf of the Joint Committee any document necessary to give effect to any resolution of the Joint Committee

1.2.3 sign any document which is a necessary step in any legal procedure or proceedings

2. Treasurer to the Joint Committee

2.1 In addition to any other powers and duties referred to in this Agreement the Treasurer to the Joint Committee is authorised to produce the Budgets estimates and the accounts of the Joint Committee

CORE BUDGET INDEXATION

~~1.1 The Core Budget may be increased by an amount equal to the percentage increase (if any) in the “all items except food” group (item reference CHAY) in the General Index of Retail Prices published by the Central Statistical Office (in paragraph 1.2 below referred to as “the Index”)~~

~~1.2 Calculation of the new minimum Core Budget shall be in accordance with the following formula:-~~

$$\text{New Core} = \frac{\text{Old Core Budget} \times \text{Index 2}}{\text{Index 1}}$$

~~Where:~~

~~New Core Budget = the Core Budget to be calculated for the new year commencing 1 April~~

~~Old Core Budget = the Core Budget for the previous year commencing 1 April~~

~~Index 2 = the figure for the Index as at September preceding the new year~~

~~Index 1 = the figure for the Index as at September preceding the previous year~~

~~1.3 The increases in the Core Budget under paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 shall be calculated by the Treasurer to the Joint Committee and reported to the Joint Committee at the Budget meeting for the year commencing 1 April 2003, and for each subsequent year. The Treasurer to the Joint Committee shall supply to any Authority on request a full calculation of the revised Core Budget~~

~~1.4 If the basis of computation of the Index referred to above shall change, any official reconciliation between the basis of computation published by the relevant Government department or agency shall be binding upon the Authorities and shall be applied in adjusting the application of the Index~~

~~1.5 In the absence of such official reconciliation such adjustment shall be made to the figures of any such Index as to make it correspond as nearly as possible to the previous method of computation and such adjusted figure shall be used to the exclusion of the actual published figures (unless and until officially reconciled figures are published) and in the event of a dispute regarding such adjustments the dispute shall be referred for determination under section 16~~

APPENDIX 4 - CDeGP Programme Board Mandate

CDeGP Programme Board Mandate

Each member of the Programme Board is mandated by their parent Authority to:

- Make key strategic, financial and technical decisions that relate to the delivery of the CDeGP Work Programme agreed by the Joint Committee and in accordance with the agreed budget.
- Directly report progress back to Chief Executive's in parent authority on a monthly basis.
- Report progress back to Corporate Management Team at parent authority on a bi-monthly basis as a minimum.
- Agree that the Project Executives of the key projects within the CDeGP have delegated powers to make decisions on behalf of all authorities following full consultation with the Project / Programme Board.
- Be empowered to ensure the full involvement of Heads of Service, Middle Managers and front line staff in CDeGP projects to ensure the successful delivery of the Partnership's Improvements in Customer Services Strategy.
- Regularly report programme issues, risks, considerations, recommendations etc to respective Joint Committee members.
- Work together to establish links with other public and non-public sector organisations to ensure a consolidated approach to access to services in Durham.
- Continue to innovate joint working opportunities via eg national and local funding, other partnership collaborations etc in a way that contributes to the sustainable delivery of the CDeGP access to services vision.

APPENDIX 5 - Asset Register

BUDGET COSTS FOR 2003/2004

[to be determined]

COUNTY DURHAM e-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP **ASSET REGISTER**

The Asset Register is intended to enable the Joint Committee to readily ascertain what assets are owned on its behalf where they are located and provide an insurance record. It can be used to track maintenance contracts, software licences or used for any other purposes so required.

The Programme Office is responsible for maintaining the Asset Register to ensure that it is kept up to date with additions and disposals.

All disposals of items on the Asset Register must be authorised through the Programme Board

The Asset Register should contain, as a minimum, the following information

The following items are required:

- Asset Number
- Manufacturer
- Model
- Serial Number
- Location
- Purchase date
- Order Number
- Original cost value
- Owning Authority
- Purchased/Leased/Loaned/Donated (Indicate whether Authority has purchased, leased, loaned or donated item to the partnership)
- Insurance required Y/N

The following items may be recorded

- Supplier
- Project name
- In Service
- Date lease/loan/contract expires

The following items are required when asset is disposed with

- Disposal date
- Method of disposal

Plus any other items that the Programme Office identify

APPROPRIATION RESERVE MANAGEMENT SCHEME

1. Purpose of Reserve

1.1 The purpose of the appropriation reserve is to hold accumulated surpluses of the Joint Committee which can be made available, subject to the approval of the Joint Committee, to:

- (a) Meet any deficits arising on the ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget
- (b) Set aside sums for future investment through the Programme Budget
- (c) Finance any other specified use approved by the Joint Committee

2. Operation of the Reserve

2.1 the appropriation reserve shall be under the control of the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee may give approval to the use of the reserve for the purposes of the Objectives or the Functions

3. Investment of Reserve Balance

3.1 The Treasurer to the Joint Committee is authorised to invest balances from time to time either internally or externally in an approved investment as appropriate

4. Contribution to the Reserve

4.1 Where the Joint Committee underspends the ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget in any year the balance may be transferred to the appropriation reserve

4.2 Interest payments are payable annually based on the average quarterly credit balance at the beginning of each quarter. The interest rate will be that calculated by the Treasurer to the Joint Committee at the base rate of the Co-operative Bank less 0.25% for the relevant year

5. Payments to be met from the Reserve

5.1 No direct payments are to be made from the appropriation reserve

5.2 Subject to the approval of the ~~Joint Committee~~Programme Board contributions from the appropriation reserve to the ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget or the Programme Budget may be made in respect of specific purposes in furtherance of the Functions

6. Management of the Scheme

6.1 The Treasurer to the Joint Committee is authorised to make the accounting entries necessary to achieve the purposes of the appropriation reserve in accordance with proper accounting practices

7. Amendment to the Scheme

7.1 The Joint Committee may request the Authorities to amend the scheme in this Appendix at any time. Any such amendment would have to be approved by all Authorities

CAPITAL RESERVE MANAGEMENT SCHEME

1. Purpose of Reserve

- 1.1 The purpose of the capital reserve is to provide a source of funds available to finance capital expenditure

2. Operation of the Reserve

- 2.1 The capital reserve shall be under the control of the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee may give approval to finance an acquisition from the reserve provided the proposed expenditure is capital expenditure in accordance with proper and prudent local authority accounting practice. Approval to any proposal will allow the approved amount to be transferred from the reserve to the appropriate heading in the Programme Budget

3. Investment of Reserve Balance

- 3.1 The Treasurer to the Joint Committee is authorised to invest balances from time to time either internally or externally in an approved investment as appropriate

4. Contributions to the Reserve

- 4.1 Contributions may be made to the capital reserve from time to time from the ~~Core Budget~~Programme Office Budget or the Programme Budget subject to specific approval from the Joint Committee and subject to compliance with legislation
- 4.2 Donations from other bodies/persons may be placed in the capital reserve upon the understanding that they are to be used for capital expenditure at some future date. The Joint Committee shall approve the treatment of all such donations
- 4.3 Interest payments are payable annually based on the average quarterly credit balance at the beginning of each quarter. The interest rate will be that calculated by the Treasurer to the Joint Committee at the base rate of the [Co-operative] Bank less 0.25% for the relevant year

5. Payments to be met from the Reserve

- 5.1 No direct payments are to be made from the capital reserve

6. Management of the Scheme

6.1 The Treasurer to the Joint Committee is authorised to make the accounting entries necessary to achieve the purposes of the capital reserve in accordance with proper accounting practices

7. Amendment to the Scheme

7.1 The Joint Committee may request the Authorities to amend the scheme at any time. Any such amendment would have to be approved by all Authorities

-

APPENDIX 8 - Financial Regulations

APPENDIX 8

**THE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS FOR THE COUNTY DURHAM
e-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE**

[Lead Authority's)

APPENDIX 9 - Contract Standing Orders

**CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS FOR THE COUNTY DURHAM
e-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE**

[Lead Authority's]

IN WITNESS of which the Authorities have caused their respective Common Seals to be affixed to this Agreement as a deed the day and year first before written

Dated _____ 2003

**The County Durham e-Government
Partnership Joint Committee**

Agreement

*Director of Corporate & Legal Services
County Hall
Durham*

HMJ9v4/AGREE

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CENTRAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

29 MARCH 2006

Report of the Director of Central Resources **E-GOVERNMENT RETURN 6.0**

purpose of the report

1. To seek member approval for the Authority's latest Implementing E-government (IEG) submission.

background

2. The Authority is required to submit its Implementing E-government return by 10 April 2006. This is attached at Annex 4.
3. Colleagues will be aware from previous reports that the Authority is required to achieve "green" status of 54 priority service outcomes. Of those outcomes 29 are "required" and had to be achieved by 31 December 2005, and 25 are "good" and need to be achieved by 31 March 2006.
4. In addition to the above, the return also includes sections on:

- (i) Change management

Section 2 of the submission relates to change management. Although this section does not form part of any official targets, information supplied here will be used as part of development of national policy relating to e-government. This section relates to the internal organisation and management processes within the Council.

- (ii) BVPI 157

This best value indicator relates to the electronic enablement of local authority services in line with a national developed electronic service delivery toolkit. This performance indicator is now 100% and was achieved over 2 months ahead of schedule.

- (iii) Resources

Section 5 of the return shows the expenditure which has been, and is to be, spent on achieving electronic government. It includes both internal and external resources, which are both revenue and capital in nature.

(iv) Efficiencies

The Government expects local authorities to generate efficiencies as a result of investment in electronic government. Section 6 of the return shows expected efficiencies. Whilst the figures here are relatively small, it is important that the Authority develops a marketing strategy to migrate service users to more cost effective methods of service delivery. A government sponsored national project has just been introduced which will assist in delivering this objective. Furthermore, the most significant savings will be generated by improvements in procurement and streamlining back office systems through for example, joint working and improved use of I.T.

(v) Take up

Section 4 of the submission shows estimated take up of electronically enabled services over the following access channels:

- (a) Website
- (b) Telephone
- (c) Face to Face
- (d) Other electronic media
- (e) Non electronic media.

The figures show an increase in the delivery of services electronically especially through telephone and website delivery, with a reduction in non electronic methods i.e. face to face delivery. The take-up strategy mentioned in (iv) will continue this trend.

priority service outcome (ps0) progress

- 5. Red status means that the PSO is at a primary/research stage, being piloted before wider rollout across the Authority or planned but not yet approved for funding.
- 6. Amber status means that the PSO has funding in place and is being actively implemented.
- 7. Green status means that the PSO has been actioned and implemented or particular standards achieved with plans for extended rollout on an enterprise wide basis i.e. across the Authority/Partnership.
- 8. The following overall position as of now is:

	<u>No.</u>	<u>%</u>
Green	49	91
Amber	5	9
Red	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>54</u>	<u>100</u>

9. Work is ongoing to ensure that all targets will be met. However, it is accepted by the ODPM that not all targets will be met by all local authorities by 31 March 2006. This is partially due to delays in delivering the outcomes of some key national projects. In particular this relates to the introduction of smartcards, single business account and those PSO's which require secure sharing of data.
10. At present there are 5 PSO's which are not green. Comments on each PSO are set out below:

R9 – E-procurement

To achieve this PSO the Council needs in place electronic invoicing, ordering and payment. The ordering and payment aspects of this PSO have been achieved. In relation to invoicing, it is relatively expensive to link the Council's financial system to suppliers' electronic systems. At this point in time there seems to be little interest from suppliers (particularly SME's) in achieving this level of joint working. At present, however, the Authority is capable of receiving invoices by e-mail which are entered manually onto the financial system.

G8 – Single Business Account

This was the subject of a report on the Central Resources Committee dated 1 February 2006. At present the CDeGP is examining the output from the national project for this PSO. Wear Valley has set aside approximately £80,000 to achieve this PSO. This is a PSO which many authorities have struggled to deliver due to the lack of integration of data systems.

G12 – Smartcards

This was the subject of a report on the Community Services Committee dated 20 July 2005. It is generally accepted nationally that there is a lack of a clear business case for smartcards which partly explains why a lot of authorities will struggle to achieve 'green' status on this PSO. However, the CDeGP is involved with a regional 'Youth Opportunity Card' pilot but this will not deliver 'green' status until Summer 2007.

G16/G17

The achievement of these PSO's require close working with the County Council. At present the County Council have put in place systems and procedures to achieve 'green' status from their perspective. The Authority will continue to work with the County to achieve 'green' in the coming months.

11. The ongoing revenue costs will need to be accommodated within existing budgets. This will require the identification of efficiency gains and a programme of actions to migrate to more cost effective methods of payments.

change management issues

12. Achievement of Priority Service Outcomes only represents the first step of e-government. Beyond the Priority Service Outcomes, there is a need to:

- (i) Re-engineer processes to achieve efficiencies. The CDeGP have appointed 4 Business Analysts to re-engineer processes across all Durham Authorities. The first services to undergo review will be environmental services and housing services. These services will then be integrated into the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
- (ii) Raise awareness of the public as to the benefits of e-enabled service delivery. A national take up campaign is being developed. The Authority will work with the CDeGP (of which it is a member) to develop a take up strategy. That said, to date we have had the following numbers of electronic service requests and downloads from the website:

Downloads (number shown in brackets)

Local Plan (598)
 Matters, Autumn Edition (472)
 Application for Council Housing (332)
 Eastgate Consultation (314)
 Visit Wear Valley Guide (305)
 Planning Application Form (267)
 Visions Membership Application (265)
 Housing Matters Issue 4 (256)
 Community Plan (247)
 Local Agenda 21 (240)

In addition to the above we have had 854 electronic service requests via e-mail in the last 6 months and 125 internet payments since this service was launched in November 2005.

- (iii) Educate the public where possible to enable them to make use of new methods of service delivery. This is a longer term aspiration and is likely to include the use of self service kiosks.
- (iv) Engage service heads in embracing the opportunities which e-government offers. In this regard IDeA has offered to help facilitate workshops with service heads and staff to raise awareness of e-government within the Authority.

- RECOMMENDED**
1. That Members note the contents of the report.
 2. That Members agree the IEG submission subject to further minor amendments to be agreed by the Chair and Director of Central Resources.

Officer responsible for the report	Author of the report
Gary Ridley	Gary Ridley
Director of Central Resources	Director of Central Resources
Ext 227	Ext 227



IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT RETURN 2006 (IEG6)

"Meeting the targets for e-government"

Name of Authority: Wear Valley District Council

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Local Context

The Council is committed to e-government as a means of achieving its corporate objectives. These can be viewed on our web site at

<http://www.wearvalley.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5107>

E-government will help to achieve all of these objectives by allowing us to engage more closely with customers and citizens. The Authority's IEG returns outlined the importance of putting customers first and this is centred around the following elements:

Element	Impact/Achievement
Making services available outside normal working hours	The Council has expanded and enhanced its website and is now 100% BVPI157 compliant. This has led to a significant increase in website traffic.
Providing services in a way that people want e.g. face to face, telephone, email etc.	The Council has responded to customer surveys by providing improved face to face access via the first stop shop and introduced a contact center based on the recently installed CRM system which is now logging 500+ calls a week. We have also introduced, and are continuing to introduce, a series of measures to enable electronic payments of rent and council tax, for example, from post offices, via the Internet and by the use of debit and credit cards.
Providing information and access to services	The Council has established a First Stop Shop within the Civic Centre. The next stage of development, which will be done in partnership with the County Durham e-Government Partnership (CDeGP), will be a move towards one stop shops and a contact center(s)

Exploiting opportunities offered by technology	The Council has introduced CRM and Content Management systems. External funding has also been secured for EDRMS which is currently being introduced in the Revenues and Benefits Section and corporately for logging Freedom of Information requests.
Maintaining a website which encourages consultation and debate on Council priorities	Great efforts have been made over the past couple of years to ensure that the District Council's website stimulates debate on local policy priorities. The Council has a very active set of forums which receive over a dozen messages every day on a wide variety of topics. In the forums, questions can also be asked of Council Officers, a facility which has proved most useful in ascertaining local issues and concerns. In addition, regular "formal" consultations are undertaken on the site, as are a variety of "quick-polls" on specific issues. To improve matters further, in the coming year a corporate consultation management system is being introduced authority-wide.
Improving the democratic process	The Council's website includes details of committee minutes and future meetings as well as information relating to Councillors. Members of the public are also encouraged to use the forums mentioned above. Local organizations/communities have also been empowered to maintain their own websites.
Joint working through the County Durham e-Government Partnership (CDeGP)	The Council is a member of the CDeGP which has enabled it to:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. implement a joint CRM system 2. develop a joint access to services strategy 3. develop a joint Telecomms strategy 4. commit to introducing, at an early stage, the Government Connects products 5. make significant cost savings in achieving the above
Improving efficiency via the use of e-government	The Council has introduced the following:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. e-payments via the website and with debit and credit cards 2. homeworking for staff 3. web-based self-service options for citizens and businesses

Managing Delivery

The Authority has established a framework for delivering e-government which includes the appointment of member and officer e-champions who are supported by senior staff from all departments who have been tasked with achieving priority service outcomes.

County Durham E-government Partnership

The Council is a member of the County Durham E-government Partnership, whose e-government vision is:

Working together across all boundaries to deliver quality, joined-up, customer-focused services (regardless of personal means, locality and circumstances),

To achieve this vision the following objectives and desired outcomes have been identified:

Objectives

- Establishing a common technology infrastructure
- Developing and opening up access channels
- Maximising the take up of electronic transactions
- Exploiting integrated business systems and procedures
- Promoting cultural change and organisational development

Desired Outcomes

- Raise customer expectations through the promotion of e-government
- Improve customer choice
- Make best use of technology
- Encourage citizen participation in e-democracy
- Ensure value for money and sustainability

This vision and objectives and outcomes clearly dovetails into the Councils vision to be the best district council in England. To date the achievements of the CDeGP include:

- i) Development of an E-government strategy
- ii) Development of a joint constitution
- iii) Development of a programme office to oversee E-government progress within the partnership
- iv) Production of an access strategy
- v) Joint procurement and introduction of a CRM across all 8 Durham Authorities leading to significant economies of scale
- vi) Joint procurement of a financial management system across 5 Authority's leading to significant economies of scale

Next Steps

This IEG statement shows that the Council has continued to make good progress on the e-government agenda. Progress in achieving the priority service outcomes has been externally audited and has shown that the Council has made above average progress within the North East region.

The Council now recognises the importance of using the e-government platform that it has built over the last 5 years as a springboard to deliver evermore effective and efficient services to its citizens and other customers.

As a priority the Council will therefore:-

1. Continue to build on successful priority service outcomes e.g. homeworking (5 Benefits staff have improved performance indicators significantly), e-payments and web enabled customer contact with 24 hour response.
2. Develop a marketing and takeup strategy for self-service access to Council services based on the National e-services takeup campaign.
3. Re-engineer, with the help of the 4 Business Analysts employed by the CDeGP back office processes to improve staff efficiency and effectiveness.
4. Develop a programme to promote digital inclusion.
5. Expand the range of services covered by the CRM system and contact centre by continuing support for the CDeGP.
6. Continue to develop and improve the Council's capacity to drive forward change, using the tools available within the 'local e-government Support and Capacity Programme', and others.
7. Continue to develop and implement an appropriate procurement strategy which will reduce procurement costs, but at the same time, encourage and support the involvement of local SMEs.

Section 1 - Priority Outcomes (self-assessment)

Satisfactory progress towards delivery of the listed priority outcomes listed below is required within the remit for achieving e-government by 2005. See <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1002882&PressNoticeID=1546> and <http://www.idea.gov.uk/knowledge>.

Outcome And Transformation Area Description	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
R1 Parents/guardians to apply online for school places for children for the 2007 school year. The admissions process starts about a year before the beginning of the school year, e.g. September 2006 for 2007 entry.	Green 07/02/2005	Green 07/02/2005
	Comment: The County Council will act as lead authority on behalf of the CDeGP (County Durham e-Government Partnership).	
R2 Online access to information about educational support services that seek to raise the educational attainment of Looked After Children.	Green 07/02/2005	Green 07/02/2005
	Comment: The County Council has developed URLs based on LAWS and deep links have been established and are being maintained by Wear Valley DC (see below). "Information about the LEA's admissions procedures is available on the DCC website, along with advice to parents about schools for which an alternative body is the admissions authority. Redesign of pages on the DCC website is to take place with the aim of rationalising the available information concerning school admissions and making it available through a common channel. Integration of the online admissions system within the facility is planned. This information is available to all our partners (it can also be made available through the CRM Self-Service Portal when launched) through the DCC website and contact centres. (see http://www.durham.gov.uk/durhamcc/usp.nsf/pws/Education+-+Admissions)"	
G1 Development of an Admissions Portal and / or e-enabled telephone contact centre to assist parents, carers and children in their choice of, and application to local schools	Green 07/02/2005	Green 07/02/2005
	Comment: The County Council has developed URLs and deep links have been established and are being maintained by Wear Valley DC.	
If already 'green' on R1, R2 & G1 above please comment on	Comment: This is a county council function.	
E1 Agreed baseline and targets for take-up of online schools admissions service and educational attainment of Looked After Children. Otherwise you may leave this row blank.		
R3 One stop direct online access and deep linking to joined up A-Z information on all local authority services via website or shared telephone contact centre using the recognised taxonomy of the Local Government Category List (see www.laws-project.org.uk).	Green 28/01/2005	Green 28/01/2005
	Comment: The County Council has developed URLs based on LAWS and deep links have been established and are being maintained by Wear Valley DC.	

Outcome And Transformation Area Description	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
R4 Local authority and youth justice agencies to co-ordinate the secure online sending, sharing of and access to information in support of crime reduction initiatives in partnership with the local community.	Green 31/12/2005	Green 31/12/2005
	Comment: The County Durham Observatory collects and supplies GIS data to local Crime Reduction Partnerships and to NERISS (North East Regional Information Sharing System), which gives partners secure access to information supporting crime reduction. There is an Information Sharing Protocol for Crime and Reduction Partnerships already established and the DCC Youth Engagement Service (see - http://www.cdyes.org.uk/YES/usp.nsf/pws/CDYES+-+CDYES+-+Homepage) has secure email links to the Criminal Justice Board (see - http://www.cjonline.gov.uk/index.html), as well as secure access to the Social Care and Health Information system. Further development of the County Durham Observatory is taking place.(see - http://www.countydurhamobservatory.info/observatory/usp.nsf/pws/County+Durham+Observatory+-+Welcome) CDeGP have both signed up to using GMail with Government Connects. Sedgfield have piloted the GMail secure email on behalf of the partner councils, which are now in the process of linking up. This will give secure email connectivity to the partners within the Information Sharing Protocol.	
G2 Empowering and supporting local organisations, community groups and clubs to create and maintain their own information online, including the promotion of job vacancies and events.	Green 01/04/2002	Green 01/04/2002
	Comment: The Council has already empowered numerous community groups etc. through the OneNE Market Towns Portal project. A number of these groups maintain their own web sites.	
If already 'green' on R3, R4 & G2 above please comment on E2 Agreed baseline and targets for customer satisfaction and efficiency savings between the supplying organisations on shared community information initiatives. Otherwise you may leave this row blank.	Comment:	
R5 Public access to online reports, minutes and agendas from past council meetings, including future meetings diary updated daily.	Green 01/11/2004	Green 01/11/2004
	Comment: Implemented as part of the rollout of the Authority's web content management system. We aim to add value to this PSO based on the outputs of the Regional e-Government Partnership Project - e-Democratic Suite, of which Wear Valley DC is an active member.	
R6 Providing every Councillor with the option to have an easy-to-manage set of public web pages (for community leadership purposes) that is either maintained for them, or that they can maintain themselves.	Green 01/04/2004	Green 01/04/2004
	Comment: We aim to add value to this PSO based on the outputs of the Regional e-Government Partnership Project - e-Democratic Suite, of which Wear Valley DC is an active member.	
G3 Citizen participation and response to forthcoming consultations and decisions on matters of public interest (e-consultation), including facility for citizens to sign up for email and/or SMS text alerts on nominated topics.	Green 28/01/2005	Green 28/01/2005
	Comment: Implemented as part of the rollout of the Authority's web content management system. We aim to add value to this PSO based on the outputs of the Regional e-Government Partnership Project - e-Democratic Suite, of which Wear Valley DC is an active member.	

Outcome And Transformation Area Description	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
G4 Establishment of multimedia resources on local policy priorities accessible via public website (e.g. video & audio files).	Green 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2005
	Comment: The Authority has purchased video equipment & software and the website now includes several multimedia presentations. It is anticipated that the use of this facility will be extended in future.	
If already 'green' on R5, R6, G3 & G4 above please comment on E3 Agreed baseline and targets for e-participation activities, including targets for citizen satisfaction. Otherwise you may leave this row blank.	Comment: We are a member of the North East Connects e-democracy project and will use outputs from this project. We will then conduct a survey to gauge public opinion of the changes implemented.	
R7 Online public reporting/applications, procurement and tracking of environmental services, includes waste management and street scene (e.g. abandoned cars, graffiti removal, bulky waste removal, recycling).	Green 31/12/2005	Green 31/12/2005
	Comment: Heads of Environmental Services from all partner authorities have agreed to deliver the 49 pids from the LGSL via the Countywide CRM solution.	
R8 Online receipt and processing of planning and building control applications.	Green 30/06/2005	Green 30/06/2005
	Comment: Sx3 Planning portal with web public access is now implemented.	
G5 Public access to corporate Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for map-based data presentation of property-related information.	Amber 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment: All partners are looking to achieve this outcome using Durham County's online mapping service. The effect of the Positional Accuracy Improvement programme on this may require that sub-groups are formed in order to achieve this outcome by 31st March 2006.	
G6 Sharing of Trading Standards data between councils for business planning and enforcement purposes.	Green 30/06/2005	Green 30/06/2005
	Comment: The installation of a new computerised Environmental Services system during 2005/06 will enable this outcome to be achieved. Some trading standards information will be shared electronically (with encryption) and there is a Joint Protocol for Information Exchange for County Durham and Darlington Statutory Agencies to which all statutory agencies are signatories.	
G7 Use of technology to integrate planning, regulation and licensing functions (including Entertainment Licensing and Liquor Licensing) in order to improve policy and decision-making processes around the prevention of anti-social behaviour.	Amber 01/11/2004	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment: The Authority is in the final stages of implementing new software to integrate these functions.	
If already 'green' on R7, R8, G5, G6 & G7 above please comment on E4 Agreed baseline and targets for take-up of planning and regulatory services online, including targets for customer satisfaction and efficiency savings. Otherwise you may leave this row blank.	Comment:	

Outcome And Transformation Area Description	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
R9 Appropriate online e-procurement solutions in place, including as a minimum paperless ordering, invoicing and payment.	Amber 01/04/2003	Amber 01/04/2003
	Comment: The Authority has already introduced electronic raising, approval and transmission of purchase orders, as well as electronic receipting of goods and invoice matching. Purchasing cards have also been introduced and a pilot is in place using 'petrol' purchase cards. To further progress the e-procurement agenda a Project Officer has been employed, jointly with Teesdale District Council, to develop a Procurement Strategy for both authorities. As part of this project the business case for electronic invoicing, via a marketplace approach or otherwise, will be investigated, from both the Authority and its suppliers' perspective. At this point in time a strong enough business case cannot be made for marketplace and/or electronic invoicing.	
G8 Establishment of a single business account (i.e. a cross-departmental 'account' run by the local authority whereby businesses are allocated a unique identifier that can be stored and managed via a corporate CRM account facility supporting face-to-face, website and contact centre transactions).	Amber 31/12/2005	Amber 31/12/2005
	Comment: Through NE Connects the partnership has participated in the Working With Business workshops with a view to jointly rolling the Single Business Account through the CRM. Achieving this outcome is part of the remit of a Business Analyst recently appointed by CDeGP.	
G9 Regional co-operation on e-procurement between local councils.	Green 01/04/2004	Green 01/04/2004
	Comment: All partners are associate members of NEPO.	
If already 'green' on R9, G8 & G9 above please comment on	Comment:	
E5 Access to virtual e-procurement 'marketplace';	Comment:	
E6 Inclusion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in e-procurement programme, in order to promote the advantages of e-procurement to local suppliers and retain economic development benefits within local community;	Comment:	
E7 Agreed targets (please specify) for efficiency savings by December 2005, including the % of undisputed invoices paid in 30 days (BVPI 8). Otherwise you may leave these rows blank.	Comment:	
R10 Online facilities to be available to allow payments to the council in ways that engender public trust and confidence in local government electronic payment solutions (e.g. email receipting/proof of payment, supply of automatic transaction ID numbers).	Green 30/06/2005	Green 30/06/2005
	Comment: Each partner is pursuing short term solutions to achieve this outcome within the deadline. However the partnership has expressed interest to Bolton MBC in becoming an early adopter of Government Connects.	
R11 Delivery of 'added value' around online payment facilities, including ability to check Council Tax and Business Rate balances online or via touch tone telephone dialling.	Green 31/12/2005	Green 31/12/2005
	Comment: Each partner is pursuing short term solutions to achieve this outcome within the deadline. However the partnership has expressed interest to Bolton MBC in becoming an early adopter of Government Connects.	
G10 Demonstration of efficiency savings and improved collection rates from implementation of e-payments.	Green 31/03/2002	Green 31/03/2002
	Comment: Increased numbers of payers using direct debit/internet/debit cards achieved. Increased collection rates have also been achieved in recent years.	

Outcome And Transformation Area Description	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
G11 Registration for Council Tax and Business Rates e-billing for Direct Debit payers.	Green 01/01/2005	Green 01/01/2005
	Comment: The Benefits and Revenues e-Government User Group are jointly performing an options appraisal of appropriate solutions that will link into the Countywide CRM.	
If already 'green' on R10, R11, G10 & G11 above please comment on	Comment:	
E8 Provision of facilities for making credit or debit card payments via SMS text message for parking fines (mobile phone).		
E9 Adoption of smart cards as standard for stored payments (e.g. replacing swipe cards).	Comment: In a similar fashion to G12, Wear Valley District Council will work with North East Connects to address the business case for E9 on a regional basis. This activity will entail the aggregation of requirements to define economies of scale in deploying smart cards as a standard for stored payments, etc., across the region.	
E10 Agreed baseline and targets for reductions in unit costs of payment transactions. Otherwise you may leave these rows blank.	Comment:	
R12 Online renewal and reservations of library books and catalogue search facilities.	Green 01/11/2004	Green 01/11/2004
	Comment: The Authority's web site contains deep links to the County Council's web site.	
R13 Online booking of sports and leisure facilities, including both direct and contracted-out operations.	Green 30/09/2005	Green 30/09/2005
	Comment: Leisure system upgrade, including a web bookings interface, to be implemented Q3 2005. This will enable client access from home and/or a local doctor's surgery.	
G12 Integrated ICT infrastructure and support to ensure the consistent delivery of services across all access channels (e.g. web, telephone, face to face) based on e-enabled back offices and smart card interfaces for council library, sports and leisure services.	Amber 01/07/2005	Amber 01/07/2005
	Comment: North East Connects, supported by NERSC, has facilitated a workshop to offer general advice on G12 and to specifically address the requirements of Sports & Leisure services, Library Services, and eGov programme plans, on a regional scale. Moving forward, Wear Valley District Council will work with the CDeGP 'Youth Opportunity Card' pilot to establish local requirements, to confirm our individual position with back office strategy for Library and Leisure Services, and to identify opportunities and make plans for smartcard interfaces.	
If already 'green' on R12, R13 & G12 above please comment on	Comment:	
E11 Agreed baseline and targets for take-up of library, sports & leisure services online, including targets for customer satisfaction and efficiency savings. Otherwise you may leave this row blank.		
R14 Online facilities to be available to allow the public to inspect local public transport timetables and information via available providing organisation, including links to 'live' systems for interactive journey planning.	Green 01/04/2003	Green 01/04/2003
	Comment: The County Council has developed URLs and deep links have been established and are being maintained by Wear Valley DC.	

Outcome And Transformation Area Description	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
R15 Online public e-consultation facilities for new proposals on traffic management (e.g. controlled parking zones (CPZs), traffic calming schemes), including publication of consultation survey results.	Green 07/05/2005	Green 07/05/2005
	Comment: The County Council has developed URLs and deep links have been established and are being maintained by Wear Valley DC.	
G13 E-forms for parking "contravention mitigation" (i.e. appeal against the issue of a penalty charge notice), including email notification of form receipt and appeal procedures.	Green 01/01/2005	Green 01/01/2005
	Comment: e-forms are now available on the website.	
G14 GIS-based presentation of information on roadworks in the local area, including contact details and updated daily.	Green 29/11/2004	Green 29/11/2004
	Comment: The County Council has developed URLs and deep links have been established and are being maintained by Wear Valley DC.	
If already 'green' on R14, R15, G13 & G14 above please comment on E12 Agreed baseline and targets for customer satisfaction and efficiency savings. Otherwise you may leave this row blank.	Comment: BVPI103 does not apply to district councils.	
R16 E-enabled "one stop" resolution of Housing & Council Tax Benefit enquiries via telephone, contact centres, or via one stop shops using workflow tools and CRM software to provide information at all appropriate locations and enable electronic working from front to back office.	Amber 01/01/2005	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment: Wear Valley have recently introduced DIP & Workflow technology into the Benefits Section and this is progressing well with live claims being scanned into the system and controlled via the workflow software.	
R17 Online facilities to be available to allow citizens or their agents to check their eligibility for and calculate their entitlement to Housing & Council Tax Benefit and to download and print relevant claim forms.	Green 28/01/2005	Green 28/01/2005
	Comment: The Benefits and Revenues e-Government User Group are going to adopt the DWP national product. In phase 1 all partners have/are implementing benefits calculator.	
G15 Mobile office service using technology to offer processing of Council Tax and Housing Benefit claims directly from citizens homes.	Green 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2005
	Comment: A successful pilot using laptops has been completed and use of this facility is being expanded.	
If already 'green' on R16, R17 & G15 above please comment on E13 Agreed baseline and targets for turnaround in processing of Council Tax and Housing Benefit claims (BVPI 78) and renewals.	Comment:	
E14 Pre-qualification of Council Tax and Housing Benefit claimants for other eligible entitlements (e.g. school uniform grants, free school meals), including pre-filling of relevant claim forms. Otherwise you may leave these rows blank.	Comment:	
R18 Comprehensive and dedicated information about access to local care services available over the web and telephone contact centres.	Green 31/12/2004	Green 31/12/2004
	Comment: Our web site contains deep links to the County Council Social Service's web site, together with additional information on the Authority's web site itself.	

Outcome And Transformation Area Description	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
R19 Remote web access or mediated access via telephone (including outside of standard working hours availability) for authorised officers to information about individual 'care packages', including payments, requests for service and review dates.	Green 31/05/2005	Green 31/05/2005
	Comment: The Authority is not a social services authority. However it does provide care services via its Careline service. Information on this service has been added to the web site, together with deep links to the County Council's web site.	
G16 Systems to support joined-up working on children at risk across multiple agencies.	Amber 01/09/2005	Amber 01/09/2005
	Comment: Locally, the Integrated Children's System went live in January 2006 and will be rolled out to all staff in Childrens Services during 2006. In addition, a project is being developed to provide electronic access to the Child Protection Register for NHS staff. The project should be implemented in early 2006. Although this is a County Council project the districts will continue to be involved. The County Council are also well advanced in developing an electronic service directory for staff, children and families. The development builds on the strong tradition within County Durham of providing electronic information about voluntary, community and support groups through Community information on-line. A new front end is being developed to ensure that children's information is clearly identified and easy to access. The directory has been available from December 2005. Nationally, Councils are awaiting guidance from DfES on the creation of the 'Child Index'. The DfES are also working on the feasibility and business case for the electronic enablement of the Common Assessment Framework (e-CAF) - guidance is expected on the e-CAF in 2006.	
G17 Joint assessments of the needs of vulnerable people (children and adults), using mobile technology to support workers in the field.	Amber 30/09/2005	Amber 30/09/2005
	Comment: A Pathway team has been running in Sedgefield Borough council with Social Care, NHS, PCT and housing staff. Information sharing protocols have been agreed and some Social Care & Health staff use mobile technology. The remaining Districts will work with Durham County to implement Pathway teams in their own areas. A pathway team for 'The Dales' (i.e. Teesdale and Wear Valley) has now been established.	
If already 'green' on R18, R19, G16 & G17 above please comment on E15 Agreed baseline and targets for customer satisfaction, including improvement in numbers of users/carers who said that they got help quickly (BVPI 57). Otherwise you may leave this row blank.	Comment:	
R20 Email and Internet access provided for all Members and staff that establish a need for it.	Green 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2005
	Comment: e-mail and internet usage policies have been approved by the Corporate Management Team and training of all staff has commenced.	
R21 ICT support and documented policy for home/remote working (teleworking) for council members and staff.	Green 01/04/2004	Green 01/04/2004
	Comment: The Authority has a homeworking policy and several users work from home on a regular basis.	
R22 Access to home/remote working facilities to all council members and staff that satisfy the requirements set by the Council's published home/remote working policy.	Green 01/09/2004	Green 01/09/2004
	Comment: The Authority has a homeworking policy and several users work from home on a regular basis.	

Outcome And Transformation Area Description	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
G18 Establishment of e-skills training programme for council members and staff with recognised basic level of attainment (e.g. European Computer Driving Licence, British Computer Society Qualification "e-Citizen").	Green 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2005
	Comment: The Authority has established an ECDL training program with the local college. This has proved to be very popular with staff and will now also be made available to relatives of staff.	
If already 'green' on R20, R21, R22 & G18 above please comment on E16 Agreed targets for baseline and efficiency savings arising from the introduction of new ways of working. Otherwise you may leave this row blank.	Comment: Homeworking is being piloted, mainly within the Benefits service. Early evidence shows a significant increase in productivity by those individuals working from home. This will be used as a benchmark for further homeworking projects.	
R23 Self-service or mediated access to all council services outside standard working hours via the Internet or telephone contact centres (i.e. available for extended hours outside of 9am-5pm Monday to Friday).	Green 31/12/2005	Green 31/12/2005
	Comment: All partners are pursuing their own solutions to achieve this outcome within the deadline. In the longer term the Countwide CRM and Durham Connects portal will be used as the main access channel across Durham.	
R24 Implementation of a content management system (CMS) to facilitate devolved web content creation and website management.	Green 31/12/2004	Green 31/12/2004
	Comment: Already in place - users will begin to maintain their own content after being trained during 2005.	
G19 Adoption of ISO 15489 methodology for Electronic Document Records Management (ERDM) and identification of areas where current records management policies, procedures and systems need improvement to meet the requirements of Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection legislation (see www.pro.gov.uk/about/foi/map-local.rtf).	Amber 01/04/2004	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment: The Authority has recently procured Anite software as part of a programme to introduce ISO 15489-based EDRMS technology across the Authority as a whole. The technology has been implemented with the Benefits Section and corporately for FOI requests. The Authority has also developed an Information Strategy and associated delivery plan.	
G20 Conformance with level AA of W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) standards on website accessibility (see www.w3.org/WAI).	Green 01/11/2004	Green 01/11/2004
	Comment: Implemented as part of the rollout of the Authority's web content management system.	
G21 Compliance with Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF), including the Government Metadata Standard (e-GMS) (see www.egifcompliance.org & www.govtalk.gov.uk).	Amber 01/11/2003	Green 30/03/2006
	Comment: More research is required for this, although the Authority does specify that systems must be e-GIF compliant when procuring. A member of staff has been appointed to conduct an audit of the Authority's systems and to devise procedures to ensure e-GIF compliance for all new systems.	
If already 'green' on R23, R24, G19, G20 & G21 above please comment on E17 Agreed baseline and targets for efficiency savings based around improved accessibility of services and information. Otherwise you may leave this row blank.	Comment:	

Outcome And Transformation Area Description	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
R25 Online publication of Internet service standards, including past performance and commitments on service availability.	Green 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2005
	Comment: Wear Valley District Council are committed to delivering value for money services through electronic channels. We have set targets on the availability of the service and publish site availability statistics on a monthly basis. The performance information is collected by external monitoring, and is delivered by "SiteMorse", a third party that specialises in website monitoring.	
R26 Monitoring of performance of corporate website, or regional web portal, between 2003/04 and 2005/06 in order to demonstrate rising and sustained use, as measured by industry standards including page impressions and unique users.	Green 31/05/2005	Green 31/05/2005
	Comment: The Authority uses Webtrends to gather this information.	
G22 Establishment of internal targets and measures for customer take-up of e-enabled access channels.	Green 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2005
	Comment: Targets initially set within IEG2 and IEG3 and also included in IEG4.	
G23 Adoption of recognised guidelines for usability of website design (see www.laws-project.org.uk).	Green 31/01/2005	Green 31/01/2005
	Comment: The new CMS-driven web site will conform to the LAWS standard. Devolved content will be subject to a vetting procedure to ensure the guidelines are followed.	
If already 'green' on R25, R26, G22 & G23 above please comment on E18 Agreed baseline and take-up targets for migration of local authority business to e-access channels (e.g. web, telephone contact centres, Interactive Digital TV, mobile telephone) by 2005/06, including efficiency savings. Otherwise you may leave this row blank.	Comment: During this forthcoming financial year the Council will work towards developing e-take up targets.	
R27 Systems in place to ensure effective and consistent customer relationship management across access channels and to provide a 'first time fix' for citizen and business enquiries, i.e. using a common database, which holds customers records, to deliver services across different channels, and enabling joined-up and automated service delivery.	Green 31/12/2005	Green 31/12/2005
	Comment: The partnership is currently building CRM programme management capacity with a view to implementing all services through the CRM and ensuring the CRM is sustainable. A CRM service delivery project manager has been appointed to address the business process reengineering associated with implementing the 672 services within the LGSL through the CRM.	
R28 All email and web form acknowledgements to include unique reference number allocated to allow tracking of enquiry and service response.	Green 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2005
	Comment: All partners are pursuing their own short term solutions in order to meet the deadline. The Countywide CRM will be used to achieve this outcome in the longer term.	
R29 100% of email enquiries from the public responded to within one working day, with documented corporate performance standards for both email acknowledgements and service replies.	Green 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2005
	Comment: All partners are pursuing their own short term solutions in order to meet the deadline. The Countywide CRM will be used to achieve this outcome in the longer term.	
G24 Integration of customer relationship management systems with back office activity through use of enabling technology such as Workflow to create complete automation of business process management.	Amber 01/01/2005	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment: The Countywide CRM has been implemented with the Oracle workflow module. Process maps have been created for all services enabled through the CRM.	

Outcome And Transformation Area Description	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
<p>G25 Facilities to support the single notification of a change of address, i.e. a citizen should only have to tell the council they have moved on one occasion and the council should then be able to update all records relating to that person to include the new address.</p>	<p>Green 31/05/2005</p>	<p>Green 31/05/2005</p>
<p>If already 'green' on R27, R28, R29, G24 & G25 above please comment on</p> <p>E19 Agreed baseline and improvement targets for the percentage of public enquiries about council services resolved at first point of contact and efficiency savings resulting from investment in customer relationship management and workflow technology.</p> <p>Otherwise you may leave this row blank.</p>	<p>Comment: Partners are pursuing their own interim solutions to achieve this outcome within the deadline. The Countywide CRM will be used to handle these requests in the longer term. The NE toolkit local community is currently looking at the LGSL to determine those services which may be effected by a change of address.</p> <p>Comment:</p>	

Section 2 - Change Management (self-assessment)

Authorities are asked to provide information on advisory good practice outcomes relating to the internal organisation and management practices of the council that are required to help deliver the people, systems and service management changes necessary for e-government. Information supplied here will be used to inform national policy, but does not fall within the remit of the December 2005 target.

Change Management Area	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of people to the following key local e-government functions in your Council (see http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/aio//206757): 		
i) Member & officer e-champions	Green 01/04/2001	Green 01/04/2001
	Comment:	
ii) e-government programme manager	Green 01/04/2005	Green 01/04/2005
	Comment: Funding has been approved to recruit an e-government programme manager but this post is proving difficult to fill. It is proposed therefore, to fill this role internally together with assistance/consultancy from the IDeA ISU.	
iii) customer services management	Amber 01/04/2004	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of competency development of the above key functions and training for staff affected by e-Government projects, within the Council's workforce development planning (for more information about the e-capacity Building Programme see http://www.lamip.org/MicroSites/eCapacityBuilding/Pages/TemplateUser.aspx?PageType=StandardContent&XSL=standardcontent&Key=1) 	Amber 01/01/2005	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment: The Authority is currently in the middle of developing a competencies programme for all staff. We will, however, use any guidance provided by the IDeA with reference to the 'key' e-government roles.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of an e-delivery programme board 	Green 01/04/2004	Green 01/04/2004
	Comment: The Authority has had an IEG working group comprising of heads of service for some years. However the role of this group is being refined to provide a focus on e-service delivery.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of formalised programme & project management methodologies (e.g. PRINCE2, MSP) to support e-delivery programme 	Green 31/12/2005	Green 31/12/2005
	Comment: We are an Early Adopter of the e-Government Capacity Building Programme and have been testing their programme and project management methodologies. We are currently using the 'Project Management Handbook' together with the associated processes and templates to manage the introduction of corporate EDRMS.	

Change Management Area	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation/agreement of corporate risk management strategy for roll-out of local e-government, including regular review of risk mitigation measures 	Green 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2005
	Comment: We are an Early Adopter of the e-Government Capacity Building Programme and have been testing their programme and project management methodologies including their guidance on Risk Management. We are currently using the 'Project Management Handbook' together with the associated processes and templates to manage the introduction of corporate EDRMS, including an associated risk register. The corporate risk register will be updated as this project progresses.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of customer consultation/research to inform development of corporate e-government strategy 	Green 01/04/2004	Green 01/04/2004
	Comment: The Authority has carried out its own consultation, and the CDeGP has also carried out consultation county-wide. The results are being used to inform the development of an e-government strategy.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of policy for addressing social inclusion within corporate e-government strategy 	Green 31/12/2005	Green 31/12/2005
	Comment: Work will commence on this in the new year.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of the specific needs of the most disadvantaged groups and exploring how Information Communication Technologies (ICT) can help to address these needs (see http://www.socialexclusion.gov.uk/page.asp?id=583) 	Red 01/01/2006	Red 01/01/2006
	Comment:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of officer(s) to lead on corporate governance of information assets and information legislation (e.g. Freedom of Information Act), including information sharing and data quality audit procedures 	Green 01/04/2004	Green 01/04/2004
	Comment: The Authority has a FOI working group chaired by a head of service. It is hoped that approval will be given in 2005/06 for the appointment of a post with specific responsibility for Information management and FOI and Data Protection compliance.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of Public Services Trust Charter re the use of personal information collected to deliver improved services, including data sharing protocol framework (see http://www.dca.gov.uk/foi/sharing/toolkit/lawguide.pdf & http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/documents/eTrustguidegovtalk.rtf) and designation of an Information Sharing Officer 	Amber 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment: CDeGP to develop protocols based on outcomes of FAME national project.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of partnerships for the joint (aggregated) procurement of broadband services 	Green 01/04/2004	Green 01/04/2004
	Comment: The Authority has already used ADIT North East to procure its replacement PBX and will also continue to work closely with the other partners within the CDeGP.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with intermediaries re addressing issues of take up and efficiency in the delivery of e-government services (e.g. Citizens Advice Bureaux) and including intermediaries component of Government Connect (see http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/documents/intermediaries_policy_document.pdf & http://www.govconnect.gov.uk/ccm/portal) 	Amber 31/12/2005	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment: Work will commence on this next year.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with BS 7799 on information security management 	Amber 01/11/2004	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment: The Authority is currently in the process of implementing recommendations from the Audit Commission on information security. This involves developing and implementing BS7799 compliant policies and procedures.	






Change Management Area	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of Benefits Realisation Plan for delivery of local e-government programme strategic objectives 	Amber 31/03/2005	Amber 31/03/2005
Comment: Work will commence on this next year.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of mapping of Local Government Services List transactions against approved security levels (0-3) (see http://www.esd.org.uk/standards/lgs/lgsi.doc & http://www.authentication.org.uk/levels.asp & http://e-government.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/00/22/40/04002240.doc) 	Amber 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2006
Comment: Work will commence on this in 2005.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned compliance to HMG Security and authentication frameworks through commitment to citizen, employee and volunteer account registration in Government Connect (see http://www.govconnect.gov.uk/ccm/portal) 	Amber 31/03/2005	Amber 31/03/2005
Comment: Work will commence on this in 2005.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with an independent trust scheme approval process designed to provide assurance for individuals and companies using or relying upon e-business transactions (see www.tscheme.org) and which will work with Government Connect (see http://www.govconnect.gov.uk/ccm/portal/) 	Amber 31/12/2005	Green 31/03/2006
Comment: Work will commence on this in 2005.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of Government Connect (see http://www.govconnect.gov.uk/ccm/portal/) to support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) personalisation & registration for services categorised at security levels '0' and '1' through the citizen account ii) adoption of Unique IDentifiers (UIDs) and associated standards, as designated in Government Connect iii) the bereavement journey & closing of accounts (see http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/pst/projects/mad/bereave.asp) iv) citizen & business authentication for services for services categorised at security levels 0-3 v) registration & authentication of employees for internal and cross-agency services vi) corporate approach to collection of e-payments 		
	Amber 10/05/2005	Amber 10/05/2005
Comment: The CDeGP, of which Wear Valley is a member, is committed to using Government Connect and is looking to becoming a regional pilot site.		
	Amber 10/05/2005	Amber 10/05/2005
Comment: The CDeGP, of which Wear Valley is a member, is committed to using Government Connect and is looking to becoming a regional pilot site.		
	Amber 10/05/2005	Amber 10/05/2005
Comment: The CDeGP, of which Wear Valley is a member, is committed to using Government Connect and is looking to becoming a regional pilot site.		
	Amber 10/05/2005	Amber 10/05/2005
Comment: The CDeGP, of which Wear Valley is a member, is committed to using Government Connect and is looking to becoming a regional pilot site.		
	Green 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2005
Comment:		

Change Management Area	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
vii) cross agency secure transactions (Government to Government)	Amber 10/05/2005	Amber 10/05/2005
	Comment: The CDeGP, of which Wear Valley is a member, is committed to using Government Connect and is looking to becoming a regional pilot site.	
viii) account structures for citizens, businesses, property, voluntary & community bodies, schools and parishes	Amber 10/05/2005	Amber 10/05/2005
	Comment: The CDeGP, of which Wear Valley is a member, is committed to using Government Connect and is looking to becoming a regional pilot site.	
ix) common XML schema and frameworks for performance management, Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements (where in place)	Amber 10/05/2005	Amber 10/05/2005
	Comment: The CDeGP, of which Wear Valley is a member, is committed to using Government Connect and is looking to becoming a regional pilot site.	
x) GC Register (see http://www.govconnect.gov.uk/ccm/woss-demo/the-programme.en)	Amber 10/05/2005	Amber 10/05/2005
	Comment: The CDeGP, of which Wear Valley is a member, is committed to using Government Connect and is looking to becoming a regional pilot site.	
xi) GC Exchange (see http://www.govconnect.gov.uk/ccm/woss-demo/the-programme.en)	Amber 10/05/2005	Amber 10/05/2005
	Comment: The CDeGP, of which Wear Valley is a member, is committed to using Government Connect and is looking to becoming a regional pilot site.	
• Government Connect (see http://www.govconnect.gov.uk/ccm/portal/) back office connection in place (Department Interface Server)	Amber 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment: CDeGP is looking at Kent connects to develop authentication processes for local authorities transactions.	
• Enable Directgov (see www.direct.gov.uk) to deeplink into service pages on local authority websites, by providing & maintaining URL data, based on Local Government Service & Interaction lists, standard schemas and formats, as directed by the Local Directgov programme (see http://www.localgov.gov.uk/localdirectgov/ieg5)	Green 31/12/2005	Green 31/12/2005
	Comment:	
• Reciprocal connection to Directgov (see http://www.direct.gov.uk) from corporate website and partnership portal(s)	Green 01/04/2004	Green 01/04/2004
	Comment:	
• Introduction of Digital Interactive TV services (see http://www.digitv.org.uk)	Red 01/04/2006	Red 01/04/2006
	Comment: This is a low priority for the Authority at this time, although the County Council is conducting a pilot of DigiTV on behalf of the CDeGP.	
• Establishment of dedicated telephone contact centre(s) services	Amber 01/06/2005	Amber 01/06/2005
	Comment: The Authority has already begun establishing a dedicated telephone contact centre as part of its CRM roll out program. The range of services covered is limited at present, but as the CDeGP Service Delivery Project workstreams progress the number of included services will increase dramatically.	

Change Management Area	Status at 31/12/2005	Status at 31/03/2006
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with Freedom of Information Act 2000, including responding to requests for information from individuals within a reasonable time period (see http://www.lcd.gov.uk/foi/foidpunit.htm & http://www.pro.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/access/default.htm) 	Green 31/03/2005	Green 31/03/2005
	Comment: The Authority has designated specialists in all departments.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly-maintained link from Local Land & Property Gazetteer (LLPG) to National Land & Property Gazetteer (NLPG) (see http://www.nlpg.org.uk) 	Green 01/04/2004	Green 01/04/2004
	Comment: The Authority updates the NLPG on a regular basis.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Land & Property Gazetteer (LLPG) linked to Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems 	Green 01/09/2005	Green 01/09/2005
	Comment:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connection to National Land Information Service (NLIS) at Level 3 (see http://www.nlis.org.uk) 	Green 01/04/2004	Green 01/04/2004
	Comment:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction and maintenance of an online service directory for Children's services for professionals working with children & young people, and allowing public access where possible (for further information see http://www.dfes.gov.uk/isa) 	Red 01/01/2006	Green 31/03/2006
	Comment: Deep links will be established to the County Council's web site.	

Section 3 - BVPI 157

Councils are asked to complete the following table using the definition of Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 157 for Electronic Service Delivery (Corporate). You are required to validate your local list of interactions against Version 2.01 of the Local Government Services List (LGSL) developed by local authority members of the esd-toolkit (www.esd-toolkit.org). All totals and percentages shown should be cumulative.

BVPI 157 Interaction Type	Forecast average IEG5 % e-enabled position at 31 December 2005	Actual				
		01/02 	02/03 	03/04 	04/05 	05/06 
Providing information: ● Total types of interaction e-enabled ● % e-enabled	99 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 133 ● 31.22 %	● 423 ● 99.30 %	● 426 ● 100.00 %
Collecting revenue: ● Total types of interaction e-enabled ● % e-enabled	96 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 1 ● 14.29 %	● 7 ● 100.00 %	● 7 ● 100.00 %
Providing benefits & grants: ● Total types of interaction e-enabled ● % e-enabled	92 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 6 ● 100.00 %	● 6 ● 100.00 %
Consultation: ● Total types of interaction e-enabled ● % e-enabled	98 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 1 ● 5.56 %	● 14 ● 77.78 %	● 18 ● 100.00 %
Regulation (such as issuing licenses): ● Total types of interaction e-enabled ● % e-enabled	90 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 28 ● 77.78 %	● 36 ● 100.00 %
Applications for services: ● Total types of interaction e-enabled ● % e-enabled	96 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 22 ● 14.86 %	● 77 ● 52.03 %	● 148 ● 100.00 %
Booking venues, resources & courses: ● Total types of interaction e-enabled ● % e-enabled	88 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 7 ● 100.00 %
Paying for goods & services: ● Total types of interaction e-enabled ● % e-enabled	91 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 2 ● 3.45 %	● 58 ● 100.00 %	● 58 ● 100.00 %
Providing access to community, professional or business networks: ● Total types of interaction e-enabled ● % e-enabled	98 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 7 ● 3.50 %	● 198 ● 99.00 %	● 200 ● 100.00 %
Procurement: ● Total types of interaction e-enabled ● % e-enabled	86 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 3 ● 100.00 %
Total: ● Total types of interaction e-enabled ● % e-enabled	97 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 0 ● 0.00 %	● 166 ● 18.26 %	● 811 ● 89.22 %	● 909 ● 100.00 %

Section 4 - Access Channel Take-Up

In order to demonstrate public take-up of the main e-access channels that you are investing in, you are asked to complete the table below detailing actual and forecast figures for numbers of e-enabled payment transactions and change of address notifications. Planning authorities should also complete the Local Service Website line for planning applications. It is important that e-access channel investment and rollout also facilitates accompanying improvements in the corporate management capability required to monitor and collect such statistics. Click on the light bulb icons for industry definitions of page impressions and unique users.

E-enablement & Main E-Access Channel Take-Up	Actual			Forecast	
	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Local Service Websites					
• Page impressions (annual)	497,000	507,691	2,719,815	2,510,000	2,760,000
• Unique users, i.e. separate individuals visiting website (annual)	106,000	85,624	132,850	145,000	160,000
• Number of e-enabled payment transactions accepted via website	10	420	900	1,000	1,100
• Number of change of address notifications accepted via website	0	2	5	20	30
• Number of planning applications accepted via website (including through the Planning Portal)	0	0	20	36	60
	Comment:				
Telephone <i>(i.e. telephone interactions where officers can access electronic information and/or update records on-line there and then, including interactions in contact centres)</i>					
• Number of e-enabled payment transactions accepted by telephone	300	3,524	5,000	5,250	5,500
• Number of change of address notifications accepted via telephone	1,500	1,680	2,800	2,800	2,800
	Comment:				
Face To Face <i>(i.e. front-line operations where officers can access electronic information and/or update records on-line there and then, including interactions at reception desks, One Stop Shops & home visits)</i>					
• Number of e-enabled payment transactions accepted via personal contact	3,410	5,000	5,100	5,200	5,300
• Number of change of address notifications accepted via personal contact	1,840	1,700	1,600	1,400	1,200
	Comment:				
Other Electronic Media <i>(e.g. BACS, text messaging)</i>					
• Number of e-enabled payment transactions accepted via BACS	122,000	131,000	139,000	147,000	155,000

	Actual			Forecast	
E-enablement & Main E-Access Channel Take-Up	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
• Number of e-enabled payment transactions accepted via text message or other electronic form	125,000	127,000	130,000	133,000	137,000
• Number of change of address notifications accepted via other electronic media	1,480	0	2,900	3,200	3,800
	Comment:				
Non Electronic <i>(e.g. cash office, post)</i>					
• Number of payments accepted by cheque or other non-electronic form	151,400	150,000	148,000	146,000	144,000
• Number of change of address notifications accepted via non-electronic form	9,190	8,630	8,000	7,800	7,600
	Comment:				

Section 5 - Local e-Government Implementation Expenditure

Councils are asked to provide a summary of current and forecast expenditure on implementing electronic government up to 2007/08. This should include the standard elements in the table below and brief commentary on the use of IEG money. For 2005/6 onwards, please include best estimates of revenue and capital expenditure even though the council may not yet have officially approved the budgets. (Please note that implementing e-government expenditure refers to investment designed to e-enable local services and to transform their accessibility, quality and cost-effectiveness in line with the 2005 target. Cyclical spend related to the maintenance of the existing ICT infrastructure should not be included):

Programme Resource	Backward Look (£)			Forward Look (£)	
	01/02 to 03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
• IEG capital grant	400,000	350,000	150,000		
	Comment:				
• ODPM Local e-Government Support & Capacity Programme capital grant	0	0	50,000	0	0
	Comment:				
• your council's nominal pro rata share of ODPM Local e-Government Partnership Programme capital grant allocated in your area	0	81,000	0	0	0
	Comment: WVDC's share of the CDeGP CRM funding				
• financial contribution from public-private partnerships	0	0	0	0	0
	Comment:				
• resources being applied from internal revenue and capital budgets to implement e-government	400,000	105,000	107,000	110,000	115,000
	Comment: Budgets for 2005/06 onwards have not yet been set so these figures are estimates only.				
• other resources (e.g. training) (please specify)	35,000	15,000	10,000	5,000	5,000
	Comment: £5k p.a. on PRINCE2 training etc.; £2.5k p.a. on ECDL training; £2.5k p.a. on other e-gov. training				
• ODPM e-Innovations Fund capital grant	0	0	0	0	0
	Comment:				
• financial contributions from other sources of Government funding, such as the Invest to Save Budget (ISB), EU funding	158,000	0	0	0	0
	Comment: £70k Planning Delivery Grant; £70k DWP DIP/Workflow grant; £18k DWP homeworking grant				
TOTAL	993,000	551,000	317,000	115,000	120,000

Section 6 - Local e-Government Programme Efficiency Gains

The calculation of efficiency gains from local e-government has been designed to align with the approach to measuring achievement against the efficiency gains target set out in the January 2005 Efficiency Technical Note (ETN) for Local Government. Links to listed websites in the table Notes also offer a key source of support in calculating figures.

	Backward Look (£)				Forward Look (£)			
	04/05		05/06		06/07		07/08	
Efficiency Gains	Annual gain	...of which cashable	Annual gain	...of which cashable	Expected annual gain	...of which cashable	Expected annual gain	...of which cashable
Corporate services, of which:								
• e-recruitment	2,300	800	2,400	820	2,500	840	2,600	860
	Comment: Annual gains are based on staff time saved as a result of downloadable applications and stationery/postage savings. The 2004/05 figures are based upon 2000 downloaded forms per annum. Subsequent figures are based on a modest increase in downloaded forms each year.							
• e-payments	400	200	400	200	400	200	400	200
	Comment:							
• corporate services efficiencies not covered above	1,200	1,000	1,200	1,000	1,200	1,000	1,200	1,000
	Comment: 2004/05 annual gains are based on committee minutes and agendas being available online thereby saving both staff time and postage/stationery costs. Subsequent years figures have been kept constant.							
e-Procurement, of which:								
• Service specific	1,600	0	1,600	0	1,300	0	1,300	0
	Comment: e.g. through the introduction of fuel cards and purchasing cards							
• Cross-cutting e-procurement efficiencies not covered above	350,000	350,000	10,000	10,000	0	0	0	0
	Comment: 2004/05 gains are based on a £30,000 saving arising from joint purchase of a new telephone switchboard and a £320,000 saving arising from joint purchase of a CRM system as part of the County Durham e-government Partnership initiative.							
Productive time, of which:								

	Backward Look (£)				Forward Look (£)			
	04/05		05/06		06/07		07/08	
Efficiency Gains	Annual gain	...of which cashable	Annual gain	...of which cashable	Expected annual gain	...of which cashable	Expected annual gain	...of which cashable
• Service specific	300	0	5,330	1,000	22,000	1,500	23,000	1,750
	Comment: The above are based on staff time savings arising from customers using electronic forms on the Authority's website (total estimated number of e-forms are approximately 350 per annum) plus increases in productive time within the Benefits Section due to home working (estimated at £16k for both 06/07 and 07/08).							
• Cross-cutting productive time efficiencies not covered above	20,000	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	20,000	0
	Comment: The 2004/05 saving is based upon a 2% efficiency for those staff (approximately 50 per annum) who have undertaken the European Computer Driving Licence qualification. For 2005/06 and beyond this assumes a similar number of staff completing the ECDL qualification each year.							
Transactions	0	0	0	0	100	0	100	0
	Comment:							
Miscellaneous efficiencies not covered above	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Comment:							
TOTAL EFFICIENCY GAINS - GROSS	375,800	352,000	40,930	13,020	47,500	3,540	48,600	3,810
LESS e-government implementation expenditure	551,000		317,000		115,000		120,000	
	Comment:							
TOTAL EFFICIENCY GAINS - NET	-,175,200		-,276,070		-67,500		-71,400	

CENTRAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

29 MARCH 2006

Report of the Director of Central Resources

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS)

purpose of the report

1. To outline to Members proposed changes to the LGPS and to seek Members views accordingly.

proposed changes to the scheme

2. Draft regulations detailing proposed changes to the Scheme in England and Wales are being consulted on by the ODPM. The draft regulations propose a package of changes.

- (i) **The 85-year rule is being removed.** This means that the age at which members can retire with unreduced benefits is to be standardised at age 65 by phasing out what is known as "the 85 year rule". This rule currently allows employees who voluntarily retire on or after age 60 and before age 65 to take unreduced benefits if their combined age and calendar length of scheme membership (both in whole years) add up to 85.

Although the 85 year rule is to be removed, the rights that employees have built up in the Scheme up to 30 September 2006 are not being affected in any way by the removal of the rule. It is only the benefits that employees build up in the Scheme after that date that will be paid at a rate lower than under the present arrangements and, even then, only if the employee chooses to draw the benefits on or after age 60 and before age 65. If the employee chooses to draw benefits at or after age 65 their pension will not be reduced. Older members (i.e. those who will be 60 by 31 March 2013) may get some extra protection from the effect of the removal of the 85 year rule but this is still under discussion.

- (ii) **Other parts of the package of changes include improvements in choice and flexibility for employees i.e.**

- Although it is proposed that the 85 year rule should be removed, employees will be able to pay extra contributions in order to still draw an unreduced pension on voluntary retirement before age 65
- Flexible retirement will be permitted at or after age 60 - this means employees could, with their employer's consent, reduce their hours or move to a less senior position in order to gradually ease into retirement over a period of years and draw their accrued pension benefits at the same time, rather than having to work, say, full time until age 65. They

would build up further pension rights during the period of continued employment

- Employees will be able to take up to a maximum of 25% of the capital value of their pension benefits as a lump sum (the current lump sum which is automatically paid on retirement roughly equates to 15% of the capital value). Any amount taken above the current lump sum would be achieved by exchanging part of their annual pension for a one off tax free cash payment at a rate of £12 lump sum for each £1 of pension given up the maximum service limit of 40 years (or, for those who joined the Scheme before 1 June 1989, the maximum of 40 years at age 60 and 45 years at age 65) will be removed and so employees will be able to accrue extra pension rights in the Scheme.

government's justification

3. The Government's justification for wanting to change the scheme can be summarised by the following basic points:
 - Pension Funds are seeing much reduced investment return expectations.
 - Employees are living and drawing their pension for longer.
 - Pension costs for the authority and hence for council tax payers are rising as a result.
 - At the 2004 LGPS Fund valuations, the Funds in England and Wales were on average only 74% funded, with a £27 billion shortfall.
4. The Government's review of the LGPS forms part of their wider agenda to deal with increased life expectancy, changing demographics and rising pension costs.
5. Changes being introduced to the LGPS in 2006 aim to safeguard the scheme by ensuring it remains affordable and sustainable to scheme employers and to local taxpayers whilst being fair to existing and future employees.

the unions views

6. In response to the proposed changes the Unions view is that they want equal treatment to every other public sector pension scheme member. In their view all existing members of the police, armed forces, fire fighters, teachers, civil service and NHS pension schemes will have their existing rights protected as new schemes are developed for the future. Whilst they accept that the rule of 85 needs to be abolished they consider life-time protection for existing scheme members to be reasonable.

conclusion

7. In relation to Wear Valley the Council has seen rising pension costs in recent years. The Government's view is that the savings generated from the abolition of the rule of 85 will be greater than those calculated by the unions. Both sides' calculations are based on assumptions that are difficult to disprove as they are based on future trends in relation to retirement and employment.

RECOMMENDED that Members consider the above and outline their views as to the merit or de-merit of the proposed changes.

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