

# BT Lancashire Services

Annual Review

West Lancashire Borough Council

2013/2014

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## 1 Introduction

Welcome to the 2013/2014 Annual Review of the work of BT Lancashire Services (formerly One Connect Limited) on behalf of West Lancashire Borough Council for the delivery of both its Revenues and Benefits Service and ICT Service.

In July 2011, a contract between Lancashire County Council and West Lancashire Borough Council was agreed. This is a 10 year contract to deliver shared Revenues, Benefits and ICT Services on behalf of West Lancashire Borough Council through the strategic partnership, One Connect Limited (BT Lancashire Services since April 2014).

In 2013/14, work on Welfare Reform changes continued, together with ensuring continuity of service delivery through a period of management change.

The agreed business model continues to be based on 'up front savings' (of 15%) with no reduction in services. The cost of the ICT Service and the Revenue and Benefits Service in 2013/2014 was £3.103 million and for this period, direct savings to West Lancashire Borough Council amounted to £530,000. This is in addition to the agreement which also aimed to deliver added value and investment (borne by the Partnership).

In summary the Contract in 2013/2014 has delivered to West Lancashire Borough Council:

- Direct savings of £530,000.
- ICT investment of £7,500.
- Combined ICT and Revenues and Benefits Added Value of £25,000.

A high level summary of the financial benefits to West Lancashire Borough Council from the Partnership in its first three years, as at the 31 March 2014, is as follows:

Activity	2011/2012 (£k)	2012/2013 (£k)	2013/2014 (£k)	Total to Date (£k)
Savings	266	522.0	530	<b>1,318</b>
Revenue and Benefit ICT System	150	550.0	141	<b>841</b>
Payroll Service	-	13.5	13.5	<b>27</b>
Other Financial Benefits	25	30.5	79	<b>134.5</b>
Total Cashable Savings (1)	441	1,116	763.5	<b>2,321</b>

**Table 1: Summary of Financial Benefits 2011-2014.**

**Note: (1) 2011/2012 = Part Year**

## Governance

The governance of the Contract continues to be overseen by the Shared Services Board, having representation from West Lancashire Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and BT Lancashire Services. The role of this Board is to review the implementation and delivery of services, monitor service delivery and performance, discuss future opportunities, working together and building positive long term relationships.

The key contractual elements of the Agreement include:

- A Shared Services Agreement between West Lancashire Borough Council and Lancashire County Council to deliver these services through its partner BT Lancashire Services.
- A double secondment model for all West Lancashire Borough Council employees from the Borough Council to the County Council and then seconded into BT Lancashire Services. This was a first of its kind which protected the terms and conditions of staff and their public sector pensions. These costs are borne by BT Lancashire Services as part of its financial obligations and Contract.

A set of fundamental principles agreed by all the parties are viewed as key to the creation of a successful and long term relationship.

- In terms of the Revenues and Benefits Service, the partnership provides a Revenues and Benefits Service that delivers a service including Council Tax and NNDR billing and collection, debt recovery, prevention and detection of fraud and a creditors and debtors function.
- In terms of ICT, the partnership delivers a service that includes provision of a service desk, operations service, desktop service, applications service, network and voice services and also uses reasonable endeavours to ensure that all services and facilities within the partner's control are accessible to all users.

A monthly 'Quality of Service' Report is produced which includes the following information in respect of the services provided:

- A synopsis of the services delivered (executive summary)
- Performance against any Contractual and Non-Contractual Service Levels
- Continuous Improvement - Service improvements and on-going developments
- A preview of key activity looking forward

## 2013/2014 High Level Performance Review

Details of performance against targets in respect of 2013-14 for both services have been provided on an on-going basis in monthly Quality of Service Reports. In addition this data has been presented on a quarterly basis to the Shared Service Board – again via the Quality of Service Report. A high level summary of performance for the year can be summarised as follows:

### ICT:

- Severe Business Disruption - 100% resolved within agreed timeframe against target of 99%.
- Major Business Disruption - 100% resolved within agreed timeframe against target of 97%.
- Minor Business Disruption - 100% resolved within agreed timeframe against target of 97%.
- Minor Disruption - 99% resolved within agreed timeframe against target of 97%.
- Advice and Guidance - 100% resolved within agreed timeframe against target of 97%.

### Revenues and Benefits:

- Collection of current year's Council Tax - collected 95.32% against a target of 96.11%.
- Collection of current year's NNDR - collected 95.55% against a target of 96.60%.
- Collection of previous year's Council Tax - collected 20.94% against a target of 24.50%.
- Collection of Sundry Debtors - Collected £5.84m against a target of £5.71m.
- Benefits overall processing time - 7.44 days against a target of 12 days.
- £86.5k of HB Local Authority Error - against a target of £139,020.
- Collection of HB overpayments - collected £171,000 against a target of £170,000.

## 2014/2015 Planned Developments

In this section we highlight the planned activity for each of the services scheduled to happen during 2014/2015 (in ICT Services case, in line with the implementation of the ICT Strategy).

### ICT:

- Carry out a program of work to continue to reduce the number of ICT calls logged by West Lancashire Borough Council staff.
- Seek to increase the percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact.
- Improve the processes around the renewal of recurring ICT contracts.
- Make improvements in mobile and remote working by delivering secure email onto mobile devices.
- Conduct a review of existing business application systems' usage to define further exploitation and usage, as well as opportunities to benefit from new applications.

- Review Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery arrangements, seeking opportunities and benefits from aligning with BT Lancashire Service arrangements.
- Review ageing MacFarlane contact centre platform to assess requirements and options for replacement.
- Review all opportunities for the provision of online services to staff and citizens of West Lancashire Borough Council.
- Introduce 'single sign on' to systems and unified password control to reduce duplicate logins and passwords.
- Look to exploit and reuse work done in the County Council to roll out Voice Over IP and remove ageing telephony.

## Revenues and Benefits:

- Governance and communications – a review of the intra-organisational governance and communications arrangements.
- Learning and Development Programme – a review of the collective and individual training and development arrangements.
- Local Tax collection and recovery – a collection and recovery programme that significantly increases the amount and frequency of collection and recovery activity.
- Internal and external Audit – the introduction of a more collaborative approach to engagement with both internal and external auditors to enable better planning and fulfilment of audit activity.
- Financial Liaison – an approach, agreed with West Lancashire Borough Council, to the management and provision of financial data – primarily to the Borough Treasurer.
- Welfare Reform – an action plan for the effective roll-out of Welfare Reform-related activity in particular Universal Credit.
- Contact Centre scope review – an ongoing review of the working arrangements between the Revenues and Benefits Service and the Lancashire County Council's Customer Access Service (CAS).
- Technical re-platform – the transfer of the technology platform to a Lancashire-based solution.
- Organisational review – a review of the effectiveness of the organisation and structure of the service.
- 2015 Year End – effective management of this key activity to enable 2014/2015 financial close down and 2015/2016 Council Tax NNDR billing.

## 2 2013/2014 ICT Review

The service is currently delivered through:

- Provision of a Customer Service Desk function.
- Desktop, Network and Infrastructure Support.
- Support of key West Lancashire Borough Council applications.
- Delivery of ICT projects and Service Improvement Plans.

The total cost of the ICT Service in 2013/2014 was **£1.325 million**, giving a guaranteed saving of **£199,000** to West Lancashire Borough Council. These savings are in addition to the **£295,000** combined for 2011/2012 and 2012/2013.

In addition to the delivered saving of **£199,000** (in 2013/2014), other financial benefits have been gained by West Lancashire Borough Council through the delivery of the One Connect Limited ICT Service.

### Infrastructure Improvements

In 2012/2013, ICT Services carried out a 'health check' of the ICT infrastructure. This identified a program of activity required to improve the stability and resilience of the ICT set up, and the final actions were completed early in 2013/2014. This concluded the first stage of an on-going infrastructure improvement program that continued throughout 2013/2014.

During May 2013 the provision of West Lancashire Borough Council's internet link was transferred to the BT Lancashire Services' corporate internet connection, providing the authority with a level of resilience not previously available to the West Lancashire Borough Council's internet service. The connection, which was previously supplied by a third party, is now monitored and supported by ICT Service staff, offering enhanced stability and improved resolution times.

In the first quarter of 2013/2014, work was also carried out to upgrade the Storage Area Network (SAN), including server migration upgrades to hardware to facilitate stable, remote access for Councillors, staff, home workers and housing contractors.

During December 2013, ICT Services completed work to set up a new server which runs a comprehensive system to monitor key components of the ICT infrastructure. It allows ICT staff to monitor all West Lancashire Borough Council's servers, the Storage Area Network (SAN) and tape backup hardware via a centralised console. The system features automated alerting, so that if any hardware faults are detected an email alert is sent to ICT Service support staff. This enables ICT



Services to react in a more timely fashion to hardware failures, often solving infrastructure problems before they occur, so reducing disruption to West Lancashire Borough Council services.

In January 2014, ICT Services completed the rollout of the "Wake on LAN" service to all West Lancashire Borough Council PCs on which the QL Housing System is installed. The Wake on LAN service allows PCs that are switched off to be activated remotely via the network, enabling QL client upgrades to be deployed out of hours in a controlled manner. This means that the business has the most up-to-date software available, whilst ensuring maximum system availability and causing no disruption to customers.

During 2013-2014, ICT Services completed a programme of critical security updates to key West Lancashire Borough Council systems. May 2013 saw the final batch of updates applied to the authority's main SQL Database Server (hosting databases for systems including Civica Authority Financials, CRM and Document Management System), and to the Council's E-mail and Planning servers.

## Accommodation Moves

2013/2014 saw the completion of ICT activities associated with the vacation of Westec House. In April 2013, a new circuit was provisioned into the main West Lancashire Borough Council Offices at Derby Street, Ormskirk. This new circuit offers an improved service to users (for remote access for Councillors, Revenues and Benefits Home Workers and Housing Contractors) by providing double the amount of bandwidth at 4Mb. May 2013 saw the relocation of the West Lancashire Borough Council Firewall and SSL/VPN hardware to the Derby St communication room. This concluded the ICT elements of a key piece of work in support of the council's overall accommodation strategy.

## GCSx and PSN Accreditation

2013-2014 has seen ICT Services carry out a major piece of work to ensure the West Lancashire Borough Council network is compliant with the requirements of GCSx and PSN. In August 2013, ICT Services completed an ICT Health Check in order to identify remedial actions required and work then commenced to address the vulnerabilities identified. These works included various system upgrades, patching of corporate desktop application and improving the security of the supporting server and network infrastructure.

The ICT Health Check also highlighted issues with the backup software located at West Lancashire Borough Council's remote sites, which could potentially have allowed someone with malicious intent to access the affected server. ICT Services migrated all remote sites onto the new corporate Netbackup software. This facilitates central administration of all West Lancashire Borough Council



backups and so as well as addressing the security issues, it affords quicker backup restoration times for the customer.

In October and November 2013/2014, ICT Services introduced a 'Two Factor Authentication' system at West Lancashire Borough Council. Two Factor Authentication provides enhanced network security for all remote access clients by adding a second layer of authentication. The solution was designed, new servers and associated infrastructure were installed and tested, and the client software was deployed.

In November 2013, a McAfee solution for the management and encryption of removable media (USB sticks and CD/DVD drives) was designed and applied to all laptops and desktops. The solution gives enhanced control over the removable media estate, including optical media.

The successful completion of this program of activity in 2013 saw West Lancashire Borough Council achieve the Government Connect Extranet (GCSx) and PSN accreditation in November 2013. This allowed ICT Services to then successfully complete the migration of all Government Connect (GCSx) Services onto the new PSN Network in February 2014.

## ICT Strategy

One of the most important areas of ICT activity during 2013-2014 was the work undertaken in collaboration with West Lancashire Borough Council to devise an ICT Strategy for the authority. This involved meeting with senior managers and business unit heads across the council in order to understand their requirements. The result was a comprehensive set of recommendations, mapping out the future direction of the council's ICT infrastructure, which was signed off in October 2013. The strategy ensures long term compliance with Government security accreditation and also enables access to new services including:

- Migration to Microsoft Exchange 2010 platform.
- Improved secure mobile and remote working solutions.
- Windows 7 upgrades.
- Electronic Document Management Services.
- Upgrades of Oracle and SQL server platform.
- Software Asset Management and licence audit control.

ICT Service staff attended the West Lancashire Borough Council meeting in March 2014 to present the ICT roadmap and describe how it offers a number of business improvement opportunities for both senior officers and councillors. They explained how the new platforms and technology can facilitate secure mobility solutions, whilst also saving the council money by replacing current infrastructure.

In 2013/2014 work commenced on the implementation of all items signed off in the strategy. It is anticipated that these will be substantially complete by the end of the first quarter of 2014-2015.

## Other ICT Projects

During 2013/2014, ICT have also delivered a number of specific projects for business units within the council:

- The transfer of Revenues and Benefits Service telephony to the Customer Contact Centre, Accrington was completed. ICT Services worked alongside West Lancashire Borough Council Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits staff and the Customer Contact Centre staff to set up a new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) on the Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system and configure the telephony network to route calls to the Customer Contact Centre.
- ICT Services provided additional support in the run up to the West Lancashire Borough Council elections. This work included the setting up and provision of equipment and arranging access to systems, as well as completing updates to the elections software.
- Developmental work was carried out for the new West Lancashire Borough Council website including building of new servers, configuration of the content management software and migration of content.
- A new Planning Register system was implemented to automate the production and publication of all West Lancashire Borough Council Planning registers. This has streamlined the process, removed an unsupported Microsoft Access database and created savings in officer time.
- Support was provided to Property Services and the external contractor over two separate weekends during major electrical works at the main Council Building, Derby Street, Ormskirk. Technicians were on site to ensure power issues were quickly rectified and ensure critical services remained live. No system down-time or loss of service was experienced.
- The program of upgrades to key West Lancashire Borough Council software was on-going throughout 2013-2014, including successful upgrades to the Housing Management systems QLX (financial module) and QLHX (management module), and the Express Elections Software. This program of work delivers enhancements to the council's systems, as well addressing any known system errors.

## Performance

No.	Definition of SLA	Target (%)	Performance Year 2013/2014 (%)
1	Severe Business Disruption Business Unit (sub-unit): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>unable to operate</li> <li>service component failed or severely impaired</li> </ul>	99	100
2	Major Business Disruption Critical user or user group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>unable to operate</li> <li>business unit experiencing significant reduction in service performance</li> </ul>	97	100
3	Minor Business Disruption: Single user or user group unable to work with no available workaround	97	100
4	Minor Disruption: Single user or user group experiencing problems but with ICT defined available workaround	97	99
5	Advice and Guidance	97	100

**Table 2: Contractual Targets.**

The number of escalated and auto generated incidents reported during 2013/2014 compared to the same period last year:

Incidents Raised	Incidents Meeting SLA (%)	2012/2013 Year to Date	2013/2014 Year to Date	2013/2014 Year to Date Variation (%)
Priority 1	100	0	0	0
Priority 2	100	6	5	(17)
Priority 3	100	330	179	(45.8)
Priority 4	99	2,208	1,314	(40.5)
Priority 5	100	261	176	(32.6)
Total	-	2,805	1,674	(40.3)

**Table 3: Incidents reported in 2012/2013 compared to 2013/2014.**

Key performance indicators gathered monthly:

Key Performance indicator	Year 2013/2014
Percentage of incidents resolved 0–8 hours (any priority)	67.2
Priority 3 - percentage resolved within 8 hours <sup>(1)</sup>	82.8
Priority 4 - percentage resolved within 8 hours <sup>(1)</sup>	63.2
Priority 5 - percentage resolved within 8 hours <sup>(1)</sup>	47.6
Percentage of Interactions resolved at first point of contact (any priority) by service desk	3.4
Number of incidents raised by Elected Members	83

**Table 4: Key performance indicators.**

<sup>(1)</sup> New metrics introduced from October 2013. Year to date figures have now been retrospectively calculated.

The following table shows the volume of telephone calls answered by Connect2ICT Service Desk during 2013/2014 compared to last year.

Activity	Year 2012/2013	Year 2013/2014
Calls answered	2,157	<b>1,594</b>
% of calls answered	93	<b>91</b>

**Table 5: Connect2ICT calls answered.**

## Added Value

This added value can be; cost avoidance, additional works at no charge, investments and can be either a combination of cashable or non-cashable items. Examples of this are included in the table below:

Activity	Year 2013/2014 (£K)
Call logging system relocation	7.2
Electrical work support	1.3
ICT Health Check remedial work	0.9
Contract novation consultancy	0.9
Technical assistance and guidance – Community Centres	0.7
Loan of hardware	0.6
Audit of Tanhouse Community Centre computers	0.5
Supply of hardware to Planning Services	0.5
Out of hours support – Christmas cover	0.4
Out of hours support – BT Fibre connection	0.3
Storage Area Network (SAN) upgrade	0.2
SSL\VPN hardware upgrade	0.2
Critical security updates	0.2
Firewall, SSL\VPN relocation	0.2
Internet provision	0.2
Provided assistance to West Lancs External Auditors	0.2
Out of hours response to Fire Alarm	0.2
Home Care Link (HCL) relocation	0.1
Weekend Standby - Revenues and Benefits year end processing	0.1
Out of hours support, User Acceptance Testing	0.06
Total	14.96

**Table 6: Year to Date 2013/2014 - Added Value to West Lancashire Borough Council.**

### 3 2013/2014 Revenues and Benefits Review

The total cost of the Service in 2013/2014 was £1,977,000, giving a guaranteed saving of £332,000 pa to West Lancashire Borough Council. These savings are in addition to the £170,000 delivered in 2011/2012 and £323,000 delivered in 2012/2013.

In addition to the delivered saving of £332,000 (in 2013/2014), other financial benefits have been gained by West Lancashire Borough Council through the delivery of the Revenues and Benefits Service by BT Lancashire Services.

During 2013/2014, the Revenues and Benefits Service has focused on managing the impact of the technology migration which took effect from 01 April 2013, and of the Welfare Reform changes. The impact of the Welfare Reform changes incorporated changes in local policy – in particular the introduction of the local Council Tax Support scheme which had the effect of increasing the Council Tax net collectable. Organisationally, the key changes to the Service have been the movement of telephony-related activity to the Customer Access Service and the removal of Liverpool Direct Limited's resources that had been introduced to support the Service.

#### Performance

The agreed Service Level Agreement (SLA) comprises, in total, **seven** performance indicators covering the Service. In the case of one of the performance indicators – Benefits Fraud Sanctions and Prosecutions – the target was suspended for the year. All **seven** indicators are contractual. West Lancashire Borough Council requested that data is also provided for the average time to process benefits new claims and change of circumstance; volumes of complaints received and payment of creditor invoices on time.

No.	Definition of SLA	Target	2013/2014 Performance Year to Date
1	NI 181 – Average time to process all items	12 days	<b>7.44 days</b>
2	Overpayment Recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments (payments received)	£170K p.a.	<b>£170,909</b>
3	Benefit Fraud Sanctions & Prosecutions	Target suspended	<b>42</b>
4	Benefits Local Authority Error Overpayments – Lower Threshold YTD based on Initial Estimate for 2013/2014	Below £139,020	<b>£86,437</b>

**Table 7: Benefits Service Contractual Performance Targets 2013/2014**

No.	Definition of SLA	Target	2013/2014 Performance Year to Date
5	Council Tax Collection Rate Current Year (BVP19)	96.11%	<b>95.32%</b>
6	Council Tax Previous Years Arrears	24.50%	<b>20.94%</b>
7	NNDR Collection Rate Current Year	96.60%	<b>95.53%</b>
8	Sundry Debtors	£5,706.434	<b>£5,841,004</b>

**Table 8: Revenues Service Contractual Performance Targets 2013/2014**

## Service Delivery Chronology

From a service delivery perspective, the migration to a new ICT system, which went live in January 2013, was very challenging and some expected issues arose. These issues together with the impact of elements of the Government's Welfare Reforms resulted in a difficult 2012/2013 year end and 2013/2014 billing process resulting in extremely high levels of customer contact.

Linked to the Welfare Reforms programme, from 01 April 2013, the national scheme of Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced with a localised Council Tax Support scheme, under which certain types of customer were automatically protected. On transfer, this government grant was reduced by 10% therefore any additional costs and increases in demand for benefit over and above current levels will have to be funded by local authorities. West Lancashire Borough Council made the decision that a localised Council Tax Support scheme be introduced on the basis that the existing Council Tax Benefit scheme be used to calculate entitlement and then a percentage reduction of 22% be applied. For the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014, a total of **£7,480,881** Council Tax Support has been paid and a total of **-£44,094** Council Tax Benefit paid, i.e. more Council Tax Benefit has been reclaimed than paid out.

In the early part of the financial year, issues arose with the reconciliation of 2012/2013 data, which took some time to resolve. Recently, much work has been carried out in collaboration with the Council and in particular the Borough Treasurer to ensure that all financial data required, is available in a format and at a time as required by the Council.

May 2013 saw the commencement of the transfer of all Revenues and Benefits Service telephony activity into the Customer Contact Centre (delivered by One Connect Limited at the time and now a facility delivered by Lancashire County Council). This led to Benefits telephony activity being transferred in August and Council Tax telephony in September. In terms of the Customer Contact



Centre performance over the year, of the 17,850 Benefits calls being offered, 15,533 were answered, equating to 87%. Of the 28,658 Revenues calls being offered, 24,004 calls were answered, equating to 84%.

In June 2013, preparation work commenced for the introduction of the Benefit cap, which was implemented in West Lancashire from 15 July 2013. Also, linked to Welfare Reforms, arrangements were put in place for the on-going monitoring of Discretionary Housing Payment expenditure and targeting of eligible applicants. For the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014, a total of **781** Discretionary Housing Payment applications have been received and assessed. **569** of these applications have been agreed resulting in a total of **£130,499** committed expenditure for 2013/14, and **£28,410** remaining for 2013/14. BT Lancashire Services worked closely with all housing providers, including the Borough Council's Housing Service, to maximise take-up in appropriate circumstances.

Linked to Welfare Reforms, another issue arose later in the year related to the Social Sector Size Criteria and in particular the "loophole" surrounding customers who had occupied the same property since January 1996. Following a number of challenges to the changes to the legalisation, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) issued a clarification that a number of customers occupying the same property and having been in continuous receipt of Housing Benefits since 1 January 1996 were exempted from these changes. This "loophole" has since been closed.

The Welfare Reforms changes also included the Government announcement that they are going to create a Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) which would bring together investigators from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC) and Local Authorities in preparation for Universal Credit. The Council has been engaged in monitoring how this proposal is developing and the recent announcement that this change will happen in West Lancashire in August 2015.

During the latter end of the year Universal Credit (UC) became an increasingly high profile issue. A UC Task Group has been created involving the Council – Transformation, Finance and Housing - the local Job Centre Plus Team and representation from BT Lancashire Services. Activity has been focussed on key stakeholder engagement – including the identification and engagement of key delivery partners – and digital access and support.

Also during the latter end of the year, BT Lancashire Services led the Council's participation of a Lancashire County-wide Single Person Discount project. The objectives of this project being to increase revenue for the Council and also prevent fraud. At the end of the year data was received from an external credit reference agency, Experian, and a planned mailshot will target those cases that are considered to be high risk.

In terms of Council stakeholder management and engagement, an area that required attention was the working arrangements and relationship with the Council's Audit Management and Team. During

the early part of 2014, a lot of work was carried out in collaboration with the Council and in particular the Head of Audit to improve this situation. This resulted in much improved working arrangements based on collaboration and joint objectives.

Finally, a great deal of effort went into ensuring that the 2013/2014 year end and 2014/2015 billing exercise for Council Tax and NNDR was managed in an efficient and timely manner. This required the data needed to close down the financial records for 2013/2014 being readily available to the Council. It also required the timely dispatch of the 2014/2015 bills to enable the collection and recovery process to commence within set timescales. This whole process was again conducted in a collaborative way, and to the satisfaction of the Council.

## Performance Summary

Performance relating to Benefits work and Sundry Debtors over the year has been good. The Benefits-related service levels were consistently ahead of target – the most significant improvement being in the area of Local Authority Error when compared to the previous year. Whilst the area of Sundry Debt Collection saw variations in performance trends, underlying performance remained strong over the year. With regard to Sundry Debtors, records show that there are a number of accounts that should be classed from a collection and recovery perspective as "unable to progress" (for example subject to legal action). The total value of cases falling into this category is in excess of £690k. BT Lancashire Services and West Lancashire Borough Council worked together to better understand the impact of this and reflect this factor in future years performance reporting. In addition there are a number of write off cases that were submitted for consideration by BTLs. These have been approved by the Council and the overall impact of this is, as stated earlier in this report, year-end performance has exceeded target.

Performance for most of the year in respect of collection of both current and previous Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) was below target, impacted in part by the economic climate and the new Government Welfare Reform changes – in particular the localised Council Tax Support scheme - and changes to the empty property discount arrangements, both introduced from 1 April 2013. The other issue that was impacting on a downturn in revenues collection and recovery was the recovery programme – a programme that required enhancing in terms of the frequency of pre-planned recovery activity. An increase in resources together with the implementation of a detailed and comprehensive recovery plan, from the issue of reminder notices to implementation of bailiffs' activity, resulted in improved performance during the last quarter.

In summary all Benefits-related and Sundry Debtors Service Level Agreements were delivered to target. With regard to Revenues, whilst Council Tax and NNDR service levels were behind, the encouraging feature was, whilst being a number of % points off target in January 2014, by the end of

March we were behind by only 0.7% and 1.07% respectively – in other words the trend was reversed and almost hit target within an 8 week period.

## Key Highlights

- Technology Migration – despite the issues described previously and attributed to the technology migration, such a project carries many risks that can have a major, negative impact on performance – the issues arising from this migration were relatively few.
- Performance Improvement – in particular in the last three months of the year - a review of the Local Taxation Recovery Plan going forward and increased activity agreed and set for the last three months of 2013/2014 and for 2014/15.
- Year end - the successful annual billing of 49,000 Council Tax accounts, 3,000 NNDR accounts and the uprating and notification to over 10,000 Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claimants.
- Pre-planning and preparation for 2014/2015 – the production of a comprehensive Work Programme for 2014/2015.

## Added Value

Year to date 'added value' to West Lancashire Borough Council is:

Activity	2013/2014 Year To Date (£K)
Discretionary Housing Payment Guidance	4.0
IRRV Performance Awards submission	2.0
Welfare Reform Presentations to DSH and West Lancs. Carers Groups	0.5
Presentation on Universal Credit implementation	0.2
Proposal for Housing Chargeable Repairs transfer	1
Response to BE 10828 re: Equality Policies and Practices	0.2
Discretionary Housing Payment Quarter 2 2013/14 briefing note	0.5
Face to face Portfolio Holder Discretionary Housing Payment briefing	0.2
Free Scholl Meals data extract	0.5
Council Tax payroll deductions	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.1</b>

**Table 9: Year to Date Added Value to West Lancashire Borough Council**

## 4 People Review

We have made a commitment to place quality at the core of the business. BT Lancashire Services maintain or are working towards a number of management systems across the organisation that enable us to work towards registration to a number of national and international standards, which provides a proven business improvement framework and a robust channel of support in achieving excellence.

### ISO 9001 Quality Management System

ISO 9001 Quality Management Systems is the internationally recognised standard for the quality management of businesses. It focuses on processes which control the delivery of products and services and ensures that customer needs and expectations are met. It gives a clear demonstration of commitment to quality. Following on from the success of the ICT Service, which successfully achieved certification to the standard in June 2012, it is our aim for the Revenues and Benefits Service to be included in the scope by the end of 2014.

### ISO 27001 ICT Information Security Systems

ISO 27001 aims to ensure that adequate controls are in place to address the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information. The standard is designed to ensure the selection of adequate and proportionate security controls, which help the organisation to protect its information assets and gives confidence to any interested parties. As part of BT Lancashire Services' overall strategy to demonstrate a commitment to client security, and to ensure that security is embedded deep into the culture of the organisation, we are in the process of implementing an Information Security Management System that encompasses all of our ICT services, including hosting, maintenance and support for services delivered to all of our client base. It is envisaged that the ICT Service will be assessed against the requirements of this highly regarded standard by December 2014.

### ISO 20000 IT Service Management Systems

ISO 20000 is the first worldwide standard specifically aimed at IT Service Management. It describes an integrated set of IT service management system processes for the effective delivery of services to the business and its customers. It is aligned with, and complementary to, the process approach defined within the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) from The Office of Government Commerce (OGC). Achieving this certification is a clear indicator that the ICT Service is being managed and delivered in accordance with accepted industry best practice. BT Lancashire Services is currently working towards the implementation of ISO 20000 and will seek certification by December 2014.

## Staff Benefits – looking forward

It is the aim to deliver a new staff benefits scheme to staff seconded into the Partnership by June 2014. It is envisaged that this exclusive online shopping and savings program will offer discounts at over 3,500 retailers across the UK and 4 different ways of making savings, including local deals and the collection of 'WOWPoints'.