

# BT Lancashire Services

Annual Review  
West Lancashire Borough Council  
2015/2016

Reference: WLBC Annual Review  
Version: Final  
Date: June 2016  
Owner(s): Mark Orford/Claire Hall

<b>Contents</b>		<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>2015/2016 High Level Performance Review</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>2016/2017 Continuous Improvement &amp; Planned Developments</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>2015/2016 ICT Review</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>2015/2016 Revenues and Benefits Review</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Quality</b>	<b>25</b>

## 1 Introduction

Welcome to the 2015/2016 Annual Review of the work of BT Lancashire Services (BTLS) on behalf of West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC), 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 with BT Lancashire Services.

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 2015/2016 was £3.227m and for this period, direct savings to West Lancashire Borough Council amounted to £552k. This is in addition to the agreement which also aims to deliver added value and investment (borne by the Partnership).

In summary the Contract in 2015/2016 has delivered to West Lancashire Borough Council:

- Direct savings of £552k.
- Combined ICT and Revenues and Benefits Added Value of £20k (incl. members refresh and Wifi solution, support for Flood Crisis and Empty Homes Review).

A high level summary of the financial benefits to West Lancashire Borough Council from the Partnership in its first five years, as at the 31 March 2016, is as follows:

Activity	2011/2012 (£k)	2012/2013 (£k)	2013/2014 (£k)	2014/2015 (£k)	2015/2016 (£k)	Total to Date (£k)
Savings	266	522	530	539	552	2,409
Revenue and Benefit ICT System	150	550	141	607	0	1,448
Payroll Service	-	13.5	13.5	0	0	27
Other Financial Benefits	25	30.5	79	160	20	315
Total Cashable Savings	441	1,116	763.5	1,306	572	4,199

**Table 1: Summary of Financial Benefits 2011-2016.**

**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 is 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 National Non-Domestic Rates 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, and network and voice services. It also includes access to a range of BTLS technical specialist and project management capability to enable business areas within the council to set an ICT strategy and implement projects to meet its business requirements.

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

## 2 2015/2016 High Level Performance Review

Details of performance against targets in respect of 2015-16 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 – **92%** resolved within agreed timeframe against target of **97%**.
- Minor Business Disruption – **98%** resolved within agreed timeframe against target of **97%**.
- Minor Disruption – **98%** 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 **97.02%** against a target of **97.10%**.
- Collection of current year's NNDR – collected **98.32%** against a target of **97.2%**.
- Collection of previous year's Council Tax – collected **37.31%** against a target of **24.5%**.
- Collection of Sundry Debtors – Collected **95%** against a target of **89.1%**.
- Benefits overall processing time – **7.02 days** against a target of **12 days**.
- **£82,401** of Housing Benefit Local Authority Error – against a target of less than **£139,235**
- Collection of Housing Benefit overpayments – collected **£276,577** against a target of **£170,000pa**

## 3 2016/2017 Continuous Improvement & Planned Developments

In this section we highlight the planned activity for each of the services scheduled to take place during 2016/2017 (in ICT Services this will also be in line with the implementation of the ICT Strategy).

### ICT Services:

#### West Lancashire Borough Council Standardisation Project

The following components make up the West Lancashire Borough Council Standardisation Project:

- The Estate Refresh Policy Proposal - which will inform the strategy for standardisation of the ICT estate and its replacement PC process - has been completed. This will improve support timescales and implement a cost effective replacement policy, and will be taken forward during 2016/17, based on WLBC's preferred options which have yet to be decided.

- The Network Equipment Refresh identifies all end of life or unsupported network equipment to be replaced and brought up to supportable hardware solution.

- The standardisation of the desktop estate will provide the following benefits:

Roaming capabilities for staff enabling them to log in anywhere  
Moving staff to a newer supported version of Office  
Automatic software and upgrade deployment  
Improved support via enhanced remote access aka; "Zero Touch"  
Remote self-service rebuild capability.

- The Application licensing review will conduct investigative work to ensure WLBC is suitably licensed, and will determine evidence of licensing to reduce the potential risk of fine. Freeware alternatives will also be identified in order to reduce costs.
- A further project will see the creation of processes, documentation and training to provide access to services and products in most efficient cost effective manner. This is intended to result in a better customer experience, the creation of a larger pool of support staff for customers, and the implementation of a new web presence for West Lancashire Borough Council's ordering, knowledge, guides, communications, faults and work requests.

- In order to deliver roaming capability for users, standardised drive access for files and folders will be implemented which will facilitate this remote support. This work will also support future reviews of data storage quota management and document management.
- Developments to remote access provision will see PSN compliant remote access to corporate desktop (RACD) for existing users, as well as agility laptops for current laptop users.

## **Security/Data Retentions and Public Services Network**

- A review will take place of the Email/Vault policy – with a view to move the customer from an open ended retention policy to one that mirrors Lancashire County Council. Data security, storage, costs and retention (best practise/DPA compliance). The following points have been approved in principle but are yet to be formalised :
  - Nothing is automatically archived (and is removed from mailbox after 12 months)
  - Users can manually archive at any time – to be retained in the vault for 5 years
  - User vault size of 2gb is applied

## **Additional high priority projects**

- Customer Services Customer Relationship Manager upgrade or replacement
- Upgrade or replacement of Customer Services Telephony
- Coins replacement to Modern.gov (committee decisions management system)
- Planning Service replacement of Electronic Document Management system
- 1<sup>st</sup> touch Self-Serve tenant portal
- Wi-Fi corporate and public offering (to remove dependency on LCC infrastructure/policies)

## Revenues and Benefits:

- **Transitional Activity:** A significant amount of activity will be required specifically during the first two quarters of the year to ensure changes required to roles within the new staffing structure implemented on 1st April 2016 are well managed and controlled. This will involve a considerable amount of staff training to increase resilience and upskill staff to ensure optimum resource to demand allocation and efficient ways of working. Although it is very early day's staff involved have embraced the new opportunities with an extremely positive and 'can do' attitude and this appears to have had a really positive impact on team spirit across the service.
- **Recovery and Enforcement:** Targeted action and close monitoring will continue throughout the new financial year to ensure that performance is delivered to target, and to ensure early identification of any issues in order that appropriate action can be undertaken to mitigate deterioration and deliver performance in line with the year-end targets.
- **Welfare Reform:** With regards to Universal Credit (UC), the Delivery Partnership including West Lancashire Borough Council, BT Lancashire Services, Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) and Lancashire County Council will continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss progress to date and next steps in continuing to work together to manage the effective local roll out of UC.
- **Improved Management Information:** A fundamental work programme for the service and one which will be a priority objective over the coming months is the development of much needed and improved management information. This is an essential development which is required to support better understanding of activity trends and decision making within the service and the Council.

ICT colleagues from within BTLs are currently working with officers within the service to assess whether this can be developed and maintained in house, which is the preferred option. However if this does not prove to be a feasible option an alternative external solution has already been identified and will be procured and funded by BTLs.

- **eDocumentation / Self-Serve Agenda :** The research and identification of options to develop the service by use of more electronic documents and increased levels of customer self-service will be a key objective for the service this coming year. Resources have been redirected as part of the service redesign in order for appropriate research, analysis and feasibility studies to be undertaken to agree the most suitable service strategy, prior to implementation. This will be



considered both from an efficiency but also from a customer service perspective and will be aligned to the Councils own overriding Corporate E Strategy.

- **Learning and Workforce Development:** A detailed training skills matrix and subsequent skills gap analysis will be developed this year to further support the ongoing development of staff aligned to the new service structure. In the interim staff training and development needs will be identified as part of the annual PDR process.

All managers are being encouraged to undertake Management Style Questionnaires and a selection of managers will also attend the BTLS Pioneers Leadership Course.

Corporate info bite training sessions will continue throughout the year along with mandatory training such as Health & Safety. Technical training will continue on an ongoing basis including refresher courses on new / changed regulations and ways of working.

Detailed succession plans will also be developed in order to best prepare and manage the staff and service through the anticipated transfer of activity to the Department of Work & Pensions as a result of the Universal Credit Roll out.

- **Internal and External Audit:** Agreed schedules of work for 2016/2017 in respect of both internal and external audit activity have now been developed and agreed in collaboration with the respective audit leads and we will work to support auditors throughout the year in performing their respective duties.
- **Financial liaison:** All activity relating to the Council's financial data requirements for the service has been agreed and scheduled. Information and data required by the Council will continue to be provided on an on-going basis and data will be provided in accordance with this schedule.
- **Maintenance of ISO 9001 Quality Management standard:** Work will continue across the service to increase levels of efficiency and effectiveness and continue to maintain accreditation to this highly regarded international standard.
- **2016/2017 Year End and 2017/2018 Billing:** A significant amount of activity will be undertaken to ensure that key 2016/17 Year End and 2017/18 New Year billing requirements are delivered, and all bills for Council Tax and NNDR are dispatched within the timescales required to enable collection of the New Year's charges in accordance within a challenging timeframe.

## Challenges in 2016/17

As we look at our plans for continuous improvement in the new financial year we also need to bear in mind the challenges we are aware of both nationally and locally which will impact on service delivery. A few key challenges are summarised below;-

*Increase in Council Tax:* WLBC gross Council Tax charge has increased by 1.75% in 2016/17. Lancashire County Council, Lancashire Fire and Rescue and Lancashire Police Authority have also increased their respective Council Tax charges by 3.99%, 0.99% and 1.99%. This has resulted in an overall gross increase in Council Tax at a Council Tax Band D equivalent of 3.39% for 2016/17, compared to 2015/16. In cash terms this has resulted in an extra £2.4m net collectable debt which in the current economic climate may present additional challenges in terms of helping customers meet their liabilities and achieving SLA targets.

*Welfare Changes:* Whilst Central Government continue to work to improve the electronic transfer of benefits related data to LAs to support the impact of welfare reform and migration to UC. This process requires continued testing, checking and maintenance activity to be performed by R&B staff which has consumed a significant amount of senior resource to support throughout 2015/16 and is expected to continue throughout 2016/17.

The impact of other Welfare Reform changes on claimant income may also present additional challenges in terms of customers meeting their liabilities and we have already seen a recent impact of this in the significant increase in the number of applications for Discretionary Housing Payments, (short term support to meet Housing Benefit shortfalls in rent liabilities). In excess of 800 DHP applications were processed by R&B staff in 2015/16 and this level is likely to continue and potentially increase in 2016/17.

*Business Rates Revaluation* – The Valuation Office (VOA) is in the process of updating the rateable values of all business properties and as such Business Rates will be calculated using the new rateable values from 1st April 2017. The last general revaluation was effective as from 1st April 2010 and so a considerable shift in valuations is anticipated. As a result of this it is highly likely that a "transitional relief (TR)" scheme may be introduced if this happens, any TR scheme in itself will increase the administrative burdens for the service.

Whilst the preparation for the revaluation will be led by the VOA, R&B will need to liaise closely with them and local rate payers to ensure resultant Rating Lists are accurate and up to date, this will place additional pressure on service delivery and our ability to maximise current year collection rates.

We will endeavour to prepare for the full NNDR Retention from 2020 by maximising rating liability using local intelligence and actively communicating with local business community but again, this will place added pressure on service delivery and our ability to maximise current year collection rates.

*Council Tax Support* - The current CTS scheme ends on 31st March 2017 and a new scheme will need to be consulted upon. Whilst WLBC will lead on the consultation it is anticipated that R&B staff will be heavily involved in supporting this process together with providing data to support decision making within the council to shape the new scheme.

*Closure of Magistrates Court* - Ormskirk Magistrates Court will close in June 2016. Whilst pre booked CT & NNDR courts have been secured until that date, it remains uncertain where and how many future court hearings will be made available. This will impact on our ability to escalate CT & NNDR non-payers to the more serious collection methods such as bailiffs where necessary, and could impact on our ability to meet SLA targets. We are awaiting further information on designated court locations which will no doubt also present challenges for resourcing court hearings.

*Implementation of New Structure* – The new staffing structure came into effect 1st April 2016. One of the key benefits of the changes is the ability to cross skill staff and re focus resources to where demand is greatest. However the change to a more streamlined, generic way of working requires a significant amount of transitional activity and staff training. This will add additional pressure to the delivery of 'Business As Usual' activity specifically during the first half of the year but will be invaluable in terms of improved efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery moving forward.

## 4 2015/2016 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 2015/2016 was **£1.201m**, giving a guaranteed saving of **£211k** to West Lancashire Borough Council. These savings are in addition to the **£4.179m** combined for 2011 - 2016.

In addition to the delivered saving of **£552k** (in 2015/2016), other financial benefits have been gained by West Lancashire Borough Council through the delivery of the BT Lancashire Services ICT Service.

### ICT Strategy

- BT Lancashire Services completed the Microsoft Enterprise Support Agreement (MS ESA) annual review exercise and also provided the council with details of all applications and software products on their estate; the latter exercise identified the requirement for a further piece of work where BT Lancashire Services are assisting WLBC in the rationalization of their applications with the intention of ensuring license compliance whilst minimizing cost outlay.

### Infrastructure Improvements

- During July the ICT Service co-ordinated improvement works with a key service provider, Vodafone. This involved the installation of new fibre circuits to the Robert Hodge Centre. This work was in preparation for general modernisation works to be undertaken by Vodafone to improve service and reliability. During November 2015 ICT Services completed work in conjunction with Vodafone as part of a network improvement plan that Vodafone are undertaking across West Lancashire. The work involved the migration of three key telephony circuits formerly owned by Cable & Wireless onto Vodafone's core network. These circuits included the main outbound telephony service from Derby Street, the telephony link to Robert Hodge Centre and the telephony link to West Lancashire Business Investment Centre. ICT Services involvement included the co-ordination of Vodafone engineers whilst on site and the testing of telephony services upon completion. This work was scheduled during the weekend

period to minimise disruption with an ICT engineer on site during to ensure successful completion of the work.

## Other ICT Projects

- June 2015 saw the go live of the new West Lancashire Borough Council intranet. Feedback has been positive, with the new solution praised for being both aesthetically pleasing and easy to navigate.
- During April 2015, ICT Services resolved some long standing issues with the lettings system Abritas. This is a key tool for Housing Services, who had been experiencing issues since the installation of Windows 7 PCs during 2014. The issue was previously being dealt with internally by Housing Services staff. The ICT Service took ownership of the issue in March 2015 and were able to resolve the issues during April by working closely with Housing officers.
- Following the successful deployment of the AirWatch Mobile Device Management tool to early adopters in May 2015, the ICT Service provided support to officers included in the full roll out during June. This included face to face support for senior officers when enrolling devices and general support and troubleshooting. Twenty five per cent of mobile e-mail users required a mobile phone upgrade to an IOS device to accommodate the Airwatch installation. The ICT Service procured, configured and delivered these devices as part of the roll out, including the management of the migration of mobile telephone numbers to the new devices in a way that caused minimum disruption to users.
- The core Environmental Services application, Northgate M3 Public Protection, was upgraded during July 2015.
- During August 2015, ICT Services installed the Unified Messaging system for 40 Housing Services' staff. This followed on from the procurement and installation of 50 new system licences in July and included the configuration of each user's mailbox, installation of the necessary software and a brief one to one demonstration for each user on how to use the system.
- During October 2015, ICT Services also successfully upgraded and migrated West Lancashire Borough Council's ETARMIS system, used for recording clocking details. In addition, the upgrade and migration of the IKEN system was completed in October along with scheduled training.
- During November 2015, ICT Services created a Secure FTP site for use both internally and by external contractors, to allow the transference of information.

- The West Lancashire Investment Centre Building Management System is aimed at reducing operating costs, energy usage and CO2 emission and as such, its efficient operation at all times is essential. During December 2015, ICT Services created a dedicated secure Virtual Private Network that allows the external contractor direct access to the system (Trend 360) ultimately resulting in savings in both time and money in resolving software related control issues, as physical call-outs will be unnecessary and accordingly, no call-out charges will apply. This change will also facilitate better response times which, in turn, will lead to a much improved service for the Centre's tenants and conference delegates.
- Browsealoud was launched on the West Lancashire Borough Council Intranet on 15 March 2016. This is support software that adds a speech, reading and translation service to websites, facilitating access and participation for people who require online reading support. It is particularly useful for those with print disabilities such as dyslexia or mild visual impairments, those with English as a second language and for people who just prefer listening to content rather than reading it.
- During May 2015, ICT Services provided support for the 2015 Elections, this included; the preparation of the corporate network to Ormskirk Civic Hall the installation, preparation and testing of PCs print and scanning services telephony and fax services and the setup of audio visual equipment to the stage area. A BTL Technician was on site at the Civic Hall for the duration of both counts.

## Performance

2015/2016 was a strong year in terms of performance against contractual Service Level Agreement. There are five targets, based on the impact of an issue and in four of the five cases the target figure for resolution was exceeded.

No.	Definition of SLA	Target (%)	Performance Year 2015/2016 (%)
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	92
3	Minor Business Disruption: Single user or user group unable to work with no available workaround	97	98
4	Minor Disruption: Single user or user group experiencing problems but with ICT defined available workaround	97	98
5	Advice and Guidance	97	100

**Table 2: Contractual Targets.**

A single Priority Two incident was logged in October 2015 which subsequently breached, causing an overall failure of the Priority Two target for that month. This also had the effect of lowering the Yearly Performance figure for Priority Two incidents and causing a failure of the overall target.

The number of escalated and auto generated incidents reported during 2015/2016 compared to the same period last year:

Incidents Raised	Incidents Meeting SLA (%)	2014/2015 Year to Date	2015/2016 Year to Date	2015/2016 Year to Date Variation (%)
Priority 1	100	0	0	-
Priority 2	92	4	15	275
Priority 3	98	211	341	61.6
Priority 4	98	1,075	1044	(2.9)
Priority 5	98	137	116	21.2
Total	-	1,427	1516	6.2

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

Key performance indicators gathered monthly:

Key Performance indicator	Year 2015/2016
Percentage of incidents resolved 0–8 hours (any priority)	69
Priority 3 - percentage resolved within 8 hours	80
Priority 4 - percentage resolved within 8 hours	67
Priority 5 - percentage resolved within 8 hours	55
Percentage of Interactions resolved at first point of contact (any priority) by service desk	12
Number of incidents raised by Elected Members	76

**Table 4: Key performance indicators.**



The following table shows the volume of telephone calls answered by AskICT Service Desk during 2015/2016 compared to last year.

Activity	Year 2012/2013	Year 2013/2014	Year 2014/2015	Year 2015/2016
Calls answered	2,157	<b>1,594</b>	1194	1340
% of calls answered	93	<b>91</b>	92	92

**Table 5: AskICT calls answered.**

## 5 2015/2016 Revenues and Benefits Review

The total cost of the Service in 2015/2016 was £2.025m giving a guaranteed recurring saving of £340k per annum to West Lancashire Borough Council. These savings are in addition to the recurring savings of £169k delivered in 2011/2012, £323k delivered in 2012/2013, £328k delivered in 2013/2014 and £332k delivered in 2014/15.

In addition to the delivered saving of £340k (in 2015/2016), other financial benefits have been gained by West Lancashire Borough Council through the delivery of the Revenues and Benefits Service by BT Lancashire Services most notably a significant improvement in Revenues collection and arrears reduction when compared to previous financial years.

### Performance

The agreed Service Level Agreement (SLA) for Revenues and Benefits comprises in total eight performance indicators covering the Service. All eight are contractual indicators although it has been agreed that one - Benefit Fraud Sanctions & Prosecutions should remain suspended.

No.	Definition of SLA	Target (%)	Annual Performance 2015/2016
1	NI 181 – Average time to process all items.	12 days	7.02 days
2	Overpayment Recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments	£170,000 p.a.	£276,577
3	Benefit Fraud Sanctions & Prosecutions.	Target suspended	-
4	Benefits Local Authority Error Overpayments	Below £139,235	£82,401
5	Council Tax: Collection Rate Current Year	97.10%	97.02%
6	Council Tax: Previous Years Arrears	24.50%	37.31%
7	NNDR Collection rate current year (BVPI10)	97.20%	98.32%
8	Sundry Debtors	89.10%	95.00%

**Table 6: Revenues and Benefits Performance 2015/16**

The overall year end performance is extremely positive and the final 2015/16 outturn is the strongest performance which has been delivered since the contract commenced.

As we have previously struggled to meet the Current Year Council Tax and NNDR annual Service Level Agreement Targets there has been a key focus on maximising revenue collection and arrears reduction throughout the year.

Strict governance arrangements were put in place and a detailed action plan developed and implemented specifically during the final two quarters of the financial year. Specific activity undertaken included;-

- Production of detailed analysis to better understand both the internal and external factors impacting on performance, in order to inform decision making
- Increased staff resources in the recovery of accounts in arrears
- Introduction of more robust weekly monitoring arrangements
- Introduction of additional steps within the recovery programme e.g. telephone calls at pre bailiff letter stage
- Refocus of enforcement activity and application of advanced recovery options e.g. hand delivery of summons
- Advertisements placed in both the local newspaper and the Councils 'Let's Talk Business' publication as a reminder to settle accounts and offer support and advice

As a direct result of the above activity we have for the first time since the contract commenced not only met the Current Year NNDR Target but exceeded it by 1.12%. We have also delivered the strongest performance against the Current Year Council Tax Target only marginally missing the target by 0.08%, which equates to approximately £44k against a liability of in excess of £53m.

## Financial Impact of Year End Performance

In order to provide some financial context surrounding performance, the overall financial impact of the year end performance along with the estimated direct impact to WLBC has been summarised for information in the table below:

No.	Definition of SLA	Target	Annual Performance 2015/ 2016	Total Financial Impact	Estimated Impact to WLBC
1	NI 181 – Average time to process all items	12 days	7.02 days		
2	Overpayment Recovery of Housing Benefit	£170k	£277k	£107k	£107k
3	Benefit Fraud Sanctions & Prosecutions.	Target suspended	-	-	-
4	Benefits Local Authority Error Overpayments	Below £144k	£82k	£62k	£62k
5	Council Tax Current Year Collection Rate (WLBC 13%)	97.10%	97.02%	-£44k	-£6k
6	Council Tax Previous Years Collection Rate (WLBC 13%)	24.50%	37.31%	£894k	£116k
7	NNDR Current Year Collection Rate (WLBC 40%)	97.20%	98.32%	£367k	£147k
8	Sundry Debtors (WLBC 100%)	89.10%	95.00%	£423k	£423k
Total 'cash value' impact				£1.640m	£680k

**Table 7: Financial Impact of Revenues and Benefits Performance 2015/16**

As can be seen from the table above the overall financial impact of the over performance against annual SLA targets in 2015/16 equates to approximately £1.64m in 'cash value' with an estimated direct positive impact to the Council of £680k.

In addition to the contractual targets we also set an 'internal' target surrounding the recovery of NNDR - Previous Years arrears, which we aspire to achieve an annual recovery of 24.5%. This year we have recovered approximately 46.2%, the over performance equates to a financial value of almost £1.56m, positive direct impact of £423k to the Council.

## Challenges in 2015/16

The above performance levels have been delivered under some quite challenging circumstances experienced in 2015/16. Several key areas are listed below;-

- Whilst delivering all statutory and internal obligations to challenging timescales
- Whilst experiencing a significant operational impact of both the Revenues & Benefits Managers

being absent from work due to serious medical conditions, from July and November 2015 respectively and ongoing.

- Whilst undergoing a service redesign and restructure during the period of November 2015 to January 2016.
- Whilst providing additional unplanned supporting activity for the Council surrounding; the Flood crisis, Capacity Grid, Member Briefings and Free School Meals

## Key Activity in 2016/2017

During the year the team has focused on a range of activities and initiatives aimed at delivering overall and sustainable improvements to all elements of the Revenues and Benefits Service.

Our key objectives for 2015/16 included addressing those priorities for the service specifically, from a Revenues perspective, collection and arrears reduction and for Benefits, timely and accurate claim management. In addition, a further objective was to build on a culture of effective stakeholder engagement underpinned by collaborative and strong working relationships and further improve the governance and communications arrangements with our staff.

A summary of key areas of activity are listed below:

- *Organisational restructure:* A significant amount of activity was undertaken during the year to redesign and restructure the service making it 'fit for purpose' moving forward. Four key objectives underpinned the redesign these included the development of;-
  - A service 'best aligned' to future service demands. One which is 'future proofed' to best adapt to key national and local factors that will impact on the structure and staff
  - A more flexible workforce whereby we look to optimise cross skilling of staff to enable effective resource management
  - A more generic workforce whereby we minimise specialism and increase resilience however where appropriate ensure access to specialist support within each service area
  - Clearly defined and understood managerial roles and responsibilities which ensure managers clearly understand what is expected of them

In order to achieve these objectives a significant amount of time and resource was invested in considering the organisational structure, talent and people and processes and technology. New roles were evaluated and moderated and a full consultation exercise undertaken. Initial proposals were adjusted to take into account staff feedback and the new structure was approved. The redeployment exercise was completed in January 2016 with all existing staff

retaining a post within the new structure. Positive feedback was received from staff and union representatives with regards to the management and communication of the overall process.

- *Recovery and Enforcement:* The recovery programme introduced last year has been repeated for 2015/2016 and results as previously detailed have been extremely positive.
- *Welfare Reform:* Work has continued throughout the year to support the Universal Credit Delivery Partnership which included representation from WLBC, BTLS RBS, the local Job Centre and also Lancashire County Council to continue to work together to manage the effective local roll out of UC.

The Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) was transferred from BTLS to the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) in August 2015. Priority was given to staff engagement and involvement in the run up and during the transition of the service and as such a smooth transfer was undertaken.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) also continues to have been managed well in collaboration with colleagues from the Councils Housing Service – in particular spend in relation to grant funding.

- *Internal and External Audit:* Agreed schedules of work for 2015/2016 in respect of both internal and external audit activity has been on-going throughout the year. All audit work was completed with minimal impact on service delivery. Feedback received from the audit work has been really positive and no major areas of concern were identified.
- *Financial liaison:* All activity relating to the Council's financial data requirements for the RBS has been delivered in accordance with a challenging schedule. This activity includes the collection, consolidation and provision of RBS-related data required by the Council to enable and/or support the submission of key financial returns.
- *2015/2016 Year end and 2016/2017 billing:* A significant amount of activity was undertaken to ensure that key Year End and New Year billing requirements were delivered and all bills for Council Tax and NNDR were dispatched within the timescales required to enable collection of the New Year's charges in accordance within a challenging timeframe.
- *Learning and Development:* Various approaches have been taken to meet the learning and development needs of our staff this year. This includes a rolling programme of E-Learning courses, targeted technical training and a pan BTLS info bite training programme.
- *The implementation of ISO 9001 Quality Management standards:* Activity has continued throughout the year to introduce improved standards and ways of working with a specific focus on; easy access to key data including regulations and working practices, improved governance

and communications including 121's, Team Briefs and Training, and also the identification and rectification of non-conformances, identifying when we have done something wrong and getting it right in the future. As such the service was awarded the accreditation of ISO9001 earlier in the year and further improvements and refinements have continued to improve working practises across the service.

## Added Value

In addition to the planned key areas of activity summarised in the above section the service has also played a significant role in supporting the Council across various unplanned activities throughout the year. Some of these tasks have absorbed a significant amount of resource and have been provided within minimal notice. They have been provided willingly by staff within the service and at no additional charge to the Council. Some of the key activities are summarised below;-

- *Empty Homes Review* – Following the Borough Council's decision to sign up for the Capacity Grid exercise, staff within the service worked closely with the third party supplier to provide source data to initiate a postal review process and then subsequently processed resultant outcomes via the RBS Council Tax computer software.
- *Flood Crisis* – Staff worked closely with WLBC Colleagues at short notice to assist in the processing of flood payment claims from affected customers, dealing with customer queries and processing the resultant flood payments.
- *Service Updates* – Two service updates have been provided to members throughout the year along with occasional additional briefing notes around subject areas such as 'Impact of Tax Credits'. This is in addition to a face to face presentation made to members in conjunction with colleagues from the DWP.
- *Free School Meals (FSM)* – Staff worked with Lancashire County Council colleagues on behalf of the Borough Council, in promoting and confirming eligibility for FSM across the WLBC Benefit caseload. This involved identifying the source data set, writing out to potentially eligible customers and with the assistance of WLBC Customer Contact Centre staff collating eligible applicants and updating LCC.

## Key Highlights

To summarise the highlights for the Revenues and Benefits service for 2015/16:

- The strongest performance has been delivered by the service this year since the contract commenced
- The service has been redesigned and restructured making it 'fit for purpose' and 'best aligned' to meet future service demands
- Over performance of revenue collection and arrears reduction against annual SLA targets of approximately £1.64m in 'cash value' with an estimated direct positive impact to the Council of £680k
- A range of added value activities have been provided to the Council throughout the year at no additional charge
- Continued excellent cross organisational joint working to plan, prepare and manage the impact of Welfare Reforms and in particular UC go-live
- Overall, an improvement in all SLA's when compared to previous years – more revenue collected, local tax arrears reduced and a redesigned service structure implemented which will ensure the service is fit for purpose, 'best aligned' to meet future service demand and 'future proofed' to best adapt to key national and local factors



## 6 Quality

We have made a commitment to place quality at the core of the business. BT Lancashire Services maintain or is working towards of a number of management systems to align our organisation to a number of national and international standards. These provide a proven business improvement framework and a robust mechanism for 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. The ICT Service successfully achieved certification to the standard in June 2012. We are externally audited at six monthly intervals and last year were re-accredited in June 2014 and December 2014. It is our aim for the Revenues and Benefits Service to be included in the scope by mid-2015.

### 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.

During 2015/16 ICT Services undertook the following activities in improving ICT Security.

Activity	Description
<i>Information Assurance Framework</i>	<i>At the request of the Council, an expansive information assurance framework developed by BTLS that encompasses the use, processing, storage and transition of Council information and the systems and processes used for those purposes. This framework is to be made available by the Council to external auditors.</i>
<i>Public Services Network Code of Connection</i>	<i>An annual PSN Code of Connection must be completed to send and receive information over the PSN network. Details include technical infrastructure and compliance to specified information assurance requirements – a process that includes extensive penetration testing to identify vulnerabilities and remedial actions.</i>
<i>CISP Registration</i>	<i>The Cyber Security Information Sharing Partnership (CiSP) has been set up by central government in conjunction with key stakeholders from the private sector. It is run by CERT UK, the UK National Computer Emergency Response Team.  At the request of the Council, CISP registration for WLBC has been completed so that the Council are informed of cyber security alerts and BTLS ICT Services response to such alerts.</i>
<i>PCI Attestation of Compliance</i>	<i>BTLS ICT Services commissioned a "mandatory" Qualified Security Assessor from BT Plc to review/assess and declare compliance with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) – applying to Cardholder Data (Contact Centre (Call Centre); Customer Service Point (Retail Outlet); Data Centre.</i>
<i>SIRO Annual Governance Statement</i>	<i>Assurance by BTLS ICT Services that tasks specified by the Council have been completed in line with the Council's Data Protection policy framework.</i>
<i>ICT Risk Exception Form</i>	<i>Used in instances where business applications are configured and managed locally by the Council. The form validates information security risks relating to the deployment and management of business applications by the Council.</i>

**Table 8: Improving Security**

## 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 to the approach defined within the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) from The Office of Government Commerce (OGC). BTLS is committed to delivering its ICT services in line with best practise guidelines of ISO 20000; we undertook a major organisational restructure in 2015/2016 to further improve the way in which are services are delivered in line with ITIL Best Practice, including significant investment in staff training.