

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<i>Revenues and Benefits Service Transition Update</i>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<i>Customer Services and Business Support – Duncan Smith</i>
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>Nicola Ellis – Head of Customer Services</b>
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<b>WARD/S AFFECTED</b>	<i>All</i>

## 1. Purpose of Report

To provide a brief progress report on the project to bring the Revenues and Benefits service in house as a fully shared service.

## 2. Background

2.1 Members will be aware that the contract with Northgate Public Services for the provision of Revenues and Benefits services ends on 31 October 2018 and the decision was made that the service would come back 'in house' to form a fully shared service with Chiltern DC

2.2 Work started earlier in the year to ensure the smooth transition and this report provides a brief update on the key areas of the transition.

## 3. Updates on the transition workstreams

### IT

The Business Support team has been busy over recent weeks building new servers to enable hosting of the IT systems in Amersham. These are the systems currently hosted by Northgate in their data centre in Woking. It should be noted that the timescales for setting up the hosting and then the transfer and reconciliation of data are extremely tight to enable the live systems to be up and running from November.

Academy test data has been extracted and delivered to Amersham to enable the systems to be built remotely by Capita and for the initial testing to take place. This testing will be carried out in conjunction with Capita who are providing assistance with the migration.

A similar process will be carried out in respect of the document management / workflow system (Information@Work). This is due to commence w/c 10 September and will be supported by Northgate Public Services.

Once the systems are set up in house they will be made available via VWorkspace which will enable the transferring homeworkers currently employed by Northgate to have remote access to the systems.

Note – there will be a short period of a few days where the systems will be unavailable however arrangements will be made to ensure that the payment run / direct debit processes

will be uninterrupted. It is also proposed that there will also be a 'view only' system available to ensure that the impact on customer queries is minimised.

### **Finance**

The main change around finance is that a decision was made to utilise the existing Chiltern Civica cash receipting system. This reduces set up costs of using the Capita system currently used by Northgate on the Council's behalf. The finance team are working with Business Support to ensure the necessary interfaces are in place between the Academy system and Icon cash receipting and also that the BACS service is uninterrupted.

One additional area is the Automated Payments telephone line where a joint line will be operating allowing taxpayers to make payments to either CDC or SBDC through the same telephone number. This is also the most cost effective option of providing this service. An order has been made with the Council's supplier and scripts are currently being written to enable this.

From 1 November the Finance team will also be assuming responsibility for the processing and banking of all payments and the subsequent reconciliations – these processes are currently being carried out by Northgate staff.

### **Staffing**

HR have now prepared the Measures Letter for the TUPE affected staff transferring from Northgate to South Bucks. This has been issued this week (w/c 3 Sept) with consultation with staff commencing shortly after. The main measures relate to pay date, date of transfer, locations, sick pay, pensions and private medical insurance. There are also a couple of measures relating to individuals only.

The new structure for the joint service has now been designed incorporating staff transferring from Northgate. A number of new roles (including apprentices) are proposed.

### **Customer Services**

The joint customer service team has been taking South Bucks revenues and benefits calls for approximately 18 months now so staff are already familiar with the service. Arrangements are currently being made to set up a customer service / revenues and benefits 'hub' in the current Northgate area at Capswood. As well as answering some calls in this location, this will enable resilience in dealing with personal callers to the offices.

Members are asked to note this report

<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
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