

DATE: 10 April 2008

Revenues and Benefits – Electronic Document Management System

Ward(s) All

Portfolio: Cllr A. Griffiths (Finance and Personnel)

Summary of report:

Review the impact on performance of the new Revenues and Benefits electronic document management information system (EDMS).

Background papers:

None applicable.

Reason for scrutiny:

- In 2005/06 Revenues and Benefits (R&B) performance dipped to an all time low.
- WMBC one of the five poorest performing authorities was selected by BFI in January 2006 for a focused inspection
- Stakeholder's confidence in the service dipped prompting an "options appraisal" considering outsourcing.
- As a result a mixed economy recovery plan approach was accepted.
- Progress was subject to scrutiny by stakeholders.
- R&B have transformed and are now regarded internally as an exemplary service having made significant improvements and financial savings.
- They were short listed for the 2008 LGC Finance Team of the Year Award

Resource and legal considerations:

The implementation of the EDMS system was a key component in the revenues and benefits recovery plan approved by Scrutiny

Noticeable Benefits of EDMS

- Improved efficiency through faster access to information
- Greater consistency in working practices through standardisation of process
- Increased quality of work due to staff compliance with policies and procedures
- Productivity gains from the automation of repetitive tasks
- Reduced cost of storage and retrieval of information and files

- More open, transparent government enabling better public access
- The possibility of integrating into a corporate system
- Improved Management information
- Reduced support costs i.e. printers and postage
- On target to achieve efficiency savings
- Improved staff morale

Citizen impact:

Enhanced service to citizens by:-

- Improved ease and choice of access
- Improved speed and quality of service
- Increased benefit take-up
- Improved complaints/appeals processes
- Improved partnership working with RSLs
- Fast tracking claims for vulnerable customers; reducing hardship, securing tenure
- Improved customer satisfaction – fewer complaints more compliments
- Improved customer service through integrated front and back office and more efficient staff
- Faster processing of claims
- Less errors
- Waiting times reduced
- Phone call waiting times reduced.

Environmental impact:

- Eliminated paper processes – saving in excess of 300,000 sheets of paper per annum
- Removal of 600 filing cabinets released enough floor space to relocate Revenues from the old town hall in to the Civic centre reducing electricity, heating and saving £90k accommodation costs
- Eliminated the need for paper files and on going maintenance – saving in excess of 250 cardboard files per annum and 5000 sheets of paper
- Reduced time taken to deal with calls, resulting in reduction in use of electricity, phones calls,
- Electronic messaging and automated interfaces have reduced printing requirements and associated costs e.g electricity, printer cartridges etc.
- Many reports are now stored electronically and are viewed on line negating the need to print them – estimated savings of 10,000 sheets of paper
- Electronic rent officer referrals eliminated the need for paper referrals resulting in reduced paper, printing and envelopes costs
- The management and storage of emails associated with individual claims or accounts can now be automatically linked to the claimant/account negating the need to print off data and file remotely.
- Workflow – This automates the routing of documents and forms to individuals that are experienced to deal with them. Saving approximately 10,000 sheet of paper

- Automated letters - Some correspondence generated whilst the customer waits reducing post, envelopes and postal costs.

Performance management:

Statistics released by central government for 2007 performance show Walsall's revenues and benefits team to be the most improved metropolitan team in the UK.

Measurable improvements

- Time taken to process new claims reduced 74% in year and to process changes in circumstances reduced 57% in year
- Queue waiting times reduced 50%
- Outstanding work reduced 77 %
- Telephone abandon rates reduced
- Case load increased 4%
- Successful recruitment and retention
- On-going training and development.
- Flexible/customer focused service delivery
- Securing external funding
- Sickness rates reduced 46%
- leavers rates reduced 31%
- NNDR highest collection rate ever.
- Council tax collection increase 0.77%

Local performance improvements

- DD take up increased 9%
- E-payments increased 41%
- New payment dates
- Reduced bailiff costs
- Backlogs cleared
- Vacancies filled, induction programme and career grades introduced.
- Complaints dropped 34%
- Waiting times reduced 50%
- Absence levels dropped by an average 3.8 days
- Attrition rates dropped 5%

Equality Implications:


Automating procedures ensures all citizens are treated equally.

Consultation:

- Members
- Registered social landlords
- Other authorities e.g. Telford

Contact Officer:

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1. Report

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In this section of the report, you should take note of the following points:-

- There is no need to reproduce the title of the report at the top of the page
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1.2
1.3
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