

Key Recommendations

R1	<p>Agree a shared vision of what an excellent benefits service for the people of Derby will be and how this will be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensure that as part of the customer services improvement programme Councillors and staff define and own an excellence vision for the benefits service to which they aspire and which includes• an evidence based understanding of the needs of diverse, hard to reach and vulnerable communities• resourced plans with specific actions, measures, timetables, named people
R2	<p>Strengthen customer focus and reduce the time it takes to process claims by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• understanding the reasons why customers don't return information quickly• designing processes that encourage staff proactively to contact and encourage customers to contact the service quickly• use visiting officers to ensure a speedier and equitable service• improving communication and processes between front and back office so that claims are only touched once and• improving the understanding of why customers access the service and update the current customer service strategy
R3	<p>Improve the take up of benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• by better understanding who and where the groups are who are under claiming HB• using demographic information to target areas or specific groups:• linking to the Council's anti poverty strategy
R4	<p>Improve the capacity of the benefits service by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ensuring staff have access to procedures and training material which is available to all that need it• updating the current training policy so that a consistent approach to administering benefits is applied and• improving workforce planning which should include policies which will have a positive impact on recruitment, retention, staff development, smarter working
R5	<p>Improve the Benefits Service's understanding and delivery of value for money</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conducting an assessment of how local factors and context impact on costs• Identifying indicators that measure efficiency/productivity• Conducting benchmarking with a range of organisations which work in a variety of ways• Focusing on areas identified as a result of this work in order to improve efficiency and• Agreeing what value for money measures are required

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Action planning to support key recommendations.

	Actions	Outcomes	Deadline dates	Officer Lead	Progress
1	Build evidence based understanding of needs of communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with John Parnham (Research and strategy) Area neighbourhoods (Andy Thomas) Build knowledge framework Use knowledge framework to inform take-up and customer service delivery Link to anti poverty strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved benefit take-up Improved Council Tax collection and debt recovery Increased customer satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge framework built April 09 	Maurice Curtin & Brian Tomlinson	Met with John Parnham – Supplying bens caseload data to match socio-economic data BT to contact Area neighbourhood to start building knowledge framework. Links to customer perspective in Customer service will inform take-up planning and delivery. Seniors forum visited 4 Dec 08 Meeting with Neighbourhood senior management 12 Jan 09
2	Obtain customer perspective of service delivery before processes are redesigned and before and after each Pilot delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased customer satisfaction with service deliver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May 2008 1st survey Focus groups Aug 2008 Jan 2009 2nd Survey 	Brian Tomlinson	1st customer survey completed and results fed into CSIP planning Links to understanding demographic info in 1 Brian Tomlinson leading from CSIP on customer consultation Survey underway for Pilot area Survey completed for pilot area and BT attending Focus groups

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3	Develop a vision for the Customer Services Improvement Programme which can be defined and owned by staff & Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff & Cllrs have a clear understanding of Customer Service Improvement Programme Vision 		Customer Service Improvement Programme board	Staff workshops completed and volunteers engaged in designing new processes for services. Vision for service established Will be embedded into Managing Individual Performance meetings
4	Survey benefit customers about why they don't return info quickly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quicker processing of benefit claims Reduced the number of claims made defective Reduce the number of disputes against benefit decisions 	<p>Analysis by end of Nov 08</p> <p>Scope and implements verification easements to assist vulnerable customers claiming benefit by week commencing 5 Dec 08</p> <p>Implement verification easements 19 Jan 09</p>	MH	<p>Part of CSIP project - Delivered through Focus Groups. Will inform processes in Changes service</p> <p>Benefits conducting analysis of defective revisions</p> <p>Analysis complete</p> <p>Easements scoped Dec 08</p>
5	Design processes that encourage proactive quick contacting of customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the number of defective claims Quicker processing of benefit claims 	<p>Process design is Delivered</p> <p>1st Pilot commences 29 September 08</p>	CSIP project team	<p>Delivered. Processes redesigned to include proactive quick contacting of customers. Links to changes project in CSIP</p> <p>In place now claim checking at 10 and 20 days</p>
6	Use visiting officers to deliver a speedier & equitable service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the number of defective claims Quicker processing of benefit claims 	<p>Process design is Delivered</p> <p>1st Pilot commences 29 September 08</p>	CSIP project team	Links to CSIP as above (5) planned into redesigned processes with steps and rules for using VOs

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7	Improve processes and communication between front and back office so that claims are touched once	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased customer satisfaction with service delivery Quicker processing of benefit claims Reduced hand-offs Increased value for money 	<p>Process design is Delivered</p> <p>1st Pilot commences 29 September 08</p> <p>Scope 2nd pilot and deliver recommendations to project board 17 Dec 08</p> <p>Implement Programme board recommendation Jan 09 to Feb 09</p>	CSIP project team	<p>Links to CSIP process design – a core principle of redesigned processes</p> <p>1st pilot is delivering this approach MI supports this</p> <p>2nd pilot in planning stage</p> <p>2nd pilot (change events scoped) paper to Programme board</p>
8	Improve understanding of why customers access the service and update Customer service strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased customer satisfaction with service delivery Reduced calls into Derby Direct that are chasing service delivery 	Ongoing	KA/BF/MH	<p>Part of core business</p> <p>Weekly planning meetings to review why customers are accessing service. For example work priorities are adjusted,</p>
9	<p>Improve take-up plan by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understanding groups who are under claiming using demographic information to targets areas or specific groups linking to anti poverty strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved benefit take-up Improved Council Tax collection and debt recovery 		MC	<p>See 1 – some work done to try and understand the demographics better. Take up plan has been developed. Work is going on to agree work to be carried out involving key stakeholders. Quarterly meetings will be scheduled to review progress followed by councillor briefing on the outcome.</p>
10	Ensure staff have electronic access to training material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved capacity & flexibility of staff resources Improved employee development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work packages completed by 06 Oct 08 On CSIS end of 	CSIP project team	<p>Links to CSIP project plan. Training material and rules to be available on CSIS.</p> <p>Superseded as customer</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased accuracy of benefit processing Deliver value for money training service 	<p>December 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement REGS and Courseware – April 09 		<p>services is investing in an online training product</p> <p>Procurement hitch – contract out to tender</p>
11	Redesign processes for service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased customer satisfaction with service delivery Quicker processing of benefit claims Reduced hand-offs Increased value for money in service delivery Improved debt recovery performance Increased accuracy of benefit processing 	06 October 2008	CSIP project leads	Work packages written for new processes.
12	Develop assisted electronic claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased customer satisfaction with service delivery Quicker processing of benefit claims Reduced hand-offs Increased value for money in service delivery Increased accuracy of benefit processing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement August/Sep 2008 Implementation 31 Jan 09 	BP and CSIP programme Board	Julie S project and links eclaims project being managed within CSIP
13	Redesign training plan and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased accuracy of benefit processing Increased customer satisfaction with service delivery Increase cross-service staff flexibility Increased staff satisfaction 	<p>Start September 08 for 1st Pilot</p> <p>End Mar 09</p>	MC & Project leads	<p>Skills audit done for 1st pilot</p> <p>Training takes place September 08</p> <p>Agreed a Modular Training Strategy for Customer Services.</p> <p>Skills audit underway for current skill levels – end Sept 08</p> <p>Design a modular training</p>

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					package for Team Leaders REGS training package to be procured
14	Improve work force planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase cross-service staff flexibility • Increased staff satisfaction • Increased customer satisfaction with service delivery 	April 09	Programme Board. Project Lead - BF	Agree approach to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise job description and person specification to support new processes • Recruitment –links to NVQ • Retention – Reward & recognition scheme • Staff development NVQ & IRRV, pathways for career and technical expertise
15	Assess how local factors and context impact on costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased value for money in service delivery 	July 2008		Agreed and costed existing processes for each customer group (good, can't, wont, lazy)
			Sept 2008		Agree interventions to move customers into different groups (SMS, emails, telephone for Revenues and Benefits) Piloted and to be mainstreamed Nov 2008
	b) identifying indicators that measure efficiency /productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased value for money in service delivery • Quicker processing of benefit claims 	Aug 2008		Develop a model to monitor demand, capacity & productivity for Derby Direct, Benefits & Council Tax Underway cross service model to be used via MOSS

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced hand-offs 	Sep 08		Agree approach to daily use of model with OMG & staff planning
16	Benchmark with a range of organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop smarter processes for service delivery 	Delivered for CSIP	Project lead CS	Benchmarked with banks, DWP other LAs Including: DDebit, recovery processes, payment methods
17	Focus on areas identified to improve efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased customer satisfaction with service delivery Quicker processing of benefit claims Reduced hand-offs Increased value for money in service delivery Improved debt recovery performance Increased accuracy of benefit processing 	Ongoing	Programme Board	<p>Links with CSIP Redesigning service delivery to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eclaims project underway Changes over the phone – Multiple DD dates Disagreements with decisions <p>Eclaims project underway Multiple direct debit dates start 15 Nov Disagreements with decisions pilot started 29 09/09</p>
18	Agree what VFM measures are required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to monitor the cost of service delivery 	Ongoing	Programme Board	<p>Conducted consultation to determine VFM from a customer perspective</p> <p>Identified current process costs</p> <p>Monitored reason for current customer calls – to design out service failure</p>

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19	Increase no of cheque runs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased customer satisfaction with service delivery Customers receive benefit payments quicker 	<p>September 08</p> <p>Week commencing 5 Jan 09</p>	MH/DM	<p>Final stage of implementation should be live w/c 27 Oct 08 following some technical problems with processing software</p> <p>Technical problems resolved with software supplier go live with 2nd run week commencing 5 Jan 09</p>
20	Change OP process to start recovery only after appeal time limit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased customer satisfaction with service delivery 	June 08	MH	Delivered