

<b>BLACKPOOL AND FYLDE JOINT COMMITTEE</b>
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**AGENDA FOR MEETING TO BE HELD ON  
01 OCTOBER 2009  
FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL – RECEPTION ROOM,  
TOWN HALL  
17.00 pm**

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2.	<b>APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN</b>	1
3.	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	1
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6.	<b>DELEGATED POWERS PREVIOUSLY HELD BY EXECUTIVE MANAGER (FINANCE)</b>	20 – 22
7.	<b>REPLACEMENT OF IT SYSTEMS FOR REVENUES AND BENEFITS</b>	23 – 25

The Joint Committee's advised by Senior Officers of both Fylde and Blackpool Councils as follows:

Fylde Borough Council:

Philip Woodward:

Tracy Scholes :

Allan Oldfield:

Ian Curtis:

Chief Executive

Director of Governance and Partnerships

Director of Customer and Operational Services

Head of Legal Services

Blackpool Council:

Julian Kearsley:

Marie McRoberts:

Executive Director of Business Services

Assistant Director Revenues and Benefits

Also in attendance Adrian Roberts (Preston City Council) in a client advisory role



## **BLACKPOOL AND FYLDE JOINT COMMITTEE**

### **MEMBERSHIP**

CHAIRMAN - TBC

VICE-CHAIRMAN – TBC

### **Councillors**

Councillor Roger Small	Fylde Borough Council
Councillor Albert Pounder	Fylde Borough Council
Councillor Ian Fowler	Blackpool Council
Councillor Tony Williams	Blackpool Council

<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>MEETING</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>ITEM NO</b>
<b>DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS (FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL)</b>	<b>BLACKPOOL AND FYLDE JOINT COMMITTEE</b>	<b>1 OCTOBER 2009</b>	<b>5</b>

**OVERVIEW OF SHARED ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN BLACKPOOL COUNCIL AND FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Public Item**

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

**Summary**

This report is brought for the information of the Joint Committee at its augural meeting.

The Joint Board was established under Regulation 11 of the Local Authorities Regulations 2000 and consists two members from both Blackpool Council and Fylde Borough Council, advised by senior officers from each authority.

The Joint Board was established with particular responsibility to exercise overall authority over the revenues and benefits shared service.

This report summarises the joint arrangements held between both Council's which falls within the remit of the Joint Committee to oversee.

**Recommendation**

1. To note the range and scope of the joint arrangement between both Council's to administer the revenues and benefits service.

**Reasons for recommendation**

It is helpful for members to have a broad overview of the arrangements covered by the Joint Committee to aid future decision making.

## **Alternative options considered and rejected**

Not applicable.

## **Report**

1. There are a number of shared arrangements in place between Blackpool Council and Fylde Borough Council for the delivery of services and these are summarised below:
  - Administrative arrangement – revenues and benefits service
  - Contract – corporate health and safety advisory service
  - Contract – Payroll service
  - Contract – human resources service
2. Whilst the contractual arrangements sit outside the remit of the Joint Board, the overall control for administering the joint arrangements for the revenues and benefits service sits with this committee.
3. This arrangement took effect from 1 October 2008 and is for a five year period. A copy of the agreement for the service is attached. The lead Director for this arrangement from Fylde Borough Council is Tracy Scholes and support is provided by Preston City Council in conducting the Client role.
4. For clarity, the other contractual arrangements between the two councils, are summarised below:
  - Corporate health and safety advisory service

This contract commenced in October 2006 and runs to October 2011. The lead Director for this contract from Fylde Borough Council is Tracy Scholes.

- Human resources service

This contract commenced in January 2008 and runs until 31 October 2014. The lead Director for this service from Fylde Borough Council is Allan Oldfield.

- Payroll service

This contract is taken forward annually on a rolling basis with the last agreement commencing on 1 April 2009. The lead Director for this service from Fylde Borough Council is Allan Oldfield.

## **Risk Assessment**

This item is for information only and makes no recommendations. Therefore there are no risks to address

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Tracy Scholes	(01253) 658521	17 Sept	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Document name		Council office or website address

### Attached documents

1. Agreements as detailed within the covering report

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The revenues and benefits service provides economies of scale in bringing two teams together to run one common service. The other arrangements are of a contractual nature and as such are not covered by the joint administrative arrangements
Legal	Agreements are in place for all of the arrangements
Community Safety	No direct implications. Although a robust approach to corporate health and safety can have a positive impact of the safety of council officers within the community.
Human Rights and Equalities	The HR service provides a direct in assisting with the Council's equalities agenda.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	
Health & Safety and Risk Management	



## **Administrative Arrangement**

**Between**

**Blackpool Council (Host Partner)**

**and**

**Fylde Borough Council (Partner)**

**Relating to the provision of**

**Revenue & Benefits services to both Councils**

(This agreement is effective from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008  
for a 5 year period, subject to an annual review)

Version 5

**(DATED: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008)**

Administrative Arrangement  
Revenues & Benefits Services  
Blackpool Council & Fylde Borough Council

# Administrative Arrangement

This arrangement is made between:

(1) Blackpool Council of PO Box 11, Town Hall , Blackpool, FY1 1NB,  
("Blackpool"), and

(2) Fylde Borough Council of the Town Hall, St. Annes FY8 1LW, ("Fylde")

## Shared Service Host Partner

Organisation: Blackpool Council

Name: Julian Kearsley

Position: Executive Director of Business Services

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

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## Shared Service Partner

Organisation: Fylde Borough Council

Name: Phillip Woodward

Position: Chief Executive

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

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## RECITALS

The Executive Members for Blackpool and Fylde have agreed to collaborate for a provision of a Shared Service for Revenues and Benefits, pursuant to Section 101 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and Regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000 in the manner and upon the terms hereinafter set out.

(Blackpool Cabinet Member Decision PH149/2007)

(Fylde Cabinet Decision Minute 10 / July 2007)

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## 1 Definitions & Interpretations

In this Agreement, the following expressions shall, save where the context otherwise requires, have the following meanings:

- **'Arrangement'** - means this Arrangement between the parties together with the Schedule(s) to it, as amended, modified, or supplemented from time to time in accordance with those provisions.
- **'Commencement Date'** - means 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008.
- **'Partners'** – means both partnering authorities (Blackpool and Fylde)
- **'Fees'** - means the fees payable under this Arrangement to Blackpool as host partner, for the provision of services.
- **'Head of the Shared Service'** – Assistant Director Revenues and Benefits, Blackpool Council
- **'Renewal Date'** - means April 1st in any year.
- **'Schedule'** - means any Schedule incorporated in this Arrangement.
- **'Services'** – refers to the services detailed in Schedule 2.
- **'Shared Service'** – means the joint service provided by the Partners under this Arrangement

## 2 Administrative Arrangements

### 2.1 Nature of the Arrangement

Pursuant to Section 101 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and Regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000, Blackpool and Fylde agree to develop and maintain a Shared Service for Revenues and Benefits on the terms hereinafter set out in order to achieve efficiency savings.

### 2.2 Duration

This Arrangement shall be for a term of [5] years from the Commencement Date unless the parties agree to determine under clause 7.1 of this Arrangement

### 2.3 Principles

The Partners shall jointly develop a Revenues & Benefits Service and will work to develop an environment of co-operation and trust using the following agreed principles:

- *Be accountable* – to the joint responsibilities set out in this Arrangement
- *Collaborate and co-operate* – establish and adhere to the governance structure to ensure that service activities are delivered and actions taken on a joint basis

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*Administrative Arrangement  
Revenues & Benefits Services  
Blackpool Council & Fylde Borough Council*

- *Be open* – communicate openly about major concerns, issues or opportunities relating to the services provided
- *Learn, develop and achieve potential* – share information, experience and skills to learn from each other and develop new ways of working together. Work collaboratively to identify business improvements, eliminate inefficiencies and reduce the cost of service provision
- *Adopt a positive outlook* – demonstrate a positive, “can do” attitude, looking at ways to improve services
- *Focus on excellent customer and public services* – support this Arrangement through a detailed service plan, which will show how delivery will be targeted and managed

## **2.4 Aims and Objectives**

The Partners aim to provide a modern, efficient, customer focused service that meets the collective needs and interests of the citizens of both Blackpool and Fylde. The Partners are committed to continuous improvement whilst delivering value for money.

The Partners aim to achieve the following service objectives:-

- To issue bills promptly to all liable persons, net of entitlements, and to operate a fair and sensitive debt collection policy which acknowledges that there are instances of genuine need, but recognises that customers have a responsibility to pay their debts.
- To provide a speedy, accurate and secure Housing Benefit service that is accessible to everyone in the community and ensures claimants receive the benefits to which they are entitled.
- To minimise Housing Benefit Overpayment and maximise the recovery of those that occur.
- To encourage a strong culture of good performance that sets aspirations to be amongst the best in local authority services.
- To develop and deliver the services within the agreed timeframe, standards and budget, to realise projected savings, in accordance with the policies and corporate commitments of each partner authority.

### **3 Governance Arrangements**

#### **3.1 Governance Structure**

To achieve the agreed aims and objectives a Joint Board shall be established under Regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (arrangements for discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000. The Joint Board shall consist of two members from Blackpool Council and two Members from Fylde Borough Council, advised by senior officers from each authority.

The Joint Board will exercise overall authority over the Shared Service and provide strategic direction, overview and accountability for the Shared Service.

The Shared Service is not established as a separate legal entity and therefore will not have authority to employ staff or enter into legally binding contracts with third parties. This role will be delegated to Blackpool, as host partner

#### **3.2 Management**

The Joint Board will delegate the management of services under this Arrangement to the Head of the Shared Service, who will:

- Report to the Joint Board as agreed;
- Provide timely information to external customers when requested;
- Provide prompt information as requested by Auditors (Internal & External) and appropriate Government bodies
- Provide performance information in accordance with the reporting mechanism for each authority

#### **3.3 Compliance Monitoring**

Both Blackpool and Fylde shall nominate an officer to monitor the Shared Service and the terms of this arrangement, and hold:

- Quarterly meetings between the Head of the Shared Service and Council representative/s to discuss service delivery issues, improvement processes, performance targets and costs.
- Ad hoc meetings with individual managers from Blackpool and Fylde where appropriate, to resolve service delivery and work related issues.

All parties must comply with statutory requirements and Government policies as they apply to services required and delivered under this Arrangement.

Compliance monitoring will take place in respect of balancing and reconciliation procedures, ensuring that statistical returns are completed within specified timeframes.

During the term of this Arrangement the Shared Service shall afford Blackpool, Fylde and associated internal and external auditors on reasonable notice, access to such information, records and materials retained and relating to the service, as reasonably required to undertake their duties.

Instruction from either Partner to the Shared service shall be in writing unless the Head of the Shared Service otherwise agrees after considering the circumstances. The Shared Service may take instructions from such persons specified by a Partner as an authorised signatory provided for this purpose.

## **4 Obligations**

The partners covenant with each other:

- to contribute to shared service costs in line with authorised budgets, reviewed each year and subject to consultation. As part of this agreement practical arrangements have been made for the payment of invoices to cover costs in relation to running the Shared Service.
- not to unreasonably withhold or delay its consent to changes in procedure if such changes can be shown to have efficiency gains to the provision of Services, without detriment to the Customer. (ie. Benefit claimant, Council Tax payer)

## **5 Fees**

Fylde agrees to pay Blackpool, expenses on a monthly basis in accordance with budget provision, and as detailed in Schedule 3.

## **6 Performance**

The Partners will collaborate and work jointly to develop the Shared Service and provide the support and services required in contributing towards improved performance.

As a minimum, performance against National Indicators will be reported to the Joint Board. Further information in relation to performance against targets (national and local) is detailed under Schedule 4.

## 7 Terms and Conditions

### 7.1 Termination

Either partner may terminate this Arrangement by giving at least 12 months' notice in writing, to expire on or after a period, 5 years after the Commencement Date.

Either partner may by notice in writing, immediately terminate this Arrangement if the other commits any material breach of any term of this Arrangement and which (in the case of a breach capable of being remedied) has not been remedied within 30 days of a written request to remedy (such request to contain a warning of the intention to terminate).

Subject to an extension of the existing Arrangement, upon termination or expiry, appropriate staff, budget and resources will be transferred to the partner authorities as agreed between the Partners, in order to ensure continuous service provision. If the Partners fail to agree in this regard the matter will be resolved in accordance with clause 7.4 below. TUPE conditions will apply to any staff transfer.

In the event of a termination of this Arrangement, Blackpool shall provide on the written request of Fylde:

- Data held on any electronic systems in a standard format with accompanying file layout documentation. This data will be permanently deleted from Blackpool's system 3 months after the termination of this Arrangement.

### 7.2 Notices

Except as otherwise expressly provided, no Notice or other communication from one partner to another shall have any validity, unless made in writing, by or on behalf of the partner concerned.

Any Notice which is to be given by either party to the other shall be given by letter (hand delivered, or sent by registered post or recorded delivery). Such letter shall be addressed to the other party in the manner detailed below:

(a) For Fylde:

Monitoring Officer  
Town Hall  
St Annes  
FY8 1LW  
**F.A.O. Ian Curtis**  
Tel. (01253 658506)

(b) For Blackpool:

Head of Legal & Democratic Services  
PO Box 11  
Town Hall  
Blackpool FY1 1NB  
**F.A.O. Mark Lewis**  
Tel.(01253 477400)

Provided that the notice is not returned as undelivered it shall be deemed to have been given 2 working days notice after the day on which it was posted, or sooner where the other party acknowledges receipt of such Notice.

For day to day communication between the parties, methods of communication will be by e-mail, letter, facsimile or telephone. For these purposes the address of each party shall be the lead officers for Blackpool and Fylde, as detailed in Schedule 1.

### **7.3 Variation**

The terms and conditions of this Arrangement shall only be capable of variation by a written memorandum executed by both the parties. The Lead officers in each authority (Schedule 1) will discuss and agree any variations to this Arrangement.

### **7.4 Disputes**

The Partners will act together in good faith to resolve any dispute that may arise under this Arrangement. In the event of any dispute of difference arising between the Partners in connection with this Arrangement, which cannot be resolved at a local level, such disputes or differences shall be referred to the lead officers of each party.

If the Partners are unable to resolve a dispute they will then attempt to resolve it with the assistance of a mediator to be appointed by the Partners. In default of an agreement, within 28 days of the appointment of the mediator to resolve the dispute, the matter shall be referred to the S151 Financial Officers for each authority, who will either adjudicate on the point at issue or will direct the parties as to the method of dispute resolution.

## **8 Information**

### **8.1 Freedom of Information**

Each partner acknowledges that the other is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environment Information Regulations, and shall assist and co-operate with each other to enable compliance with these information disclosure requirements.

### **8.2 Data Protection Act**

Each partner shall comply with any notification requirements under the Data Protection Act 1998 ("DPA") and both parties will duly observe all their obligations under the DPA, arising and in connection with this Arrangement.

The provisions of this clause shall apply during the continuance of this Arrangement and indefinitely after its expiry or termination.

## **9 Change Control**

### **9.1 Types of Change**

This Arrangement is to be a living document, capable of being updated and amended over time with the agreement of both parties. All changes should be made through the change control procedure. Potential updates will fall into a number of types.

- a. Routine changes – through discussion and agreement between partnering authorities at the Joint Board, changes can be made to the service agreement at any time, to meet the changing requirements and constraints of service delivery.
- b. Periodic review – in addition to changes outlined above, this Arrangement will be revisited and reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure it remains appropriate for the Services it provides and the requirements it places on the wider organisations.

### **9.2 Change Control Procedure**

Such changes shall be a supplement to this Arrangement, which shall be agreed by exchange of letters and attached to this document.

## Schedule 1

### Contact Details

**HOST PARTNER:** **BLACKPOOL COUNCIL**  
**Lead Officer:** **Julian Kearsley**  
**Designation:** **Executive Director of Business Services**  
**Office Address:** Municipal Buildings  
Corporation Street  
Blackpool FY1 1NA  
**Office Telephone Number:** (01253) 478500  
**E-mail address:** dir.business.services@blackpool.gov.uk

**PARTNER:** **FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**Lead Officer:** **Dave Joy**  
**Designation:** **Director of Corporate Resources**  
**Office Address:** Town Hall  
St Annes  
FY8 1LW  
**Office Telephone Number:** (01253) 658700  
**Email Address:** DaveJ@fylde.gov.uk

**SHARED SERVICE:**  
**Lead Officer:** **Marie McRoberts**  
**Designation:** **Assistant Director Revenues and Benefits**  
**Department Name** Revenues and Benefits  
Blackpool Borough Council  
**Office address** PO Box 50  
Town Hall  
Blackpool FY1 1NF  
**Office Telephone Number:** (01253) 478910  
**Email Address:** [marie.mcroberts@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:marie.mcroberts@blackpool.gov.uk)



## Schedule 2

### Service Specification

The Shared Service will provide service delivery of Revenues and Benefits activities across the Fylde and Blackpool Council areas, aiming to deliver significant service improvements for customers and cost saving benefits for both authorities.

The authorities are working together as a Shared Service, adopting the same high quality ways of working and sharing expertise and investment to become a high performing organisation. The new operation is based upon simplified, streamlined, standardised and automated processes that enable consistent, high quality service delivery.

The Shared Service will undertake all work in respect of Revenues and Benefits for the partnering authorities, including:

- Billing, collection and recovery of Council Tax
- Billing, collection and recovery of Business Rates
- Housing and Council Tax Benefit administration, assessment and payment
- Billing, collection and recovery of benefit overpayments
- Handling of all correspondence and complaints
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information issues
- Performance management and monitoring
- Compilation of all Government returns relating to the service
- Scanning and indexing of all documents sent to the service (Fylde BC only)
- Service specific reconciliations, system controls and system administration
- The provision of relevant training
- Assessment of Free School Meals, Clothing Allowances and Student Awards (Blackpool Council only)
- Financial Assessments for Social Care (Blackpool Council Only)

Work specifically excludes:

- Corporate Debt recovery
- Administrative work in relation to Business Improvement Districts
- Corporate Fraud (including Benefit Fraud)
- Provision of Contact Centre services (Customer First and Fylde Direct)

## **Schedule 3**

### **Fees & Charges**

Fylde shall pay to Blackpool (as Host Partner), expenses on a monthly basis in accordance with agreed budget provision. An invoice supported by details of the services provided will be presented to Fylde by Blackpool, monthly in advance, with 15 days payment terms. Fees shall be payable in pounds sterling.

The Partners will be consulted and informed of any additional charges requested, to cover additional services and these will be clearly marked on the invoice provided.

Additional payments received in the form of specific Government Grants relating to service improvements or the implementation of new legislation will be transferred to the Shared Service, when received by the relevant Partner authority.

## Schedule 4

### Performance

It is highly unlikely that the Shared Service will achieve improved performance for Partners across all areas within the first 12 months.

The performance target for Year 1 is therefore for each Partner authority to be performing at a level at least equal to that achieved in the financial year immediately preceding the Commencement Date of this Arrangement.

The table below shows performance indicators in 2007/08 covering the main service areas that will be considered as a minimum requirement:

<b>Indicator Name</b>	<b>Actual 07/08 (Blackpool)</b>	<b>Actual 07/08 (Fylde)</b>
The % of Council Tax collected	94.4	97.80
The % of NNDR collected	96.81	98.50
% of Council Tax payers using direct debit	56	72
Average days to process new claims for Housing/Council Tax benefits	43.51	32.06
Average days to process changes of circumstance	15.87	6.82
HB overpayments recovered as % of the amount of overpayment raised in the period	59.35	80.84
HB overpayments recovered as % of total HB overpayment debt outstanding at start of period plus the amount of overpayment raised in the period	17.73	23.26

Further information regarding performance will be reported on a quarterly basis.

<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>MEETING</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>ITEM NO</b>
<b>DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS (FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL)</b>	<b>BLACKPOOL AND FYLDE JOINT COMMITTEE</b>	<b>1 OCTOBER 2009</b>	<b>6</b>

## **DELEGATED POWERS PREVIOUSLY HELD BY EXECUTIVE MANAGER (FINANCE)**

### **Public item**

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

### **Summary**

The report seeks Committee approval for the delegation of a number of administrative functions in relation to Revenues & Benefits to the Head of the Shared Service.

### **Recommendation**

1. Delegate the decision making power in relation to functions listed in Appendix A to the Head of the Shared Service (or designated representative)

### **Report**

1. The two Councils have committed to a revenues and benefits shared service that achieves efficiency savings and represents value for money whilst customer service in line with best practice.
2. Fylde Borough Council's Constitution contains powers delegated to the former Executive Manager (Finance), who has a range of important responsibilities under the Council's financial regulations.
3. The Director of Governance and Partnerships in consultation with the Operational Finance Manager considers that efficient and effective administration at the Council, in

relation to Revenues and Benefits, would be assisted and improved by delegating certain powers to the Head of the Shared Service (or designated representative).

4. For write offs, a regular and effective review of outstanding debts by the shared service team enables both Council's to achieve prompt collection of all debts in line with audit recommendations.

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>	
Finance	The delegation of the powers would ease the administrative function in carrying out duties relating to revenues and benefits and allow minor decisions to fall within the discretion of the Head of the Shared Service, thus removing any technical uncertainty as to responsibilities.
Legal	The original delegated powers of the Executive Manager (Finance) are included in the Council's Constitution.  (Part C of Appendix 2)
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

REPORT AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
Tracy Scholes  Director of Governance and Partnerships	(01253) 658500	September 2009	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
NAME OF DOCUMENT	DATE	WHERE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION
Revenues & Benefits –  Delegations to Specified Officers	23 June 2009	Town Hall, St Annes

### **Attached documents**

Appendix A showing proposed delegated powers

## Appendix A

### Authorisation delegated to the Head of the Shared Service (or representative)

1. The determination and administration of applications in relation to Council Tax, covering discounts and exemptions (including discretionary decisions), together with disabled persons allowance and Housing and Council Tax Benefit.
2. The agreement of rating assessments of property, not owned or occupied by the Council.
3. The recovery of Council Tax and Business Rates
4. Refunds of overpayments
5. The write-off of debts up to £5,000 (Council Tax) and £10,000 (Business Rates) including cumulative debts for individual debtors.

*Debts over these limits and up to £25,000 will be authorised for write off by the Section 151 Officer (or deputy) for the relevant authority, but will be reported to Cabinet for information purposes.*

*Debts in excess of £25,000 will be authorised for write off by Cabinet.*

6. The determination of applications for Discretionary Housing payments in line with agreed budget limits.
7. The determination of applications for Mandatory Rate Relief in relation to Business Rates.

Specific to Fylde BC, the approval of rate relief (Business Rates) on the grounds of hardship, S44A applications for partial relief and Discretionary Rate Relief will be determined by the Section 151 Officer, or in absence, the Deputy Section 151 Officer (Fylde).

In addition, applications for discretionary relief (Council Tax) will be determined in the same way.

<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>MEETING</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>ITEM NO</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BUSINESS SERVICES (BLACKPOOL COUNCIL)</b>	<b>BLACKPOOL AND FYLDE JOINT COMMITTEE</b>	<b>1 OCTOBER 2009</b>	<b>7</b>

**REPLACEMENT OF IT SYSTEM FOR REVENUES AND BENEFITS**

**Public Item**

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

**Summary**

This report outlines the work being undertaken to replace the Pericles system which is unavoidable due to the acquisition of Anite by Northgate.

The procurement has to be carried out in accordance with EU procurement rules and a Prior Information Notice has already been issued. Fylde and Blackpool Councils are proceeding on the basis of a joint contract for the software over a seven year period.

**Recommendation**

To note the progress being made on the replacement of the IT system for Revenues and Benefits for Fylde and Blackpool Councils.

**Reasons for recommendation**

To provide members with information on a major change impacting upon the service over the next 12 months.

## **Alternative options considered and rejected**

Not applicable.

## **Cabinet Portfolio**

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:

Business Services      Councillor I Fowler, Blackpool Council  
Finance and Resources – Councillor R Small, Fylde Borough Council

## **Report**

Following the acquisition of the Council's current software supplier (Anite) by Northgate in October 2008, Fylde and Blackpool Councils, along with over twenty other Pericles users was advised that the Council Tax and Benefits system would be 'desupported' with effect from December 2010.

There are currently three suppliers of Revenue and Benefits software in the marketplace and it is key that the authorities select a system which is fit for purpose taking account of cost, functionality, long term stability and service improvement potential.

A Prior Information Notice has been issued on behalf of Blackpool, Fylde and Rochdale Councils and, following on from this, a number of informal site visits have been held and initial costings have been obtained.

The next step is for the Councils to go out to formal tender via the EU accelerated restricted procedure to determine the appropriate supplier. The tender will include a clause allowing for efficiency gains from sharing the same supplier. A common evaluation process is being used.

In order to maximize the value from the authorities' investment in a new system in terms of price and costs of acquiring a replacement, Fylde and Blackpool Councils are proceeding on the basis of a joint contract for a seven year period.

Each authority would be responsible for meeting the cost of its element of the system which would be jointly licensed and hence give Fylde an ongoing right to continue to use the system operating on the Blackpool ICT platform in the event of prior termination of the administrative agreement for the shared service.

Systems implementation is complex and time-consuming, involving data mapping and cleansing, interface development, conversion of data, printing and report redesign and staff training. Final conversion will involve system downtime prior to going live.

A detailed project planning methodology is being applied to this work. Whilst backlogs can be anticipated, conversion process arrangements will be put in place to minimize disruption to customers and maintain performance in processing times and collection rates as far as possible.

It is anticipated that the implementation at each authority affected by the acquisition of Pericles by Northgate will be scheduled to facilitate shared working on backlog busting and other conversion tasks. It is currently planned to have this work completed by October 2010.



## Risk Assessment

The detailed project plan will include a detailed risk assessment.

## Conclusion

The process must be rigorously progressed against a tight timescale to ensure a smooth implementation which minimises disruption to the service.

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Julian Kearsley	(01253) 478500	23/09/09	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Project Brief	July 2009	Blackpool Council Offices

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The costs associated with the replacement of Pericles fall into two categories: one-off capital costs for purchase of the replacement system, and ongoing system maintenance costs. Members need to be aware that these costs may be significant, but at this early stage there are no detailed financial costings available as the cost of acquisition and maintenance for the two authorities is dependent upon the tenders received. Provision will need to be made in the medium term financial strategies for Fylde and Blackpool Councils
Legal	The new software will be subject to a joint agreement running for a seven year period
Community Safety	No implications
Human Rights and Equalities	No implications
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	No implications
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No implications

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