Revenues & Benefits
Performance is improving across the service following a very challenging period from May 2012- April 2013, with the implementation of new software and document management system, the technical problems experienced accessing data held at Kings Lynn, return of the data to Cromer in Jan 2013, significant welfare reform changes in benefits, technical reforms in Council Tax and the new CTS scheme all implemented from 1st April 2103 and annual billing in March 2103.

All the necessary work in relation to the reforms was in place for annual billing March 2013. This included document redesign, software testing and implementation and staff training and customer awareness publicity.

Queries/challenges about the technical reforms and recovery notices sent to people who previously had not had to pay council tax resulted in a significant number of contacts to the section which has impacted on the turnaround of customer enquiries. May 2012 – 2,349 telephone contacts – May 2013 – 3,362 telephone contacts.

Recovery notices are issued regularly every month to people who default on instalments. Collection is on target for NNDR,slightly up for the same period last year and very slightly down for council tax for the same period last year .

| **Quarter 1** | **2012/13** | **2013/14** |
|---|---|---|
| NNDR | 33.0% | 33.34% |
| Council Tax | 30.5% | 30.13% |
| | | |

Working to meet the corporate objective of bringing empty properties back into use and maximising new home bonus, in the last three months Council Tax has undertaken a review of all properties subject to the levy charge and those empty for more than 6 months ensuring the council tax data base accurately reflects the position.
Information gathered has identified properties that are then considered by the enforcement board for action as appropriate.

Benefits have successfully brought in a number of welfare reforms. The increased funding and profile of Discretionary Housing Payments has seen considerable increase in applications we have processed more to date (210) than the whole of 12/13 (191).

Benefits performance in terms of processing days is impacted by ‘older claims’ from 2012/13 as performance looks at the average days across all claims. The outstanding work (June /July) claims have been ringfenced and are worked on in a priority order. The current month is being kept up to date. Where all the information is received with a new claim it is processed within 24 hrs.
Quarter 1 Performance
New Claims are taking 28 days (monthly cumulative) and Change of Circumstances 16 days (monthly cumulative)

We have been successful in recent recruitment – 2 X FTE apprentices in revenues and 2 x FTE benefit assessors with interviews for telephony people in a fortnights time.
Louise Wolsey 9/8/13