

ANGUS COUNCIL

RESOURCES AND CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

6 MAY 2004

SUBJECT: COUNCIL TAX BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Abstract: This Report details the Council Tax Best Value Service Review including details of the proposed service improvements.

1 RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee -

- i) note the content of the Council Tax Best Value Service Review; and
- ii) approve the implementation of the improvement plan as detailed in Appendix A of this Report.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 A Best Value Service Review of the Council Tax Service was included in the original programme of the Finance Department's Best Value Service Reviews.

2.2 A copy of the Review has been placed in the Members Lounge. This Report highlights the main outcomes of the Review and the proposed service improvements.

2.3 The Review was discussed at the Best Value Monitoring Group held on 16 March 2004 and was approved for submission to the Resources and Central Services Committee.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Review was undertaken in accordance with Angus Council's Best Value Service Review Corporate Model.

3.2 The area's covered by the Review were the Billing, Collection and Recovery of Council Tax.

3.3 The purpose of the Review was to:-

- Identify areas of improvement in the service in respect of improved collection levels whilst minimising the cost of collection.
- Gauge customer satisfaction with the Council Tax Service.
- Increase the number of Direct Debit Payers.
- Make appropriate recommendations for service improvements.

- 3.4 The service is measured by the Account Commission, Audit Scotland Performance Indicators and the CIPFA Directors of Finance Performance measures. As part of the review a benchmarking exercise was undertaken with Moray Council and a survey of Council Tax Payers was carried out.

4 SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

- 4.1 As a result of the Review, certain service improvements have been identified. A copy of the Improvement Action Report is attached as Appendix A.

5 REVIEW CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Council Tax Service Review highlights that the service compares favourably with the benchmarking partner, performance indicators and achieves a high level of customer satisfaction. The Council Tax Collection Rate is good and continues to improve each year with the collection costs reducing year on year. The Service Improvement Action Plan seeks to build on the already well established Council Tax Service.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial implications to the Council as a result of this report.

7 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Human Rights implications arising as a result of this report.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Chief Executive and the Director of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

CMB/FC
05 May 2004

David S. Sawers
Director of Finance

SERVICE - COUNCIL TAX**APPENDIX A****RESPONSIBLE OFFICER / CONTACT: CARLA BARROWMAN**

1. Agreed Improvement Action	2. Brief Description of what the Improvement is intended to Achieve.	3. Start Date Timescale
i. Carry out television advertising campaign. ii. Write to existing Standing Order payers. iii. Issue Direct Debit instructions with Reminder Letters	Increase Direct Debit payers and therefore reduce the need for recovery action, allowing resources to be directed to more problematic debt.	September 2003 April 2004 April 2004
Promote a greater awareness of Angus Council's Web Site.	Make Customers aware that this facility exists thereby allowing them Access to Council Tax Information and to download forms outwith office hours.	June 2004
Progress facility to make payment by Debit/Credit card.	Increase customer payment choice.	April 2003
Investigate the possibility of internet payment.	Increase customer payment choice	February 2004

4. Projected Completion Date	5. Progress to Date
January 2004 July 2004 On-going	Number of Direct Debit payers has increased by 1000 during 2003/04.
Ongoing	
April 2004	Problems have been encountered with software, which are currently being addressed.
June 2004	