Revenues Services

The following table details the various activities currently in scope for Revenues Services. The right column shows which service is offered by each partner Cheltenham (C), Cotswold (CO) and West Oxfordshire (WO). Please note the Forest of Dean (F) service is currently outsourced.

Council Tax	
Valuation and Property Maintenance	
Identifying any new or changes to existing properties and notify the Valuation Office Agency (VOA)	C / CO / WO
Liaison and exchange of information with Planning, building control and Street Naming	C / CO / WO
Liaison with and exchange of information with VOA	C / CO / WO
Issue of Completion Notices	C / CO / WO
Amending records to reflect changes on weekly update schedules from VOA	C / CO / WO
Reconcile property record to Valuation list	C / CO / WO
Liability and Billing	
Determine appropriate liability, create new or amend existing accounts and issue appropriate bills. This includes: • Receive or collect information to identify the liable person or organisation, changes in circumstances, changes in payment method and eligibility for discounts & exemptions. Create or amend accounts and issue bills and letters • Recalculate instalments and issue bills due to daily changes made to council tax support entitlement • Set up/amend/cancel direct debits and produce bills	C / CO / WO
Undertake trace enquiries to find absconded debtors	C / CO / WO
Recovery and Enforcement	
Preparation, processing and issue of statutory recovery notices in line with recovery timetable and court dates	C / CO / WO
Attend court and present Council's case to obtain liability orders	C / CO / WO
Deal with all customer queries ,and make payment arrangements, set up attachments to benefit or earnings	C / CO / WO
Check and process cases to Enforcement Agents monitor cases with enforcement agents	C / CO / WO
Monitor payment arrangements and attachments /chase payment by phone/letter	C / CO / WO
Check cases and Issue various 7 day letters and process cases to alternative recovery methods	C / CO / WO
Prepare and present councils case as committal hearings	C / CO / WO
Receive notification of insolvency action, amend accounts according and submit proof of debt forms	C / CO / WO
Make trace enquires	C / CO / WO
Prepare and recommend irrecoverable debts for write off cases	C / CO / WO

Ad-hoc recovery visits by visiting officers	C / CO / WO

Review of discounts, exemptions & empty properties	
Produce annual timetable and review discounts by letter, visit or data matching exercise	C / CO / WO
Rolling review of empty properties by visiting officers	C / CO / WO
SPD review with annual bill and NFI data match	C / CO / WO

Customer Service	
All customer contact dealt with by revenues staff - general queries, change of address, discount & exemptions, payment queries, paperless direct debit, recovery queries, response to bills, letter, notices, debit/credit card payments	C / CO / WO

Business Rates

Valuation and Property Maintenance	
Maintain the council tax property database to correspond with the Valuation List and the council's LLPG. This includes • Identifying any new or changes to existing properties and notify the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) • Liaison and exchange of information with Planning, building control and Street Naming • Liaison with and exchange of information with VOA • Issue of Completion Notices • Amending records to reflect changes on weekly update schedules from VOA • Reconcile property records to Valuation list	C / CO / WO

Liability and Billing	
Determine appropriate liability, create new or amend existing accounts and issue appropriate bills. This includes: • Receive or collect information to identify the liable business or organisation, changes in circumstances, changes in payment method and eligibility for reliefs & exemptions. Create or amend accounts and issue bills and letters • Set up/amend/cancel direct debits and produce bills • Undertake trace enquiries to find absconded debtors	C / CO / WO

Recovery and Enforcement	
Preparation, processing and issue of statutory recovery notices in line with recovery timetable and court dates	C / CO / WO
Attend court and present Council's case to obtain liability orders	C / CO / WO
Deal with all customer queries ,and make payment arrangements	C / CO / WO
Check and process cases to Enforcement Agents monitor cases with enforcement agents	C / CO / WO
Monitor payment arrangements and chase payment by phone/letter	C / CO / WO
Check cases and Issue various 7 day letters and process cases to alternative recovery methods	C / CO / WO
Prepare and present councils case as committal hearing	C / CO / WO
Receive notification of insolvency action, amend accounts according and submit proof of debt forms	C / CO / WO
Make trace enquires	C / CO / WO

Prepare and recommend irrecoverable debts for write off cases	C / CO / WO
Review of discounts, exemptions & empty properties	
Produce annual timetable and review discounts by letter, visit or data matching exercise	C / CO / WO
Rolling review of empty properties by visiting officers	C / CO / WO
Customer Service	
All customer contact dealt with by revenues staff - general queries, change of address, reliefs & exemptions, payment queries, paperless direct debit, recovery queries, debit/credit card payments	C / CO / WO

Revenues (council tax & business rates)

Income Control and Reconciliation	
Payment Processing • Check and reconcile daily cash postings for council tax, business rates and benefit overpayments. • Load and post files if automated process fails • Prepare manual payment posting requests • Reconcile open Revenues and cash book to income codes on general ledger • Monitor and manage suspense account • Missing payment enquiries	C / CO / WO
Direct debit Processing • Create AUDDIS and payment extract files and process to BACS • Process unpaid and amended DD files and issue revised bills	C / CO / WO
Revenues - refund processing • Check all refunds and process file to Bacs or cheque file to accounts payable • Reconcile open revenues financial controls to general ledger	C / CO / WO
Quality control monitoring • Sample accuracy checks on council tax & business rates processing	C / CO / WO
Compliance • Undertake any compliance activities to ensure appropriate exemptions and discounts are applied.	C / CO / WO
Email accounts • Manage and monitor revenues generic inboxes • Run decodes to import emails in to and send batched emails from open revenues workflow	C / CO / WO
Visiting	
Inspection of new, altered and empty properties	C / CO / WO
Verification/ review of discounts, exemptions and reliefs	C / CO / WO
Recovery/debt collection	C / CO / WO
Financial reconciliation, reporting and forecasting	
Monthly reconciliation and collection performance	C / CO / WO
Quarterly budget monitoring report	C / CO / WO
Tax base and new homes bonus forecasting	C / CO / WO
Business rates retention monitoring and forecasting	C / CO / WO
Calculating tax base for council tax setting including Parishes	C / CO / WO

Revenues – Statutory Returns	
QRC	C / CO / WO
CTB1	C / CO / WO
NNDR1	C / CO / WO
NNDR3	C / CO / WO
Revenues - Annual billing/yearend	
Support council tax setting process	C / CO / WO
Annual billing testing, processing, reconciliation and issue and new year bills	C / CO / WO
End of year processing and reconciliation	C / CO / WO
Preparation of financial reconciliations for general ledger and collection funds	C / CO / WO
Revenues – System Administration open Revenues & related software	
Testing of releases, upgrades, new functionality	C / CO / WO
Parameter set up	C / CO / WO
User maintenance	C / CO / WO
Workflow, work type, letter & document set up	C / CO / WO
Revenues – General	
Procurement and monitoring of Revenues contracts	C / CO / WO
Provision of periodic information in respect of empty properties to the empty homes team for the purpose of bringing empty homes back in to use	C

Other

General System administration for all systems and any linked systems including	C / CO / WO
• Liaison with ICT on all open Revenues issues • Co-ordinate installation of releases and upgrades • Liaison with and meetings with systems account manager • Manage budget	
Revenues & Benefits client services to Forest of Dean District Council	

Benefits Services

The following table details the various activities currently in scope for Benefits Services. The right column shows which service is offered by each partner Cheltenham (C), Cotswold (CO) and West Oxfordshire (WO). Please note the Forest of Dean (F) service is currently outsourced.

Benefits Support	
Scanning/ referencing of all Revenues and Benefits post	C / CO / WO
Back scanning of internal post and documents	C / CO / WO
Download and process "tell us once" information from the secure DWP website weekly	C / CO / WO
Download and process "Atlas and ETD" information from the secure DWP website daily	C / CO / WO
Land registration enquiries via a secure internet link	C / CO / WO
Importing emails, housing lettings lists, building control files and creating work items	C / CO / WO
Logging back benefit and council tax support reviews	C / CO / WO
Validate welfare benefits entitlement via secure DWP website (CIS) using token.	C / CO / WO
Other clerical support for the revenue and benefits team	C / CO / WO
Housing Benefit /Council Tax Support and Advice	
Face to face advice service for housing benefits, council tax support, benefit overpayments and general advice on all other welfare.	C / CO / WO
Checking application forms, verifying supporting documents and photocopying/scanning information.	C / CO / WO
Providing Universal credit advice and support including debt counselling on behalf of DWP.	C / CO / WO
Staffing a benefit/ council tax support helpline between.	C / CO / WO
Providing direct dial contact names/ telephone numbers for officers dealing with a customers claim.	C / CO / WO
Providing a home visit service for the disabled or elderly who are unable to visit the council offices on housing benefit and council tax support claims.	C / CO / WO
Benefit Overpayment Recovery	
Raise debtor accounts, printing and posting of invoices on system sundry debtor module for benefit overpayments.	C / CO / WO
Raise debtor accounts for fraud overpayments administration penalties as a result of investigations by DWP and liaise with SPOC officer regarding debts.	C / CO / WO
Issue reminders	C / CO / WO
Apply income and court costs to debtors accounts	C / CO / WO
Reviewing underlying entitlement to reduce debts	C / CO / WO
Negotiate and administer instalment arrangements	C / CO / WO
Record all correspondence and telephone calls onto diary.	C / CO / WO

Liaise with DWP, housing, landlords, other councils and Bailiffs over recovery action	C / CO / WO
Pass non paid accounts to legal	C / CO / WO
Mange queries from customers	C / CO / WO
Maintaining the system sundry debt module, move cases though the recovery stages and process work items via workflow module.	C / CO / WO
Take payments via system on web pay	C / CO / WO
Contact employers for direct earning s attachments	C / CO / WO
Contact DWP for recovery from welfare benefits	C / CO / DWP
Transfer debts back to benefits for ongoing recovery	C / CO / WO
Process cancellations and write offs	C / CO / WO
Production of management reports, reconciliation, calculation of bad debts and end of year processes	C / CO / WO
Produce, check and send off government performance and statistical returns.	C / CO / WO
Liaise with Go shared services regarding missing payments, refunds , journal transfers, cash allocation	C / CO / WO
Liaise with housing providers and access housing records via secure link to check credits, refunds, rent breakdown etc.	C / CO / WO

Benefit /Council tax Support Reconsideration and Appeals

Carry out an independent review of a benefit/ support decision that has been challenged by a customer.	C / CO / WO
Request additional supporting information from customer, landlord, employer, DWP, other council or voluntary agency	C / CO / WO
Confirm revised decision by personal letter giving appeal rights if they still disagree.	C / CO / WO
Preparing cases for appeal tribunal from customers who still disagree with revised decision	C / CO / WO
Attending tribunal hearings on behalf of council	C / CO / WO
Create and update reconsiderations / appeals on the system appeals module and processing off work items from the workflow module.	C / CO / WO
Produce, check and monitor performance and statistical returns.	C / CO / WO

Quality Control Monitoring

Check at least a 10% sample of officers work within 24 hours and before decision is posted to customer	C / CO / WO
Log all sample checks by date and individual officer and record count of total work done, total checked and whether the claim was correct, a critical or non-critical error based on policy and procedures.	C / CO / WO
Report all critical errors to senior officer for correction and highlight any training needs	C / CO / WO
Maintain the Quality monitoring spreadsheet throughout the year and produce quarterly returns	C / CO / WO
Check a 10% sample of write offs and manual adjustments monthly for correct authorisation and that the adjustment is correct	C / CO / WO

Processing of Housing benefit /Council Tax Support

To check, validate and calculate all new claims for housing benefit/council tax support as per national and local regulations, working practices, procedures and standards set by the council	C / CO / WO
To check, validate and calculate changes in circumstances/cancellations for housing benefit/council tax support as per national and local regulations, working practices, procedures and standards set by the council	C / CO / WO
To correctly calculate all over and under payments of benefits using the correct classification and reason codes and issue letters as per regulations	C / CO/ WO
Validate welfare benefit entitlement via secure DWP website (CIS) using token.	C / CO / WO
To verify income, capital, earnings, identity, rent under the councils verification standards.	C / CO / WO
Request additional information in writing from customer , employer, landlord etc.	C / CO / WO
To liaise with the council tax department, government agencies, ALMO's, housing associations etc. to process the claims	C / CO / WO
To make fraud referrals or consider underlying entitlement as part of the claims process.	C / CO / WO
To process all claims using the system benefits module and process off work items from the workflow module.	C / CO / WO
To correctly categorise all the tenancy types contained in the HB regulations and highlight supported, Homeless, extended or rapid reclaim claims.	C / CO / WO
Do referrals to the overpayments teams for debts that are unable to be recovered from ongoing	C / CO / WO
To restrict cases subject to the benefit cap regulations and keep records	C / CO / WO
To restrict cases subject to the bedroom tax regulations and keep records	C / CO / WO
To calculate self-employed and student income	C / CO / WO
To action cases subject to the FERIS/RTI data match and keep records	C / CO / WO
To action cases subject to Universal credit and keep records	C / CO / WO
Do referrals to the Valuation office for rent reviews.	C / CO / WO
To cross check council tax records to make sure in tandem (bill/ben process)	C / CO / WO

Discretionary Housing Fund

To award short term financial help from the fund based on applications and a means test of income/outgoings	C / CO / WO
To use the system DHP module to record awards and defined classifications.	C / CO / WO
To arrange welfare visits to establish need or maximise customers income	C / CO / WO
To review any appeals against refusal or amount or period of award.	C / CO / WO
Produce, check and send off government performance and statistical returns.	C / CO / WO
To report to cabinet/full council if awards exceed fund.	C / CO / WO

Payments/reconciliation/statistics/ performance /Gov't returns

Daily council tax support payment run	C / CO / WO
Weekly council tenant payment run into/out of Cheltenham Borough homes system	C / CO / WO
Weekly rent allowance payment runs via BACS on Bottomline software	C / CO / WO

Urgent daily payment runs	C / CO / WO
Monthly cash reconciliation to ledger codes for payments/refunds. Correct discrepancies etc.	C / CO / WO
Monthly reconciliation of benefit subsidy and correct discrepancies	C / CO / WO
Productions of reports, statistical returns, extract files on a daily/weekly/monthly/quarterly/yearly basis. Check output and correct discrepancies.	C / CO / WO
Import of data matching, RTI and benefit cap data and Ben Cap data into system and produce work items.	C / CO / WO
Production of government returns such as SHBE, HBRF, HMRC, BRMA, Subsidy, DHP, UC	C / CO / WO
System testing of system software such as new products changes or patches corrections, mail merge documents or new reports.	C / CO / WO
Produce, manage and extract monthly reviews for posting and progression through defined stages	C / CO / WO
Council tax support forecasting	C / CO / WO
Annual uprating of welfare benefits /premiums and parameters. Year- end calculations, testing, letter production/packing.	C / CO / WO
Maintain Benefits flexi recording system	C / CO / WO

Management

Complaints & MP letters	C / CO / WO
System security and parameter maintenance.	C / CO / WO
Monitoring UC partnership agreement	C / CO / WO
Monitoring SPOC / Fraud agreement with DWP	C / CO / WO
Annual review of CT support scheme	C / CO / WO
Sponsor role of DWP secure access systems	C / CO / WO
Public speaking and attending forums, project groups, talks on behalf of council on data security, welfare reform and housing issues.	C / CO / WO
Year- end working papers and reconciliation of all budget cost centres, liaising with Go services accountants	C / CO / WO
Mid- year estimates, performance statistics, government returns	C / CO / WO
Project planning of major regulation changes, public consultation, customer engagement and publicity.	C / CO / WO
Maintain PVP register for benefits	C / CO / WO
Publicity and marketing of the service - forms, leaflets, letters.	C / CO / WO

Other

Delivery of internal training on HB/CTS regulations, procedures, software/system changes	C / CO / WO
Client service for FOD	
Undertake any compliance activities to ensure appropriate benefit, exemptions and discounts are awarded.	C / CO / WO

GENERIC REQUIREMENTS

The following table details the generic areas that will be undertaken by all services as standard.

Management of people
Management of financial resources
Management of non-financial resources
Production of reports as and when required
Attendance at meetings / dealing with member information requirements as required
Maintaining appropriate legislative/regulatory/professional knowledge/networks
Writing appropriate policies, procedures and guidance notes
Corporate responsibilities e.g. responding to FOI requests, safeguarding, business continuity, emergency response, equality, prevent, audit and health and safety