

APPENDIX 1

BUSINESS RATES 2014/15 CIPFA BENCHMARKING					
	Partnership	NWLDC	HBBC	HDC	COMMENTS/ACTIONS
<u>NO IN GROUP</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>16</u>	
In year collection 2014/15	4th highest in the group. Collection is well above average.	3rd highest . Well above average. Very positive	Average in the group. HBBC is 98.3%. Highest is 99.2% and lowest is 96.8%	3rd highest . Well above average. Very positive	The Partnership results are not relevant in this context. proactive collection
Amount written off during 14/15 as % net debit	5th from the bottom of the group. Being below average on this is positive.	6th from the bottom of the group. Being below average on this could be positive.	1.1%. Just above average. One Council is skewing the figures at 3.6%. Everyone else ranges from 0.4% to 1.7%. Debts are proactively tackled and if there is no prospect of payment, debts are written off in line with best accounting practice	0.4%. 3rd lowest in the group. Debts are proactively tackled and if there is no prospect of payment, debts are written off in line with best accounting practice	n/a
Net balance o/s as a % of net debit	Lowest in the group. Again this is very positive.	Lowest in the group. Again this is very positive.	3rd lowest in the group. Very positive	0.3%. 2nd lowest in the group. Very positive	Comments contained previously

Direct Debit	2nd highest in the group. At approximately 53% the Partnership is considerably above average for NNDR DD payers. DD is not generally speaking the preferred payment method for businesses hence the difference in percentage between Ctax and NNDR DD penetration.	52% - above average (Ave is 48%)	52% - above average (Ave is 47%)	53% -above average (Average is 47%)	Proposal that all staff Partnership and LA promote Direct Debit at every dealing with a Business Rate payer
Staff Cost	2nd highest in the group in 2014/15. Our costs have since changed due to the restructure. We have bolstered up the NNDR team in order to sell our services	Above average. 6th in the group at £30.41 per hereditament (Ave is £25.74)	Highest in the group at £41.88 per hereditament (Ave is £24.39)	Above average. 4th highest in the group. £30.75 per hereditament (Ave is £25.29).	The overall costs will increase in 2015/16 due to the restructure.
Hereditaments FTE	We are in the middle of the group. 8th from the bottom. We have approx. 1550 against the average of approx. 1750.	Very slightly above average. Approx. 1550 against the average of 1500	below average. Approx. 1300 against the average of 1600	Very slightly above average. Approx. 1600 against the average of 1550	This will change as more staff are now in the team
Direct Costs	Above Average. 5th from the top at £35.16 per hereditament. Ave is £27.07	NWLDC are below average at £31.03 per hereditament against the average of £33.53	HBBC are 3rd from the top at £43.55. Average is £31.91	HDC are below average at £31.10 per hereditament against the average of £33.19	All costs need to be reviewed as part of the budget process and re-negotiation of contracts.
Indirect cost	Above Average. 3rd from the top at £17.80 per hereditament. Average is £12.52	Highest in the group £21.72 per hereditament. Average is £11.97.	Just above average at £12.73 per hereditament against the average of £11.70	2nd highest at £18.66. Average is £12.08	This demonstrates that the recharges are high and need to be reviewed or reconsidered if an alternative model of delivery is agreed for the partnership

Accommodation	We have low accommodation costs. We are below average at 88p per hereditament. Average is £1.30. 5th from the bottom.	4th lowest. Well below average at 93p. Average is £1.54	5th lowest. Well below average at £1.01. Average is £1.49.	3rd lowest. Well below average at 69p. Average is £1.49	No further actions required
Other Central Charges per hereditament	The majority of the group have central recharges under £7.69 per hereditament. We are recharged £13.84.	Highest in the group £17.69 per hereditament. Average is £7.06.	5th highest. £8.38 against the average of £7.14	2nd highest.£15.20 against the average of £7.27.	This demonstrates that the central charges are high and need to be reviewed or reconsidered if an alternative model of delivery is agreed for the partnership

Refunds	<p>We have the highest number of refunds per 1000 hereditaments in the group. This is not a negative position. We do not know what the other councils processes are in regard to refunds. They may leave credits sitting on the system and we may process them in a timely manner. Refund numbers depend on VO changes, appeals, movement between or out of properties etc.</p>	<p>NWL have the highest number of refunds per 1000 hereditaments in the group. 269 against the average of 160. This is not a negative position. We do not know what the other councils processes are in regard to refunds. They may leave credits sitting on the system and we may process them in a timely manner. Refund numbers depend on VO changes, appeals, movement between or out of properties etc.</p>	<p>5th highest. 243 refunds per 1000 hereditaments in the group against the average of 163. This is not a negative position. We do not know what the other councils processes are in regard to refunds. They may leave credits sitting on the system and we may process them in a timely manner. Refund numbers depend on VO changes, appeals, movement between or out of properties etc.</p>	<p>3rd highest. 255 refunds per 1000 hereditaments in the group against the average of 164. This is not a negative position. We do not know what the other councils processes are in regard to refunds. They may leave credits sitting on the system and we may process them in a timely manner. Refund numbers depend on VO changes, appeals, movement between or out of properties etc.</p>	Comments contained previously
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Reminders	We are below average on the number of notices issued. This could be positive as we are proactive in our recovery processes and contact customers prior to notices being issued. We have a very robust recovery timetable.	We are below average on the number of notices issued. This could be positive as we are proactive in our recovery processes and contact customers prior to notices being issued. We have a very robust recovery timetable.	We are below average on the number of notices issued. This could be positive as we are proactive in our recovery processes and contact customers prior to notices being issued. We have a very robust recovery timetable.	We are below average on the number of notices issued. This could be positive as we are proactive in our recovery processes and contact customers prior to notices being issued. We have a very robust recovery timetable.	
Costs	Our costs are below average at £71. The average is £86. Costs are currently being reviewed.	Our costs are below average at £71. The average is £92. Costs are currently being reviewed.	Our costs are below average at £71. The average is £89. Costs are currently being reviewed.	Our costs are below average at £71. The average is £90. Costs are currently being reviewed.	The costs are currently all incurred at the summons stage. We will be splitting this between the summons and liability order costs in 2016/17.
Number Summonses	Below average due to proactive contact with ratepayers.	Below average due to proactive contact with ratepayers.	Below average due to proactive contact with ratepayers.	Below average due to proactive contact with ratepayers.	This can be looked at two ways, we have a duty to collect. Are our policies strict enough with regard to making arrangements without court action - One for partners to discuss

Liability Orders granted	As expected - below average as we are below average on the number of summonses issued.	As expected - below average as we are below average on the number of summonses issued.	As expected - below average as we are below average on the number of summonses issued.	As expected - below average as we are below average on the number of summonses issued.	See above
Cases referred to enforcement agents	Lowest of the group. Not necessarily a negative as other recovery procedures are used and Enforcement agents will only be considered once other options have been tried. Procedures are being automated so this may	not reported - Info wasn't available at time of submission	not reported - Info wasn't available at time of submission	not reported - Info wasn't available at time of submission	
Colocated flexible workers	Above average in the group. We have a flexible working policy and across the whole partnership approx. 90% work from home. This is positive.	Above average in the group. We have a flexible working policy and across the whole partnership approx. 90% work from home. This is positive.	2nd highest (HDC are highest) Above average in the group. We have a flexible working policy and across the whole partnership approx. 90% work from home. This is positive.	Highest in the group. We have a flexible working policy and across the whole partnership approx. 90% work from home. This is positive.	This links directly to having low accommodation costs.

COUNCIL TAX 2014/15 CIPFA BENCHMARKING

	<u>Partnership</u>	<u>NWLDC</u>	<u>HBBC</u>	<u>HDC</u>	<u>COMMENTS/ ACTIONS</u>
<u>NO IN GROUP</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>19</u>	
In year collection 2014/15	2nd in Group (one didn't supply information) Above average Positive message for the partnership collectively	Slightly above average. 97.8% against the average of 97.7%	Above average. 98.00% against the average of 97.7%	Significantly above average. 98.6% against the average of 97.7%	The Partnership results are not relevant in this context
Amount written off during 14/15 as % net debit	Well below average , which is a positive in this case. 0.3% against the average of 0.9%	At average level 0.4%.	Below average. 0.3% compared to the average of 0.4%	Below average. 0.3% compared to the average of 0.4%	n/a
Net balance O/S as a % of net debit	Well below the average line very good in this case. 1.8% against an average of 3.2%	Below average 2.1% against the average of 2.2%	Below average 1.9% against the average of 2.1%	Below average 1.3% against the average of 2.2%	n/a
Direct Debit	5th in group, the partnership collectively above the average	65.3% against the Average of 61.00%. Positive.	66.4% against the Average of 61.00%. Positive.	70.1% against the Average of 61.00%. Positive.	Proposal that all staff Partnership and LA promote Direct Debit at every dealing with a Business Rate payer
Staff Cost	£6.80 (Average is £6.78)	£6.53. (Average is £6.49)	£7.16. (Average is £6.18)	£6.55. (Average is £6.49)	Costs will change in 2015/16 due to the restructure.

Cost per banded dwelling	£10.60 (Average is £10.29).	£10.11 (Average is £10.42)	£10.17 (Average is £10.22)	Above average £11.70 (Average is £10.42)	This will change as the staff make up is different
Dwellings FTE	Above average. 2nd highest. 5212 dwellings per FTE. The average is 3933. This flags up a possible reason for the backlog as staff are dealing with a high number of properties. The restructure may rectify this once the team are fully competent in their generic roles.	Above average. 5th highest. 5229 dwellings per FTE. The average is 4306. This flags up a possible reason for the backlog as staff are dealing with a high number of properties. The restructure may rectify this once the team are fully competent in their generic roles.	Above average. 6th highest. 5169 dwellings per FTE. The average is 4226. This flags up a possible reason for the backlog as staff are dealing with a high number of properties. The restructure may rectify this once the team are fully competent in their generic roles.	Above average. 4th highest. 5249 dwellings per FTE. The average is 4306. This flags up a possible reason for the backlog as staff are dealing with a high number of properties. The restructure may rectify this once the team are fully competent in their generic roles.	n/a
Direct Costs	3rd lowest. £7.14 against the average of £10.77	4th lowest. £6.84 against the average of £8.92	7th lowest. £7.53 against the average of £8.92	4th lowest. £6.98 against the average of £8.92	n/a
Indirect costs	Highest in the group. £8.10 against the average of £3.63.	3rd highest in the group. £8.65 against the average of £5.36.	5th highest in the group. £7.38 against the average of £5.25.	4th highest in the group. £8.40 against the average of £5.36.	This demonstrates that the recharges are high and need to be reviewed or reconsidered if an alternative model of delivery is agreed for the partnership
Accommodation	Below average at 23p. Average is 55p per banded dwelling.	4th lowest. 24p against the average of 51p per banded dwelling	7th lowest. 25p against the average of 46p per banded dwelling	5th lowest. 24p against the average of 51p per banded dwelling	

Central Charges	Highest in the group. £6.57 against the average of £2.15.	3rd highest in the group. £7.00 against the average of £3.67.	5th highest in the group. £5.87 against the average of £3.62.	3rd highest in the group. £6.98 against the average of £3.67.	Comments contained previously
Band D Charge	£1493 against the average of £1476.	£1524 against the average of £1504.	£1453 against the average of £1496.	£1503 against the average of £1504.	
Refunds	Above average , demonstrate process in timely manner top in group	Average of the group. 8.83%. Average is 8.8%	slightly above average 9.6% per chargeable dwelling against the average of 8.76%.	Above average 10.36% per chargeable dwelling against the average of 8.80%.	
MP enquiries	minimal - doesn't register a percentage.	minimal - doesn't register a percentage.	none	minimal - doesn't register a percentage.	Suggests a quality service is delivered
Ombudsman Enquiry	Lowest in group, well below average demonstrates quality	None	None	minimal - doesn't register a percentage.	Suggests a quality service is delivered
Registered Complaints	well below average. 0.03% against the average of 0.1%	below average. 0.03% against the average of 0.06%	below average. 0.02% against the average of 0.06%	below average. 0.05% against the average of 0.06%.	Suggests a quality service is delivered
Reminders per 1000 chargeable dwellings	Below Average in issue of reminders and finals. Two schools of thoughts can be considered positive or negative	Below average. 301 against an average of 365.	Below average. 273 against an average of 374.	Below average. 245 against an average of 365.	This can be looked at two ways, we have a duty to collect. Are our policies strict enough with regard to making arrangements without court action - One for partners to discuss
Court Costs	Below Average	Our costs are below average at £71. The average is £87. Costs are currently being reviewed.	Our costs are below average at £71. The average is £87. Costs are currently being reviewed.	Our costs are below average at £71. The average is £87. Costs are currently being reviewed.	n/a

No. of Summonses per 1000 chargeable dwellings	Below Average	Above average. 143 per 1000 dwellings. Average is 130.	Above average. 115 per 1000 dwellings. Average is 131.	Above average. 98 per 1000 dwellings. Average is 130. HDC is a highly affluent area with a high collection rate.	This can be looked at two ways, we have a duty to collect. Are our policies strict enough with regard to making arrangements without court action - One for partners to discuss
Liability Orders granted per 1000 chargeable dwellings	Below Average	Above Average	Below Average	Below Average	This can be looked at two ways, we have a duty to collect. Are our policies strict enough with regard to making arrangements without court action - One for partners to discuss
AOE	Significantly below average at below 10%. Top is above 41.23%	Mid table. 12.26 compared to the average of 13.79 per chargeable dwelling	7th from bottom. 9.95 compared to the average of 13.44 per chargeable dwelling	3.76 compared to the average of 13.79 per chargeable dwelling. HDC is a highly affluent area with a high collection rate.	This process is being looked at to try to automate it.
Cases referred to enforcement agents	not reported - Info wasn't available at time of submission	29 against an average of 55 per chargeable dwelling	27 against an average of 53 per chargeable dwelling	Bottom. 20 against the average of 55	This process will soon be automated but other options (e.g. Attachment of earnings/benefits) will always be considered first before we issue cases to the EA's.

Colocated flexible workers	Above average in the group. We have a flexible working policy and across the whole partnership approx. 90% work from home. This is positive.	Above average in the group. We have a flexible working policy and across the whole partnership approx. 90% work from home. This is positive.	Above average in the group. We have a flexible working policy and across the whole partnership approx. 90% work from home. This is positive.	Above average in the group. We have a flexible working policy and across the whole partnership approx. 90% work from home. This is positive.	This is positive and links to low accommodation costs
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BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION 2014/15 CIPFA BENCHMARKING					
	<u>Partnership</u>	<u>NWLDC</u>	<u>HBBC</u>	<u>HDC</u>	<u>COMMENTS/ACTIONS</u>
<u>NO IN GROUP</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>56</u>	
Gross Cost per weighted caseload(1)	£56.18 is higher than the average of £51.17	£50.15 is lower than the average of £56.49	£53.64 is lower than the average of £56.49	£66.60 is higher than the average of £56.49	Post structural review the number of assessors has decreased. Admin subsidy is deducted to obtain the net cost which we have no control over
Weighted Cases/FTE (2)	Weighted caseload per FTE is 1,517 against average of 959	Weighted caseload per FTE is 1,755 against average of 992	Weighted caseload per FTE is 1,616 against average of 992	Weighted caseload per FTE is 1,244 against average of 992	Partnership assessment staff have the highest number of cases per FTE , the number of assessors has decreased. It can be expected that previous years performance levels will not be matched given this information. Though processed exceeded targets This wil increase further now a new structure is in place
Speed of Processing change events (3)	6.4 days against an average of 9 days	6.7 days against an average of 8 days	6.3 days against an average of 8 days	6.2 days against an average of 8 days	Across the Partnership performance exceeds the average . This will not continue as there are fewer staff
Speed of Processing new claims (4)	16.1 days against an average of 23.5 days	16.1 days against an average of 21.4 days	15.9 days against an average of 21.4 days	16.2 days against an average of 21.4 days	Across the Partnership performance exceeds the average must be noted that staff have been reduced so this will not be maintained at this level

HB overpayments recovered (5)	Above average collection rates 82.6% against average of 60.2%	Above average collection rates 79.8% against average of 63.5%	Above average collection rates 82.2% against average of 63.5%	Above average collection rates 85.7% against average of 63.5%	Above average collection rates across the partnership. The calculations are based on in year collection rates excluding arrears b/fwd.
HB overpayments written off (6)	Below average write-offs of 1.36% against 4.0%	Above average write-offs 19.0% against 3.8%	Below average write-offs of 1.6% against 3.8%	Below average write-offs of 2.2% against 3.8%	In the main lower than average write offs which may suggest that we have a stronger commitment to collect before we consider write-off.
Appeals lodged per 1000 claimants (7)	4.6 against an average of 10.4	4.6 against an average of 8.3	3.8 cases against an average of 8.3	5.8 cases against an average of 8.3	Lower than average appeals would suggest that our internal processes attempts satisfy the claimants queries before it goes to appeal.
DHP (8)	Actual spend as a % of Funding = 119.4% against an average of 95.2%	Actual spend as a % of Funding = 104.7% against an average of 95.3%	Actual spend as a % of Funding = 125.5% against an average of 95.3%	Actual spend as a % of Funding = 136.5% against an average of 95.3%	Appears that the majority of respondents do not spend up to the DWP allocation which means that money will have to be returned. Our practise has always been to spend at least the allocation to support those most in need.
Number of fraud staff per 1000 claimants (9)	0.15 FTE compared with the average of 0.20 FTE	0.17 FTE compared with the average of 0.21 FTE	0.23 FTE compared with the average of 0.21 FTE	0.30 FTE when compared with the average of 0.21 FTE	Considering in the main our sanction levels are above average it would suggest that performance has not suffered as a result
Referrals to fraud per 1000 claimants (10)	40 above the average of 34 referrals per 1000 caseload	34 just below the average of 36 referrals per 1000 caseload	47 above the average of 36 referrals per 1000 caseload	37 above the average of 36 referrals per 1000 caseload	In the main the number of referrals are above rge average the source of the referral is unknown it is difficult to determine whether this is within our control.

Cleared investigations per 1000 claimants (11)	Average cleared cases is 29 ours is 12	Average cleared cases is 31 ours is 11	Average cleared cases is 31 ours is 12	Average cleared cases is 31 ours is 13	Aswell as delays caused by lack of capacity within the investigators team, delays may be outside of our control including delays from decision makers DWP, assessment, legal and HMRC
Sanctions (12)	All processes associated with sanctions are above average	Apart from cautions offered and accepted all our sanctions are above the average	Apart from cases accepted by court for prosecution which is slightly below the average all sanctions are above the average	All processes associated with sanctions are above average	In the main the number of sanctions are above the average
Overpayment deducted from ongoing benefit (13)	Deduction % of 64.6% is higher than the average of 49.1%	Deduction % of 59.2% is higher than the average of 56.9%	Deduction % of 63.8% is higher than the average of 56.9%	Deduction % of 73.0% is higher than the average of 56.9%	Across the Partnership performance exceeds the average
Attachment of DWP benefits (14)	Deduction % of 2.1% is lower than the average of 2.8%	Information not available	Deduction % of 5.6% is higher than the average of 3.2%	Information not available	Whether to deduct from DWP benefits will be determined on a case by case basis and may not always be possible or may not be the most cost effective method (we may be able to negotiate a higher repayment by allowing direct payments)

Caseload comparison (15)	Apart from CTRS the partnership has the lowest recorded caseloads for new claims and change events	When measured against the responders, with the exception of CTRS NWLDC has the lowest number of new claims and change events	When measured against the responders, with the exception of CTRS HBBC has the lowest number of new claims and change events	Apart from CTRS HDC has the lowest recorded caseloads for new claims and change events	Purely gives the caseload data for those LA's that have responded. As the number of responders who have similar caseloads to to the partnership LA's were limited we have chosen to use all the LA's within the group which would have skewed the figures.
Direct Costs (16)	Direct Costs of £33.57 are marginally higher than the average of £33.08	Direct Costs of £27.60 are lower than the average of £38.37	Direct Costs of £33.79 are lower than the average of £38.37	Direct Costs of £40.85 are higher than the average of £38.37	Staffing numbers have been reduced following the structural review which have reduced staffing costs
Indirect Costs (17)	Indirect Costs of £22.62 are higher than the average of £17.42	Indirect Costs of £22.60 are higher than the average of £17.88	Indirect Costs of £19.84 are higher than the average of £17.88	Indirect Costs of £25.96 are higher than the average of £17.88	In the main we have little or no control over these costs. Interestingly for the partnership our central costs are 1.5 x higher than the average.