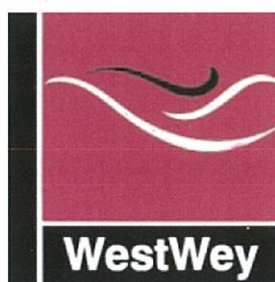




The WestWey Partnership



INTRODUCTION

West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council have joined forces to provide a joint revenues and benefits service to local people. The partnership is known as the WestWey Partnership.

We are situated on the south coast of England in Dorset. A considerable amount of the joint partnership region is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty edged by a coastline which forms part of the Jurassic Coast, England's first natural World Heritage Site. Although this is an attractive and desirable area to live poor transport links and the high costs of housing in an area with lower than average household incomes means there are some pockets of deprivation.

The maritime history and water-sport facilities of the area were contributory factors in the decision to choose this region as the host for the sailing events of the 2012 Olympics.

West Dorset District Council and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council have a history of working together in areas including:

1. Take-up campaigns

In conjunction with other Dorset local authorities and the Pension Service we have undertaken Benefit campaigns targeted at under-claiming groups such as Pensioners, Lone Parents etc.

2. Production of leaflets and literature

We developed a range of Benefit information leaflets which were edited to Plain English Campaign standards.

3. Legislative and administrative training

Benefits is an area that is subject to continual change and over a considerable period of time joint training initiatives have been undertaken to cover refresher courses, new legislation and the establishment of an IRRV NVQ Centre.

4. Anti-fraud working – DAFP

We have established the Dorset Anti Fraud Partnership (DAFP) which is responsible for undertaking fraud prevention and detection work on behalf of West Dorset, Weymouth, North Dorset and Purbeck.

The above examples of collaborative working achieved savings through economies of scale and improvement in customer service delivery through the sharing of best practices. These initiatives helped to establish a sound foundation for the formal development of a partnership for the delivery of the Revenues & Benefits Service.

The following data shows the scale of the partnership:

Activity	West	W&P	Partnership
Benefits – Caseload	6,360	5,889	12,249
Benefits - new claims	3,629	3,141	6,770
Benefits - changes in claims	11,787	9,245	21,032
Benefits - Expenditure	£22m+	£19m+	£41m+
Council Tax – billing	£54.4m	£30.9m	£85.3
Council Tax - properties	46,261	29,236	75,497
Business Rates - billing	£27.6m	£15.6m	£43.2m
Business Rates - properties	4,639	2,626	7,265