

## Council Tax

# Moving to Digital

## West Lothian Council

### Contact for Enquiries

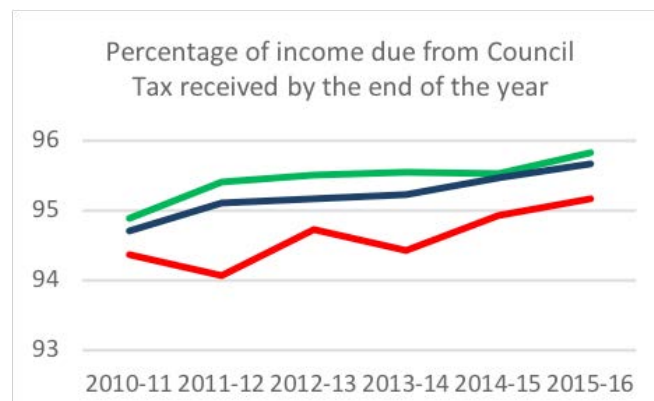
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West Lothian Council have moved council tax services online to realise savings and improve the customer experience. The redesign included reallocation of tasks to support functions and increased use and signposting of online forms. West Lothian have historically had low costs for collection of council tax, however costs have recently decreased at a faster rate compared to the family group average and uptake of e-billing and direct debit has increased year on year.

## Background

Income from council tax was historically low compared to the Scotland average



The collection Team at West Lothian Council consisted of 19.1 FTE. Areas of Responsibility included the administration of council tax (78,539 properties) and Business Rates (5,965 properties), the billing and administration of 3 BID areas, the collection of sundry debt and call handling for all the above areas.

## Key Activities

West Lothian Council focused on channel shift and streamlining of processes through staff engagement. The first stage of the process was to introduce staff-led focus groups and a staff suggestions matrix.

The outcomes of these exercises include;

- Reallocation of tasks to support functions
- Increased use and signposting of online forms
- Introduction of online reviews
- Increasing take up of e-billing

Enforcement;

- Amendment to the date in which recovery is run
- Ongoing development of performance management reports
- Enhancements to our Corporate Arrears Recovery System
- Maximising intervention income opportunities

Looking to the future;

- Capture of customer information via telephone
- Expansion to the suite of online forms following customer suggestions and ensuring that they are device responsive
- Introduce of a Citizen Portal which will allow customers to self-serve – amend DD details, view online statements

Benefits and Impact

The impact of the move to online services include increased staff engagement, increased uptake of E-billing and direct debit year on year.

Service Stats	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
No. of Properties	77,335	78,087	78,539
E-Billers	8,256	10, 541	12, 267
Direct Debit Uptake	63.09%	64.94%	67.13%

West Lothian have further seen significant savings in collection of council tax over time while income from council tax has increased at a faster rate compared to the Scotland average.

