

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

Agenda Item No 18

meeting date: 21 SEPTEMBER 2010
 title: REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT
 submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
 principal author: MARK EDMONDSON

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform committee of debts outstanding for business rates, council tax and sundry debtors. Also to update committee on Benefits Performance, including Benefits Fraud investigations, Prosecutions and Sanctions.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

❖ **Council Ambitions/Community Objectives/Corporate Priorities**

Without the revenue collected from rates, council tax and sundry debtors we would be unable to meet the Council's ambitions, objectives and priorities.

2 NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES (NNDR)

2.1 The following is a collection statement to 8 September 2010:

	£000	£000	2010/11 % to 8 Sept	2009/10 % to 8 Sept
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2010		383		
NNDR amounts due	14,491			
Plus costs	4			
Transitional surcharge	319			
Write ons	7			
	14,821			
Less				
- Transitional relief	-1,071			
- Exemptions	-567			
- Charity, Rural, Former Agricultural Discretionary Relief	-707			
- Small Business Rate Relief	-583			
- Write offs	-43			
- Interest Due	-9			
	-2,980	11,841		
Total amount to recover		12,224		
Less cash received to 8 Sept		-5,999	49.1	50.6
Amount Outstanding		6,225	50.9	49.4

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2010/11 but also those relating to previous years, but we are required to report to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) our in year collection rate. This figure is published and is used to compare our performance with other local authorities. On this measure our current in year collection rate at 31 August 2010 is 48.7% compared with 48.5% at 31 August 2009.

3 COUNCIL TAX

3.1 The following is a collection statement for Council Tax to 8 September 2010:

	£000	£000	2010/11 % to 8 Sept	2009/10 % to 8 Sept
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2010		403		
Council Tax amounts due	36,853			
Plus costs	32			
Transitional relief	4			
Write ons	2			
	36,891			
Less - Exemptions	-891			
- Discounts	-2,850			
- Disabled banding reduction	-44			
- Council Tax Benefit	-2,258			
- Write offs	-10			
	-6,053	30,838		
Total amount to recover		31,241		
Less cash received to 8 Sept		-15,462	49.5	49.6
Amount Outstanding		15,779	50.5	50.4

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2010/11 but also those relating to previous years, but we are required to report our in year collection rate to the DCLG. This figure is published by them and is used to compare our performance against other local authorities. On this measure our current in year collection rate at 31 August 2010 is 49.4% compared to 49.4% at 31 August 2009.

5 SUNDRY DEBTORS

5.1 A summary of the sundry debtors account at 13 September 2010 is:

	£000	%
Amount Outstanding 1 April 2010	392	
Invoices Raised	721	
	1,113	100
Less Paid	696	63
Total Outstanding	417	37

Aged Debtors	000s	%
< 30 days	84	20.14
30 - 59 days	60	14.38
60 - 89 days	11	2.64
90 - 119 days	15	3.60
120 – 149 days	16	3.84
150+ days	231	55.4
	417	100

6 HOUSING BENEFIT – PERFORMANCE

6.1 The main indicators for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit performance are the National Indicators for Right Benefit and Right Time. The benefit section also report on Local Performance Indicator's that have been set within the department for Benefit fraud and Overpayments.

The Department of Work and Pensions does not require Local Authorities (LA's) to report on any other Performance Measures but encourages them to monitor their own performance locally.

We obviously consider it very important to monitor benefit fraud and also overpayment data.

6.2 HOUSING BENEFIT RIGHT TIME INDICATOR 2010/2011

Right time indicator of period 1 April 2010 – 30 June 2010

The right time indicator measures the time taken to process HB/CTB new claims and change events; this includes changes in circumstances, interventions, fraud referrals and prints generated by the benefit department.

Target for year	Actual Performance	Average Performance
12 days	10.90 days	20 days per IRRV

Performance for new claims for period 1 April 2010 – 30 June 2010

Target for year	Actual Performance	Top Grade 4 for all LA's 2007/08
20 days	20.09 days	Under 30 days

7 HOUSING BENEFIT FRAUD

7.1 The following is summary of fraud investigation for the period 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2010.

Completed fraud investigations		Average caseload (YTD)	
1.04.2010 – 30.06.2010	46	2010/2011	2,751

Number of investigations per 1,000 caseload		
2010/2011	46/2,751	16.72

7.2 *Number of Housing/Council Tax Benefit Prosecutions and Sanctions per 1,000 caseload*

The following is a summary of fraud prosecutions and sanctions for the period 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2010.

2010/2011		Average caseload (YTD)	
Cautions	1	2010/2011	2,751
Administrative penalties	1		
Successful prosecutions	0		
Total	2		

Number of prosecutions/sanctions per 1,000 caseload		
2009/2010	2/2,751	0.73

7.3 Ribble Valley Borough Council has brought one formal caution and one administration penalty for benefit fraud during the period 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2010.

All the above offences were a result of failing to report a change in their circumstances promptly. These have created overpayments in Housing/Council Tax benefit for £2,271.39. The claimant given an administration penalty must also pay back £92.50 (30% of the overpayment).

8 HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS

8.1 Overpayment means any amount paid as Housing Benefit when there was no entitlement under the regulations. The performance for the period 1 April 2010 to 30 June 2010 is as follows:

Performance Measure	%
The amount of Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments recovered during the period being reported on as a percentage of HB overpayments deemed recoverable during that period.	83.57

Performance Measure	%
The amount of Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments recovered during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the financial year plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period.	26.03
The amount of Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments written off during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the financial year, plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period.	0.00

9 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

9.1 Note the continuing progress that we make in collecting these debts, and the performance of our Housing Benefit Section remains excellent.

REVENUES AND BENEFITS MANAGER

PF41-10/ME/AC
8 September 2010