

**RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL** INFORMATION  
**REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item No 23

meeting date: 26 JULY 2011  
 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 13 July 2011:

	£000	£000	2011/12 % to 13 July	2010/11 % to 13 July
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2011		363		
NNDR amounts due	15,494			
Plus costs	5			
Transitional surcharge	103			
Write ons	21			
	<b>15,623</b>			
Less				
- Transitional relief	-620			
- Exemptions	-344			
- Charity, Rural, Former Agricultural Discretionary Relief	-740			
- Small Business Rate Relief	-1,024			
- Write offs	-53			
- Interest Due	-1			
	<b>-2,782</b>	12,841		
<b>Total amount to recover</b>		<b>13,204</b>		
Less cash received to 13 July		-3,908	29.6	29.6
<b>Amount Outstanding</b>		<b>9,296</b>	<b>70.4</b>	<b>70.4</b>

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2011/12 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 30 June 2011 is 29.8% compared with 30.7% at 30 June 2010. NB The fall in the in year collection rate is due to the ending of the temporary increase in the empty property rate exemption threshold.

### 3 COUNCIL TAX

3.1 The following is a collection statement for Council Tax to 13 July 2011:

	£000	£000	2011/12 % to 13 July	2010/11 % to 13 July
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2011		404		
Council Tax amounts due	37,015			
Plus costs	31			
Transitional relief	1			
Write ons	2			
	<b>37,049</b>			
Less - Exemptions	-925			
- Discounts	-2,839			
- Disabled banding reduction	-43			
- Council Tax Benefit	-2,326			
- Write offs	-12			
	<b>-6,145</b>	30,904		
<b>Total amount to recover</b>		<b>31,308</b>		
Less cash received to 13 July		-9,615	30.7	30.6
<b>Amount Outstanding</b>		<b>21,693</b>	<b>69.3</b>	<b>69.4</b>

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2011/12 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 for 2011/12 at 30 June 2011 is 30.4% compared to 30.3% at 30 June 2010.

## 5 SUNDRY DEBTORS

5.1 A summary of the sundry debtors account at 18 July 2011 is:

	£000	%
Amount Outstanding 1 April 2011	472	
Invoices Raised	573	
	<b>1,045</b>	<b>100</b>
Less Paid	<b>594</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Total Outstanding</b>	<b>451</b>	<b>43</b>

Aged Debtors	000s	%
< 30 days	50	11.09
30 - 59 days	19	4.22
60 - 89 days	9	1.99
90 - 119 days	187	41.46
120 – 149 days	8	1.77
150+ days	178	39.47
	<b>451</b>	<b>100</b>

## 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 2011 – 30 June 2011*

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
10 days	9.18 days	20 days per IRRV

*Performance for new claims for period 1 April 2011 – 30 June 2011*

Target for year	Actual Performance	Top Grade 4 for all LA's 2007/08
19 days	20.98 days	Under 30 days

7 HOUSING BENEFIT FRAUD

7.1 The following is summary of fraud investigation for the period 1 April 2011 – 30 June 2011.

Completed fraud investigations		Average caseload (YTD)	
1.4.2011 – 30.6.2011	57	2011/2012	2,829

Number of investigations per 1,000 caseload		
2011/2012	57/2,829	20.14

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 2011 – 30 June 2011.

2010/2011		Average caseload (YTD)	
Cautions	1	2010/2011	2,829
Administrative penalties	1		
Successful prosecutions	1		
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		

Number of prosecutions/sanctions per 1,000 caseload		
2011/2012	3/2,829	1.06

7.3 Ribble Valley Borough Council has brought one formal caution, one administration penalty and one prosecution for benefit fraud during the period 1 April 2011 – 30 June 2011.

The above offences were a result of the claimants failing to report a change in their circumstances promptly. These have created overpayments in Housing/Council Tax benefit for £5,395.69. The claimant given an administration penalty must also pay back £82.05 (30% of the overpayment). The claimant prosecuted was also given a 12 month conditional discharge from the court.

## 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 2011 – 30 June 2011 is as follows:

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>%</b>
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.	92.75
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.	20.18
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.	0.61

## 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.

## HEAD OF REVENUES AND BENEFITS

PF39-11/ME/AC  
13 July 2011