

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No 22

meeting date: 27 MARCH 2012  
 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 March 2012:

	£000	£000	2011/12 % to 13 March	2010/11 % to 13 March
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2011		363		
NNDR amounts due	15,825			
Plus costs	9			
Transitional surcharge	92			
Write ons	27			
	<b>15,953</b>			
Less				
- Transitional relief	-596			
- Exemptions	-492			
- Charity, Rural, Former Agricultural Discretionary Relief	-799			
- Small Business Rate Relief	-1,410			
- Write offs	-135			
- Interest Due	-2			
	<b>-3,434</b>	12,519		
Total amount to recover		<b>12,882</b>		
Less cash received to 13 March		-12,333	95.7	96.5
<b>Amount Outstanding</b>		<b>549</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>3.5</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 29 February 2012 is 96.79% compared with 98.03% at 28 February 2011. The fall in the in year collection rate is due to the ending of the temporary increase in the empty property rate exemption threshold and the delay in the inclusion of a large new assessment in the business rate list by the Valuation Office Agency.

### 3 COUNCIL TAX

3.1 The following is a collection statement for Council Tax to 13 March 2012:

	£000	£000	2011/12 % to 13 March	2010/11 % to 13 March
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2011		404		
Council Tax amounts due	36,970			
Plus costs	84			
Transitional relief	2			
Write ons	2			
	<b>37,058</b>			
Less - Exemptions	-1,017			
- Discounts	-2,859			
- Disabled banding reduction	-45			
- Council Tax Benefit	-2,304			
- Write offs	-31			
	<b>-6,256</b>	30,802		
<b>Total amount to recover</b>		<b>31,206</b>		
Less cash received to 13 March		-30,682	98.3	98.5
<b>Amount Outstanding</b>		<b>524</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>1.5</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 29 February 2012 is 98.7% compared to 98.8% at 31 28 February 2011.

#### 4 SUNDRY DEBTORS

4.1 A summary of the sundry debtors account at 14 March 2012 is:

	£000	£000	%
Amount Outstanding 1 April 2011		472	
Invoices Raised	1,556		
Plus costs	4		
	<b>1,560</b>		
Less write offs	<b>0</b>	<b>1,560</b>	
<b>Total amount to recover</b>		<b>2,032</b>	
Less cash received to 14 March 2012		1,704	83.86
<b>Amount outstanding</b>		<b>328</b>	

Aged Debtors	000s	%
< 30 days	79	24.09
30 - 59 days	9	2.74
60 - 89 days	4	1.22
90 - 119 days	13	3.96
120 – 149 days	8	2.44
150+ days	215	65.55
	<b>328</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 5 HOUSING BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 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 Indicators that have been set within the department for benefit fraud and overpayments.
- 5.2 The Department for 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.
- 5.3 We obviously consider it very important to monitor benefit fraud and also overpayment data.

##### *Housing Benefit Right Time Indicator 2011/2012*

1 October 2011 – 31 December 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	9.81 days	20 days per IRRV

*New claims performance*

1 October 2011 – 31 December 2011

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

6 HOUSING BENEFIT FRAUD

6.1 The following is a summary of fraud investigations for the period 1 October 2011 – 31 December 2011.

Completed fraud investigations		Average caseload (YTD)	
1 October 2011 – 31 December 2011	38	2011/2012	2,854

  

Number of investigations per 1,000 caseload		
2011/2012	38/2,854	13.31

*Number of Housing/Council Tax Benefit prosecutions and sanctions per 2,000 caseload*

2011/2012		Average caseload (YTD)	
Cautions	1	2011/2012	2,854
Administrative penalties	0		
Successful prosecutions	0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>		

  

Number of prosecutions/sanctions per 1,000 caseload		
2011/2012	1/2,854	0.35%

6.2 Ribble Valley Borough Council has brought one formal caution for benefit fraud during the period 1 October 2011 – 31 December 2011.

The above offence was a result of a claimant failing to report a change in their circumstances promptly. This created an overpayment in Housing/Council Tax benefit for £1,214.85.

7 HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS

7.1 Overpayment means any amount paid as Housing Benefit when there was no entitlement under the regulations. The performance for the period 1 October 2011 – 31 December 2011.

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.	122.72
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.	21.57

Performance Measure	%
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.	0.66

8 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

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

HEAD OF REVENUE AND BENEFITS

PF15-12/ME/AC  
22 March 2012