

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

Agenda Item No 20

meeting date: 25 MARCH 2014
 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 12 March 2014:

	£000	£000	2013/14 %	2012/13 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2013		357		
NNDR amounts due	17,421			
Plus costs	6			
Transitional surcharge	21			
Write ons	44			
	17,492			
Less				
- Transitional relief	-102			
- Exemptions	-504			
- Charity, Rural, Former Agricultural Discretionary Relief	-961			
- Small Business Rate Relief	-1,809			
- Write offs	-106			
- Interest Due	-2			
	-3,484	14,008		
Total amount to recover		14,365		
Less cash received to 12 March		-13,737	95.6	96.2
Amount Outstanding		628	4.4	3.8

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2013/14 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 28 February 2014 is 97.1% compared with 97.7% at 28 February 2013.

3 COUNCIL TAX

3.1 The following is a collection statement for Council Tax to 12 March 2014:

	£000	£000	2013/14 %	2012/13 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2013		486		
Council Tax amounts due	36,879			
Plus costs	98			
Transitional relief	3			
Write ons	7			
	36,987			
Less - Exemptions	-500			
- Discounts	-3,483			
- Disabled banding reduction	-48			
- Council Tax Benefit	69			
- Local Council Tax Support	-2,078			
- Write offs	-19			
	-6,059	30,928		
Total amount to recover		31,414		
Less cash received to 12 March		-30,817	98.1	98.3
Amount Outstanding		597	1.9	1.7

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2013/14 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 2013/14 at 28 February 2014 is 98.7% compared to 98.8% at 28 February 2013.

4 SUNDRY DEBTORS

4.1 A summary of the sundry debtors account at 14 March 2014 is:

	£000	£000
Amount Outstanding 1 April 2013		330
Invoices Raised	1,706	
Plus costs	3	
		1,709
Less write offs		1
Total amount to recover		2,038
Less cash received to 14 March 2014		1,676
Amount outstanding		362

Aged Debtors	000s	%
< 30 days	79	21.8
30 - 59 days	26	7.2
60 - 89 days	3	0.8
90 - 119 days	3	0.8
120 - 149 days	18	5.0
150+ days	233	64.4
	362	100

5 HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT PERFORMANCE

5.1 The main indicator for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support performance is known as 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 2013/2014

1 October 2013 – 31 December 2013

The right time indicator measures the time taken to process HB/CTS 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 1 October 2013 – 31 Dec 2013	Average Performance
10 days	14.75 days	20 days per IRRV

New claims performance

Target for year	Actual Performance 1 October 2013 – 31 Dec 2013	Top grade 4 for all LA's 2007/08
20 days	21.66 days	Under 30 days

6 HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FRAUD

6.1 The following is a summary of fraud investigations for the period 1 October 2013 – 31 December 2013.

Completed fraud investigations		Average caseload	Number of investigations per 1,000 caseload
Housing Benefit	44	1,954	22.52
Council Tax Support	44	2,627	16.75

Summary of prosecutions/sanctions	
Cautions	1
Administrative penalties	0
Successful prosecutions	1
Total	2

Number of prosecutions/sanctions per 1,000 caseload		
Housing Benefit	2/1,954	1.02
Council Tax Support	2/2,627	0.76

7 HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS

7.1 Overpayment means any amount paid as Housing Benefit when there was no entitlement under the regulations. Performance for the period 1 October 2013 – 31 December 2013:

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.	64.53
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.	17.21
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.	0.56

8 CONCLUSION

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

HEAD OF REVENUES AND BENEFITS

DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

PF16-14/ME/AC
11 March 2014

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None

For further information please ask for Mark Edmondson.