

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

Agenda Item No 15

meeting date: 28 OCTOBER 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 14 October 2014:

	£000	£000	2014/15 %	2013/14 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2014		555		
NNDR amounts due	18,029			
Plus costs	5			
Transitional surcharge	8			
Write ons	2			
	<b>18,044</b>			
Less				
- Transitional relief	-63			
- Exemptions	-328			
- Charity, Rural, Former Agricultural Discretionary Relief	-979			
- Small Business Rate Relief	-1,896			
- Retail Relief	-266			
- Interest Due	-0			
- Write Offs	-29			
	<b>-3,561</b>	14,483		
Total amount to recover		<b>15,038</b>		
Less cash received to 14 October		-8,969	59.6	61.1
<b>Amount Outstanding</b>		<b>6,069</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>38.9</b>

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2014/15 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 September 2014 is 57.7% compared with 59.6% at 30 September 2013. The main reason for the reduction in the collection rate is the change that allows Business Ratepayers to choose to pay their rates by twelve instalments instead of ten. This option has been taken up by most large ratepayers leading to a reduction in the amount collected at this point in the year.

### 3 COUNCIL TAX

3.1 The following is a collection statement for Council Tax to 14 October 2014:

	£000	£000	2014/15 %	2013/14 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2014		510		
Council Tax amounts due	38,050			
Plus costs	50			
Transitional relief	1			
Write ons	2			
	<b>38,103</b>			
Less - Exemptions	-476			
- Discounts	-3,292			
- Disabled banding reduction	-46			
- Council Tax Benefit	11			
- Local Council Tax Support	-1,962			
- Write offs	-10			
	<b>-5,775</b>	32,328		
<b>Total amount to recover</b>		<b>32,838</b>		
Less cash received to 14 October		-19,438	59.2	59.5
<b>Amount Outstanding</b>		<b>13,400</b>	<b>40.8</b>	<b>40.5</b>

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2014/15 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 2014/15 at 30 September 2014 is 58.7% compared to 58.9% at 30 September 2013.

#### 4 SUNDRY DEBTORS

4.1 A summary of the sundry debtors account at 17 October 2014 is:

	£000	£000
Amount Outstanding 1 April 2014		382
Invoices Raised	1,290	
Plus costs	0	
		<b>1,290</b>
Less write offs		0
<b>Total amount to recover</b>		<b>1,672</b>
Less cash received to 17 October 2014		971
<b>Amount outstanding</b>		<b>701</b>

Aged Debtors	000s	%
< 30 days	245	34.9
30 - 59 days	72	10.3
60 - 89 days	11	1.6
90 - 119 days	17	2.4
120 - 149 days	9	1.3
150+ days	347	49.5
	<b>701</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 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 2014/2015*

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 July 2014 – 30 September 2014	Average Performance
10 days	8.0 days	20 days per IRRV

##### *New claims performance*

Target for year	Actual Performance 1 July 2014 – 30 September 2014	Top grade 4 for all LA's 2007/08
23 days	17.5 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 July 2014 – 30 September 2014.

Completed fraud investigations		Average caseload	Number of investigations per 1,000 caseload
Housing Benefit	29	1,896	11.60
Council Tax Support	29	2,499	15.30

Summary of prosecutions/sanctions	
Cautions	1
Administrative penalties	0
Successful prosecutions	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>

Number of prosecutions/sanctions per 1,000 caseload		
Housing Benefit	1/1,896	0.53
Council Tax Support	1/2,499	0.40

## 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 June 2014 – 30 September 2014:

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.	75.80
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.	23.75
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.	0.04

## 8 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT

8.1 At your last meeting (9 September 2014) this committee authorised the Council to enter into Delivery Partnership Agreement (DPA) with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to provide services to Universal Credit claimants in Ribble Valley.

8.2 The staffing implications of entering into the DPA along with other changes to the Benefits Section was considered by CMT on 24 September 2014 and a report has been submitted to Personnel Committee on 22 October 2014 seeking approval for creating a new post to carry out these duties.

8.3 The decision of Personnel Committee will be reported verbally at your meeting.

8.4 There will be no financial implications from this as funding for the post is provided by DWP.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 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

PF58-14/ME/AC  
15 October 2014

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None

For further information please ask for Mark Edmondson.