

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

Agenda Item No 13

meeting date: 16 JUNE 2015
 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 4 June 2015:

	£000	£000	2015/16 %	2014/15 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2015		467		
NNDR amounts due	18,527			
Plus costs	3			
Transitional surcharge	0			
Write ons	19			
	18,549			
Less				
- Transitional relief	5			
- Exemptions	-301			
- Charity, Rural, Former Agricultural Discretionary Relief	-1,034			
- Small Business Rate Relief	-1,955			
- Retail, Reoccupation, New Build, and Discretionary Transitional Relief	-509			
- Interest Due	-0			
- Write Offs	-23			
	-3,817	14,732		
Total amount to recover		15,199		
Less cash received to 4 June		-3,191	21.0	20.6
Amount Outstanding		12,008	79.0	79.4

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2015/16 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 May 2015 is 20.82% compared with 20.10% at 31 May 2015. Furthermore our collection rate for 2014/15 at 31 March 2015 was 98.23% compared with 97.78% for 2013/14 at 31 March 2014.

3 COUNCIL TAX

3.1 The following is a collection statement for Council Tax to 4 June 2015:

	£000	£000	2015/16 %	2014/15 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2015		651		
Council Tax amounts due	39,039			
Plus costs	36			
Transitional relief	0			
Write ons	0			
	39,075			
Less - Exemptions	-496			
- Discounts	-3,312			
- Disabled banding reduction	-46			
- Council Tax Benefit	23			
- Local Council Tax Support	-1,884			
- Write offs	-1			
	-5,716	33,359		
Total amount to recover		34,010		
Less cash received to 4 June		-7,054	20.74	20.65
Amount Outstanding		26,956	79.26	79.35

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2015/16 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 2015/16 at 31 May 2015 is 20.99% compared to 20.92% at 31 May 2014. Furthermore our collection rate for 2014/15 at 31 March 2015 was 98.83% compared to 98.99% for 2013/14 at 31 March 2014.

4 SUNDRY DEBTORS

4.1 A summary of the sundry debtors account at 5 June 2015 is:

	£000	£000
Amount Outstanding 1 April 2015		554
Invoices Raised	758	
Plus costs	1	
		759
Less write offs		1
Total amount to recover		1,312
Less cash received to 5 June 2015		570
Amount outstanding		742

Aged Debtors	000s	%
< 30 days	54	7.3
30 - 59 days	41	5.5
60 - 89 days	276	37.2
90 - 119 days	54	7.3
120 - 149 days	4	0.5
150+ days	313	42.2
	742	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 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 April 2014 – 31 March 2015	Average Performance
10 days	8.3 days	20 days per IRRV

New claims performance

Target for year	Actual Performance 1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015	Top grade 4 for all LA's 2007/08
23 days	18.1 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 April 2014 – 31 March 2015.

Completed fraud investigations		Average caseload	Number of investigations per 1,000 caseload
Housing Benefit	79	1,887	41.86
Council Tax Support	79	2,454	32.19

Summary of prosecutions/sanctions	
Cautions	5
Administrative penalties	1
Successful prosecutions	1
Total	7

Number of prosecutions/sanctions per 1,000 caseload		
Housing Benefit	7/1,887	3.71
Council Tax Support	7/2,454	2.85

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 April 2014 – 31 March 2015:

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.	81.67
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.	48.22
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.	1.56

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

PF30-15/ME/AC
5 June 2015

For further information please ask for Mark Edmondson.