

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

Agenda Item No 13

meeting date: 5 APRIL 2016
 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 18 March 2016:

	£000	£000	2015/16 %	2014/15 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2015		467		
NNDR amounts due	18,988			
Plus costs	5			
Transitional surcharge	-3			
Write ons	21			
	19,011			
Less				
- Transitional relief	16			
- Exemptions	-355			
- Charity, Rural, Community Amateur Sports Clubs Relief	-1,260			
- Small Business Rate Relief	-2,062			
- Retail, Reoccupation, New Build, Discretionary Transitional Relief, and Flood Relief	-654			
- Interest Due	-0			
- Write Offs	-119			
	-4,434	14,577		
Total amount to recover		15,044		
Less cash received to 18 March 2016		-14,361	95.5	96.0
Amount Outstanding		683	4.5	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 29 February 2016 is 97.16% compared with 97.07% at 28 February 2015.

3 COUNCIL TAX

3.1 The following is a collection statement for Council Tax to 18 March 2016:

	£000	£000	2015/16 %	2014/15 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2015		651		
Council Tax amounts due	39,250			
Plus costs	85			
Transitional relief	1			
Write ons	3			
	39,339			
Less - Exemptions	-534			
- Discounts	-3,551			
- Disabled banding reduction	-46			
- Council Tax Benefit	43			
- Local Council Tax Support	-1,821			
- Write offs	-16			
	-5,925	33,414		
Total amount to recover		34,065		
Less cash received to 18 March		-33,239	97.6	97.8
Amount Outstanding		826	2.4	2.2

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 29 February 2016 is 98.48% compared to 98.58% at 28 February 2015.

4 SUNDRY DEBTORS

4.1 A summary of the sundry debtors account at 22 March 2016 is:

	£000	£000
Amount Outstanding 1 April 2015		554
Invoices Raised	1,818	
Plus costs	3	
		1,821
Less write offs		108
Total amount to recover		2,267
Less cash received to 22 March 2016		1,893
Amount outstanding		374

Aged Debtors	000s	%
< 30 days	47	12.6
30 - 59 days	20	5.3
60 - 89 days	1	0.2
90 - 119 days	7	2.0
120 - 149 days	23	6.1
150+ days	276	73.8
	374	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 2015/2016

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 2015 – 31 December 2015	Average Performance
9 days	7.64 days	20 days per IRRV

New claims performance

Target for year	Actual Performance	
	1 October 2015 – 31 December 2015	Top grade 4 for all LA's 2007/08
23 days	20.5 days	Under 30 days

6 HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS

6.1 Overpayment means any amount paid as Housing Benefit when there was no entitlement under the regulations. Performance for the period 1 October 2015 – 31 December 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.	82.53
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.	22.48
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.	0.07

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 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

PF24-16/ME/AC
21 March 2016

For further information please ask for Mark Edmondson.