

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

Agenda Item No 14

meeting date: 21 JANUARY 2020
 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 processing times and overpayment recovery.

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 5 January 2020:

	£000	£000	2019/20 %	2018/19 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2019		604		
NNDR amounts due	21,326			
Plus costs	2			
Transitional surcharge	44			
Write ons	0			
	21,372			
Less				
- Transitional relief	-241			
- Exemptions	-409			
- Charity, Rural, Community Amateur Sports Clubs Relief	-1,237			
- Small Business Rate Relief	-3,290			
- Revaluation 2017, Pub, SSB and Other reliefs	-501			
- Interest Due	0			
- Write Offs	-45			
	-5,723	15,649		
Total amount to recover		16,253		
Less cash received to 5 January 2020		-13,463	82.8	82.7
Amount Outstanding		2,790	17.2	17.3

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2019/20 but also those relating to previous years, but we are required to report to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) 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 December 2019 is 84.02% compared with 83.39% at 31 December 2018.

3 COUNCIL TAX

3.1 The following is a collection statement for Council Tax to 5 January 2020:

	£000	£000	2019/20 %	2018/19 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2019		927		
Council Tax amounts due	49,401			
Plus costs	64			
Transitional relief	1			
Write ons	3			
	49,469			
Less - Exemptions	-711			
- Discounts	-4,409			
- Disabled banding reduction	-54			
- Council Tax Benefit	10			
- Local Council Tax Support	-1,830			
- Write offs	-25			
	-7,019	42,450		
Total amount to recover		43,377		
Less cash received to 5 January 2020		-37,479	86.4	86.7
Amount Outstanding		5,898	13.6	13.3

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2019/20 but also those relating to previous years, but we are required to report our in year collection rate to the MHCLG. 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 at 31 December 2019 is 87.16% compared to 87.31% at 31 December 2018.

4 SUNDRY DEBTORS

4.1 A summary of the sundry debtors account at 13 January 2020 is:

	£000	£000
Amount Outstanding 1 April 2019		429
Invoices Raised	3,218	
Plus costs	1	
		3,219
Less credit notes		-61
Total amount to recover		3,587
Less cash received to 13 January 2020		-2,412
Amount outstanding		1,175

Aged Debtors	000s	%
< 30 days	60	5.11
30 - 59 days	704	59.91
60 - 89 days	8	0.68
90 - 119 days	23	1.96
120 - 149 days	8	0.68
150+ days	372	31.66
	1,175	100

4.2 The balance of debt outstanding for '150+ days' includes debts raised on an annual basis at the start of the financial year, which are being paid by direct debit on a monthly basis throughout the year. Another substantial element within this balance is debt relating to overpaid housing benefit due to reasons including fraud. Recovery action continues on such housing benefit debt, with some being paid by instalments.

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 overpayment data.

Housing Benefit Right Time Indicator 2019/2020

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 2019 – 31 December 2019	Average Performance
5 days	3.50 days	20 days per IRRV

New claims performance

Target for year	Actual Performance 1 October 2019 – 31 December 2019	Top grade 4 for all LA's 2007/08
15 days	10.03 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.

6.2 The figures overleaf are from the previous quarter as the latest figures were not available at the time of writing the report.

Performance for the period 1 October 2019 - 31 December 2019:

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.	116.54
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.	14.61
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.	0.23

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

PF63-19/ME/AC
7 November 2019

For further information please ask for Mark Edmondson.