

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

Agenda Item No 24

meeting date: 6 SEPTEMBER 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 22 August 2016:

	£000	£000	2016/17 %	2015/16 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2016		575		
NNDR amounts due	19,213			
Plus costs	3			
Transitional surcharge	0			
Write ons	49			
	19,265			
Less				
- Transitional relief	2			
- Exemptions	-431			
- Charity, Rural, Community Amateur Sports Clubs Relief	-1,086			
- Small Business Rate Relief	-2,052			
- Retail, Reoccupation, New Build, Discretionary Transitional Relief, and Flood Relief	-45			
- Interest Due	-0			
- Write Offs	-54			
	-3,666	15,599		
Total amount to recover		16,174		
Less cash received to 22 August 2016		-6,596	40.8	45.2
Amount Outstanding		9,578	59.2	54.8

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2016/17 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 July 2016 is 38.81% compared with 39.26% at 31 July 2015.

3 COUNCIL TAX

3.1 The following is a collection statement for Council Tax to 22 August 2016:

	£000	£000	2016/17 %	2015/16 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2016		787		
Council Tax amounts due	41,155			
Plus costs	46			
Transitional relief	0			
Write ons	2			
	41,203			
Less - Exemptions	-477			
- Discounts	-3,697			
- Disabled banding reduction	-46			
- Council Tax Benefit	9			
- Local Council Tax Support	-1,835			
- Write offs	-6			
	-6,052	35,151		
Total amount to recover		35,938		
Less cash received to 22 August 2016		-14,506	40.4	40.4
Amount Outstanding		21,432	59.6	59.6

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2016/17 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 at 31 July 2016 is 40.00% compared to 39.95% at 31 July 2015.

4 SUNDRY DEBTORS

4.1 A summary of the sundry debtors account at 26 August 2016 is:

	£000	£000
Amount Outstanding 1 April 2016		478
Invoices Raised	1,309	
Plus costs	1	
		1,310
Less write offs		0
Total amount to recover		1,788
Less cash received to 26 August 2016		1,175
Amount outstanding		613

Aged Debtors	000s	%
< 30 days	62	10
30 - 59 days	40	7
60 - 89 days	12	2
90 - 119 days	15	2
120 - 149 days	207	34
150+ days	277	45
	613	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 2016/2017

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 2016 –30 June 2016	Average Performance
10 days	7.3 days	20 days per IRRV

New claims performance

Target for year	Actual Performance 1 April 2016 –30 June 2016	Top grade 4 for all LA's 2007/08
23 days	21.1 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 April 2015 – 30 June 2016:

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.	64.45
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.	15.66
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.	0.57

7 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18

- 7.1 The Government abolished Council Tax Benefit from April 2013 and local authorities were required to introduce their own Local Council Tax Support Scheme.
- 7.2 After consultation with residents we introduced a scheme based on Housing and Council Tax Benefit with a reduction of 12% in entitlement for working age claimants to cover the shortfall in funding from central government.
- 7.3 In its summer budget of 2015 the Government announced a number of welfare changes that would become effective from 1 April 2017 for the Housing Benefit Scheme.
- 7.4 In order to maintain the link between our Local Council Tax Support Scheme and the Housing Benefit scheme we are currently consulting residents on their views on continuing to align the scheme with Housing Benefit.
- 7.5 The consultation is due to run until 30 September 2016 and a further report will be brought with recommendations for our 2017/18 scheme later this year.

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

PF40-16/ME/AC
23 August 2016

For further information please ask for Mark Edmondson.