

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

meeting date: 18 JANUARY 2022
 title: REVENUES AND BENEFITS GENERAL REPORT
 submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
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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 6 January 2022:

	£000	£000	2021/22 %	2020/21 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2021		907		
NNDR amounts due	21,871			
Plus costs	3			
Transitional surcharge	7			
Write ons	3			
	21,884			
Less				
- Transitional relief	4			
- Exemptions	-415			
- Charity, Rural, Community Amateur Sports Clubs Relief	-1,317			
- Small Business Rate Relief	-3,782			
- Nursery Discount, Retail Discount, SSB, Flood Relief, Revaluation 2017, Pub, SSB and Other reliefs	-4,076			
- Interest Due	0			
- Write Offs	-111			
	-9,697	12,187		
Total amount to recover		13,094		
Less cash received to 6 January 2022		-10,584	80.1	75.9
Amount Outstanding		2,510	19.9	24.1

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2021/22 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 2021 is 81.96% compared with 82.06% at 31 December 2020. The collection rate for 2020/21 was severely impacted by COVID19 and was 2.10% lower than 2019/20. Based on current estimates it is likely that our collection rate for this year will be similar to pre pandemic levels.

3 COUNCIL TAX

3.1 The following is a collection statement for Council Tax to 6 January 2022:

	£000	£000	2021/22 %	2020/21 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2021		1,679		
Council Tax amounts due	55,331			
Plus costs	86			
Transitional relief	2			
Write ons	0			
	55,419			
Less - Exemptions	-770			
- Discounts	-4,856			
- Disabled banding reduction	-66			
- Council Tax Benefit	4			
- Local Council Tax Support plus Hardship	-2,098			
- Write offs	-27			
	-7,813	47,606		
Total amount to recover		49,285		
Less cash received to 6 January 2022		-42,422	86.1	84.5
Amount Outstanding		6,863	13.9	15.5

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2021/22 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 on 31 December 2021 is 87.12% compared to 85.41% at 31 December 2020. The collection rate for 2020/21 was severely impacted by COVID19 and was 1.24% lower than 2019/20. Based on current estimates it is likely that our collection rate for this year will be like pre pandemic levels.

4 SUNDRY DEBTORS

4.1 A summary of the sundry debtors account on 10 January 2022 is:

	£000	£000
Amount Outstanding 1 April 2021		651
Invoices Raised	2,407	
Plus costs	0	
		2,407
Less credit notes		-194
Total amount to recover		2,864
Less cash received to 10 January 2022		-2,315
Amount outstanding		549

Aged Debtors	000s	%
< 30 days	23	4.19
30 - 59 days	29	5.28
60 - 89 days	82	14.94
90 - 119 days	20	3.64
120 - 149 days	11	2.00
150+ days	384	69.95
	687	100

4.2 The balance of debt outstanding for '60-89 days' includes debts raised on an annual basis at the start of the financial year, which are being paid by direct debit monthly 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 debts, 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 reports 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 2021/2022

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 2021– 31 December 2021	Average Performance
5 days	4.78 days	20 days per IRRV

New claims performance

Target for year	Actual Performance 1 October 2021 – 31 December 2021	Top grade 4 for all LA's 2007/08
15 days	13.40 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 July 2021 – 30 September 2021:

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.	69.35
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.	8.37
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.	Nil

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

18 January 2022

For further information please ask for Mark Edmondson.