

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

meeting date: 30 MARCH 2021
 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 17 March 2021:

	£000	£000	2020/21 %	2019/20 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2020		741		
NNDR amounts due	21,167			
Plus costs	0			
Transitional surcharge	6			
Write ons	7			
	21,180			
Less				
- Transitional relief	-22			
- Exemptions	-396			
- Charity, Rural, Community Amateur Sports Clubs Relief	-1,291			
- Small Business Rate Relief	-3,771			
- Nursery Discount, Retail Discount, SSB, Flood Relief, Revaluation 2017, Pub, SSB and Other reliefs	-6,958			
- Interest Due	0			
- Write Offs	-97			
	-12,535	8,645		
Total amount to recover		9,386		
Less cash received to 17 March 2021		-8,358	89.0	94.6
Amount Outstanding		1,028	11.0	5.4

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2020/21 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 28 February 2021 is 94.17% compared with 96.63% at 29 February 2020. Both the collection rate for 2020/21 and the overall amount outstanding have been severely impacted by COVID19.

3 COUNCIL TAX

3.1 The following is a collection statement for Council Tax to 17 March 2021:

	£000	£000	2020/21 %	2019/20 %
Balance Outstanding 1 April 2020		1,062		
Council Tax amounts due	52,367			
Plus costs	-1			
Transitional relief	1			
Write ons	1			
	52,368			
Less - Exemptions	-803			
- Discounts	-4,654			
- Disabled banding reduction	-55			
- Council Tax Benefit	3			
- Local Council Tax Support plus Hardship	-2,376			
- Write offs	-24			
	-7,909	44,459		
Total amount to recover		45,521		
Less cash received to 17 March 2021		-43,625	95.8	97.4
Amount Outstanding		1,896	4.2	2.6

NB The figures included in the table include not only those charges for 2020/21 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 28 February 2021 is 96.65% compared to 98.06% at 29 February 2020. Both the collection rate for 2020/21 and the overall amount outstanding have been severely impacted by COVID19.

4 SUNDRY DEBTORS

4.1 A summary of the sundry debtors account at 17 March 2021 is:

	£000	£000
Amount Outstanding 1 April 2020		696
Invoices Raised	3,541	
Plus costs	9	
		3,550
Less credit notes		-953
Total amount to recover		3,293
Less cash received to 17 March 2021		-2,338
Amount outstanding		955

Aged Debtors	000s	%
< 30 days	102	10.68
30 - 59 days	18	1.88
60 - 89 days	7	0.73
90 - 119 days	25	2.62
120 - 149 days	12	1.26
150+ days	791	82.83
	955	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 2020/2021

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 2020– 31 December 2020	Average Performance
5 days	3 days	20 days per IRRV

New claims performance

Target for year	Actual Performance 1 October 2020 – 31 December 2020	Top grade 4 for all LA's 2007/08
15 days	6.08 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 2020 - 31 December 2020:

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.	135.56
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.	10.04
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.	0.03

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

PF31-20/ME/AC
3 November 2020

For further information please ask for Mark Edmondson.