

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder

21 November 2017

LEAD OFFICER: Executive Director

Revenues Quarterly Performance Report for Quarter 1: July – September 2017

Purpose

1. To review and report on the current performance of the Revenues & Benefits Section using statistical information and further explanation where required.
2. This is not a key decision, however, the Revenues and Benefits teams report quarterly on their performance.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder note the current performance information for the Revenues and Benefits Team provided in this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The Revenues and Benefits teams strive to deliver a high standard of performance. Balancing a number of different functions, the teams consistently demonstrate their commitment to meeting residents' expectations and providing value for money service.

Background

5. With the abolition of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and introduction of National Indicators (NIs) there is a significant change to the requirement for the Council to report on the performance of the Revenues and Benefits service.
6. The Council will, however, continue to be required to report on many former Revenues Services BVPIs through statistical returns (e.g. revenue collection rates). For the most part, the former BVPIs are considered to be valuable indicators of performance and therefore will continue to be reported to the Portfolio Holder. The BVPI reference numbers have been retained as a convenient way of maintaining continuity of performance reporting.

Considerations

7. As at the end of the second quarter of 2017/18, the Council Tax collection rate was 61.6%, against a target of 59.8%. Net payments collected totalled £66.2m, compared to £64.2m in 2016/17. Details can be found in APPENDIX A.
8. Non-Domestic Rates' collection also performed favourably against an end of quarter target of 59.8%, with a collection rate of 61.7%. In monetary terms, the amount collected was £50.5m compared to £46.7m for the same period last year. Details can be found in APPENDIX B.

9. The numbers of business properties, those that are not in use, and the total Rateable Value within South Cambridgeshire are shown below. Appendix E contains a visual representation of these figures showing the trends, and a breakdown by property type is shown in Appendix F.

Year	Period	Total Rateable Properties	Total Unoccupied Properties	Total RV (£)
2015/16	Q1	4720	421	175,734,248
	Q2	4715	415	176,748,704
	Q3	4737	437	177,751,559
	Q4	4762	459	178,310,944
2016/17	Q1	4841	446	185,626,024
	Q2	4882	466	186,094,479
	Q3	4925	462	187,563,084
	Q4	4955	471	187,501,164
2017/18	Q1	4989	480	209,470,165
	Q2	5044	474	209,155,278

10. I am also reporting on performance of the new Revaluation Relief, a local business rates discretionary relief scheme. To date, nearly 300 applications have been issued, and we have awarded a total of £69,712 across 65 local businesses. We are continuing to contact those who have not yet returned the form.
11. Performance in Rent collection at the end of quarter two was 97.25%, against a target of 97.1%. In terms of rent not collected, the arrears for current tenants were £392k, compared to £349k for the same period last year. The details can be found in APPENDIX C
12. Sundry Debtors had 16% of invoices in arrears at the end of September, compared to a target of 31.1%. In monetary terms, this equates to £943k in arrears from invoices totalling nearly £6m. APPENDIX D shows the detail.
13. The average processing time for new claims as at the end of Quarter2 2017/18 is 23.58 days compared to target of 20 days. It was expected that performance would be affected by implementation of the Revenues and Benefits automation project which will be completed by the end of 2017/18.
14. Change of Circumstances processing times average to date (Quarter2) is 14.47 days for 2017/18 compared to target of 12.00 days. As already noted within the report the performance has been affected by the Revenues and Benefits automation project.
15. The days to process new claims and changes of circumstances has reduced compared to Quarter 1 and performance on a monthly basis is now back under target ; is expected that number of days to process claims continue to be lower than target.
16. The changes to working practices and other measures which have been put in place have now addressed the increase processing times and performance is now back on track as shown in performance information (Appendix G).

17. Average processing times for new claims for October was 10 days and changes of circumstances was 9 days and average processing times are now 20.91 days (new claims) and 13.51 days (changes)., It is expected that processing times will continue to at a more acceptable level going forward and performance targets will to be achieved and exceeded.
18. There have been 102 applications for support under the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) scheme and expenditure is in line with what we expect at this time of year.

Expenditure £54523 (33%) 2017/18 (Grant £165,659)

The benefits team and homeless team have worked closely together to identify cases which are in need of a grant and this work is continuing this year to ensure that the grant payment is fully spent.

Implications

19. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

20. Targets relate to revenue collection and will ensure that the Council's budgeted income is received.

Legal

21. The Council has a legal duty to deliver the service in accordance with Billing, Enforcement and Benefit legislation

Risk Management

22. Failure to maintain high collection rates could have an adverse effect on the Council's budget requirements.

Equality and Diversity

23. We ensure that revenue collection and benefits administration are delivered in a fair and consistent manner to all members of the community. Partial EQIA's have been carried out on our Billing & Collection policy, Benefit Administration

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

24. None

Effect on Corporate Objectives

25. **Objective – Homes for our future**
Secure the delivery of a wide range of housing to meet the needs of existing and future communities

Background Papers

None

Report Author: Katie Brown – Revenues Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713335

Dawn Graham – Benefits Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713085