

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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| REPORT TO: | Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder | 20 February 2018 |
| LEAD OFFICER: | Head of People and Organisational Development | |

Revenues Quarterly Performance Report for Quarter 3: October 2017 – January 2018

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 (BVPs) 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 BVPs through statistical returns (e.g. revenue collection rates). For the most part, the former BVPs 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 third quarter of 2017/18, the Council Tax collection rate was 88.7%, against a target of 88.5%. Net payments collected totalled £95.4m, compared to £92.4m 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 86.3%, with a collection rate of 87.2%. In monetary terms, the amount collected was £71.8m compared to £68m 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 |
| | Q3 | 5089 | 471 | 209,899,738 |

10. I am also reporting on performance of the new Revaluation Relief, a local business rates discretionary relief scheme. To date we have awarded £446,658.61 in additional relief to 216 businesses that were negatively impacted by the revaluation.
11. Performance in Rent collection at the end of quarter three was 98.16%, against a target of 97.7%. In terms of rent not collected, the arrears for current tenants were £392k, compared to £389k for the same period last year. The details can be found in APPENDIX C
12. Sundry Debtors had 15.4% of invoices in arrears at the end of December, compared to a target of 18%. In monetary terms, this equates to £1.27m in arrears from invoices totalling just over £8.3m. APPENDIX D shows the detail.
13. The average processing time for benefit new claims as at the end of Quarter3 2017/18 is 19.75 days average compared to target of 20 days. It was expected that performance will be maintained for the remainder of 2017/18 and annual performance for 2017/18 to be at or below the target of 20 days Appendix G shows the detail.
14. The time taken to process benefit changes of circumstances to end of Quarter 3 is 12.09 days average for 2017/18 compared to target of 12.00 days. It is expected that processing times for the remainder of the financial year as in previous years will be below target and this will enable annual performance for 2017/18 to be at or below the target of 12 days.
15. The changes to working practices and other measures which have been put in place have now addressed the increase processing times and reduced performance which occurred as the start of the year. Performance as illustrated in Appendix G has been monthly below target for each month since September 2017.

16. There have been 200 applications for support under the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) scheme and of these 157 have been granted a payment; expenditure is in line with what we expect at this time of year.

Expenditure £92,680(56%) 2017/18 (Grant £165,659)

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

Implications

17. 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

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

Legal

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

Risk Management

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

Equality and Diversity

21. 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)

22. None

Effect on Corporate Objectives

Objective – Homes for our future

Secure the delivery of a wide range of housing to meet the needs of existing and future communities

No Background Papers

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