

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder

17 January 2017

LEAD OFFICER: Interim Chief Executive

Revenues Quarterly Performance Report for Quarter 1: July - September 2016

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 2016/17, the Council Tax collection rate was 61.9%, against a target of 59.8% The net payments collected totalled £64.4m, compared to £62.4m in 2015/16. Details can be found in APPENDIX A..
8. Non-Domestic Rates' collection performed favourably against an end of quarter target of 59.8%, with a collection rate of 60.3% In monetary terms, the amount collected was £46.7m compared to £43.5m for the same period last year. Details can be found in APPENDIX B.

9. I am also reporting quarterly on the numbers of business properties, those not in use, and the total Rateable Value within South Cambridgeshire. 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 (£)
2013/14	Q1	4453	547	174,655,404
	Q2	4525	530	174,331,290
	Q3	4560	490	174,45,8360
	Q4	4566	472	174,141,793
2014/15	Q1	4586	459	173,544,088
	Q2	4635	459	174,291,013
	Q3	4661	482	174,576,048
	Q4	4682	453	175,043,343
2015/16	Q1	4720	421	175,734,248
	Q2	4715	415	176,748,704
	Q3	4740	437	177,751,559
	Q4	4762	459	178,310,944
2016/17	Q1	4841	466	185,626,024
	Q2	4882	462	186,094,479

10. Performance in Rent collection at the end of the second quarter was 97.56%, against a target of 97.1%. In terms of rent not collected, the arrears for current tenants were £349k, compared to £293k for the same period last year. The details can be found in APPENDIX C
11. Sundry Debtors had 14.3% of invoices in arrears at the end of the quarter two, compared to a target of 31.1%. In monetary terms, this equates to £1.6m in arrears from invoices totalling £6.3m. APPENDIX D shows the detail.
12. The electronic forms for Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Support (CTS) has continued to have a positive effect on processing times for new claims and changes to benefit.
13. The average processing time for new claims as at Q2 2016/17 is 11.33 days compared to target of 20 days. The performance has improved compared to previous year performance, full details can be found in APPENDIX G.
14. Change of Circumstances processing times averaged to date (Quarter2) is 9.86 days for 2016/17 compared to target of 12.00 days. The performance has been improving and average processing times for 2016/17 are significantly lower than 2015/16.
15. The performance of overpayments recovery is no longer being reported as a key performance indicator however this is still being monitored as an internal performance indicator

Quarter 2

2015/16 Total recovered overpaid housing benefit = £567,389

2016/17 Total recovered overpaid housing benefit = £735,052

16. There have been 127 applications for support under the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) scheme, and 75 residents have received DHP awards. This number includes 3 residents for whom removal costs were paid.

Expenditure £50,916 (35.79%) 2016/17 (Grant £142,256)

A budget of £80,000 has been ring-fenced to allow those affected by reduced amount of the benefit cap to be prioritised for DHP payments for 2016/17.

The benefits team and housing advice/homeless team are working together to look at options for those effected residents on an individual basis who will receive a reduction due to the benefit cap amount of £20,000 per year for couples and those with children, and £13,400 for those who are single without children.

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 B – Homes for our future

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

Background Papers

Where the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

No Background Papers

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