

Decision Maker: EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date: Thursday 7 July 2016

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: REVENUES SERVICE MONITORING REPORT

Contact Officer: John Nightingale, Head of Revenues and Benefits
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Chief Officer: Peter, Turner, Director of Finance

Ward: All

1. Reason for report

- 1.1 This report provides information regarding the performance of the Revenues Services provided by Liberata for the 6 months up to the 31st March 2016. A letter from Amanda Inwood-Field, Liberata's Contract Director, provides an update on each individual service and is attached at Appendix 1 with statistical data relating to the Revenues service shown in subsequent appendices.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 The PDS is requested to note the information contained within the report and the letter provided by Liberata detailed in Appendix 1.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy.
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: 400003
 4. Total current budget for this head: £3.3m
 5. Source of funding:
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 2 plus Liberata staff
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement
Local Government Finance Act 1988
The Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992
Local Government Finance Act 2012
Rating Law and Practice: England and Wales
LGPS Regulations 2013
 2. Call-in: Applicable:
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): The services covered in this report affects all Council Taxpayers, Business Ratepayers, Members and Pensioners, this could amount to an estimated 139,000 households.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The Revenues and Benefits Team monitors the contract, sets targets and performance standards, liaises with partners, progresses the development and improvement of services through leadership on specific improvement initiatives. The team also ensures the services comply with current legislation, financial regulations, contractual obligations and audit requirements. A summary of performance by the services is contained in Appendix 2.
- 3.2 To maintain the drive for improved service performance, monthly service review meetings are held with operational and senior Liberata management. The Heads of Service of Liberata and Bromley meet regularly to deal with escalated issues, review policies and develop new ideas.

Council Tax

- 3.3 The in-year Council Tax collection rate for 2015/16 was 97.72%, which was 0.03% higher than achieved in the previous financial year. This was the 6th highest of the 33 London Authorities.

The collection rate on current year and arrears was 97.49% which was 0.08% down on the previous year.

In the financial year 2015/16 the number of household registered for Council Tax increased from 137,835 to 138,604. In the same period the number of households receiving SPD fell from 43,840 to 43,426.

Additional recovery tools introduced in 2015/16 include the commencement of SMS text messaging. Texts are forwarded prior to the issue of the final reminder when the charge payer loses the right to pay by instalments.

Business Rates

- 3.4 The in-year collection for 2015/16 was 98.87%, an improvement of 0.07% on the previous year. This was the 11th highest of the 33 London Authorities.

The collection rate for current years and arrears was 97.09%, down 0.02% on the previous year.

In 2015/16 there was a significant increase in the number of companies opting to pay by 12 monthly instalments. This placed additional pressure on the section to strictly monitor payments ensuring they contact the account holder immediately where February and/or March instalment is not received.

From April 2016 Retail Relief came to an end. Advanced notification was forwarded to all business in receipt of assistance advising of the change and their corresponding increase in liability from April 2016.

In the financial year 2015/16 the number of properties registered for Business Rates fell from 7,364 to 7,256.

Cashiers

- 3.5 The payment kiosk sited in the Civic Centre central reception continued to take high volume of payments. However, the usage has reduced in transactions and value from that of the previous year. In the financial year 2015/16 payments to the value of £2,044,615 was taken by this means compared to £2,493,403 in the previous year.

Payroll

3.6 The average number of payments made each month is as follows:

LBB General / Schools	4,007
Pensions	4,967

During 2015/16 the Payroll Section undertook the additional work associated with 11 schools converting to Academy status

Pensions

3.7 Membership numbers recorded on the pension's administration system as at 31 March 2016 were 6234 actives, 5287 deferreds and 5084 pensioners.

The new Teachers Pension Scheme was successfully implemented in 2015/16.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The report refers to the significant income collection undertaken through the Exchequer Services contract with Liberata.

Non-Applicable Sections:	Policy, Legal and Personnel
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	