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Dear Claudine,

As we approach the July 2020 Executive Resources & Contracts PDS meeting where we consider and review the Exchequer service, we take this opportunity to write to you with Liberata's assessment of the performance that we have provided to London Borough of Bromley (LBB) and its citizens.

This summary covers performance for the year ended 31st March 2020.

Council Tax

The in-year collection for the year was 97.86% and was equivalent to £206.7m of cash collected. The 2019/20 in- year collection was 0.14% lower than the previous year. However, this reflected the impact that the Coronavirus had on our recovery activity. In line with the Council's objective of being sympathetic to residents rapidly worsening financial position, we amended our recovery processes accordingly. Although we still issued reminder letters we stopped all other activity from Enforcement Agents, ceased issuing any court summonses and instead encouraged residents to contact us so we could discuss and agree on achievable repayment plans or implement short term payment deferrals.

In Year Collection

	31/03/2020	31/03/2019	Variance
In Year	£m	£m	£m
Net Collectable Debt	£211.18	£198.30	£12.88
Amount Collected	-£206.66	-£194.33	£12.33
Debt Remaining	£4.52	£3.97	
 Collection Rate	 97.86%	 98.00%	 -0.14%

The all-years collection figure achieved was 97.85% and was a decrease of 0.04% compared to the previous year.

All Years Collection

	31/03/2020	31/03/2019	Variance
All Years	£m	£m	£m
Net Collectable Debt	£213.78	£201.09	£12.69
Amount Collected	-£209.19	-£196.84	£12.35
Debt Remaining	<u>£4.59</u>	<u>£4.25</u>	
Collection Rate	97.85%	97.89%	-0.04%

The on-going project to roll out additional self-service modules continued during the year. The facility for residents to receive bills and other correspondence regarding their Council Tax electronically rather than in paper format was launched in late 2019. We had planned a major publicity campaign to encourage residents to sign up for this service prior to the issuing of annual bills in mid-March. The impact of the campaign has been affected by the current situation however, we still achieved sign ups of over 3,000 households. The number of MyBromley Accounts currently stands at nearly 70,000 generating nearly 12,000 online transactions or webpage visits per month. The go live of the module to automate the application process for discounts and exemptions had been planned for early 2020 but has now had to be pushed back until later this year. Currently residents are able to conduct the following online activities:

- View Council Tax annual bills, copy bills, payment details, discount and exemptions status
- View system generated correspondence
- Set up direct debits
- Advise of a change in address
- Set up a payment arrangement
- Receive e-bills for Council Tax and Business Rates
- View Benefit account information and system generated correspondence
- View NNDR annual bills, copy bills, payment details, discount and exemptions status

Business Rates

The in-year collection rate was 98.03% which was down by 0.50% compared to the previous year's figure. Once again our collections were adversely affected by the impact of the Coronavirus which saw many business in the borough having to close temporarily.

In Year Collection:

	31/03/2020	31/03/2019	Variance
In Year	£m	£m	£m
Net Collectable Debt	£96.51	£93.73	£2.78
Amount Collected	-£94.61	-£92.35	£2.26
Debt Remaining	£1.90	£1.38	
 Collection Rate	 98.03%	 98.53%	 -0.50%

The all years collection rate for the year was 95.68%, an improvement of 1.68% compared to the previous year.

All Years Collection Rate:

	31/03/2020	31/03/2019	Variance
All Years	£m	£m	£m
Net Collectable Debt	£98.44	£97.43	£1.01
Amount Collected	-£94.19	-£91.59	£2.60
Debt Remaining	£4.25	£5.84	
 Collection Rate	 95.68%	 94.00%	 1.68%

Business Improvement Districts (BID)

As in previous years Liberata have continued to manage the billing and recovery for a number of BID boards within the borough. The collection rates achieved are shown below and in some cases, in line with our other debt recovery services, the figures were adversely affected by the Coronavirus:

BIDS	31/03/2020 £000	31/03/2019 £000	Variance
Orpington BID			
Collectable Debt	£189.92	£191.93	-£2.01
Amount Collected	-£186.13	-£187.09	-£0.96
Debt Remaining	£3.79	£4.84	
Collection Rate	98.01%	97.48%	0.53%
Bromley BID			
Collectable Debt	£639.10	£612.71	£26.39
Amount Collected	-£598.10	-£591.81	£6.29
Debt Remaining	£41.00	£20.90	
Collection Rate	93.58%	96.59%	-3.00%
Beckenham BID			
Collectable Debt	£245.66	£243.56	£2.10
Amount Collected	-£223.28	-£210.61	£12.67
Debt Remaining	£22.38	£32.95	
Collection Rate	90.89%	86.47%	4.42%
Penge BID			
Collectable Debt	£147.85	£144.66	£3.19
Amount Collected	-£134.28	-£132.29	£1.99
Debt Remaining	£13.57	£12.37	
Collection Rate	90.82%	91.45%	-0.63%

Cashiers

We collected nearly £10.9m during the year which covered 28,168 transactions and included amounts taken via the Kiosk, post and central income.

Pensions and Payroll

The Pension Team achieved an average of 99.27% service level compliance over the year to 31st March 2020. The Payroll Team also continued to provide a valued service with an average accuracy rate of 99.98% across the Council's Corporate, Schools and Pensions payrolls.

Impact of the Coronavirus

As detailed above the Coronavirus deeply impacted how residents and local businesses interacted with the Council. Our debt recovery processes and communications were quickly amended to take account of the changing national economic position which affected individuals and businesses alike. With the move to total lockdown and the closure of the Civic Centre and our Shared Service Centres across the UK, we also had to steer residents and business to use the Council's website in order to communicate with us. This was to ensure that we were able to manage the rapid rise in queries and notifications of changes in circumstances that we were receiving.

Our approach was to promote the use of self-serve, where available, so residents could quickly access the information that they required or make any necessary changes to their accounts. We also implemented a number of web based 'Contact Us' forms for different service lines. These were designed to ensure that residents provided us with key information in a structured format that allowed us to establish the nature of their query and then resolve it as quickly as possible.

The preparatory work that had commenced as part of the new contract meant that we were quickly able to deploy the necessary IT equipment to all staff to enable them to work from home with limited disruption to the services provided. The idea of promoting more web based interaction with residents and business via channel shift was also one of the fundamental themes of the new contract. This meant that as well as maintaining current services we were also able to work with the Council to design, implement and manage an online solution for the Small Business Grants, the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant and the Discretionary Grant that the Government introduced to assist businesses affected by the Coronavirus. Over the last two months, we have processed over 5,000 applications from businesses, over 3,000 of which have been approved, and paid out over £43.5m in grants.

Liberata remains firmly committed to delivering an outstanding service to the London Borough of Bromley and its citizens.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Inwood-Field
London Regional Contract Director

The key elements of the Revenues Service includes (2019/20 figures):

- **£223.5 million** – Annual amount of Council Tax raised
- **£101.8 million** – Annual amount of Business Rates raised
- **£12.5 million** – Annual payment of Council Tax Support
- **£97 million** - Annual payment of Housing Benefit
- **£60.8 million** – Gross payment of staff salaries (through the LBB payroll service, including schools, excluding Academies) for the period from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020
- **£29.8 million** – Payment of Pensions from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020
- **£10.9 million** – 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 revenue on 28,168 transactions, this includes Kiosk
- (1,141 Loomis cash collections during the year to 31st March 2020)

Council Tax Data:

In year collection performance by Liberata is shown below:

Best Value PI's	Actual 08/09	Actual 09/10	Actual 10/11	Actual 11/12	Actual 12/13	Actual 13/14	Actual 14/15	Actual 15/16	Actual 16/17	Actual 17/18	Actual 18/19	Actual 19/20
BV9:CTAX Collected	97.03%	97.28%	97.59%	97.65%	97.76%	97.50%	97.70%	97.79%	97.93%	98.04%	98.00%	97.86%

Actual 31st March 2020 – 97.86%

The amount of collectable debt raised for the year 2019/20 was **£223.5m** in respect of **140,802** properties.

238 Cheque refunds and **4,736 BACs** refunds totalling **£1,549,727.84** have been issued from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020.

The following Council Tax recovery notices were issued:

	31/3/10	31/3/11	31/03/12	31/03/13	31/03/14	31/03/15	31/03/16	31/03/17	31/03/18	31/03/19	31/03/20
Reminders	34,892	34,971	51,920	45,816	56,256	54,745	52,125	55,553	78,657	63,387	57,196
Summonses	17,061	19,774	16,436	16,168	19,267	13,158	9,543	14,052	10,755	9,375	9,561
Liability Orders	10,713	12,956	9,396	10,868	9,999	8,645	8,337	10,338	9,115	8,105	8,606
14 day letters – Enforcement Agent warning	13,127	11,823	11,757	12,518	15,816	10,103	12,214	8,247	8,647	10,074	9,129
Accounts passed to Enforcement Agent	9,724	9,538	All at 14 day stage	All at 14 day stage	All at 14 day stage	All at 14 day stage	All at 14 day stage	All at 14 day stage	All at 14 day stage	All at 14 day stage	All at 14 day stage

NB: The first 14 day letters were issued directly to the bailiffs from **11 July 2011**.

The 2018/19 debt carried forward at the 1st April 2019 was £4,396,384.84

Council Tax - Summoned Debt	
Summonses / costs	£510,867.58
Arrangement	£375,226.60
Bailiff /14 DAY	£1,770,840.37
Attachment	74,647.14
Bankruptcy	£0
Liability	£607,990.72
Un-summoned Debt	
Finals	£467,088.10
Un-summoned	£589,724.33
Total	4,396,384.84

The breakdown analysis of the total **2018/19** debt outstanding at the 1st April 2019 of **£4,396,384.84** is shown above.

The balance of the total **2018/19** debt outstanding as at the **31st March 2020** is **£2,637,420.79** a reduction of **£1,758,964.05**

Council Tax Arrears Breakdown as at 31st March 2020

	Arrears B/F 31.03.2019	Arrears carried forward	Net reduction	Actual % collection
1998	£1,810.57	£384.89	£1,425.68	
1999	£3,282.87	£8.97	£3,273.90	
2000	£9,290.88	£2,837.58	£6,453.30	
2001	£16,823.35	£9,180.51	£7,642.84	
2002	£25,473.60	£18,562.19	£6,911.41	
2003	£40,921.19	£29,373.47	£11,547.72	
2004	£52,439.32	£37,897.21	£14,542.11	
2005	£82,479.43	£60,856.92	£21,622.51	
2006	£118,358.12	£92,649.51	£25,708.61	
2007	£143,387.58	£118,820.19	£24,567.39	
2008	£188,732.34	£153,220.53	£35,511.81	
TOTAL	£682,999.25	£523,791.97	£159,207.28	23.31%
2009	£217,307.95	£177,522.47	£39,785.48	18.31%
2010	£261,999.10	£217,068.30	£44,930.80	17.15%
2011	£347,573.09	£275,722.53	£71,850.56	20.67%
2012	£445,144.54	£359,346.77	£85,797.77	19.27%
2013	£723,085.22	£585,632.18	£137,453.04	19.01%
2014	£921,277.23	£752,041.09	£169,236.14	18.37%
2015	£1,164,803.55	£963,191.92	£201,611.63	17.31%
2016	£1,609,042.38	£1,276,545.41	£332,496.97	20.66%
2017	£2,347,256.44	£1,750,637.73	£596,618.71	25.42%
2018	£4,396,384.84	£2,637,420.79	£1,758,964.05	40.01%
TOTAL	£13,116,873.59	£9,518,921.16	£3,597,952.43	27.43%

Business Rates Data:

In year collection performance by Liberata is shown below:

Best Value PI's	Actual 08/09	Actual 09/10	Actual 10/11	Actual 11/12	Actual 12/13	Actual 13/14	Actual 14/15	Actual 15/16	Actual 16/17	Actual 17/18	Actual 18/19	Actual 19/20
BV10:Rates Collected	99.1%	99.02%	98.9%	98.81%	98.72%	98.70%	98.80%	99.05%	98.87%	98.53%	98.53%	98.03%

The amount of collectable debt raised for the year 2019/20 is **£101.8 million**.

There have been 986 refunds actioned from the 1st April 2019 to the 31st March 2020 amounting to **£3,992,497.31** in respect of vacation and rateable value reductions.

The following recovery notices were issued -

	31/3/10	31/3/11	31/03/12	31/03/13	31/03/14	31/03/15	31/3/16	31/3/17	31/3/18	31/03/19	31/03/20
Reminders Issued	3,977	3404	2,536	4,023	3,545	4,445	4,263	4,288	3,525	3,245	3,447
Final Notices Issued	1,892	1,824	1,741	2,014	2,472	2,353	1,560	1,960	1,985	1,312	2,201
Summonses Issued	903	725	1,156	987	1,091	1,053	535	1,123	768	601	429
Liability Orders	666	672	749	683	771	734	411	525	522	550	438
7 day letters issued	674	367	471	501	No longer used	No longer used	No longer used	No longer used	No longer used	No longer used	No longer used
Accounts passed to Enforcement Agent	316	430	537	645	650	444	283	184	159	203	369

The **2018/19** debt carried forward at 1st April 2019 was **£1,470,359.14**

NDR recovery stage	Amount
Un-summoned	£369,180.08
Arrangement	£86,216.25
Enforcement Agent	£249,750.98
Final	£240,169.00
Liability	£307,413.38
Reminders	£140,434.54
Summoned	£77,194.91
Total	£1,470,359.14

Movement in arrears for reporting period –

Arrears total 2001 - 2018/19 as at **01/04/19** **£3,192,632.62**

Arrears total 2001 - 2018/19 as at **31/03/20** **£1,458,592.74**

Reduction in Overall arrears **£1,733,039.88**

Business Rates Arrears breakdown as at 31st March 2020

	Arrears B/F 31.03.2019	Arrears carried forward	Net reduction	Actual Collection %
2008	3,658.03	2,226.54	-1,431.49	39.13%
2009	18,695.36	2,295.44	-16,399.92	87.72%
2010	12,087.57	11,415.65	-671.92	5.56%
2011	18,487.20	17,763.66	-723.54	3.91%
2012	66,134.43	45,096.04	-21,038.39	31.81%
2013	67,587.48	48,379.15	-19,208.33	28.42%
2014	143,513.10	75,580.35	-67,932.75	47.34%
2015	255,896.31	88,970.89	-166,925.42	65.23%
2016	401,212.31	186,048.94	-215,163.37	53.63%
2017	734,001.69	366,700.81	-367,300.88	50.04%
2018	1,470,359.14	614,115.27	-856,243.87	58.23%
	3,191,632.62	1,458,592.74	-1,733,039.88	54.30%

Backdated revaluations and the removal of discounts and exemptions can result in a backdated increase in arrears

Cashiers Data

The cashiering service dealt with the following transactions in the period 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020:

Civic Centre Total	Transactions including Kiosk
£10,898,516.32	28,168

Payroll Data:

The average number of payments made each month/annually is shown below:

	Monthly	Annually
Non-Teaching/Teaching	2,438	29,258
Pensions	5,277	63,319

Appendix 2

Complaints Data:

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