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18 June 2020

Our Ref: AIF/RJ

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 12 months to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

### **Debtors and Income**

The Sundry Debts unadjusted in-year collection figure for the year was 86.77%. This represented cash of £57.1m, which was an increase of £9.4m on the previous year. The adjusted collection figure, which excludes debts where recovery action is not possible, was 99.79% and was 7.79% above the target. Details of the excluded debts are listed below:

- £1.47m of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) invoices were raised during the year but were not due for payment until after the year end.
- Invoices totalling £3.69m were issued within the last 14 days of the year. However, active recovery action can only commence on these debts after 21 days.
- A number of debts were placed on hold either due to the debt being in dispute or because we were awaiting further instructions from the Council.
- Debts totalling £90k had been secured by Charging Orders.

In Year Collection	31/03/2020	31/03/2019	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Net Collectable Debt	£65.78	£55.07	10.71
Amount Collected	£57.08	£47.71	9.37
<b>Unadjusted Collection Rate</b>	<b>86.77%</b>	<b>86.63%</b>	<b>0.14%</b>
<b>Adjustments to Net Collectable Debt:</b>			
- CIL Debts	-£1.47	-£0.33	
- Disputed Debts	-£0.82	-£0.58	
- With LBB	-£2.51	-£0.09	
- Charging Orders	-£0.09	-£0.22	
- Invoices less than 14 days old	-£3.69	-£3.09	
<b>Adjusted Net Collectable Debt</b>	<b>£57.20</b>	<b>£50.76</b>	<b>£6.44</b>
<b>Adjusted Collection Rate</b>	<b>99.79%</b>	<b>94.03%</b>	<b>5.76%</b>

Our collection rate on out of year debt was 99.45% and represented £5.34m. As with the in-year collections we have a number of debts where we are unable to take any active recovery action. These debts represented 70.6% of the total outstanding balance and are summarised below:

- £1.3m of debt was either in dispute or were on hold pending instructions from the Council.
- £730k of debt had been either recommended for, or was awaiting, write off.
- £249k of debt had been secured by Charging Orders.

The new Orchard Housing System went live in December 2019. Unfortunately ongoing issues with the system meant that there was a four month period when we were unable to take any recovery action on the Nightly Paid Accommodation debts due to uncertainty over the outstanding balances. This, together with the £2.4m (27.82%) increase in current year charges, contributed to the increase in the year end debt position of £676k.

### Accounts Payable

For the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, the percentage of undisputed invoices that were paid within 30 days was 99% which was 1% above the annual target. The percentage of invoices paid within 20 days was 97%. The percentage of suppliers paid by BACS during the year was 92% which was 1% higher than the previous years' figure.

### Financial Assessment and Management Team

Our client base, as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, comprised of 791 clients receiving residential care and 3,297 clients receiving non-residential care. We had previously reported that a new online assessment form was being piloted by the Visiting Officers.

However, the results of this pilot showed that, due to the volume of information contained within the form, this was not the most efficient type of form for use by the general public. As a result a full review was undertaken and we are now creating a fully integrated data form. We are aiming to have this live on the Bromley website later this year. In the meantime we have rolled out an online review form for residential care clients which has been used as part of the annual uplift process.

Liberata has invested in additional staff based in our Shared Service Centre (SSC). This has created significant resilience for both the residential and non-residential assessments service and will enable us to ensure that KPI's are achieved and maintained during spikes in workload and at specific times throughout the year. The SSC continues to undertake Quality Checking and identifying best practice across our London contracts.

The Information@Work Data Management System (DMS) is now live. The workload is distributed in priority order to employees via workflow. Liberata management now have a greater, in depth view of the workload and have the ability to allocate work in line with KPI requirements. The suite of automated reporting within DMS outlines the performance of employees and provides the foundation for benchmarking which underpins Liberata's Performance Management procedure.

### **Appointee & Deputyship Team**

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, the team had 257 clients of which 192 were for Appointeeship and 65 were for Deputyship. The arrangements to switch from Lloyds Link to Lloyds Commercial Online Banking was finalised and put into effect from mid-September 2019. This has improved transaction times when processing payments to clients and payment of invoices to LBB.

The implementation of Information@Work Data Management System (DMS) across the Adult Social Care services has now enabled a more robust management of the caseload as well as providing the opportunity to utilise expertise in this area across the London contracts. This has improved resilience and allows for the adoption of best practice.

### **Impact of the Coronavirus**

The Coronavirus had a profound impact on the way that Liberata were able to provide a service to the Council and the residents of Bromley. However, we were aided in this respect by both the additional measures we had started to implement as part of the mobilisation project for the new contract and the strong ethos of partnership working that exists between Liberata and Council employees.

Preparations to mitigate the effects of the virus began in February when Liberata undertook a scenario based Business Continuity/Disaster Recover exercise to test our plans for dealing with a pandemic. This was followed up in early March with

online training courses for managers in dealing with pandemics, bi weekly company-wide impact monitoring meetings and then, from mid-March, with weekly contingency planning meetings with our key contacts in the Council.

Under the new contract we had committed to roll out technology to allow employees to work remotely as part of our Business Continuity plan. This project started in December 2019 and was due to conclude during Quarter 1 of 2020. The advent of the Governments' lockdown meant that we had to complete the roll out and training on the new technology ahead of schedule. As a result we were able to empty the Civic Centre, initially of all vulnerable employees and those that needed to shield relatives, and then of all remaining employees by 24<sup>th</sup> March while still being able to provide our normal services.

As well as changing our technology we also had to amend many of the existing processes in order to allow for remote working and the digital transfer of documents in place of paper copies. Once again we were aided in this exercise by the work we had already started in advance of the new contract where we have a number of projects aimed at increasing automation and allowing residents to transact online for the Debtors and Income and Accounts Payable services.

As a result of the above we were quickly able to implement revised debt recovery processes to take account of the overnight change in residents and businesses finances by offering payment deferrals, renegotiating payment plans and placing all Enforcement Agents visits on hold for an initial period of three months. Process changes were put into place to allow us to pay care providers and suppliers of Personal Protection Equipment as quickly as possible as a way of supporting these key service providers.

The virus also created significant challenges which needed to be overcome to enable us to continue delivering the Appointee & Deputyship service to some of our most vulnerable customers. Immediate changes to our processes were designed, agreed and implemented to enable us to continue providing customers with their personal financial support during the lockdown period.

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**