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Appendix 1

10 December 2021

Our Ref: AIF/RJ

Dear Claudine,

As we approach the January 2022 Executive, Resources and Contracts Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee 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 6 months to 30th September 2021.

Debtors and Income

The Sundry Debts unadjusted in-year collection figure for the year was 70.72% which represented cash of £21.63m. Although this was below the target of 78% there were a number of debts where we were unable to take any further recovery action. If adjusted our rate to exclude these debts then the revised collection rate would be 83.92% which was 5.92% above the target. The adjustment to the collection rate is necessary in order to obtain a true picture on the team's performance. Details of the debts excluded from the adjusted rate are listed below:

- £3.09m of invoices were raised during the last 14 days of the year. Active recovery action can only commence on these debts after 21 days
- Debts totalling £1.56m were placed on hold either as a result of a dispute or because we were awaiting further instructions from the Council
- £97k of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) invoices were raised during the period but were not due for payment until after 30th September.

- Debts totalling £63k had been secured by Charging Orders on properties whereby payment will be made only once the property is sold

In Year Collection	1/4/20 - 30/9/20	1/4/21 - 30/9/21	Variance
	£m	£m	£m
Net Collectable Debt	£25.85	£30.59	£4.74
Amount Collected	£12.86	£21.63	£8.77
Unadjusted Collection Rate	49.70%	70.72%	21.02%
Adjustments to Net Collectable Debt:			
- CIL Debts	-£0.07	-£0.10	
- Disputed Debts	-£0.91	-£1.28	
- With LBB	-£0.14	-£0.28	
- Charging Orders	-£0.11	-£0.06	
- Deferred Commercial Rents	-£0.56	£0.00	
- Invoices less than 14 days old	-£2.48	-£3.09	
Adjusted Net Collectable Debt	£21.58	£25.78	£4.20
Adjusted Collection Rate	59.55%	83.92%	24.37%

The total amount of out of year debt collected was £16.9m which equated to a collection rate of 98.93% across all financial years. Included in the outstanding balance are debts where, similar to the in year position, we were unable to take any further recovery action. These debts were valued at £4.86m and were made up as follows:

- £3.36m of debt was either in dispute or was on hold pending instructions from the Council.
- £1.19m of debt had been either recommended for, or was awaiting, write off.
- £319k of debt had been secured by Charging Orders.

The impact of the Coronavirus has continued to impact our recovery work as the previous year's lockdowns and suspension of Court sessions, Eviction actions and Enforcement Agents activities all resulted in an increase in our out of year debt figures and associated work volumes. Following the easing of restrictions earlier this year we agreed with the Council to implement a recovery plan which sought to clear historic debts and ensure that our in year recovery achieved pre-pandemic levels. Measures being adopted include the use of SMS messaging to send reminders and to chase up broken arrangements. Increasing the content on the Council website to make it easier for debtors to make a payment online or contact the team if they have a query. Issuing of monthly statements to Temporary Accommodation tenants. Using a partner organisation to help with the tracing of former Temporary Accommodation tenants who have moved. We hope to commence work with the Council to see if a direct debit facility can be established for Temporary Accommodation clients.

Accounts Payable

As the majority of the Accounts Payable team, Council workers and suppliers have continued to work remotely, we have had to continue with the additional checking processes which were first introduced in 2020. However, the percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days for the 6 months to 30th September 2021 increased by 1% from last year to 99%. The percentage of invoices paid within 20 days was 97% which was also 1% higher than last year. The percentage of suppliers paid by BACS during the year was 96% which was 1% higher than the previous years' figure.

Financial Assessment and Management Team

Our client base, as at 30th September 2021, comprised of 766 clients receiving residential care and 3,530 clients receiving non-residential care. Liberata have successfully implemented significant service improvements, which include introducing performance benchmarks for employees, online application forms, and implementation of both the performance management and quality tool kits. We continue to focus on our channel shift strategy which will migrate customers to digital channels which will positively impact processing times of a financial assessment being carried out.

A more intuitive online smart form has also been created which is ready to implement once the new social care system has been fully implemented. This form will be able to make real time decisions whilst a customer keys information in. Pop up messages will appear to request that specific information is uploaded via our Evidence Upload Facility. Liberata will also use Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to upload submitted applications directly into our Document Management System. This process takes place on the day the application is submitted and removes the requirement for the manual indexing of the application form from one system to another.

Liberata has further built on the resilience created for both the residential and non-residential assessment services. This plays a pivotal role in ensuring that workload peaks are being effectively managed and KPIs are not being negatively impacted. Liberata's focus remains firmly on quality and accurate assessments being undertaken. New employees and upskilled employees undergo in depth training on Financial Assessment processing from our Training and Policy team with significant quality checking of their work being carried out to ensure that errors are minimised.

Appointee & Deputyship Team

As at 30th September 2021, the team had 288 clients of which 241 were for Appointeeship and 47 were for Deputyship. We are currently investigating the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) for the banking reconciliation work undertaken

by the team. This would improve the efficiency of the existing process and reduce the time taken to undertake this task.

A benchmarking exercise is currently underway on the team to establish how long it takes for specific tasks to be completed by team members. Once finalised, Liberata will implement the new benchmarks which employees will be managed against as part of our performance management framework.

Council Led Projects

During this period Liberata has participated in the Councils project to migrate their finance system onto the new Fusion platform. This is expected to go live in Quarter 1 of 2022 and should bring increased automation to the Accounts Payable and Debtors and Income services.

The Council also implemented new systems for the Children's and Adult Care services which are used by a number of Liberata services who are required to generate payments, raise invoices and complete financial assessments. Unfortunately, problems with the systems implementation resulted in issues arising which affected the performance of the Liberata services. However, Liberata are continuing to work closely with the Council representatives with the aim of resolving these issues and minimising their impact on performance.

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