

Claudine Douglas-Brown  
Assistant Director of Exchequer Services  
London Borough of Bromley  
Civic Centre  
Stockwell Close  
Bromley BR1 3UH

13<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Dear Claudine,

As we approach the January 2024 Executive, Resources and Contracts Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee where we consider and review the Exchequer Service, I 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 8-month period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

### Council Tax

The in-year collection for the period ended 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 was 74.90% which was 0.46% lower than for the previous year. Recovery is proving far more challenging this year due to the economic pressures which many residents are facing. This can clearly be seen in the number of summonses issued and cases referred for enforcement, where we have already met and exceeded the volumes for the whole of last year.

#### In Year collection

	30/11/2023	30/11/2022	Variance
In Year	£m	£m	£m
Net collectable debt	£257.31	£241.33	£15.98
Amount collected	-£192.71	-£181.85	-£10.86
Debt remaining	£64.59	£59.48	
<b>Collection rate</b>	<b>74.90%</b>	<b>75.35%</b>	<b>-0.46%</b>

The all-years collection figure achieved was 74.48% which was a decrease of 1.08% compared to the previous year.

	30/11/2023	30/11/2022	Variance
All Years	£m	£m	£m
Net collectable debt	£263.04	£246.99	£16.05
Amount collected	-£195.90	-£186.61	-£9.29
Debt remaining	£67.14	£60.38	
<b>Collection rate</b>	<b>74.48%</b>	<b>75.55%</b>	<b>-1.08%</b>

Liberata is a trading name of Liberata UK Limited

(Registered in England and Wales - No 1238274)

Registered Office: 2nd Floor Front, 60 Cheapside, London, EC2V 6AX

Liberata UK Limited is a subsidiary of Outsourcing UK Limited (Registered in England and Wales - No 10280945)

Registered Office: Floor 9, Peninsular House, 30-36 Monument Street, London, EC3R 8UJ

All previous measures to maximise collection remain in place, but we have recently added a separate team to focus solely on trying to collect the arrears of Council Tax across previous years.

We are also looking to introduce the following.

- Propensity to Pay, to allow us to focus our efforts on potentially more achievable debt cases.
- Voicescape, an automated outbound messaging service to prompt customers for payments or to make contact to make appropriate arrangements.
- Specialist Inspection team to visit all customers in receipt of a final notice to ensure they are still resident and offer appropriate support and guidance for those struggling to make payments.

The all-years collection figure achieved was 74.48% which is 1.08% lower than the same period last year and this further reinforces the difficulties many residents are facing. There is no benchmarking data available on this indicator. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2023 the number of households registered for Council Tax was 142,950.

### Business Rates

The in-year collection rate to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 was 72.52% which is down by 1.72% compared to the previous year's figure. This is partly due to the CARF payments allocated last year which will have allowed some businesses to pay even if they did not have the income to do so. As detailed in the Council Tax comments, recovery levels are much higher than previous years and based on current trends will generate the most activity in the last decade.

#### In Year collection

	30/11/2023	30/11/2022	Variance
In Year	£m	£m	£m
Net collectable debt	£82.90	£90.35	−£7.45
Amount collected	−£60.12	−£67.08	£6.96
Debt remaining	22.78	23.27	
<b>Collection rate</b>	<b>72.52%</b>	<b>74.24%</b>	<b>−1.72%</b>

The all-year's collection rate for the period was 71.16%, which is an increase of 0.46% on the previous year

	30/11/2023	30/11/2022	Variance
All Years	£m	£m	£m
Net collectable debt	£86.21	£90.89	−£4.68
Amount collected	−£61.35	−£64.26	£2.91
Debt remaining	£24.86	£26.63	
<b>Collection rate</b>	<b>71.16%</b>	<b>70.70%</b>	<b>0.46%</b>

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As with Council Tax all previous measures to maximise collection remain in place, but we are also looking to introduce the following.

- Specialist Inspection team to visit all customers in receipt of a final notice to ensure they are still resident and offer appropriate support and guidance for those struggling to make payments.
- Specialist Team to focus on arrears collection.

As of the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2023, there were 7,399 properties registered for Business Rates.

### Cashiers

During the period we collected £1.97m which related to 4,920 transactions and included amounts taken via the kiosks, post and central income. This figure is down on the previous year of £3.01m and highlights the continuing trend of residents moving to use online methods of payments.

### Payroll

The HR and Payroll licence with Zellis was due to expire in May 2023, therefore the Council agreed to procure with Oracle for their HRP solution with the business case acknowledging the benefits of the connection with their Oracle financial solution.

After twelve months of data cleansing the database the corporate staff and pensioners were migrated to the new HRP solution with the first Payroll processed in April 2023. This was not only high volume of data but also consisted of complex terms and conditions so after the first Payroll went live there were some "snagging" issues, but the Council, their migration partner and Liberata worked in partnership to resolve these and continue to address and implement further improvements.

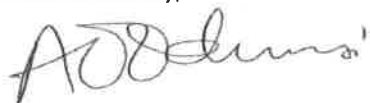
During this time BACS files were all processed on time and any adjustments to pay were arranged by the Faster Payment process ensuring Staff or Pensioners were not ever in a position of hardship. The Payroll Team also continued to provide a valued service with an average accuracy rate of 99.94% across the Council's Corporate, Schools and Pensions payrolls.

### Pensions

The Pension Team achieved an average of 97.10% service level compliance over the year to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

I conclude by reassuring you that Liberata remains firmly committed to delivering an outstanding service to the London Borough of Bromley and its citizens.

Yours sincerely,



**Bola Odunsi**  
**Regional Director (London & The Southeast)**

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The key elements of the Revenues Service includes (2023/24 figures):

- **£254.8 million** – Annual amount of Council Tax raised.
- **£90 million** – Annual amount of Business Rates raised.
- **£13.9 million** – Annual payment of Council Tax Support
- **£75.8 million** - Annual payment of Housing Benefit
- **£50.6 million** – Gross payment of staff salaries (through the LBB payroll service, including schools, excluding Academies) for the period from 1st April 2023 to 30th November 2023
- **£23.2 million** – Payment of Pensions from 1st April 2023 to 30th November 2023
- **£1.97 million** – 1st April 2023 to 30th November 2023 revenue on 4,920 transactions, this includes Kiosk
- (326 Loomis cash collections during the eight months to 30th November 2023)

## Council Tax Data:

In year collection performance by Liberata is shown below:

Best Value PI's	Actual 13/14	Actual 14/15	Actual 15/16	Actual 16/17	Actual 17/18	Actual 18/19	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Actual 22/23	Actual 01/04/23 to 30/11/23
BV9:CTAX Collected	97.50%	97.70%	97.79%	97.93%	98.04%	98.00%	97.86%	96.51%	96.82%	97.12%	<b>74.90%</b>

Appendix 2

**Actual 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 – 74.90%**

The amount of collectable debt raised for the year 2023/24 was **£254.8m** in respect of **142,950** properties.

**33** Cheque refunds and **4905** BACs refunds totalling **£1,875,753.34** have been issued from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

The following Council Tax recovery notices were issued:

	31/03/14	31/03/15	31/03/16	31/03/17	31/03/18	31/03/19	31/03/20	31/03/21	31/03/22	31/03/23	Actual 01/04/23 to 30/11/23
Reminders	56,256	54,745	52,125	55,553	78,657	63,387	57,196	54,201	63,769	52,036	25,178
Summonses	19,267	13,158	9,543	14,052	10,755	9,375	9,561	0	21,132	12,421	11,221
Liability Orders	9,999	8,645	8,337	10,338	9,115	8,105	8,606	0	10,010	10,065	9,877
14 day letters – Enforcement Agent warning	15,816	10,103	12,214	8,24794	8,647	10,074	9,129	0	10,518	9,491	9,759

The 2022/23 debt carried forward at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 was £7,361,027.70

Council Tax - Summoned Debt	
Summonses / costs	£620,126.98
Arrangement	£483,844.76
Bailiff /14 DAY	£3,547,476.01
Attachment	£3,670.90
Bankruptcy	£0.00
Liability	£751,506.33
Un-summoused Debt	
Finals	£293,050.35
Un-summoused	£1,661,352.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,361,027.70</b>

The breakdown analysis of the total 2022/23 debt outstanding at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 of £7,361,027.70 is shown above.

The balance of the total 2022/23 debt outstanding as at the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 is £5,287,209.29 a reduction of £2,073,817.78.

Council Tax Arrears Breakdown as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

ct6223a	Arrears B/F 31.03.2023	Arrears carried forward	Net reduction
2000	£1,923.05	£1,846.35	£76.70
2001	£5,134.12	£4,932.75	£201.37
2002	£12,841.32	£12,378.17	£463.15
2003	£21,944.79	£21,351.06	£593.73
2004	£25,542.24	£24,990.80	£551.44
2005	£42,233.44	£38,703.74	£3,529.70
2006	£64,109.66	£61,512.84	£2,596.82
2007	£90,337.70	£86,229.66	£4,108.04
2008	£111,380.16	£104,767.86	£6,612.30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£375,446.48</b>	<b>£356,713.23</b>	<b>£18,733.25</b>
2009	£132,984.37	£128,514.70	£4,469.67
2010	£165,396.94	£157,516.72	£7,880.22
2011	£213,104.82	£202,604.20	£10,500.62
2012	£289,607.07	£274,742.11	£14,864.96
2013	£441,887.34	£425,547.71	£16,339.63
2014	£568,939.76	£542,760.87	£26,178.89
2015	£748,167.43	£705,512.54	£42,654.89
2016	£968,040.81	£917,031.82	£51,008.99
2017	£1,290,782.76	£1,219,332.51	£71,450.25
2018	£1,814,145.48	£1,690,097.24	£124,048.24
2019	£2,529,254.70	£2,334,770.66	£194,484.04
2020	£3,398,599.56	£3,054,926.54	£343,673.02
2021	£4,859,928.76	£4,237,598.81	£622,329.95
2022	£7,361,027.07	£5,287,209.29	£2,073,817.78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£25,157,313.35</b>	<b>£21,534,878.95</b>	<b>£3,622,434.40</b>

## Business Rates Data:

In year collection performance by Liberata is shown below:

Best Value PI's	Actual 13/14	Actual 14/15	Actual 15/16	Actual 16/17	Actual 17/18	Actual 18/19	Actual 19/20	Actual 20/21	Actual 21/22	Actual 22/23	Actual 01/04/23 to 30/11/23
BV10:Rates Collected	98.70%	98.80%	99.05%	98.87%	98.53%	98.53%	98.03%	91.89%	95.47%	97.21%	72.52%

The amount of collectable debt raised for the year 2023/24 is **£90 million** in respect of 7,399 properties.

There have been **550** refunds actioned from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023 amounting to **£3,009,665.77** in respect of vacation and rateable value reductions.

The following recovery notices were issued -

	31/03/14	31/03/15	31/3/16	31/3/17	31/3/18	31/03/19	31/03/20	31/03/21	31/03/22	31/03/23	Actual 01/04/23 to 30/11/23
Reminders Issued	3,545	4,445	4,263	4,288	3,525	3,245	3,447	1,803	5,350	4,198	3903
Final Notices Issued	2,472	2,353	1,560	1,960	1,985	1,312	2,201	0	2,874	2,496	2380
Summonses Issued	1,091	1,053	535	1,123	768	601	429	0	612	1,020	762
Liability Orders	771	734	411	525	522	550	438	0	584	900	652
Accounts passed to Enforcement Agent	650	444	283	184	159	203	369	0	545	1,015	668



The **2022/23** debt carried forward at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 was **£2,527,963.50**

Movement in arrears for reporting period –

Arrears total 2001 - 2022/23 as at **01/04/23**      **£5,701,711.85**

Arrears total 2001 - 2022/23 as at **30/11/23**      **£3,702,391.41**

**Reduction in Overall arrears**                              **£1,999,320.44**

Business Rates Arrears breakdown as at **30<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

	Arrears B/F 31.03.2023	Arrears carried forward	Net reduction
2001	137.94	137.94	0.00
2008	1,143.35	1,143.35	0.00
2009	938.03	938.03	0.00
2010	0.00	569.71	569.71
2011	1,576.41	2,605.27	1,028.86
2012	10,879.38	11,886.71	1,007.33
2013	17,513.98	18,636.67	1,122.69
2014	26,518.72	28,280.61	1,761.89
2015	26,246.67	35,282.98	9,036.31
2016	86,821.81	91,865.70	5,043.89
2017	211,717.60	151,971.10	-59,746.50
2018	360,513.57	272,037.40	-88,476.17
2019	647,969.19	530,922.28	-117,046.91
2020	622,057.55	417,171.70	-204,885.85
2021	1,159,714.15	738,468.76	-421,245.39
2022	2,527,963.50	1,400,473.20	-1,127,490.30
	<b>5,701,711.85</b>	<b>3,702,391.41</b>	<b>-1,999,320.44</b>

*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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023:

Civic Centre Total	Transactions including Kiosk
<b>£1,973,441</b>	<b>4,920</b>

**Payroll Data:**

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

	Monthly	Annually
Non-Teaching/Teaching	2,691	32,286
Pensions	5,578	66,938

