

REPORT TO THE SCRUTINY PANEL for RESOURCES  
MEETING OF 15 SEPTEMBER 2011

**Status:** Progress Report  
**Title:** Revenues and Benefits Debt Position Progress Report  
**Originator:** Leigh Butler  
**Where from:** Scrutiny Work plan  
**Where to next:** Not Applicable

Objective :

Report to provide Members with a detailed analysis of debts owed to the Council in relation to Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit overpayments Debts. The report will draw comparisons when compared with 2010/11 collection rates.

1. Outcome sought from Panel

1.1 That members note and comment upon the progress regarding performance for the collection of Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit overpayments as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2011.

2 Background

2.1 Members are referred to the Council's Corporate Debt Policy approved by this Executive on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2008. See Appendix A for a copy of this policy.

2.2 The Revenues and Benefits Service now part of the Leicestershire Partnership incorporating Harborough District Council, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council and North West Leicestershire District Council is responsible for the billing and enforcement of Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit overpayments.

2.3 The net collectable debit for Harborough District Council raised for 2011/12 as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2011 is as follow:

	Council Tax (Net of Council Tax Benefit)	£45,888,105.54
	Non Domestic Rates	
£34,201,042.56		Housing Benefit Overpayments
£ 94,791.21		

2.4 The Council's uses both Bristow and Sutor and County Legal Services and they act as agents on behalf of this Council for the collection of any referred debts.

### 3 Points for discussion

3.1 The attached appendices B to D summarising debt recovered for Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit overpayments.

3.2 The Council's Corporate Debt Policy is attached in appendix A.

3.3 For the Leicestershire Partnership – Revenues and Benefits we need to be mindful that all policies covering this service area will be re-aligned, whereby there will be one rather than having one for each Council.

3.4 The performance for debt collection has improved when compared with 2009/10 and this summarised below:

	2009/10	2010/11
Council Tax	97.90%	98.10%
Non Domestic Rates	98.02%	98.27%

For arrears this to has also been reduced, see below

	31/3/10	31/3/11
Council Tax	£2.18m	£2.01m
Non Domestic Rates	£1.43m	£0.95m

### 4 Equality Impact Assessment Implications/Outcomes (attach completed EIA)

4.1 There are no equalities impact assessment issues arising directly from this report

### 5 Impact on Communities

5.1 There is no direct impact on communities but we are in the process of streamlining working processes and procedures.

In 2010/11 at Harborough we have introduced change whereby where customers who are more than two instalments in arrears for their Council Tax then we commence recovery action. This has resulted in a reduction in recovery notices being issued to customers. This has now been adopted by the partnership.

### 6 Legal Issues

6.1 There are no implications.

7 Resource Issues

7.1 There is a resourcing issue resulting in the location move to Hinckley and vacant posts have been advertised and are currently being appointed to.

8 Community Safety Implications

8.1 None arising from this report.

9 Carbon Management Implications

9.1 None arising from this report.

10 Risk Management Implications

10.1 There are none arising directly out of this report.

11 Consultation

11.1 No consultation was necessary in the production of this report.

12 Background Papers

12.1 The Council's Corporate Debt Policy has been included in the appendices to this report.

**Previous report(s): Corporate Debt Team – Role and Progress  
10<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

**Information Issued Under Sensitive Issue Procedure: *N***

**Appendices:**

- A. Corporate Debt Policy**
- B. Council Tax Collection Performance**
- C. Non Domestic Rates Collection Performance**
- D. Housing Benefit Collection Performance**