

MANAGEMENT REPORT ON HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT PERFORMANCE

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1. Summary

The Benefits team are responsible for the recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments. This report provides Members with performance monitoring information on the collection of this income for the year to 2013/14.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

REPORT

2.1. The service is responsible for recovering amounts outstanding on invoices raised by the former district councils relating to Housing Benefit overpayments, and for debt due to Shropshire Council for the same reason, which are now recovered separately from the Sundry Debt Service.

2.2. With regards to Housing Benefit overpayment recovery, the total value of invoices raised in 2013/2014 is: -

Created	£3,357,071.61
Recovered	£2,842,236.75
Written off	£ 141,193.91

2.3. The total value of invoices raised for the period April 2014 to July 2014 is:-

Created	£872,062.14
Recovered	£811,389.84
Written off	£0

2.4. At 31st July 2014 the total amount outstanding, including previous years, was £4.3 million compared with £4.1 million as at 31st July 2013. The table at appendix A provides a detailed breakdown of this debt by financial year.

2.5. Revenues and Benefits is currently going through a restructure. As part of this we are looking to combine the management of the Benefits overpayment staff with the Revenues recovery team. This should give us greater scope to better focus on collection of the sundry debt element of benefit overpayments.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

The recommendations contained in this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998.

The targets seek to increase the number of income collections transacted electronically.

4. Financial Implications

Effective monitoring of outstanding debt will enable early action to be taken to minimise the risk of financial loss to the Council.

5. Background

Housing Benefit is a national welfare benefit administered by the Council for the Department of Work and Pensions. A complex legal framework is in place to define who is entitled to benefit and to reduce fraud and error in the system. The Benefits Service within the Council has a responsibility to pay the right benefit to the right person at the right time.

6. Additional Information

None

7. Conclusions

Members are asked to note the content of the report.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

N/A

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)
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Mike Owen

Local Member

N/A

Appendices

N/A

Appendix A – Housing Benefit Overpayment Debt Breakdown by financial year

BENEFITS OVERPAYMENTS	
Financial Year	Balance 31 July 2014
2008-09	150,577.66
2009-10	703,625.80
2010-11	490,612.42
2011-12	521,452.78
2012-13	777,130.35
2013-14	1,138,718.60
2014-15	503,974.19
Total	4,286,091.80