

Report to CenSus Joint Committee

23rd September 2016

By The Head of Revenues and Benefits (CenSus)

➔ INFORMATION REPORT

CenSus Revenues and Benefits report.

Executive Summary

This report sets out the 16/17 year to date performance of CenSus Revenues and Benefits and activities undertaken by the service

Recommendations

The Joint Committee is asked to note the performance and activity of the Service.

Background Papers	-	None
Consultation	-	None
Wards affected	-	All
Contact	-	Tim Delany 07889 721964

2. Performance – 16/17

- 2.1 Benefits/CTS - stats are at appendix 1. Overall Performance to the end of August has overall claims targets missed by 0.3 of a day and changes exceeding target by 0.1 of a day; work outstanding is currently less than usual for this time of year.
- 2.2 We are beginning to experience the expected 'delay' in receiving UC information from the DWP; without any DWP backlog this is between 4 and 6 weeks. These cases relate to CTS claims only.
- 2.2 DHP – stats are at appendix 2. Expenditure has been closely monitored and is within expected budget for this time of year. However, see section 5 about the anticipated increase in DHP claims and consequent pressure on the budget from November 2016.
- 2.3 Revenues - stats are at appendix 3 – CT collection is either on target or within tolerance levels.
- 2.4 NDR – collection is of concern (although the gap between collection and target has narrowed this month). Both Adur and Horsham now seem to be mirroring the Mid Sussex performance during last year. We have undertaken some work which confirms that there are no 'black holes' or unactioned work outstanding in the system. While there are no more summonses or liability orders being issued, the average amount owed in each case at the enforcement stage is higher than those at a similar point last year but there are not sufficient volumes to account for the percentage we are off target. We are currently undertaking an exercise to analyse those cases where NDR payments are in arrears and map our process to identify any delays, bottlenecks or inefficiencies in our current processes and consider what alternative or additional action may be appropriate to improve collection rates. We are also comparing the past and present NDR property base, collection profiles etc. to see what, if anything, has changed that may be affecting in year collection rates.
- 2.5 While no consolation to lower than expected percentage collection of NDR, the amount collected for CenSus authorities is some £1.8m up on this time last year. In addition, some £2.1 m has been collected in respect of previous year's debts.

3. Budget

- 3.1 The position outlined shows a surplus against budget to date of £78K for Census Revenues and Benefits, to the end of July. This is detailed in the table below. The staffing budget is overspending, whilst there is additional Enforcement Income and Grant income, which more than mitigate this. Significant variations are further explained below:
 - 3.1.1 Employee costs – Additional costs are a consequence of the use of agency staff to backfill posts while new recruits are being recruited and trained (see Paragraph 4 below).
 - 3.1.2 Grant Income – Additional grant income has been received for new burdens in 2016/17 in respect of Implementing Welfare reform; Single Fraud Investigation Service; Pension Credit Assessed Income; Real Time information and Fraud; Error reduction Incentive Scheme; Benefit Cap changes; Universal Credit set up costs and Local Authority Data Sharing programme. It has been possible to manage the costs of these new burdens within existing resources and therefore the grant income received to date is contributing to the surplus achieved.
 - 3.1.3 Fees and Charges – Additional income as a result of increased enforcement activity in the first four months of the year.

Revenue	Revised Budget	Budget to date	Actual after prepay / accrual adjs	Variance
	£	£	£	£
Employee Costs	2,750,368	916,789	941,425	24,636
Transport Costs	71,610	23,870	17,388	(6,482)
Supplies and Services	715,386	238,462	236,825	(1,637)
Total Expenditure	3,537,364	1,179,121	1,195,638	16,517
Grant Income	0	0	(63,470)	(63,470)
Fees & Charges	(565,330)	(188,443)	(220,679)	(32,236)
Miscellaneous Income	(3,000)	(1,000)	(132)	868
Total Income	(568,330)	(189,443)	(284,281)	(94,838)
Net Expenditure	2,969,034	989,678	911,357	(78,321)

4. Staffing/recruitment

4.1 Benefits recruitment of 4 staff has been a successful exercise. All recruits have now completing their training and are swiftly becoming effective members of the team.

4.2 The recruitment of 7 members of staff for Revenues has been less successful with 2 failing to arrive on day one and 4 dropping out of training within 6 weeks of starting. Their reasons for leaving were various. Given that the Revenues recruitment process was more thorough than usual (we trialed using an established agency to employ their vetting procedures prior to the Mid Sussex recruitment process kicking in) it is difficult to reach any conclusions that would assist future recruitment exercises.

5. Benefit Cap

5.1 The revised Benefit Cap comes into effect on 07/11/15. We have now received the final scan identifying affected cases. The numbers are —

Adur - 115 (including 16 currently capped at £25k)
Horsham - 129 (including 14 currently capped at £25k)
Mid Sussex - 143 (including 19 currently capped at £25k)

5.2 All claimants named on the scan were contacted by the DWP in July. We have met and shared the scan with RSLs and most of these have engaged with those of their tenants affected. We are now in the process of writing to affected claimants detailing the impact on their HB entitlement.

5.3 We are in the process of assessing the impact on claimants and the consequent pressure on the DHP budget. We will then discuss the way forward with each authority separately.

6. Single Person Discount (Council Tax)

6.1 We are currently undertaking a targeted review of SPD entitlement; this is being carried out geographically by authority with Adur's SPDs being reviewed first. We are using a credit checking agency to risk assess cases. We are telephoning those deemed to be 'high risk' and writing to those deemed to be 'medium risk'. While it is yet early days, this appears to be an effective exercise. Details of the final outcome will be reported on completion.

6.2 The cost of this exercise will be in the region of £30k in total, with £8k of this being met by WSCC; the CenSus portion of the cost will be met from the current budget Significant sums

in excess of the overall cost will be raised following the cancellation of SPDs to which there is no longer an entitlement.

7. Next Steps

7.1 None

8. Outcome of Consultations

8.1 None

9. Other Courses of Action Considered but Rejected

9.1 None

10. Staffing Consequences

10.1 None

11. Financial Consequences

11.1 None

2016/17 - performance -average days to process

HB/LHA

New Claims	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	YTD	YTD Target
Adur	16.2	20.6	17.2	17.5	18.2								17.9	
Horsham	17.0	21.1	17.5	19.5	16.4								18.3	
MSDC	19.0	20.3	17.7	19.0	16.9								18.5	
CenSus	17.5	20.6	17.5	18.9	17.0								18.3	
Target	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0		18.0
Changes	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	YTD	YTD Target
Adur	8.2	7.5	11.7	11.5	9.0								9.3	
Horsham	9.4	9.5	12.3	11.2	9.3								10.6	
MSDC	8.3	9.6	12.9	11.3	9.5								10.1	
CenSus	8.6	9.0	12.3	11.3	9.3								9.9	
Target	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0		10.0

CTRS

Claims	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	YTD	YTD Target
Adur	18.2	21.7	17.7	19.1	19.0								19.0	
Horsham	22.9	23.5	17.8	23.4	16.9								20.8	
MSDC	24.1	21.2	19.4	20.4	19.1								20.7	
CenSus	22.1	22.2	18.4	21.2	18.2								20.3	
Target	18.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0	20.0		20.0
Changes	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	YTD	YTD Target
Adur	7.8	7.2	12.4	11.6	8.9								8.9	
Horsham	8.1	10.0	13.3	11.2	8.6								10.3	
MSDC	8.5	8.0	13.4	10.8	9.6								9.9	
CenSus	8.2	8.4	13.1	11.2	9.3								9.9	
Target	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0		10.0

DHPs

Spent/committed as at 31/07/16				
	DHP claims awarded	Budget	DHP committed	Percentage of budget committed
ADUR				
U/O claims	10		£ 6,990.86	
Benefit Cap claims	6	£ -	£ 10,438.99	
Other' claims	21		£ 9,773.91	
Total	37	£102,994.00	£ 27,203.76	26%
HORSHAM				
U/O claims	23		£ 15,663.38	11%
Benefit Cap claims	9	£0.00	£ 26,935.26	19%
Other' claims	23		£ 11,238.36	8%
Total	55	£ 140,904.00	£ 53,837.00	38%
MID SUSSEX				
U/O claims	16		£ 11,783.78	9%
Benefit Cap claims	9	£0.00	£ 11,535.28	9%
Other' claims	31		£ 25,369.96	20%
Total	56	£126,392.00	£ 48,689.02	39%

16/17 Collection Rates

ADUR		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	
	CT	Collected	11.2%	20.5%	29.7%	39.0%	48.2%							
		Target	11.5%	20.8%	29.8%	39.1%	48.2%	57.6%	67.3%	76.6%	85.7%	94.7%	96.4%	98.0%
NNDR		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	CT	Collected	10.4%	18.5%	28.6%	37.3%	46.8%							
		Target	9.9%	19.8%	30.0%	39.3%	47.9%	57.3%	65.9%	74.2%	81.9%	90.8%	94.6%	98.0%
HORSHAM		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	
	CT	Collected	11.3%	20.7%	30.0%	39.4%	48.9%							
		Target	11.3%	20.8%	30.5%	39.9%	49.5%	59.0%	68.5%	78.0%	87.4%	96.7%	97.3%	98.8%
NNDR		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	CT	Collected	12.2%	19.7%	28.1%	36.8%	50.2%							
		Target	12.4%	21.0%	29.4%	38.0%	50.8%	60.1%	68.8%	76.7%	86.6%	91.9%	96%	98.0%
MSDC		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	CT	Collected	11.4%	20.8%	30.2%	39.4%	48.5%							
		Target	11.3%	20.8%	29.9%	39.2%	48.3%	57.7%	67.5%	76.8%	86.1%	95.3%	97.0%	98.8%
NNDR		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
	CT	Collected	11.2%	19.0%	28.0%	36.6%	48.3%							
		Target	10.7%	19.3%	28.1%	36.8%	48.5%	57.7%	65.9%	74.0%	83.4%	90.8%	94.6%	98.0%