

To: POLICY & RESOURCES (FINANCE) SUB COMMITTEE		Subject: COUNCIL TAX PROGRESS REPORT
From: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE		
Date: 14 December 2004	Ref:- BC/TC/CTAXPROGRESS - NOVEMBER 2004	

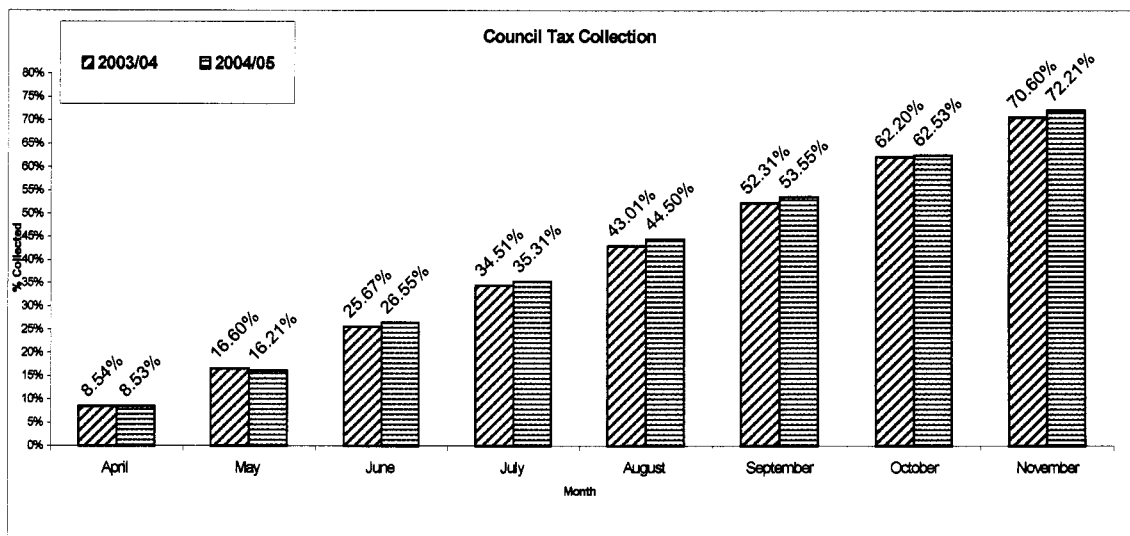
**1 Introduction**

1.1. This report provides an update on Council Tax Collection.

**2 Performance**

2.1 Details of the amount of Council Tax collected for the first seven months of the current year together with collection figures for the same period for the last financial year are shown below (Graph 1). This shows a collection of 72.21% at the end of November 2004 compared with 70.6% for the same period last year, an increase of 1.61%. This improvement in the recovery of Council Tax as shown in the graph is primarily attributable to the improved cash flow from payments as detailed in paragraph 2.2.

**Graph 1**

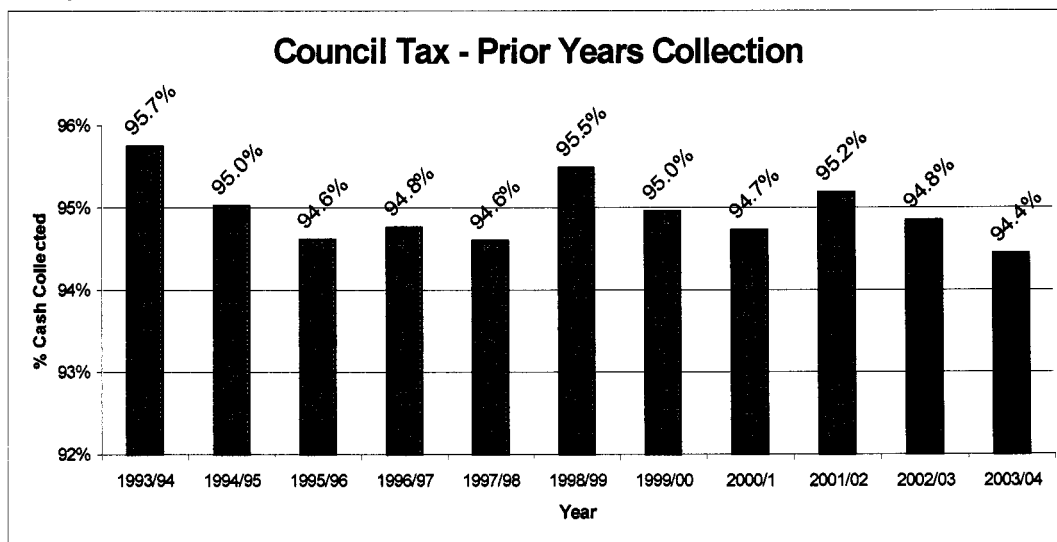


2.2 The improvement is being helped by a continued increase in Direct Debit payers to 47,638, which is an increase on last year of 7.5%, and now accounts for 34% of all payers.

2.3 A continued improvement is also reflected in the decrease in the amount of follow-up issued to date, Reminders have reduced by 17,249 (19%) Warrants by 1,750 (5%), reflecting in the improved collection levels.

2.4 In addition to improved current year recovery the prior years are also showing steady improvement with all years, other than the previous year now exceeding 94.5% collection.

Graph 2



### 3 Electronic Mail Processing

The introduction of Document Imaging Processing (DIP) and Workflow, has improved our ability to respond timeously to correspondence from payees. This improves the accuracy of our Demand Notices and contributes to improved collection performance.

There have been 119,190 individual enquiries dealt with through electronic document processing during the period 1/4/04 – 30/11/04, as follows: -

	<u>1/4/04 – 30/11/04</u>	<u>1/4/03 – 30/11/03</u>
% of cases dealt with in 5 working days	96.11%	95.62%
% of cases dealt with in less than 10 working days	99.08%	98.79%
% of cases dealt with in less than 20 working days	99.65%	99.64%

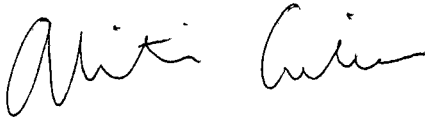
The table shows a continued high level of Council Tax enquiries dealt with within 10 days.

#### 4 Debt Recovery

- 4.1 The Council is engaged in a number of ongoing exercises to recover outstanding Council Tax in conjunction with our collection agents.
- 4.2 A recently identified initiative has highlighted a target group of debtors with similar characteristics. These debtors own their own property, have arrears covering a number of years, and have not claimed Council Tax Rebate.
- 4.3 There are just over 4,000 such cases and contact is being made with each debtor. This will provide them with the opportunity to claim Council Tax Rebate if applicable which would reduce/prevent future arrears arising, agree a repayment arrangement, or result in further recovery action as appropriate.

#### 5 Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Curran". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and 'C'.

**Director of Finance**

Members wishing further information please contact Mr Brian Cook, Head of Revenue Services, Tel:- 01698 – 30 2801.