

To: POLICY & RESOURCES (FINANCE) SUB COMMITTEE		Subject: COUNCIL TAX PROGRESS REPORT
From: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE		
Date: 10 March	Ref:- BC/TC/CTAXPROGRESS - JANUARY 2005	

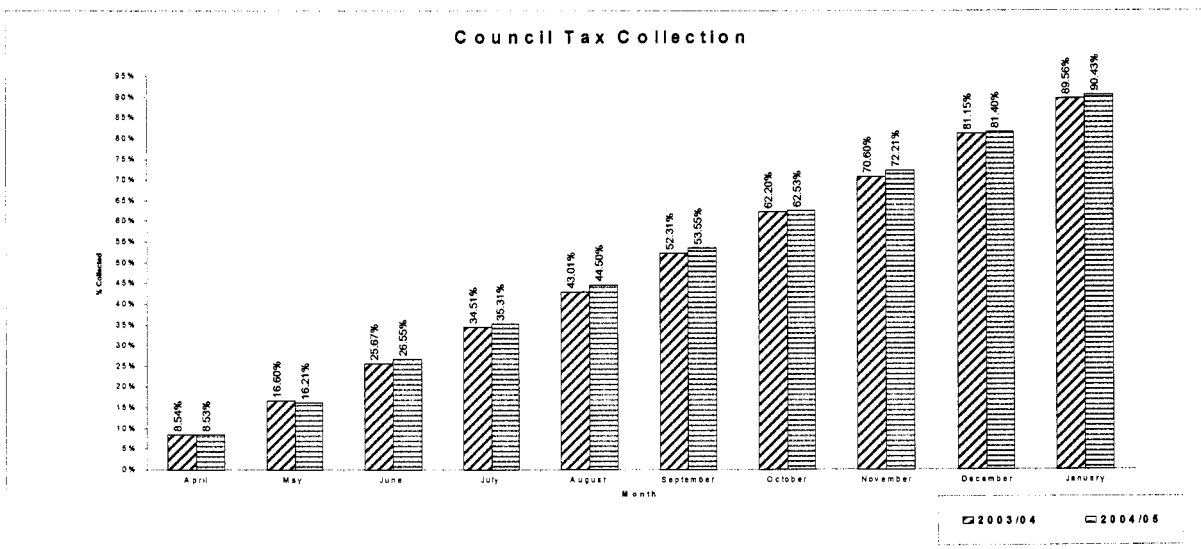
1 Introduction

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 ten 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 90.43% at the end of January 2005 compared with 89.56% for the same period last year, an increase of 0.87%. This improvement in the recovery of Council Tax as shown in the graph is primarily attributable to the improved cash flow from payments.

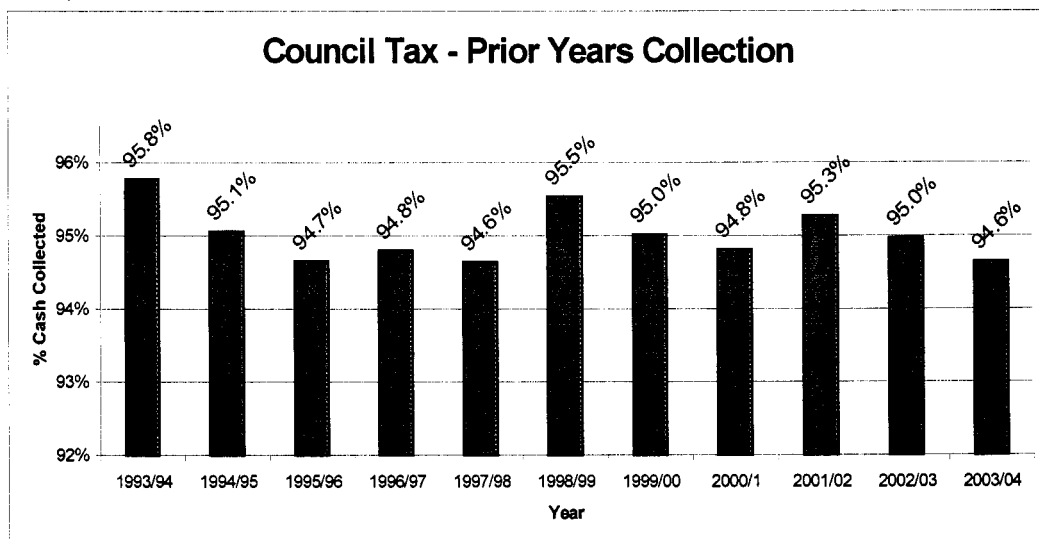
Graph 1



2.2 The improvement is being helped by a continued increase in Direct Debit payers to 46,790 which is an increase on last year of 8.0%, 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 18,842 (18%) Warrants by 2,384 (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, 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 133,345 individual enquiries dealt with through electronic document processing during the period 1/4/04 – 31/1/05, as follows:-

	<u>1/4/04 – 31/1/05</u>	<u>1/4/03 – 31/1/04</u>
% of cases dealt with in 5 working days	97.49%	95.93%
% of cases dealt with in less than 10 working days	98.96%	98.81%
% of cases dealt with in less than 20 working days	99.55%	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 As reported to Committee on 25 January 2005, recovery initiative targetting multiple year debtors has been commenced. Of these approximately 900 debtors have not responded to our recent contact offering them an arrangement to pay. Accordingly, these are now being pursued through Attachment of Property and Sequestration if necessary.

5 Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.



Director of Finance

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