

REPORT

To: POLICY & RESOURCES (FINANCE) SUB COMMITTEE		Subject: COUNCIL TAX PROGRESS REPORT
From: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE		
Date: 16 August 2005	Ref:- BC/TC/CTAXPROGRESS - JULY 2005	

1 Introduction

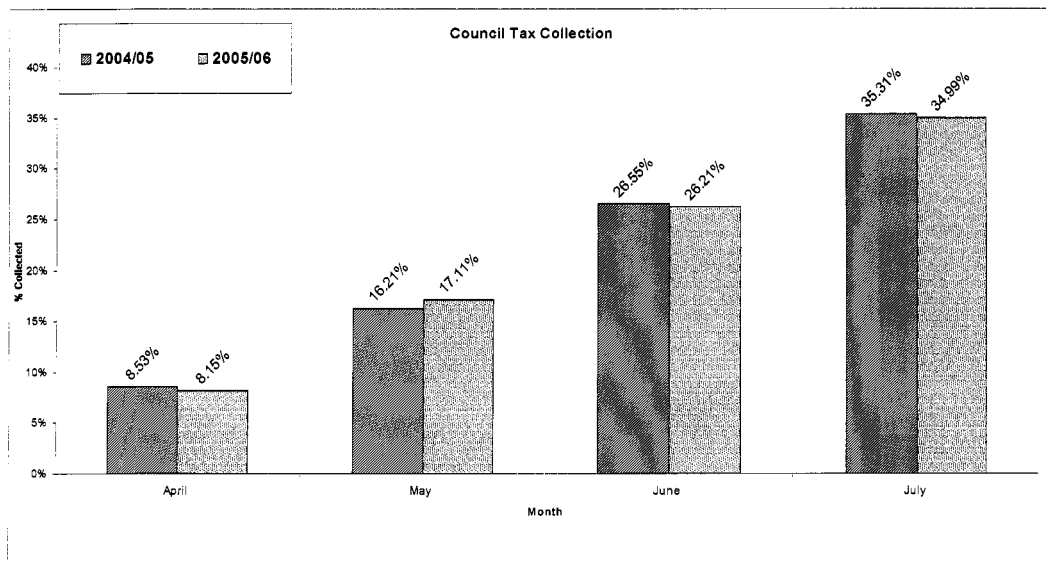
1.1. This report provides an update on Council Tax Collection.

2 Performance

2.1 Details of the amount of Council Tax collected for the first four 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 34.99% at the end of July 2005 compared with 35.3% for the same period last year. Whilst having a slight drop compared to the previous year the underlying analysis of cash-flow payments and follow-up confirms that the performance is similar to the previous year.

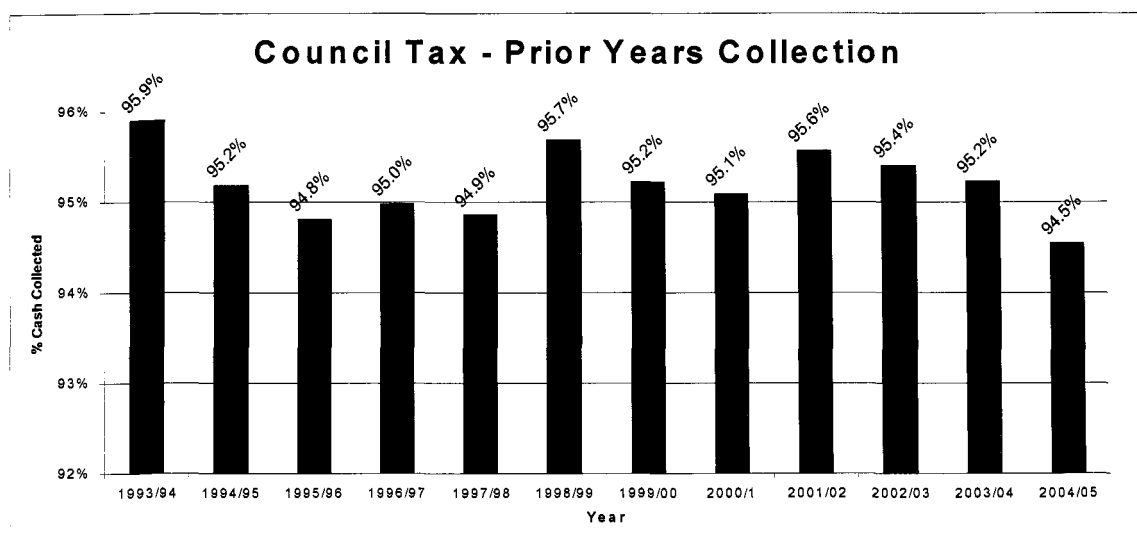
The issue of 1<sup>st</sup> Reminders to payees has increased by 2.9% with 38,306 being issued this year (37,220 previous year). This increase indicates a slower payment profile of receipts necessitating the issue of Reminders, however, the follow-up is being effective as there has been a decrease of 3.9% in the number of Warrants sought with 19,964 being obtained this year (20,771 previous year). This pattern confirms that whilst there is a marginal slowing of payments at the month end the ultimate collection of these sums is being achieved without recourse to the application for a Warrant.

Graph 1



- 2.2 The exercise to identify debtors with substantial arrears who fall into the 'Can Pay Won't Pay' category is continuing, to date we have reviewed about 1,000 cases, of which it has been necessary to take bankruptcy proceedings on 102, and to date the exercise has recovered arrears totalling £1.2m.
- 2.3 As a result of this activity a further £600,000 has been received for 2004/05, raising the collection to 94.55%. Graph 2 shows the total percentage recovered for Council Tax for each prior year and highlights that 9 of the 12 previous years have now exceeded 95% collection levels.

Graph 2



### 3 Electronic Mail Processing

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

There have been 65,211 individual enquiries dealt with through electronic document processing during the period 1/4/05 – 31/7/05.

	<u>1/4/04 – 31/7/04</u>	<u>1/4/05 – 31/7/05</u>
% of cases dealt with in 5 working days	95.24%	98.12%
% of cases dealt with in less than 10 working days	96.47%	98.95%
% of cases dealt with in less than 20 working days	99.73%	99.64%

This shows a continued high level of mail dealt with within 10 days.

4 Methods of Payment

- 4.1 The payment of Council Tax, Rent and Business Rates is now available 24 hours a day, using the Automated Payment Line introduced at the beginning of August 2005. I will take the necessary steps to advertise this facility via the press and also in amendments to future documentation.

5 Recommendation

- 5.1 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 302801.