

REPORT

To: POLICY & RESOURCES (FINANCE) SUB COMMITTEE		Subject: COUNCIL TAX & NON DOMESTIC RATES PROGRESS REPORT
From: DIRECTOR OF FINANCE		
Date: 16 January 2007	Ref:- AC/BC NOVEMBER 2006	

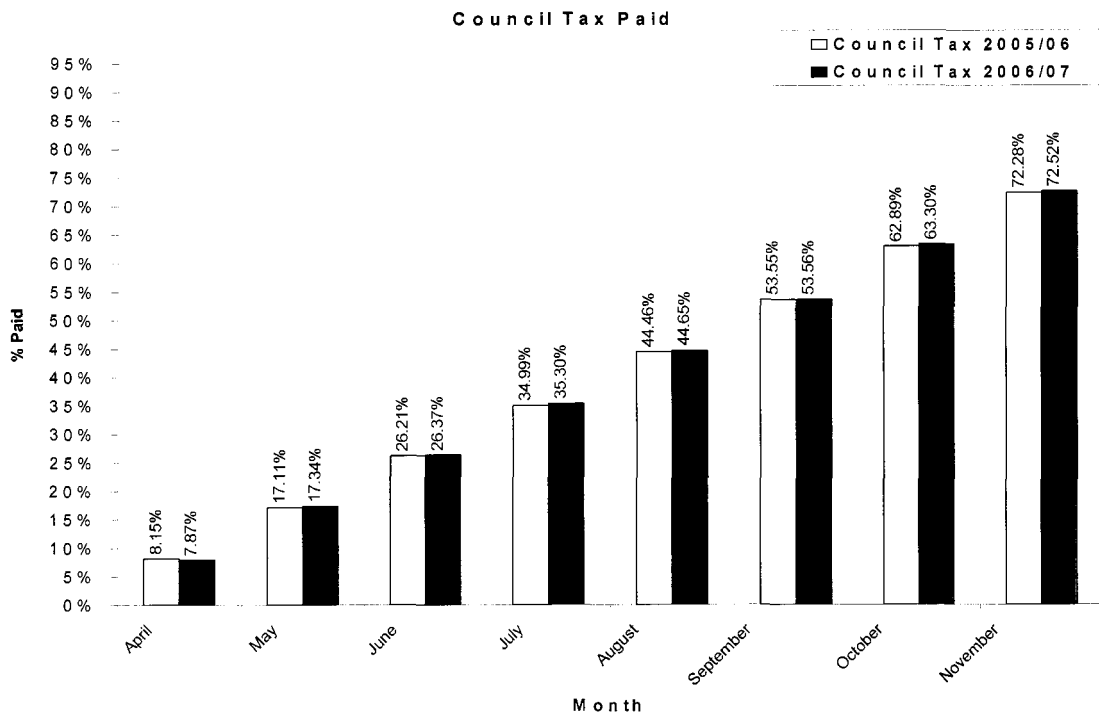
1 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on payment of Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

2 Performance

2.1 Details of the amount of Council Tax paid for the first eight months of the current year together with comparable figures for the same period for the last financial year are shown below (Graph 1). This shows that 72.52% has been paid at the end of November 2006 compared with 72.28% for the same period last year, which shows an improvement of 0.24%.

Graph 1

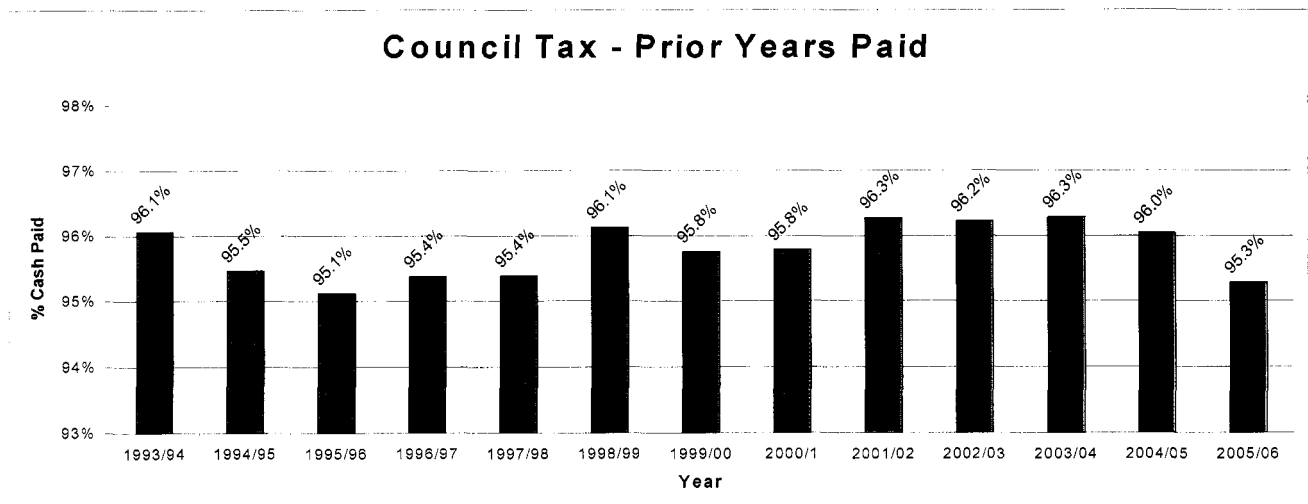


2.2 The number of Direct Debit payers continues to increase and there are now 54,101, a further 6% increase on last year, which now accounts for 38% of all payers. This level of payees provides a consistent pattern of payment and contributes to the increases in payment experienced in recent years and the reduction in follow-up detailed in paragraph 2.3.

2.3 In addition to improved current year recovery a further £3.8m has been paid towards earlier years arrears.

This has taken the recovery in respect of 2005/06 from 94.2% to 95.3%, and as can be seen on the table below all prior years are now in excess of 95% with 6 now above 96%.

Graph 2



3 Electronic Mail Processing

To date this year there has been 132,603 enquiries, an increase of 5% over last year. However, we have still maintained a high level of enquiries being dealt with within 10 days, as detailed below.

	<u>1/4/06 – 30/11/06</u>	<u>1/4/05 – 30/11/05</u>
% of mail dealt with in 5 working days	97.65%	97.86%
% of mail dealt with in less than 10 working days	98.96%	98.81%
% of mail dealt with in less than 20 working days	99.54%	99.47%

4 Debt Recovery

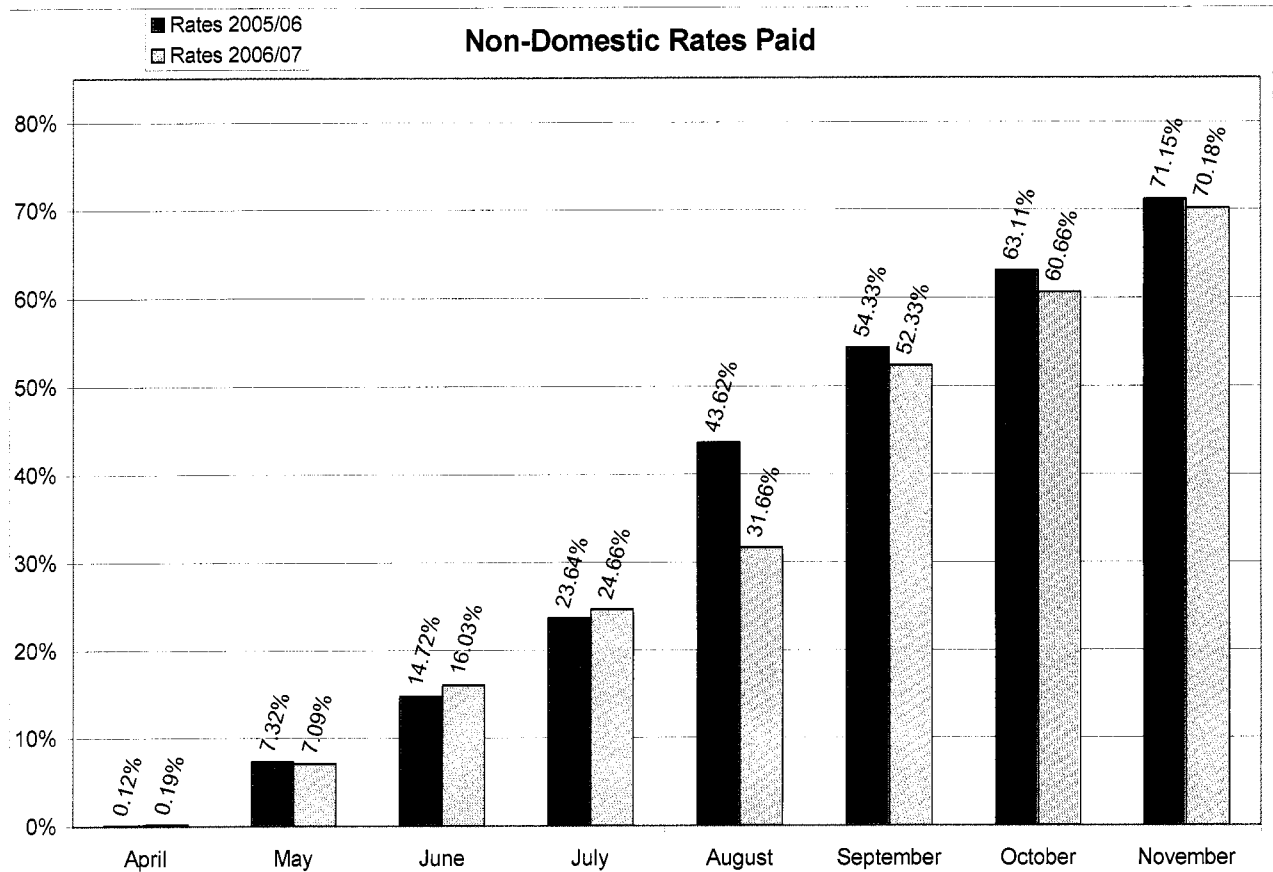
Detailed below is a summary of the outcome of the recent exercises to recover arrears from non-payers with substantial debt.

		DEBT
Cases Targeted	2,486	12.9m
Number Identified For Further Action via Legal Section	1,157	7.1m
Number Sequestered	297	1.7m
Number Paid In Full	280	1.6m
Number With Payment Arrangement	150	0.6m
Number With Debt Arrangement Scheme	73	0.4m
Total Recovered From The Initiative		£3.7m

5 Non Domestic Rates

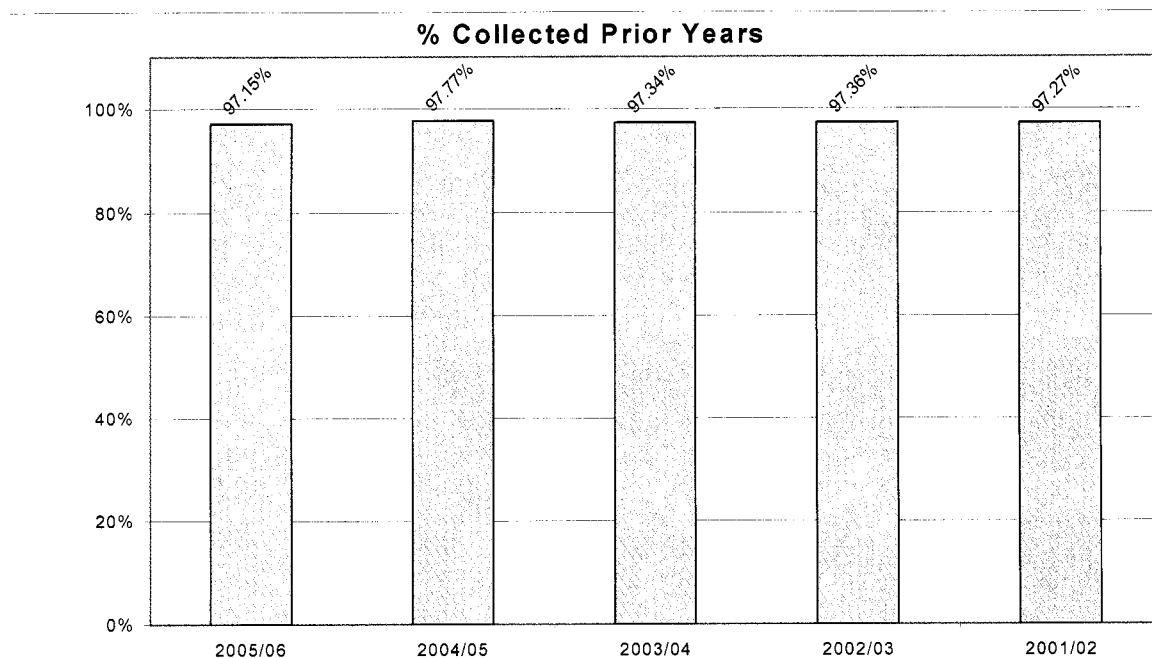
5.1 Table 1 indicates that payments are down on the same time last year, by 1.00% due mainly to 'Disabled Relief' reviews which require to be considered, and some 'Empty Properties' for which claims have yet to be received.

Table 1



5.2 Table 2 shows that the last year's recovery already exceeds 97% which is near the maximum recovery levels already achieved over the last 5 years.

Table 2.



5.3 There have been 12,729 individual enquiries dealt with through electronic document processing during the period 1/4/06 – 30/11/06.

	<u>1/4/05 – 30/11/05</u>	<u>1/4/06 – 30/11/06</u>
% of mail dealt with in 5 working days	84.31%	90.91%
% of mail dealt with in less than 10 working days	98.5%	97.61%
% of mail dealt with in less than 20 working days	99.81%	99.57%

6 Debt Recovery & Diligence Tender

6.1 The Debt Recovery and Diligence Services contract will expire on 30 June 2007 for both Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates.

6.2 This service supports the Authority's Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Debt Recovery Teams in their efforts to improve collection.

6.3 In order to ensure our continued improvement of recovery and obtain best value, the service will be subject to a tender exercise for a further 3 years.

6.4 The outcome of the tender evaluation will be reported to a future Committee cycle.

7 Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ahtu Gull', written in a cursive style.

Director of Finance

Members wishing further information please contact Mr Brian Cook, Head of Revenue Services, Tel:- 01698 – 302801.