



Cabinet Member Report for Finance

Northampton Borough Council

Monday 20th January, 2020

Finance

On the 23 December the Cabinet considered the published draft Budget 2020/21 and medium term financial plans for consultation. Full details of our draft Budget and the consultation can be found on our website using the following link:

[NBC Budget Consultation 2020-21](#)

The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was published in the week before

Christmas, Friday 20 December 2019. This broadly confirmed the funding estimates made in our draft Budget. There were a few announcements in the Settlement that are likely to affect our medium term financial position,

Including:

- Council tax referendum limits reduced to the greater of £5 or 2.00% (a reduction of 1% from 2019-20) for lower tier councils.
- Confirmation that the Business Rate Pilot (Which Northamptonshire Councils were a part of for 2019-20) will not be extended.
- Confirmation that New Homes Bonus Scheme is likely to come to an end soon.

An assessment is being undertaken on the impact of the provisional settlement on our draft Budget and any amendments will be reflected in the Council's final budget which is planned to be considered by Cabinet in February and at Council on 24 February 2020.

The Finance Team in addition to working hard on the next Budget, are also very busy with our new external Auditor (EY), who commenced their audit of 2018-19 in December 2019. They will also be commencing preparatory work for the closedown of 2019-20.

Revenues & Benefits

The Revenues and Benefits Service continues to deliver to service standards, it has also consulted on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which informed elements of the draft budget for 2020-21, with the majority of responses supporting no change to the existing scheme.

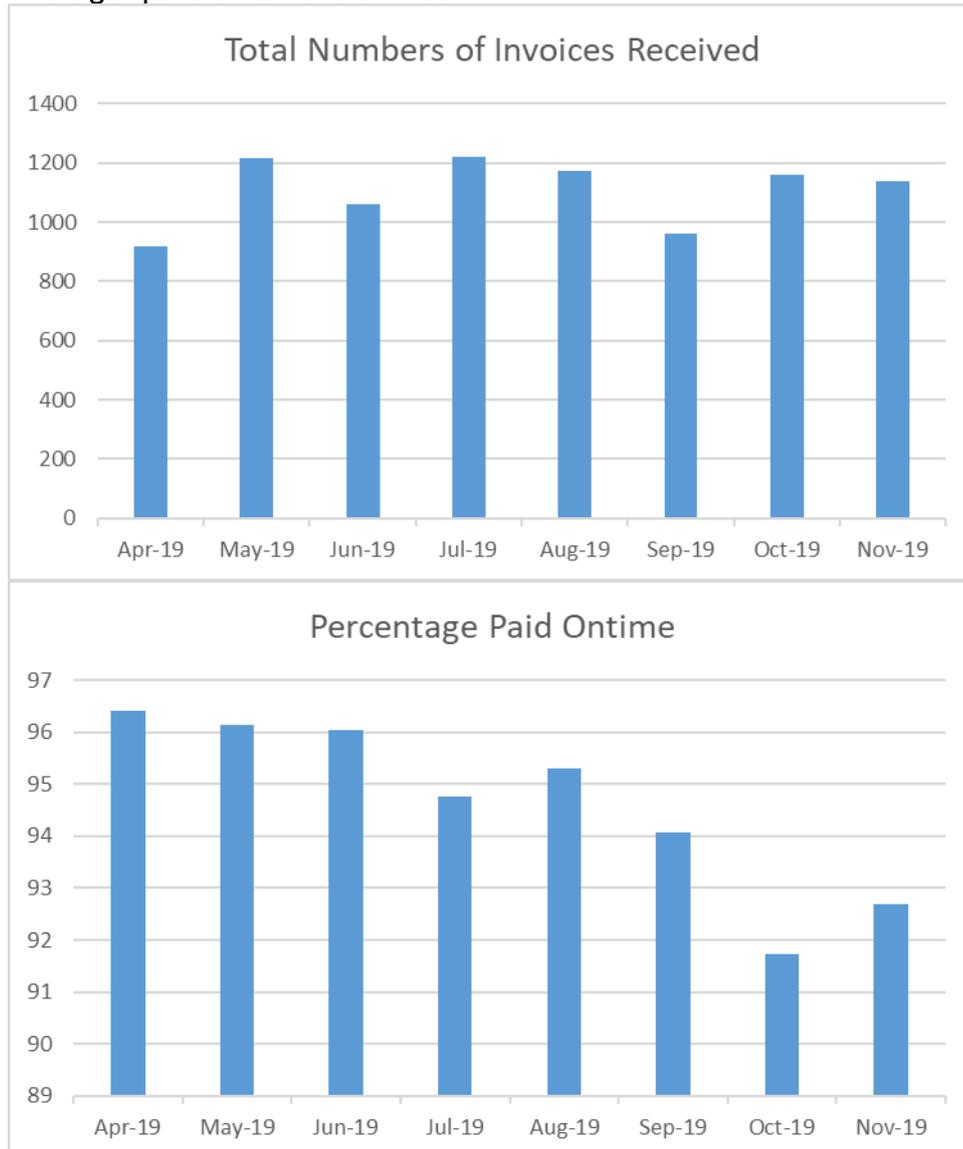
The impact of Universal Credit on the Revenue and Benefits Service and capacity requirements

will be monitored. A Single Person Discount review is active and having an impact, with several households being invited to update their status as appropriate. SPD is a 'benefit' and misuse can be considered a fraud and the Council is required to administer DWP benefits correctly.

The move by more households to pay Council Tax over twelve monthly instalments rather than the traditional ten, has had an impact on the collection rate profile, rather than the value collected.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE / RECEIVABLE

The table below reflect that 8850 Invoices were received, up to the end of November 2019, the average paid on time is 92.7%



In respect of recorded sundry debt as at the end of November 2019 there was a total of £1,928,206.46 (excluding Housing Benefit Debt) on the sundry debtors system of which £1,284,876.54 was older than 61 days. The largest service area debt is Asset Management with £635,834.97 of debt. The CFO Governance Team continues to work with the Asset Management Team to improve processes, procedures and debt management to reduce the level of aged debt.

Facilities Management

December:

- The election did impact on planning for Christmas Parties, 3 nights were hosted.
- Hosted 2 panto rehearsals, 1 conference and a wedding ceremony before being taken over by the election. Opened on 28th December to host 2 wedding ceremonies and 1 reception.

November:

- Guildhall Office team exceeded their income target for the month. With successful events including; the Junior Law Society Winter Ball, The Reel Affair Ball, Silver Linings Wedding Fair, Pre-Loved Vintage Wholesale, the NCC Staff Recognition Awards and Remembrance Sunday.
- Of 6 Wedding Enquiries this month we have converted 4 into confirmed bookings. We have also taken 7 enquiries for events/meetings for early 2020 and the team are busy trying to convert these into bookings
- Guildhall Officers had the mammoth task of re-arranging room bookings to accommodate the general election that was sprung on us at short notice.
- Repair and recommissioning of the OSS and Spencer Percival doors
- A total of 39,719 items of post dispatched
- 1,675 incoming documents scanned, overall scanning accuracy – 99.9%, with indexing accuracy – 99.1%
- 1,488 incoming Revs and Bens documents indexed in total, 2989 incoming Revs and Bens e-mails indexed
- Savings of just under £3,000 made by using Royal Mail Business Mail

Councillor Brandon Eldred
Cabinet Member for Finance