

Request

- 1) Since April 2020, has the council at any point used debt enforcement agencies (or similar service providers) in relation to cases of outstanding council tax debt?

If the answer to question 1 is 'no', the council should proceed to questions 8 and 9.

- 2) What are the debt enforcement agencies referred to in response to question 1?
- 3) How many council tax debt cases were referred to each of the debt enforcement agencies listed in response to question 2 in each financial year 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23?
- 4) How much unpaid council tax debt (preferably including any 'penalty' fees/charges) was referred in total to debt enforcement agencies in the financial years 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 combined? This should be one figure, combining all the debt enforcement agencies and all three financial years
- 5) How much of the council tax debt stated in response to question 4 was collected after being referred to a debt enforcement agency? Again, this should be one figure combining all agencies and all three financial years (including debt that was collected in a later financial year than when it was referred)
- 6) The total number of council tax accounts in each council electoral ward in 2022/23 (this is all council tax accounts, not just those carrying debts or referred to debt enforcement agencies). Preferably this should be a whole-year figure, but if that is not possible a snapshot figure will suffice. If possible within the section 12 cost limit, I would like these figures to exclude accounts relating to designated second homes and empty properties
- 7) The number of council tax accounts that were referred to debt enforcement agencies for council tax debt collection in 2022/23, broken down by electoral ward. This means those accounts where the referral took place during 2022/23. If possible within the section 12 cost limit, I would like these figures to exclude accounts relating to designated second homes and empty properties
- 8) The total number of council tax accounts in each council electoral ward at present (this is all council tax accounts, not just those carrying debts or referred to debt enforcement agencies). This should be the most recent snapshot figure available. If possible within the section 12 cost limit, I would like these figures to exclude accounts relating to designated second homes and empty properties
- 9) The number of council tax accounts that currently have unpaid council tax debts relating to financial years prior to 2023/24, broken down by electoral ward. If possible within the section 12 cost limit, I would like these figures to exclude accounts relating to designated second homes and empty properties

Response

- 1) Yes
- 2) Rundles, Bristow and Sutor, Marstons

3)

	Rundles	Bristow & Sutor	Marston	TOTAL
2020/21	0	0	0	0
2021/22	4067	0	0	4067
2022/23	2813	4613	1210	8636

4)

FINANCIAL YEAR	CTAX TOTAL VALUE
2020 - 2021	£0.00
2021 - 2022	£2,703,007.11
2022 - 2023	£3,119,119.02

The above figures do not include cases that have been through our internal enforcement agents as we cannot accurately report on this data.

The above figures reflect the suspension on recovery due to Covid and the resumption process. The figures sent to enforcement agents for 21/22 and 22/23 reflect the resumption of action through enforcement agents and the way we had to resume action on cases that were with enforcement agents pre Covid.

These numbers may contain duplicate liability orders i.e. where a liability order is returned due to a debtor absconding, the case may be referred again at a later date if a forwarding address is found and attempts to contact the debtor/collect the monies due are unsuccessful.

- 5) We are unable to report exactly how much was recovered for the debts referred in each financial year, however the below table shows how much was recovered in full across the Enforcement Agents in each financial year:

Year	Recovered
2020 - 21	£254,465.95
2021 - 22	£181,816.31
2022 - 23	£722,274.22

- 6) This information is not currently recorded, and we are unable to report retrospectively on this. We have provided current information as at 23.08.2023 in question 8.
- 7) We are unable to report on this information by ward. We have provided the number of cases referred to debt enforcement agencies in 2022/23 in question 3.

- 8) The below figures are in relation to question 8. These are the number of accounts in each township excluding accounts that are not currently classed as occupied. This information is as at 23.08.2023.

Township	Total
Ashton & Bryn	10194
Atherton	10395
Golborne & Lowton	11933
Hindley & Abram	17662
Leigh	22715
Orrell, Billinge & Winstanley	10047
Standish, Aspull & Shevington	17464
Tyldesley & Astley	11959
Wigan North	18182
Wigan South	17550
Grand Total	148101

- 9) Please see below table for question 9. Due to multi year billing we are unable to report on which financial year the accounts debt relates to. The figures below show the number of accounts that are in arrears as at 23.08.2023 broken down by township.

Township	Total
Ashton & Bryn	994
Atherton	1209
Golborne & Lowton	1425
Hindley & Abram	2011
Leigh	3240
Orrell, Billinge & Winstanley	796
Standish, Aspull & Shevington	1793
Tyldesley & Astley	1415
Wigan North	2536
Wigan South	2046
Grand Total	17465

Please be advised that arrears are defined as accounts that have not met the scheduled payment on the allocated date, and that date has since passed.