

Request:

Please provide figures for each of the following financial years: 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23.

- 1) What was the total value of unpaid council tax debt owed to the council at the end of each financial year?
- 2) For each year, what was the total value of council tax debt accrued in that 12-month period?
- 3) In each year, how many households were sent a final notice instructing them to pay the year's council tax in full after missing earlier payments?
- 4) In each year, how many times did the council instruct bailiffs to enforce liability orders for non-payment of council tax?
- 5) In each year, how many cases were taken back from bailiffs after the council accepted the individual was vulnerable?

Response:

1) The total value of all previous years outstanding Council Tax (effective back to 1.4.1993) as at 31 March in each relevant year is as follows:

Year end	Total O/S
2017/18	£18,276,427.15
2018/19	£19,896,398.32
2019/20	£19,533,736.98
2020/21	£24,815,272.75
2021/22	£28,488,531.96
2022/23	£25,241,513.15

2)

Year end	Total O/S For year
2017/18	£4,881,902.14
2018/19	£5,273,052.68
2019/20	£5,729,947.03
2020/21	£6,869,903.70
2021/22	£8,096,350.64
2022/23	£7,812,120.14

3)

Year	Total Issued
2017/18	247
2018/19	252
2019/20	231
2020/21	115
2021/22	224
2022/23	217

Please note that that final notices are only issued in certain circumstances i.e. where the account has had a 1st and 2nd reminder, has brought them up to date and then fallen behind again. It is possible to lose the right to instalments if a Reminder 1 or a Reminder 2 is not paid on time and therefore reporting on Final notices will not provide a true reflection of accounts that have lost the right to instalments.

4)

Year	Number of Liability Orders referred
2017/18	12,892
2018/19	6,237
2019/20	14,369
2020/21	0
2021/22	4,067
2022/23	8,636

Please be advised that this data may include multiple liability orders for the same account holder/liable person, of which may be recycled to other providers during the life of the debt based on the 3 different External Enforcement Agencies we use. We do have our internal Enforcement Agents however internal referral data is not currently recorded.

5) Although we have a legal duty and responsibility to all residents and businesses of the borough to ensure that Council Tax due is paid promptly, our aim is to ensure money owed is collected adopting a consistent, fair, and asset-based approach to debt collection.

The billing and recovery of Council Tax is largely prescribed by legislation and regulations, however we have introduced a Collections Welfare Framework to run alongside the prescribed requirements as our local approach to maximise support for our residents.

This includes issuing additional non-statutory letters which include initial support letters, non-statutory reminders and pre summons letters. We also utilise other methods of contact including texts and outbound calling.

The aim is to engage with customers who have missed a payment as early as possible before any statutory recovery letters commence. If a customer engages, this allows us to explore an affordable sustainable arrangement to prevent further arrears and recovery action.

We take a holistic approach to offer support, to maximise a customer's income and enable payment. To enable this, we work collaboratively with our Welfare and Assessments teams to ensure customers are in receipt of any benefits, reductions, discounts, or exemptions they may be entitled to, all designed at preventing the need for recovery action.

If a customer does not engage with us, we also have an internal enforcement team who will further attempt engagement to offer support by personal property visit with a view to exploring personal circumstances, identifying any vulnerabilities and agreeing affordable repayment arrangements with customers.

Other options of recovery including deductions and attachments are always the preferential course of action where deemed necessary with the aim of preventing further fees and minimising the need for accounts to be passed to external enforcement agents.

That said, in respect of cases returned from Enforcement Agents, we don't record the specific return reason in each case anywhere on system or the number of returns (whether that be due to vulnerability or any other reason), therefore we not be able to provide this information.