

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

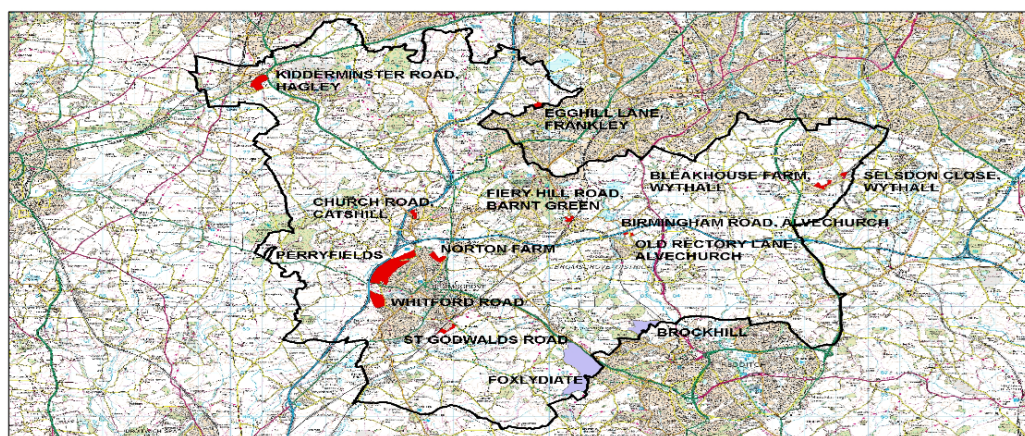
CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT: 'HELP ME TO FIND SOMEWHERE TO LIVE IN MY LOCALITY'– FEBRUARY 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This bi-monthly report highlights the key areas for the strategic purpose 'Help me to find somewhere to live in my locality'.
- 1.2 The key corporate measures suite contains a number of measures used by the organisation to better understand the corporate picture. The full suite is reported 3 times each year, with the exception of sickness absence, which is contained in each report. This report contains the full suite.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1 Use of local plan to drive development



Progression of Strategic Housing Sites

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The Bromsgrove District Plan is now being fully used to drive development across the district. A large number of dwellings identified in the plan have already been granted permission and in many cases have or are being delivered on site. The remaining large sites which have yet to gain permission are currently being assessed and it is hoped they will be brought before planning committee in the first half of 2019.

- 2.2 Deliver affordable housing (including Burcot Lane and review of temporary accommodation)

There are a number of sites currently being developed in the Bromsgrove district but demand continues to outstrip supply with over 2000 households on the waiting list and an average of 100 new affordable units coming onto the market every year via Registered Social Landlords. The Council looks likely to be taking a more proactive role locally by building 61 units at Burcot Lane with financial support from Homes England. It will also be considering the business case for opening a housing company and assessing other potential areas under its ownership where housing could be built in the future. The loss of the hostel as part of any development at Burcot has been considered and agreement reached with BDHT to replace it with six other units of temporary accommodation. They are currently identifying suitable stock for this purpose.

The levels of affordable housing commitments are affected by the overall drop in the amount of new permissions coming forward for affordable housing. Affordable housing is still being delivered on the sites which are currently under construction; however, if new large scale permissions do not come forward in 2018/19 then amount of new supply coming forward will be restricted further in future years.

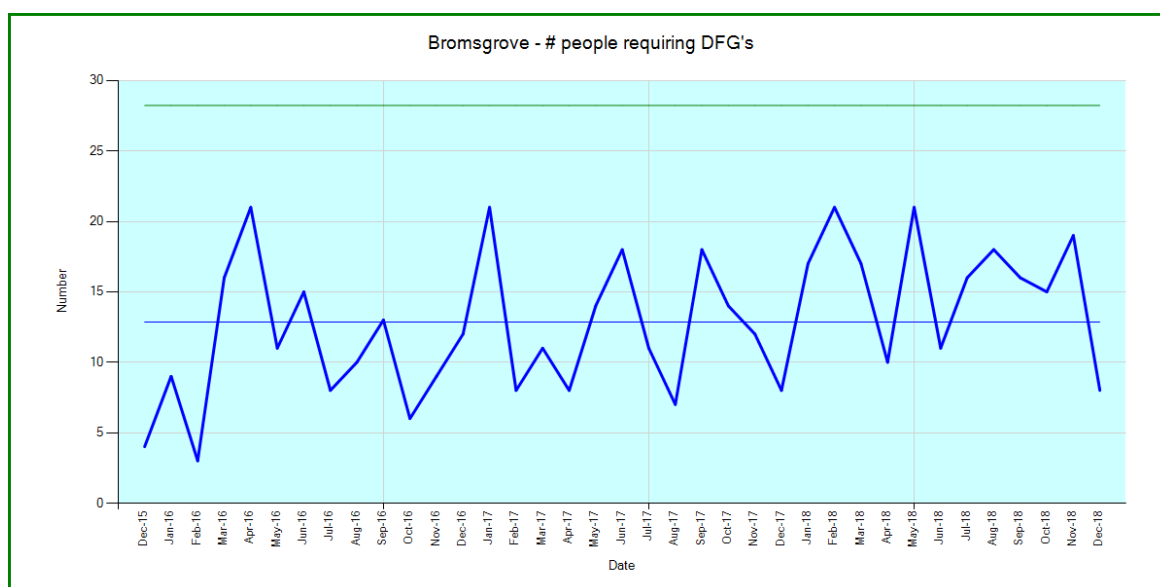
2.3 Review of Allocations Policy

The allocations policy has been reviewed in light of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act and all changes required have been successfully implemented.

2.4 Work with Registered Providers/Private Rented Sector

Work continues with RPs and private landlords – as part of the housing company business case we are considering the potential to undertake a lettings agency as part of this project and we are also part of a county wide bid to MHDCLG to secure funding to expand our private sector access scheme.

2.5 Delivery of DFG's



Work continues in this area with the Private Sector Team providing responses to incoming enquiries from both landlords and tenants across the private sector. The team have taken over 20 applications recently from private landlords across Bromsgrove and Redditch registering their properties under the new Houses in Multiple Occupation regulations.

A North Worcestershire Landlords Conference was held in September 2018 with officers working in partnership with the National Landlords Association to run the event. The event was attended by over 60 landlords with several topics discussed including Tax, legislation update and the new criteria for HMO licensing.

The team is also a key part of the delivery of aids and adaptations to homes in the district which in turn enables the occupants to remain in their properties and continue to live independently. During the current financial year, the service has approved 123 Disabled Facilities Grant interventions in Bromsgrove. 69 of these interventions have been completed and the remaining 54 are ongoing. Strategically, officers are also working with colleagues across the county, together with Foundations, on the broader task of developing the Better Care Fund approach, and recommissioning the delivery of DFGs in Worcestershire. Existing arrangements with the Home Improvement Agency for the delivery of DFGs end in March 2020.

2.6 Homelessness Reduction/Rough Sleeping

BDHT were awarded the new housing agency contract in January 2018, and they have subsequently been focussing on delivering homelessness and housing options services in line with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act which was introduced in April 2018. Note – in terms of the definition of homeless, information on the statutory definition of homelessness is contained within the Housing Act 1996. The term 'homelessness' is often considered to apply only to people 'sleeping rough', however, most of the statistics on homelessness relate to the statutorily homeless, i.e. those households which meet specific criteria of priority need set out in legislation, and to whom a homelessness duty has been accepted by a local authority. These households are rarely homeless in the literal sense of being without a roof over their heads, but are more likely to be threatened with the loss of, or are unable to continue with, their current accommodation. The recent Homelessness Reduction Act has placed new duties on local authorities to act sooner to prevent or relieve homelessness.

In recent months, there has been an increasing emphasis on preventing rough sleeping in Bromsgrove following on from a small number of reports of this issue in the town centre. As a result council officers have made arrangements to open a night shelter that serves both Bromsgrove and Redditch people when the temperature is forecast for zero or below. This is an enhancement of the national requirement for an authority to make available a night shelter provision when the temperature is forecast to be zero or below for three consecutive nights. We contact and email out to all our partners that work and support people who may experience homelessness including the Basement Project, CAB, NewStarts and the Police to ensure that as many people as possible are aware that a shelter has been made available. We have also procured a specialist rough sleeper outreach and prevention service called Caring for Communities and People (CCP) to proactively contact anyone rough sleeping to ensure that this situation does not lead them to becoming entrenched. Their success in support to rough sleepers has resulted in Bromsgrove District Council being able to submit a zero return for the annual rough sleeper count which was carried out in November. CCP will ensure that any known rough sleepers are contacted when the night shelter is open so that they can be positively encouraged to access it. CCP have also met with street traders to provide them with information on what to do if they are concerned about an individual and advice has also been provided to the local community via the media about how to contact Streetlink. This service was set up by central Government to refer rough sleepers to local services and provides a central record of rough sleeping. We promote this on our website and with partners, and it is our intention to promote Streetlink in the leaflet that goes out with Council Tax bills. Rough sleepers reported through Streetlink will be picked up by CCP and offered support to help them access accommodation.

3. **KEY CORPORATE MEASURES SUITE**

- 3.1 The key corporate measures suite contains a number of measures used by the organisation to better understand the corporate picture. The full suite is reported on 3 times each year, with the exception of sickness absence, which is contained in each report.

Sickness Data

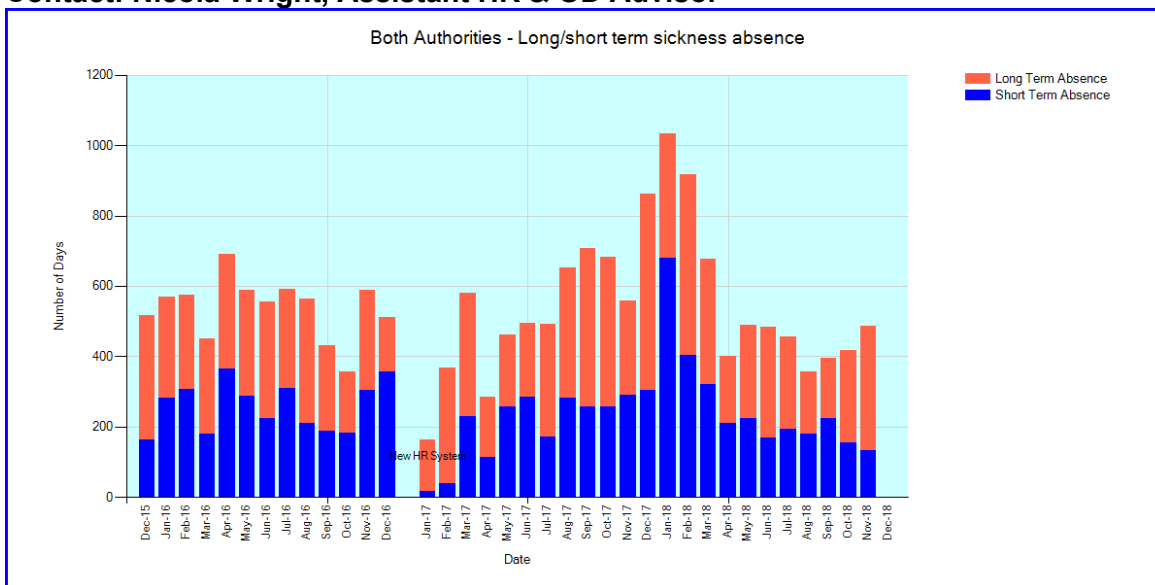
In order to support the organisation to capture as comprehensive a set of sickness data as possible, a new online self-serve module was implemented in 2017 as part of the HR21 system; this has now been rolled out to all service areas. HR continues to monitor sickness absence data and offer support and advice to managers when managing sickness absence in their teams. HR are continuing to work with managers on the use of the current policy in relation to both sickness types; however, there is a review of the sickness absence policy underway. The HR team have been actively working with the managers to look at the application of the sickness policy and are currently in the process of finalising a new policy in line with the recommendations. We anticipate that

the draft policy will be sent for approval in early 2019, with mandatory training to support managers. Additional management information is being produced and provided to all 4th tier managers and above on a monthly basis.

As part of a sickness absence working group, an internal issue log is monitored and maintained relating to sickness; this information can then be used to assist in future development of absence management. The issue log is divided into four main sections policy, process, training, and communication, each being tackled individually.

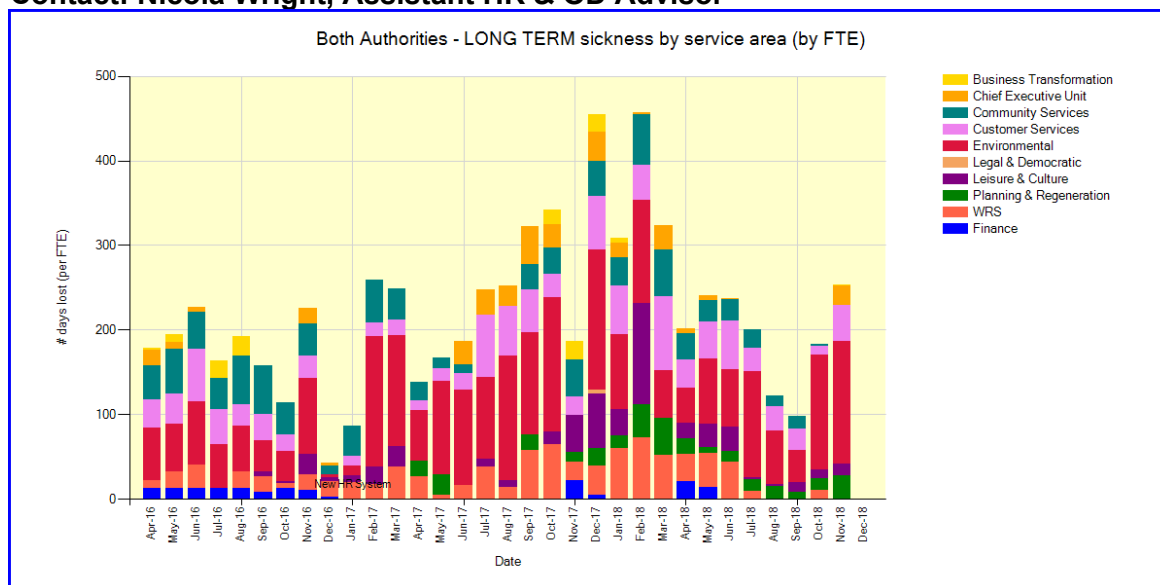
Future planned self-service system development also includes managers having access to sickness reports and a return to work interview facility.

Long/Short Term Sickness Absence
Contact: Nicola Wright, Assistant HR & OD Advisor



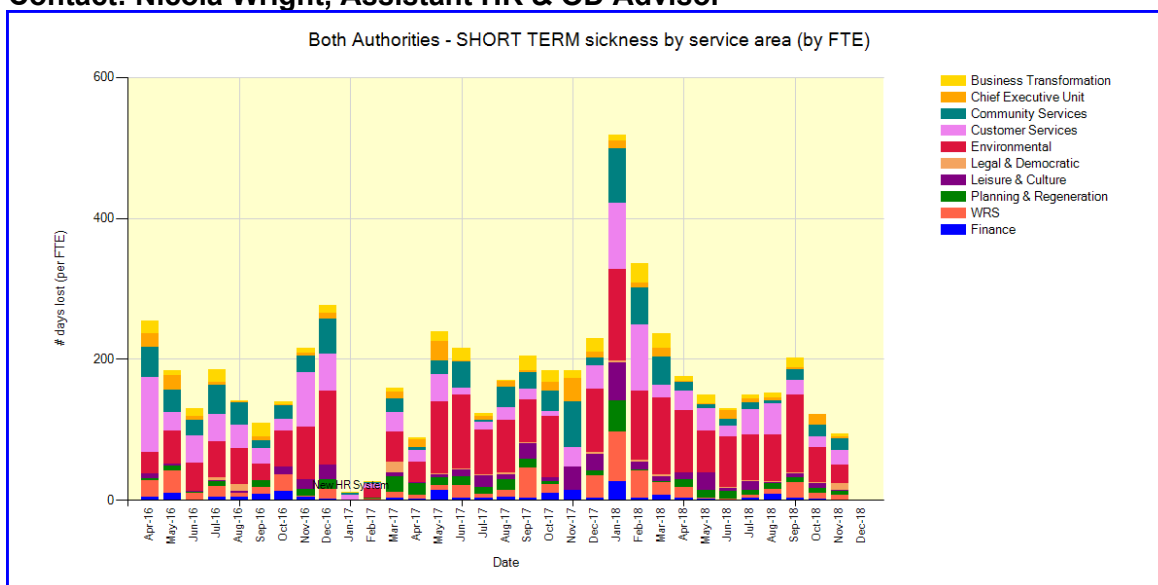
Short term sickness has remained fairly static since April 2018. The HR team continue to monitor and assist managers in tackling both types of sickness, as well as using the data to make informed interventions where required, such as review of sickness absence policy, occupational health services and the employee assistance programme.

Long Term Sickness Absence by service area (by FTE)
Contact: Nicola Wright, Assistant HR & OD Advisor



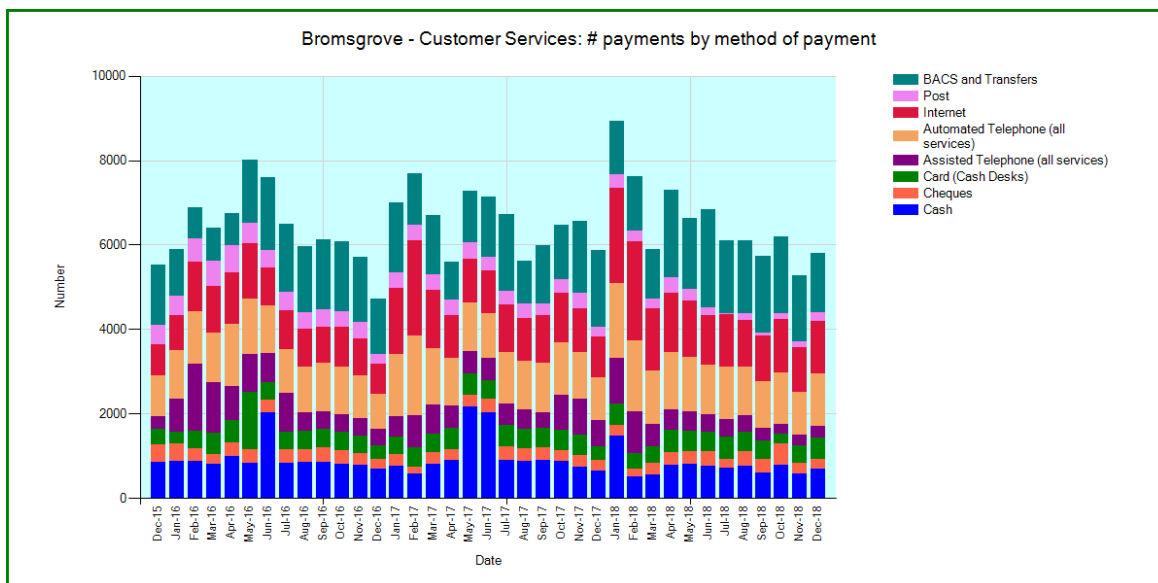
Long term absence has seen an increase over the last 2 months; increases have been experienced in Environmental Services, Customer Services, Planning and Regeneration and Business Transformation.

Short Term Sickness Absence by service area (by FTE)
Contact: Nicola Wright, Assistant HR & OD Advisor



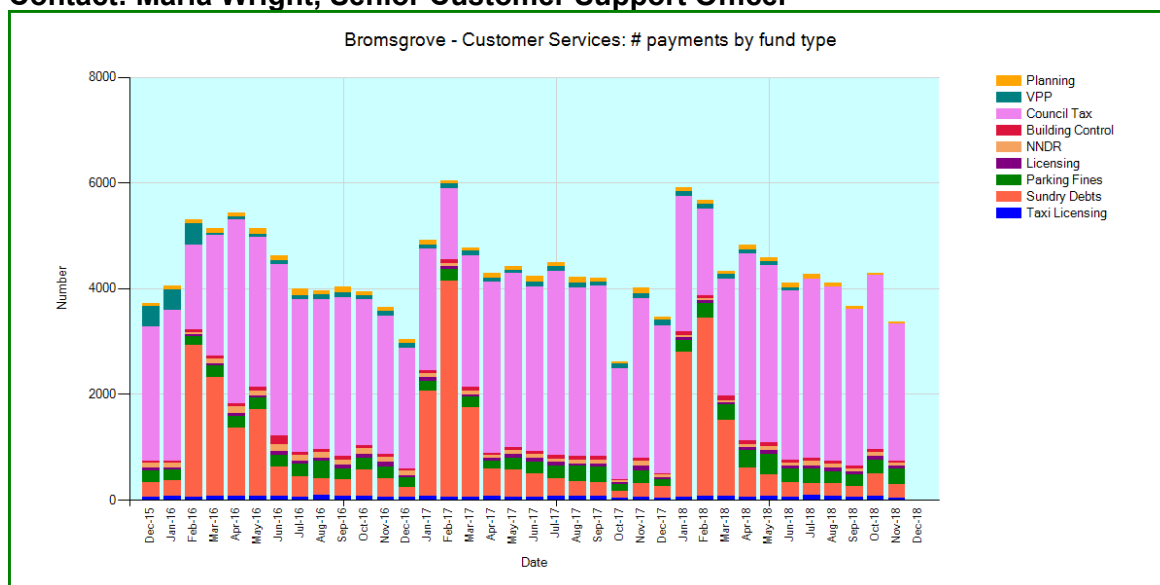
Short term absence has seen an overall decrease from the previous month; it is at the lowest level recorded in 2018.

Customer Services: # payments by method of payment
Contact: Maria Wright, Senior Customer Support Officer



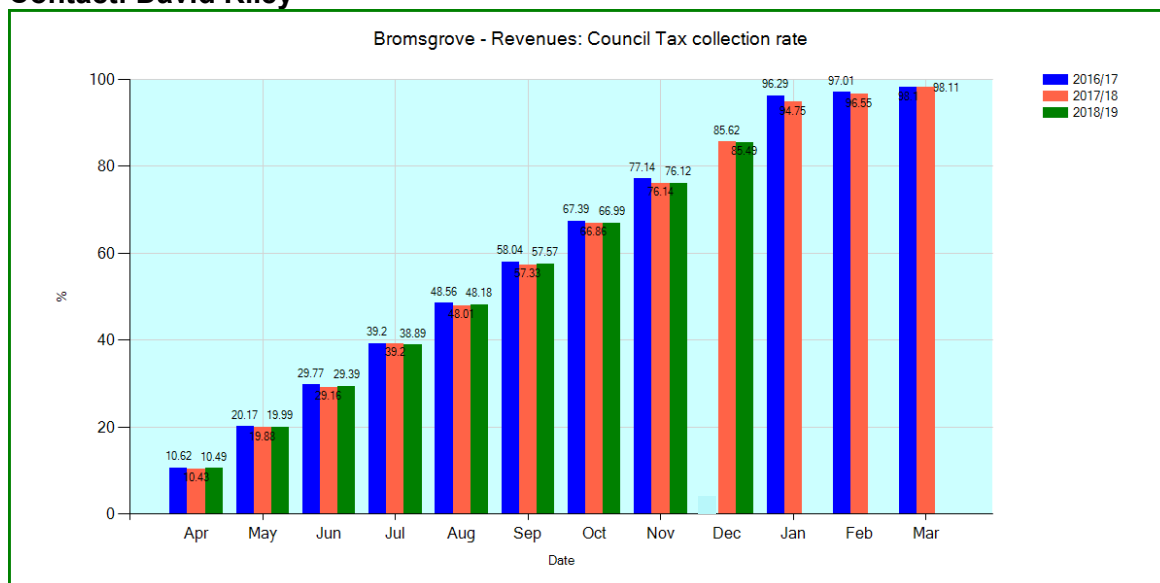
Card and cash accounts for only 1/3 of the payments taken which is a positive sign, however these numbers are not further reducing. We are currently in discussions with council tax to promote other payment methods including payments at PayPoint and Post Office locations as opposed to the cash office.

Customer Services: # payments by fund type
Contact: Maria Wright, Senior Customer Support Officer



Council tax still accounts for the largest number of payments, as expected, followed by parking fines. This measure provides information relating to the total number of payments made through all routes i.e. web pay system, online and face to face.

Revenues: Council Tax collection rate
Contact: David Riley

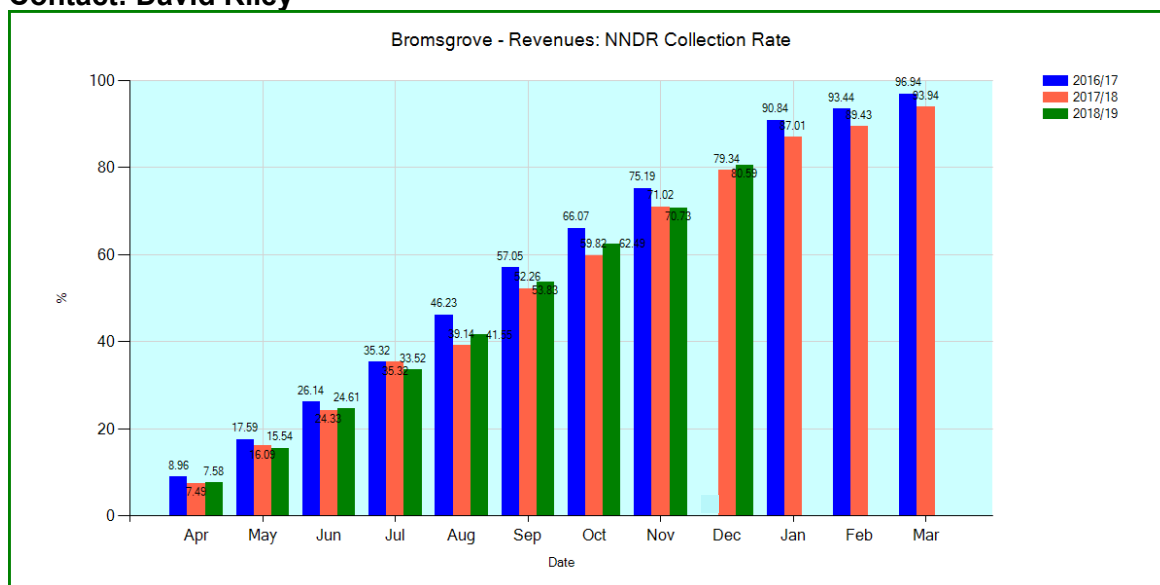


The end of year collection rates for 2016 and 2017 were broadly similar, with in year collection of 98.1% of Council Tax collected. Stretching targets have been set for the 2018/19 tax year, with the aim of collecting 98.5% of Council Tax within year.

When current performance is modelled against previous years' collection rates the end of year figures are projected to be half a percentage point below target at 98%.

The timing of the issue of recovery documents are being reviewed for the final quarter of the year to ensure that timely reminders are issued to delinquent accounts and appropriate action is taken in respect of any outstanding balances. All team members have been provided with training in relation to debt recovery techniques so that target telephone intervention can be taken and appropriate actions are taken by team members to ensure payment of debts.

Revenues: NNDR collection rate
Contact: David Riley

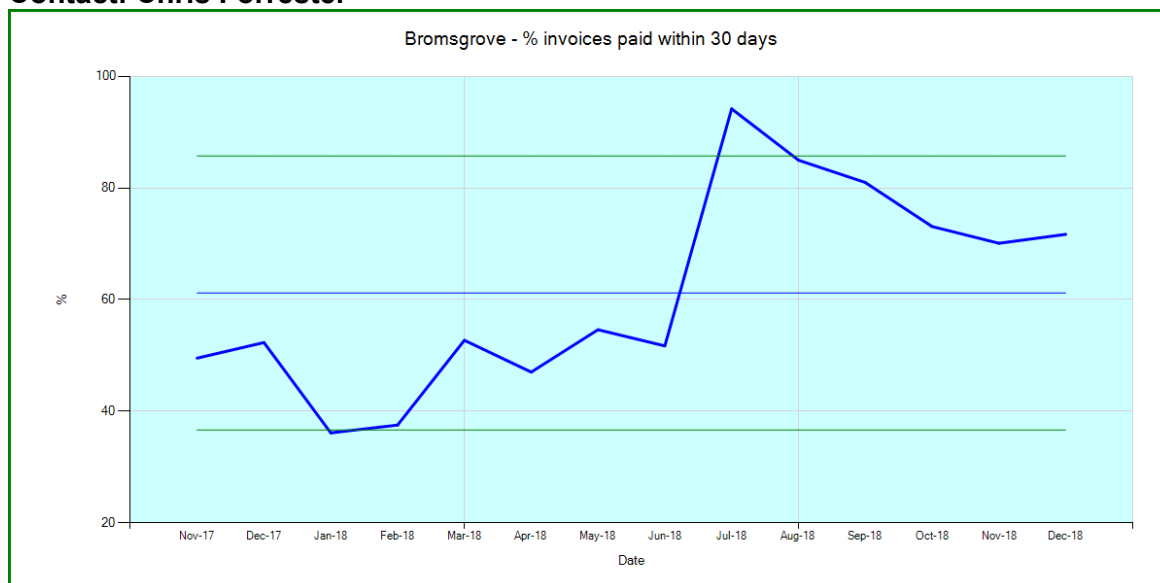


The end of year collection rates for 2016 and 2017 were 96.94% and 93.94% respectively. Stretching targets have been set for the 2018/19 rates year, with the aim of collecting 98% of Non-Domestic Rates within year – this is 1.1% above the maximum level achieved in the previous two rates years.

When current performance is modelled against previous years' the end of year collection rates are projected to be higher than in 2016 and 2017 but below the target of 98% End of year projections are improving but the improvement is slight and still short of target.

In January 2019 action commenced to target telephone calls to delinquent accounts and the current collection performance is improving. During the final quarter of the year accounts with outstanding payments will be targeted for telephone recovery and reviewed on a weekly basis.

% invoices paid within 30 days
Contact: Chris Forrester



The drop in the figures over the last few months is due to staff sickness, staff shortages and time spent on other prioritised projects, which has resulted in the team having a back log of work. We have been reviewing internal processes to determine how the figure can be improved. Due to current system limitations, a new member of staff will be hired through Matrix to increase support and it is expected that this figure will improve as a result.