

Report of the Director of Resources

IRRECOVERABLE SUNDRY DEBTS AND HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To note amounts written off under delegated powers for Sundry Debts and Housing Benefit Overpayments.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Borough Council has the power to write-off irrecoverable Sundry Debts and Housing Benefit Overpayments at the discretion of the Committee.

3 Proposed Action:

- 3.1 **The Committee is invited to RESOLVE to note that the amount of £9,482.71 has been written off under delegated powers of the Section 151 Officer.**

4 Background

- 4.1 There are periodical reviews of outstanding debts for Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates, Sundry Debts and Housing Benefit Overpayments and sums deemed to be uncollectible are recommended for write-off.

5 Discussion

- 5.1 The Section 151 Officer has reviewed the amounts stated and has written them off under delegated powers in accordance with financial regulations.
- 5.2 All appropriate action has been taken. Debts have been thoroughly pursued via legal action in the Magistrates' Court; visits have been carried out by Council staff and specialist tracing/collection agencies. In all cases the debts were deemed to be irrecoverable.
- 5.3 In the circumstances where any debts have been written off against the provision for bad debts and the whereabouts of the individual are subsequently discovered, action may still be taken to recover the debt. Should successful recovery be achieved, this would be written back against the provision in accordance with best practice.

- 5.4 A total of £9,482.71 irrecoverable Sundry Debts and Housing Benefit Overpayments have been written off under delegated powers as follows:

Type of Debt	Reason	Amount
Sundry Debts	Uneconomic to pursue	£1,773.44
Housing Benefit Overpayments	Forwarding address not Known	£4,766.83
Housing Benefit Overpayments	Insolvency	£435.88
Housing Benefit Overpayments	Deceased	£88.78
Housing Benefit Overpayments	Prison	£172.78
Housing Benefit Overpayments	Uneconomic to pursue	£928.84
Housing Benefit Overpayments	Other	£1,316.16

6 Legal Powers

- 6.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that local authorities make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs. Part of these arrangements includes arrangements for the writing-off of debts.
- 6.2 Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits the Council to delegate certain powers, duties and functions to Committees. The power to write-off debts of £2,000 and over is delegated to this Committee.

7 Financial and Value For Money Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct revenue implications as adequate provision has been made within the accounts for bad debts.

8 Risk Analysis

- 8.1 None

9 Implications for Resources

- 9.1 None

10 Implications for Stronger and Safer Communities

- 10.1 None

11 Implications for Equalities

- 11.1 None

12 Author and Contact Officer

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13 Consultees

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