

Report of the Head of Finance

IRRECOVERABLE COUNCIL TAX, HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENTS, NON-DOMESTIC RATES AND SUNDRY DEBTS**1 Purpose of Report**

To request approval for the write off of irrecoverable debts.

2 Executive Summary

The Borough Council has the power to write-off irrecoverable Non-Domestic Rates, Council Tax, Sundry Debts and Housing Benefit Overpayments at the discretion of the Committee.

3 Appendices

Further detail of debt for write off.

APPENDIX	TYPE OF DEBT	AMOUNT
A	Housing Benefit Overpayments over £2,000	£15,249.28
B	Non-Domestic Rates over £2,000	£24,288.66

4 Proposed Action:

4.1 The Committee is invited to RESOLVE the write-off of £39,537.94 irrecoverable Council Tax, Housing Benefit Overpayments and Non-Domestic Rates.

4.2 The Committee is invited to RESOLVE to note that an amount of £102,490.11 has been written off under the delegated powers of the Section 151 Officer.

5 Background

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

6 Discussion

6.1 The Section 151 Officer has reviewed the amounts stated and has written them off under delegated powers in accordance with financial regulations.

- 6.2 All appropriate action has been taken. Debts have been thoroughly pursued via legal action in the Magistrates' or County Court; visits have been carried out by Council officers and specialist tracing/collection agencies. In all cases the debts were deemed to be irrecoverable.
- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 A total of £102,490.11 irrecoverable Council Tax, Housing Benefit Overpayments, Non-Domestic Rates and Sundry Debts have been written off under delegated powers as follows:

TYPE OF DEBT	NUMBER OF ACCOUNTS	AMOUNT
Council Tax	187	£88,861.68
Housing Benefit Overpayments	44	£7,749.75
Non-Domestic Rates	3	£2,597.61
Sundry Debt	11	£3,281.07

7 Legal Powers

- 7.1 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.
- 7.2 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.

8 Financial and Value for Money Implications

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

9 Risk Analysis

Nature of risk	Consequences if realised	Likelihood of occurrence	Control measures
None			

10 Implications for Resources

None

11 Implications for Stronger and Safer Communities

None

12 Implications for Equalities

None

13 Author and Contact Officer

Richard Watson, Business Rates Manager

14 Consultees

Nigel Robinson, Principal Revenue and Benefits Manager

15 Background Papers

List of cases written off under delegated powers

Appendices

Appendix A

Housing Benefit Overpayment payers with a balance outstanding of over £2,000 where the sums are deemed to be irrecoverable

Account	Name	Address	Amount	Date	Reason
5385513	Ms B	7 St Andrews Crescent	£15,249.28	18/11/14	Customer bankrupt
	TOTAL		£15,249.28		

Appendix B

Non-Domestic Rates ratepayers with a balance outstanding of over £2,000 where the sums are deemed to be irrecoverable

Account	Name	Address	Amount	Date	Reason
600898104	Mr B	4 Yeldon Court	£9,187.42	2012/13	Forwarding address not known
600909899	The Old Swan (Earls Barton) Ltd	8 the Square, Earls Barton	£11,598.27	2013/14	Company in liquidation
600896313	Be U Interiors Ltd	10 Bradfield Road	£3,502.97	2013/14	Proposal to strike company off
	TOTAL		£24,288.66		

