

## 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 overpayment £2,000 or over	£3,320.96
B	Council tax £2,000 or over	£9,607.37

**4 Proposed Action:**

**4.1 The Committee is invited to RESOLVE the write-off of £12,930.33 irrecoverable council tax and housing benefit overpayments.**

**4.2 The Committee is invited to RESOLVE to note that an amount of £63,691.21 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 written off those she can under delegated powers in accordance with financial regulations. Sums of £2,000 or over have to be passed to this committee for consideration.

- 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 £63,691.21 irrecoverable non-domestic rates, council Tax, sundry Debts and housing benefit overpayments have been written off under delegated powers as follows:

TYPE OF DEBT	NUMBER OF ACCOUNTS	AMOUNT
Council tax	187	£44,246.15
Housing benefit overpayments	29	£4,287.16
Non-domestic rates	1	£1,102.74
Sundry debt	30	£14,055.16

## 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. All debts of under £2,000 can be written off at the discretion of the Section 151 Officer. 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 cases with a balance outstanding of over £2,000 where the sums are deemed to be irrecoverable

Account	Name	Address	Amount	Date	Reason
5339941	Exors of Mr S	165 Mill Road, Wellingborough	£3,320.96	2009/2012	Customer deceased and estate has no equity
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£3,320.96</b>		

### Appendix B

Council tax payers with a balance outstanding of over £2,000 where the sums are deemed to be irrecoverable

Account	Name	Address	Amount	Date	Reason
800143064	Exors of Ms L	14 London Road, Little Irchester	£3,825.30	2011/2012	Customer deceased and estate has no equity
800152048	Mr E	22 Haddon Close, Wellingborough	£2,319.07	2014/2015	Bankrupt
800664272	Wellingborough Working Men's Club	9 Cannon Street, Wellingborough	£3,465.00	2013/2014	No assets
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£9,609.37</b>		