

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	£2,041.58
B	Council tax £2,000 or over	£7,586.52

4 Proposed Action:

4.1 The Committee is invited to RESOLVE the write-off of £9,628.10 irrecoverable council tax and housing benefit overpayments.

4.2 The Committee is invited to RESOLVE to note that an amount of £35,837.35 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 £35,837.35 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	70	£22,692.30
Housing benefit overpayments	11	£2,846.02
Non-domestic rates	3	£3,931.60
Sundry debt	15	£6,367.43

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

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
5348314	Exors of Mr S	45 Attley Court, Wellingborough	£2,041.58	2013/2014	Customer deceased and estate has no equity
	TOTAL		£2,041.58		

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
800301232	Exors of Ms C	68 Butts Road, Wellingborough	£2,706.18	2013/2015	Customer deceased and estate has no assets
800320750	Exors of Ms F	92 the Embankment, Wellingborough	£2,450.68	2014/2015	Customer deceased and estate has no assets
801040838	Mr and Mrs U	56 Ewenfield Road, Finedon	£2,429.66	2013/2015	Individual voluntary arrangement set up
	TOTAL		£7,586.52		