



<b>Policy, Finance and Development Committee</b>	<b>Tuesday, 10 September 2024</b>	<b>Matter for Information and Decision</b>
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**Report Title:** **Collection and Write-Off of Council Debt (Q1 2024/25)**

**Report Author(s):** **Claire Werra (Revenues and Benefits Manager)**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on the status of debts written off under delegated powers.
<b>Report Summary:</b>	In Quarter 1 there have been amounts of NDR, Council Tax, Housing Benefit Overpayment written off under delegated powers by the Section 151 Officer, amounts under £5,000.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<b>That the committee note the contents of the report</b>
<b>Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):</b>	<p>Colleen Warren (Chief Finance Officer / S151 Officer) (0116) 257 2759 <a href="mailto:colleen.warren@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">colleen.warren@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Laura Parsons (Finance Manager) (0116) 257 2694 <a href="mailto:laura.parsons@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">laura.parsons@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Claire Werra (Revenues and Benefits Manager) (0116) 257 2681 <a href="mailto:claire.werra@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">claire.werra@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Strategic Objectives:</b>	Our Council (SO1)
<b>Vision and Values:</b>	Accountability (V1) Respect (V2) Customer Focus (V5)
<b>Report Implications:-</b>	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	The implications are as set out at paragraphs 2 to 6 of this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Decreasing Financial Resources / Increasing Financial Pressures (CR1)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
<b>Statutory Officers' Comments:-</b>	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.

Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
<b>Consultees:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Leadership Team</li> <li>• Heads of Service</li> </ul>
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None.
<b>Appendices:</b>	None.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the status of debts written off under delegated powers.
- 1.2 Under the policy, amounts owed by a single debtor under £5,000 may be written off by the Chief Finance Officer. Amounts above £5,000 but below £10,000 are delegated for write off to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Policy, Finance and Development Committee (PFDC) Chair. The writing debts off above £10,000 may only be approved by PFDC.
- 1.3 Every effort is made to recover a debt owed to the Council before it is considered for write off. Where appropriate, recovery and enforcement options have been taken or where the Council is legally prohibited from pursuing, debts are considered for write off in line with the Council's Corporate Debt Policy. Examples where debt recovery is prohibited by law include:
- Bankruptcy or a Debt Relief Order is in place,
  - Deceased – No assets within the estate,
  - Debtor Absconded/no trace,
  - Company in liquidation/dissolved or ceased trading with no assets,
  - Severe hardship and/or serious health issues or
  - Statute barred i.e. the Council cannot legally pursue the debt as there has been six years since the debt fell due and no action has been taken to collect the debt.
- 1.4 In some cases, it is uneconomical to collect an outstanding debt because the costs associated with recovering the debt exceed the income recoverable.

## 2. Current Position

Write offs relating to Quarter 1 (2024/25) as approved by the Chief Finance Officer (S151) are set out below.

Type of Debtor	Write offs to date less than £5,000 (by S151 Officer under delegated powers)	Write offs to date £5,001 - £10,000 (by S151 Officer under delegated powers)	Amounts written off over £10,001 approved by Members	TOTAL
<b>Council Tax</b>	£10,309.57	-	-	£10,309.57
<b>Non-Domestic Rates</b>	£2,707.40	-	-	£2,707.40
<b>Housing Benefit Overpayments</b>	£3,495.69	-	-	£3,495.69
<b>Total</b>	16,512.66			16,512.66

The amounts detailed in the above table are shown below by category and the reason for write off.

### 3. Council Tax

- 3.1 In Q1 (2024/25) there are currently no Council Tax Debts over £10,000 for which Committee's approval for write off is sought.
- 3.2 The amounts written off under delegated powers in accordance with the thresholds are outlined in the Corporate Debt Policy are as follows:

Council Tax	Total No of cases	Write offs to date less than £5,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)	Write offs to date £5,001 - £10,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)
Deceased	5	£515.79	-
Bankruptcy	3	£1375.28	-
DRO	2	£195.56	-
Small Balance	29	£940.45	-
Unable to trace	16	£7183.93	-
Vulnerable	2	£98.56	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>10,309.57</b>	<b>-</b>

### 4. Non-Domestic Rates (NDR)

- 4.1 There are currently no NDR over £10,000 for which Committee's approval for write off is sought.
- 4.2 The amounts written off under delegated powers in accordance with the thresholds outlined in the Corporate Debt Policy are as follows:

Non-Domestic Rates	Total No of cases	Write offs to date less than £5,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)	Write offs to date £5,001 - £10,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)
Dissolved	1	£53.50	-
Not appropriate to pursue	1	£2,653.89	-
Uneconomical to pursue	1	£0.01	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>£2,707.40</b>	<b>-</b>

### 5. Housing Benefit Overpayments

- 5.1 There are no Housing Benefit overpayments over £10,000 for which committee approval for write off is sought.
- 5.2 The amounts written off under delegated powers in accordance with the thresholds outlines in the Corporate Debt Policy are as follows:

(Continued overleaf)

Housing Benefit Overpayment	Total No of cases	Write offs to date less than £5,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)	Write offs to date £5,001 - £10,000 (by s151 Officer under delegated powers)
<b>Bankrupt</b>	1	£318.08	-
<b>Unable to Trace</b>	1	189.19	-
<b>Old debt</b>	3	£2,166.23	-
<b>Uneconomical to pursue</b>	8	81.21	-
<b>Non-recoverable</b>	2	740.98	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>£3,495.69</b>	<b>-</b>