
BENEFIT, COUNCIL TAX, BUSINESS RATES, FORMER TENANT ARREARS AND SUNDRY DEBTOR – WRITE- OFFS

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Corporate Director (Finance & External Services) reports that, although no provisions are included in the Council Tax and Business Rate legislation for the writing off of debt, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 1996 acknowledge that, in certain circumstances, for all practical purposes, some debts must be deemed uncollectable.
- 1.2. Appendix A to this report lists, in summary form, cases of write-off executed by the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) under his delegated authority. Appendix B lists cases which fall outside such authority and which need this Committee's approval.
- 1.3. In all cases, diligent efforts have been made to recover debts, but have failed. In a number of cases, defaulters have moved abroad and the Council has no recovery remedy. The Corporate Director is, however, pleased to inform Members that 9 Business Rate and Council Tax cases with a total value of £215.12 which had previously been written off have now been re-instated as a result of new information.

2 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1. As detailed in Appendices A and B.

3 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) That items written off under the Corporate Director's delegated authority be noted.
- (2) That items shown in Appendix B be now written off in the accounts of the authority. (HRHM/HFS)

Roger Crofts
Corporate Director (Finance & External Services)

For further information please contact Lissa Higby on

Tel:- 01702 546366 extn. 3006
E-Mail:- lissa.higby@rochford.gov.uk

APPENDIX A

1. National Non-Domestic Rating

12 Cases value £3,369.63 (average debt £280.80)

2. Benefits

None.

3. Council Tax

32 Cases value £4,231.09 (average debt £132.22)

4. Former Tenant Housing Rents

41 Cases value £2,886.07 (average debt £70.39)

5. Sundry Debtors

49 Cases value £4,706.53 (average debt (96.05)

APPENDIX B

National Non-Domestic Rating

CASE NO.	AMOUNT	REASON FOR WRITE-OFF
	£	
523	656.59	Rating assessment backdated to 1990 for transitional purposes. The debtor's legal advisors have correctly informed them they are not obliged to pay a debt over 6 years old.
520	12,037.70	Rating assessment received in 2000, but backdated to 1992. Statute of Limitations does not allow recovery of a debt over 6 years old.
521	7,873.25	Revised rating assessment backdated to 1992. Debt statute barred .
516	1,545.72	Debt remitted by Magistrates.
513	936.02	Debtor absconded – unable to trace
509	695.02	Debtor absconded – unable to trace.
506	719.34	Debtors absconded – unable to trace.
7 Cases	24,463.64	

Council Tax

CASE NO.	AMOUNT	REASON FOR WRITE-OFF
	£	
500	972.98	Debtor bankrupt. Some payment to unsecured creditors may be made at a later date.
495	600.00	Magistrates ordered this part of the debt to be remitted.
493	615.46	Debtor is severely mentally impaired and on income support. Benefits Agency confirms that benefit is insufficient for deductions to be made.
436	527.97	Debtor only liable for benefit on 50% of council tax. System error incorrectly awarded 100%.
5 Cases	2,716.41	

Sundry Debtors

CASE NO.	AMOUNT	REASON FOR WRITE-OFF
	£	
395A	1,440.00	This debt relates to the licensee of the shop at Park Sports Centre, who vacated without trace in 1989. A County Court Judgement on the same debtor produced no payment and it is, therefore, requested that this amount be written off as part of the best value process.
398A	672.75	This debt relates to building inspection fees from 1994. It has not been possible to trace the debtor and it is, therefore, requested that the amount be written off as part of the best value process.
2 Cases	2,112.75	

Former Tenant Arrears

CASE NO.	AMOUNT	REASON FOR WRITE-OFF
	£	
	590.23	Misinformation given to debtor by an unknown source which led her to take on a tenancy which was beyond her means.