

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Executive Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	6 April 2016
<b>Subject:</b>	Review of the Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy
<b>Report of:</b>	Richard Horton, Revenues and Benefits Group Manager
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Rachel North, Deputy Chief Executive
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor D J Waters
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	One

## **Executive Summary:**

The Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy is due to be reviewed by the Executive Committee.

## **Recommendation:**

**That the revised Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy is ADOPTED.**

## **Reasons for Recommendation:**

There have been changes since the Policy was last adopted and these have been reflected in the new Policy.

## **Resource Implications:**

To continue to pursue debt when it is not cost effective to do so is an ineffective use of resource.

## **Legal Implications:**

The Council should ensure that such debts are only written off in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and the Revenues and Benefits Write-off Policy. All appropriate avenues of collection must be considered and where appropriate applied before the debt is written off.

## **Risk Management Implications:**

All appropriate avenues of recovery will be followed to ensure that the debt is collected.

## **Performance Management Follow-up:**

Details of all write-offs are maintained so that if the claimant's circumstances should improve, or in the case where the debtor has absconded and a new address is identified, consideration is given to recover the debt.

**Implications for Biodiversity:**

None directly affecting the Policy.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

1.1 The Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy is due to be reviewed by the Executive Committee. The changes to the have been highlighted in grey in Appendix 1.

- Since the Policy was first written there have been changes to job titles and these have been reflected in the revised Policy.
- The Council's Finance and Asset Management Group Manager has delegated authority to write-off a debt of up to and including £15,000.
- A debt greater than £15,000 has to be authorised for write-off by the Council's Executive Committee.
- The Revenues Team Leader and Revenues Officers need to be named as having delegated authority to write-off irrecoverable debts of up to £55.00.

The Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy allows Revenues and Housing Benefit debts to be written off as irrecoverable. The reasons can be where the debtor has absconded or died, or where it is not cost effective to pursue the debtor.

**2.0 MONITORING OF WORKLOAD**

2.1 Write offs are monitored to see if the debtors circumstances have changed. Where circumstances have changed and it is appropriate to do so action is taken to recover the debt.

**3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

3.1 None.

**4.0 CONSULTATION**

4.1 None.

**5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

5.1 Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy and Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

**6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

6.1 None.

**7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 To continue to pursue debt when it is not cost effective to do so is an ineffective use of resource.

**8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**

8.1 None.

- 9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**
- 9.1** The Policy has had an Equality Impact Assessment and no issues have been identified.
- 10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**
- 10.1** Please see attached documents.

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**Background Papers:** None.

**Contact Officer:** Richard Horton, Revenues and Benefits Group Manager  
Tel: 01684 272119 Email: [richard.horton@tewkesbury.gov.uk](mailto:richard.horton@tewkesbury.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** 1 Write-Off Policy.