

Debt write offs 2018/19

- 1 The finance procedure rules stipulate that the chief financial officer must approve the writing off of debt exceeding £20k. For 2018/19 there were 3 cases exceeding £20k (one case in 2017/18) as follows:
 - a write off of £31,292.93 relating to non-domestic rates where the company went into liquidation.
 - a write off of £33,041.04 relating to non-domestic rates where the ratepayer absconded from the property. A number of tracing searches were carried out over a number of years but no information was found.
 - a write off of £21,598.10 relating to non-domestic rates where the ratepayer was successful in their application for bankruptcy.
- 2 Individual debts written off in 2018/19 totalled £1.026m (£905k for 2017/18). Debts are only written off once full debt recovery processes are completed, occasionally debt previously written off becomes payable if the debtors circumstances change. The council works closely with statutory bodies when deciding to write off debt. Legislative processes can take many months, or even years, if the debtor is on low income, to conclude before a write off is sanctioned.
- 3 Debts written-off represent a very low proportion of income collected per annum as shown in the table below:

	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Total amount written off	492	905	1,026
Council tax charged	92,097	96,876	123,323
Business rates charged	47,610	48,970	48,641
General debtors charged	50,842	59,228	60,147