

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that “every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of financial affairs and shall secure that one of their Officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs”. This responsibility is vested with the Section 151 Officer. This code of practice seeks to ensure that the role of the Section 151 Officer is not compromised.
- 1.2 To ensure this proper administration, the Section 151 Officer has an obligation under the Authority’s Financial Regulations for write offs. The Section 151 Officer may authorise an officer (Service Manager) to authorise an uncollectable or cancelled debt to be written off. This delegation carries with it accountability.
- 1.3 The previously established Code of Practice has now been updated with the intention of formalising procedures and to maintain consistency across the Authority.

2.0 POLICY

- 2.1 The code of practice will set out standards to act as a guide for each Service Manager to follow. Appendix 2 sets out the service area, the maximum amount per debtor and criteria for the write off that each Service Manager can approve.
- 2.2 Each of the **ten** identified service areas in appendix 2 will prepare write off schedules.
- 2.3 A summary page will show the total amount to be written off or on and the number of accounts by criteria. Accompanying paperwork will show the account to be written off **or on**, the value, which of the criteria the write off falls under and any background information or evidence.
- 2.4 The Senior Manager within the service is then responsible for checking the summary details and carrying out spots checks, with exception to the Accounts Receivable team, who will send individual schedules to BRO’s for approval and spot checks, before signing the schedule. Any queries should be raised at this time. Once satisfied the Senior Manager will sign the schedule.
- 2.5 The signed schedule is passed to the relevant Service Manager for approval. Authorised Service Managers for each service are listed in appendix 2.
- 2.6 Where the write off is for an exceptional item or over the maximum amount per debtor as listed on appendix 2, the Service Manager must submit the account to the Section 151 Officer for approval via Internal Audit.
- 2.7 Approved accounts for write off should be sent to the relevant Systems Officer for action who will retain all paperwork.
- 2.8 Collection performance and write offs approved to be reported to the S151 Officer.

Year End Process

- 2.9 Each Service Manager to ensure that the approved accounts to be written off **or on** have been actioned correctly through system reconciliations.
- 2.10 Following the reconciliation (attached as appendix 3), a nominated Service Manager or a delegated officer, to compile and submit a report by 31st May each year, to include write offs for all services, to the Section 151 Officer (for the annual report to Audit Committee) showing;
- the total amount (£) and
 - the number of accounts written off by agreed criteria