

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE  
COUNCIL**

**Report by Strategic Director - Regeneration, Environment &  
Growth**

**Housing and Communities Committee: 6 November 2019**

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**Subject: Former Tenant Rent Arrears Write Off – 2019/20 Quarter 2**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for the write-off of rent arrears for quarter 2 of 2019/20 for former tenants, arising from various years and reasons as detailed in Table 1.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** It is recommended that Committee approves the write off of former tenant arrears accounts totaling £88,050.10.

**3. Background**

- 3.1** At the Council meeting held on 21 December 2016, Council agreed to increase Financial Regulation D4 which gives the Strategic Lead - Resources authority to write-off individual debts. It was agreed to increase this from £1,000 to £5,000.
- 3.2** Individual debts exceeding £5,000 can be written off only with the approval of Committee.

**4. Main Issues**

- 4.1** When a tenancy ends and there are current tenant arrears of rent outstanding from the current and previous years a former tenant rent account is created. The Council's total rent that is due to be collected for 2018/19 was £39.98m of which approximately 98.15% was collected in that year.
- 4.2** The Council has to consider writing-off arrears of rent which it has not been possible to collect or which it considers will not be recoverable. It should be noted that, although these cases are written-off, a record of the arrears is maintained and there is nothing to prevent later pursuit of the debt if new information becomes available in the future, with the exception of prescribed debts.

- 4.3** The accounts submitted for write off are for former tenants and fall into the following categories:

Unreasonable to Pursue

- 4.3.1** Former tenants where our diligence action has been exhausted are requested to be written off. Examples of the actions that have been taken include telephone calls, text messages, letters and house visits or we have been unable to trace the former tenant. Following the diligence process it has been established that in the majority of cases the person does not have funds available to repay this debt. As full records are maintained for all cases written off if in future circumstances change this debt may be reinstated. This also includes cases that our managed debt partners have fully exhausted recovery attempts. The total proposed write-off in this category is 15 cases totaling £88,050.10.
- 4.3.2** The total debt for write-off is analysed in the table below.

<b>Year Tenancy Ended</b>	<b>Unreasonable to Pursue</b>	<b>Total</b>
2014	£6,071.36	<b>£6,071.36</b>
2015	£5,974.90	<b>£5,974.90</b>
2016	£11,570.28	<b>£11,570.28</b>
2017	£40,895.04	<b>£40,895.04</b>
2018	£23,538.52	<b>£23,538.52</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£88,050.10</b>	<b>£88,050.10</b>

**5. People Implications**

- 5.1** There are no people implications.

**6. Financial & Procurement Implications**

- 6.1** Sufficient provision exists for this write off. There are no procurement implications.

**7. Risk Analysis**

- 7.1** If write offs are not approved, this will affect the monitoring of performance against targets for performance indicators and budget monitoring within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

**8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 8.1** No significant issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact of this report.

**9. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

- 9.1** There is no requirement to carry out a SEA

## **10. Consultation**

**10.1** Consultation has taken place with Housing and Legal Services.

## **11. Strategic Assessment**

**11.1** Proper budgetary control and sound financial practice are cornerstones of good governance and support Council and officers to pursue the 5 strategic priorities of the Council's Strategic Plan. This report forms part of the financial governance of the Council'.

**Richard Cairns**

**Strategic Director, Regeneration, Environment & Growth**

**Date: 25 September 2019**

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**Appendix:** None

**Background Papers:** Detailed list of proposed write offs

**Wards affected:** All Council wards