

## **Additional Information requested by the Resources Overview Committee meeting held on 12 September 2017**

*Nicola Ellis (Head of Customer Services):*

### **Review of Council Tax Support Scheme**

Members raised concern that an increase in the amount of write offs may be due to the Council Tax Support Scheme. The report on the review of the scheme was referred to. This was presented to Customer Services Policy Advisory Group meeting on 4 July 2017 and is attached.

### **Level of Write Offs**

The amount of Council Tax written off had increased by £12635.12 since last year and these write offs applied to fewer accounts. Members were concerned that the average amount written off had increased. I have looked into this and compared the two years. I cannot offer much of an explanation except to say that there were some larger amounts in the 16/17 year and also there were larger numbers of small balance write offs (less than £1) in 15/16.

I am not concerned about our current level of write offs and it may help to reassure members to see this as a percentage of the net collectable debt which was in excess of **£70million** in 16/17. The amount written off equates to less than **0.09%** of the collectable debt. I have looked into comparisons with other local authorities and it does appear that this has not been published on an individual LA basis since 2008. However the total amount across the country has been published. The net collectable debt in 16/17 was £26 billion and the amount written off was £172 million. So by my calculations I think that the total amount written off as a percentage of the total debt equates to 0.66% and so we are below that.

*Julie Rushton (Parking Manager):*

### **Provision of vehicle ownership information for vehicles registered in Scotland**

The problem arises when we come to register the debt at the Traffic Enforcement Centre (TEC), Northampton County Court. The legislation for registering debt applies to England and Wales only and therefore similar to being unable to pursue debt in relation to civil parking enforcement for vehicles registered in France/Spain for example, we are unable to pursue vehicles that are registered to a Scottish address. This means we are unable to obtain the necessary approval from TEC to serve a Warrant of Control and transfer the debt to the bailiffs. The Warrant of Control, which lasts for 12 months, enables bailiffs to levy goods against the debt. This means bailiffs are able to take control of goods, including the vehicle that was parked in contravention of the parking restriction, and sell them to recover the debt. Without

the powers to register the debt and transfer it to the bailiffs we have no means in which to encourage a vehicle owner to pay the debt.

Debt written off for 'warrant of control expired' means the 12 month period during which the warrant is valid for has expired and bailiffs are no longer able to take control of goods belonging to the debtor.