65223 External Organisations, Consultants and Contractors

I am requesting information about the Council's use of external organisations, consultants and contractors in relation to debt recovery, income collection, housing arrears and related improvement work.

I am particularly interested in understanding the current level of outstanding debt, the external support being used and any contracts or work that may be coming up for renewal or re-procurement.

Where possible, please provide the following information for the last three financial years and the current financial year:

Consultancy and interim support –

Details of any external consultants, interim managers or specialist organisations used for debt recovery, income collection, housing income, financial resilience or transformation.

a. Supplier name, service provided, contract start/end dates and total value/spend. - Procurement route used.

Scott & Co (Scotland) LLP – Sheriff Officers – Start date 01/02/2026, End date 31/01/2033, £210,000 contract value for both Sheriff Officers

Walker Love – Sheriff Officers – Start date 01/02/2026, End date 31/01/2033

Harper MacLeod – Solicitors who carry out legal action for debt recovery – Start date 21/12/2023, End Date 20/12/2027, contract value is not separately recorded as it is part of an overall contract under the Legal Services framework.

b. Whether the contract is currently active and, if so, when it is due to end or be reviewed.

Please refer to A1a above.

Debt collection and recovery - Details of external debt collection, tracing, enforcement or recovery contracts.

a. The types of debt covered, for example housing rent, former tenant arrears, Adult Social Care, Housing Benefit overpayments, sundry debt or other corporate debt.

Sundry Debt, Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates (NDR), Housing Rent, Former Tenancy Arrears (FTA), Housing Benefit Overpayments.

b. Supplier, contract value, annual spend, start date and expiry date.

Please refer to A1a above.

c. Whether the Council expects the service to be renewed, extended or re-tendered.

All would be retendered prior to the end dates.

Housing rent and former tenant arrears

a. Total outstanding current and former tenant arrears.

Current Financial Year - £1,538,720 (£12,972,234 Current, £2,408,486 Former) at the end of Sept 2026.

2025-2026 Year End - £15,448,805 (£12,752,020 Current, £2,696,795 Former)

2024-2025 Year End - £13,448,524 (£11,344,306 Current, £2,104,218 Former)

2023- 2024 Year End - £14,516,716 (£11,769,556 Current, £2,747,160 Former)

b. Number of accounts in arrears.

Current Financial Year – 9,758 Current cases

2025-2026 Year End – 9,843 Current cases

2024-2025 Year End – 8,181 Current cases

2023- 2024 Year End – 9,843 Current cases

c. Where available, the value of debt aged 30, 60, 90, 180 and 365+ days.

This information is not available.

d. Annual recovery rates and amounts written off.

FTA write-offs 2025-2026 - £94,320

FTA write-offs 2024-2025 - £1,496,526

FTA write-offs 2023-2024 - £871,847

e. The amount referred to external recovery agencies and expenditure on external recovery services.

This information is not available.

Adult Social Care and other recoverable debt

a. Total outstanding Adult Social Care debt and the number of accounts/debtors.

This is included in Sundry Debt. Please refer to the table below.

	Total Outstanding	Number of Accounts	Total Recovered	Total Written-Off
2026/27 Current Year to End Sept 2026	£36,426,675.73	12,863	£57,313,958.19	£158,734.45
2025/26	£31,948,934.12	10,289	£120,233,969.24	£893,645.91
2024/25	£24,568,463.94	11,136	£132,314,203.03	£2,217,946.86
2023/24	£27,640,370.58	21,263	£116,539,196.12	£522,791.58

b. Debt by age where available.

This information is not available.

c. Amount recovered and written off during each year.

Please refer to the table in A4a above.

d. Use of external agencies, legal firms, tracing companies, consultants or other recovery providers, including spend.

This information is not available.

e. Similar information for Housing Benefit overpayments, sundry debt and other significant recoverable debt streams.

Please refer to the table below.

	Total Outstanding	Number of Accounts	Total Recovered	Total Written-Off
2026/27 Current Year to End Sept 2026	£580,552.00	N/A	£716,860.00	N/A
2025/26	£1,566,063.00	N/A	£1,226,004.00	£6,626,814.00*
2024/25	£1,063,497.00	N/A	£1,273,280.00	£672,825.00
2023/24	£659,877.00	N/A	£1,487,045.00	£399,980.00

* prescribed debt changes in prescription law

Performance and improvement work

a. Current collection/recovery targets and performance against them.

For 2025/26:

Sundry debt collection target – 80%

Sundry debt collection actual rate – 80.4%

b. Any significant debt recovery, income maximisation, arrears reduction or transformation programmes currently underway or planned.

There are no such programmes currently underway or planned. New rent policy and procedures were launched in April 2026.

c. Details of any external support, consultancy or specialist resource being considered or procured for this work.

Not applicable.

d. Any relevant business cases, procurement notices or publicly available contract information.

Not applicable.