

BRIEFING REPORT - INCOME AND CREDIT MANAGEMENT POLICY (FINANCE)



Request for Approval – Income and Credit Management Policy

To: Portfolio Holder / Senior Leadership Team

From: Paul Walshe, Head of Revenues, Benefits and Service Centre

Date: July 2025

Subject: Approval Request (Executive Decision) – Income and Credit Management Policy

1. Purpose of the Report

This report seeks formal approval for the **Income and Credit Management Policy**. The policy outlines Plymouth City Council's approach to managing income and credit across all departments and services, ensuring financial sustainability, legal compliance, and customer sensitivity.

2. Background

Income from Council Tax, Business Rates, rents, fees, and charges, form a significant portion of the Council's funding. Effective credit and income management is essential to maintain service delivery and financial resilience. The policy has been produced to reflect current legislation, operational practices, and strategic priorities.

3. Key Features of the Policy

- **Purpose:** To maximise collectable debt through prudent credit extension, risk balancing, and efficient income collection.
- **Scope:** Applies to all income sources and both statutory and non-statutory services.
- **Objectives:** Includes minimising bad debt, ensuring affordability checks, and promoting upfront payments.
- **Responsibilities:** Clearly defined roles for the S151 Officer, Chief Officers, and departmental staff.
- **Systems:** Utilises corporate systems such as Civica, Capita Academy, and Parking Gateway for debt management.
- **Customer Focus:** Emphasises customer care, flexible payment options, and signposting to debt support services.
- **Legal Compliance:** Aligns with relevant legislation including the Care Act 2014, Late Payment of Commercial Debt Act 1998, and associated financial regulations.
- **Debt Recovery:** Details processes for Council Tax, Business Rates, Adult Social Care, and general income, including use of legal action and external agents.
- **Write-Offs:** Establishes clear thresholds and authorisation levels for bad debt write-offs.

4. Strategic Alignment

The policy supports the Council's:

- **Medium Term Financial Strategy** – by protecting and increasing income.
- **Sustainable Community Strategy** – by ensuring access to services for all residents.
- **Charging Policy** – with relevance in Adult Social Care.
- **Financial Regulations** – ensuring accountability and integrity in financial management.

5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Finance portfolio holder:

1. **Approve by Executive Decision** the Income and Credit Management Policy as the Council's formal policy.
2. **Delegate** authority to the S151 Officer to implement and monitor the policy, and to approve minor amendments as required.

3. **Ensure** that all departments are informed and trained on the policy to ensure consistent application.

6. Appendices

- Appendix A: Income and Credit Management Policy
- Appendix B: Equalities Impact Assessment - Income and Credit Management
- Appendix C: Executive Decision – Income and Credit Management