

# Public Document Pack



## Corporate Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 5 September 2017 6.30 p.m.  
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David WR'.

**Chief Executive**

### **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

Councillor Robert Gilligan (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Ged Philbin (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor John Abbott	Labour
Councillor Ellen Cargill	Labour
Councillor Harry Howard	Labour
Councillor Chris Loftus	Labour
Councillor Angela McInerney	Labour
Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh	Labour
Councillor Joe Roberts	Labour
Councillor Gareth Stockton	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Kevan Wainwright	Labour

*Please contact Gill Ferguson on 0151 511 8059 or  
gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.  
The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 7 November 2017*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH  
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Part I**

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Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item.	
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*In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation*

***procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.***

**CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 6 June 2017  
in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chair), Philbin (Vice-Chair), Abbott, E. Cargill, Howard, A. McInerney, N. Plumpton Walsh, Joe Roberts and G. Stockton

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, I. Leivesley, S. Riley, G. Ferguson, T. Dean and C. Patino

Also in attendance: None

**ITEM DEALT WITH  
UNDER DUTIES  
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

		<i>Action</i>
CS1	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p> <p>Arising from the last meeting, Ed Dawson emailed additional information to Members of the Board. It was requested that this be recirculated.</p>	
CS2	<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</p> <p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>	
CS3	<p>EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES</p> <p>The Board was presented with the Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of the Board.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.</p>	

CS4 ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

The Board considered a copy of the Annual Report from the Chair of the Corporate Services Board, 2016/17. The Board met four times during the year and the report set out the work carried out and the recommendations throughout the Municipal Year April 2016 to March 2017.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be noted.

CS5 MEMBERS DEVELOPMENT GROUP NOTES

The Board considered the minutes of the Member Development Group meetings held on 31 March 2016 and 15 December 2016.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the minutes.

CS6 CORPORATE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT 1.4.16-31.3.17

The Board was provided with a report from the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented details of corporate accident statistics with associated trends, from 1 April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

Officers commented that the report highlighted the national and local health and safety information, in particular the new HSE strategy, and together with performance and incident trends, these formed the basis for the recommended actions for 2017/18. In order to be proactive in health and safety management the report also indicated the number of completed risk assessments and training delivered to staff.

It was highlighted that there had been a year by year reduction in the number of accidents leading to 'days lost', with 19 this year and 40 last year; a decrease in the number of actual 'days lost' with 369 this year compared to 671 last year; and only one compensation award for an injury to a pupil within the last 5 years out of a total of 845 accidents reported.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS7 ICT SERVICE VERBAL UPDATE

The Board received an update from Simon Riley, Operational Director, ICT and Support Services, on recent security measures undertaken by the Council's ICT Services

as a result of the recent global cyberattack. The department had taken sufficient measures prior and following the cyberattack to ensure the Council's systems remained secure. Staff had been reminded of their responsibility to remain vigilant and not to open documents from unknown sources and to forward these onto ICT for investigation.

Members also received information on the Council's two data centres, implications of the integration of the Council's systems with external systems and continuity planning measures.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Simon Riley for his informative presentation and acknowledged the work of the ICT department.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

CS8 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS - QUARTER 3 AND 4 2016-17

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented the Performance Monitoring Reports for Quarter 3 and 4 of 2016/17.

The reports related to the following functional areas which reported to the Board and detailed progress against service objectives and milestones, and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period:

- Finance;
- Human Resources and Organisational Development;
- ICT and Administrative Support;
- Legal and Democracy;
- Policy and Performance;
- Property Services; and
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services.

It was agreed that with regard to the tendering exercise for the reroofing works to Widnes Market, additional information would be circulated to the Board.

RESOLVED: That the third and fourth quarter performance monitoring reports be received and noted.

CS9 TOPIC GROUPS 2017/18

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director,

Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought to develop a work programme of topics for the Board to examine in 2017/18. It was noted that the Board had previously arranged a Topic Group to consider the Discretionary Support Scheme and it was proposed that this would continue to meet and include the impact of Universal Credit on residents in the Borough. Consideration would be given to setting up a second Topic Group if required.

RESOLVED: That

1. the Discretionary Support Scheme Topic Group continue to meet and include the impact of Universal Credit on residents in the Borough; and
2. consideration would be given to setting up a second Topic Group if required.

*Meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.*

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

**SUBJECT:** Public Question Time

**WARD(s):** Borough-wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
- (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
- (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
- (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
- (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
  - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
  - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
  - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or



- Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.
- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chairperson will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep your questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

#### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

**8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive

**SUBJECT:** Executive Board Minutes

**WARD(s):** Boroughwide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.**

**3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 None.

**4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

**5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

**5.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

None

**5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

None

**5.3 A Healthy Halton**

None

**5.4 A Safer Halton**

None

**5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

**6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 None.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

**8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

**APPENDIX 1**

**Extract of Executive Board Minutes Relevant to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2017**

**RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

**EXB8 2017/18 TO 2019/20 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which presented the Council's total forecast Capital Programme expenditure and associated funding for 2017/18 to 2019/20.

The report updated Members on the latest position on the Council's Capital Programme, including confirmed and indicative capital grant allocations for 2017/18 and future years. Table 1 provided details of the planned Capital Programme for 2017/18 onwards, based on current information for approved schemes. Table 2 summarised how the Capital Programme would be funded.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) approval be given to the updated Capital Programme for 2017/20, including forecast spend and funding, as set out in Table 1 and Table 2;
- 2) the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Transportation be delegated to agree a detailed implementation programme of Highways and Transportation schemes to be delivered in 2017/18; and
- 3) the proposed use of the ICT rolling Capital Programme for 2017/18 as set out in Appendix A attached to the report, be approved.

Operational  
Director - Finance

**EXB9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17**

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Treasury Management Annual

Report 2016/17.

The report updated the Board on activities undertaken on the money market as required by the Treasury Management Policy. It provided supporting information on the economic outlook, interest rate forecast, short term borrowing rates, long term borrowing rates, borrowing and investments, budget monitoring, new long term borrowing and treasury management indicators. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during 2016/17.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

#### EXB10 2016/17 FINANCIAL OUTTURN

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the final revenue and capital spending position for 2016/17.

The Board was advised that the final accounts for 2016/17 were near completion; the revenue spending for each Department, which would be subject to external audit, was attached at Appendix 1.

It was reported that the budget savings for 2017/18 were implemented in two sets, the first of which consisted of savings of £7.9m approved by Council in December 2016. As a result of some of these savings being implemented early, they have helped to reduce the in-year overspend position, together with budget managers' efforts to limit spend to only essential items in the final quarter of the year.

The report provided details on the key budget variances within the following services:-

- Children and Families;
- Adult Social Services and Prevention and Assessment;
- Community and Environment;
- Economy, Enterprise and Property;
- ICT and Support Services;

- Planning and Transportation; and
- Corporate and Democracy.

Members were advised that the Council's Reserves and Balances had been reviewed in accordance with the Reserves and Balances Strategy. The Council's general reserve stood at £4.8m, which was considered to be at a reasonable level given the financial challenges and spending pressures facing the Council.

It was reported that during the new financial year, a review of earmarked reserves would be undertaken in order to establish those which might be released in order to establish a fund to help with balancing the budget in future years.

With regards to Capital Spending, details of spending against the 2016/17 Capital Programme were attached to the report at Appendix 2. It was noted that spending was £37.2m below the revised Capital Programme of £122m. The reason for this being so far below budget was reported as the delay in making the second payment in connection with the Mersey Gateway bridge project.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the information within the report be taken into account when reviewing the medium term forecast and saving proposals for future years.

EXB11 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF  
ACTIVE NATION UK

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on an application for non-domestic rate relief.

The Board was advised that from 1 April 2017, the Council was responsible for meeting the full cost of all mandatory and discretionary relief granted, as part of the Liverpool City Region 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme.

An application from Active Nation UK Limited, a registered charity operating nationally, had been received. It

was reported that, as the organisation was a registered charity, there was automatic qualification for 80% mandatory relief. The organisation had applied for 15% discretionary relief, and the costs associated with this were set out in the report.

It was noted that historically, the Board had supported such applications from locally based charities and had rejected those from charities which operated nationally.

RESOLVED: That the request for 15% discretionary rate relief from Active Nation UK Limited for the period 6 February 2017 to 31 March 2019, be refused on the grounds of being a charity which operates nationally.

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community &  
Resources

EXB12 DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATES RELIEF REQUEST - CONTACT GROUP

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which contained details of an application for Discretionary Business Rates Relief.

The Board was advised that the Business Rates Retention Scheme was intended to offer councils a financial incentive to promote economic growth. It was reported that the Council has considered such applications on a case by case basis and only awarded such relief where there were exceptional reasons.

The report set out details of the request for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Contact Group's request for 100% discretionary business rates relief in respect of Unit 17, Mulberry Avenue, Turnstone Business Park, Widnes, on the basis set out in paragraph 3.8 of the report, be rejected.

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community &  
Resources

EXB13 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 4 2016 - 17

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the fourth quarter year-end to 31 March 2017.

The Board was advised that the Directorate Performance Overview Report provided a strategic summary



of key issues arising from performance in the relevant quarter for each Directorate, being aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. The Board noted that such information was central to the Council's performance management arrangements, with the Board having a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

RESOLVED: That the report and progress and performance information be noted.

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 5 September 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Member Development Group Notes

**WARDS:** N/A

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To consider the notes of the Member Development Group held on 16 March 2017.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED:** That the report be noted.

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

The notes of the last meeting of the Member Development Group are before CSPPB as stated in the Constitution.

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS – None.**

**5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS – None.**

**6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton – None.**

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton – None.**

6.3 **A Healthy Halton – None.**

6.4 **A Safer Halton – None.**

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal – None.**

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS – None.**

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES – None.**

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.

### Member Development Group

At a meeting of the Member Development Group held on 16th March 2017  
at the Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes

**Present:** Councillors J. Abbott, J. Bradshaw, B. Gilligan, C. Rowe, P. Wallace,  
M. Wharton and G. Zygadlo.

**Officers:** K. Mackenzie and A. Scott.

**Apologies for absence:** Councillors J. Stockton (Chairman) and K. Wainwright.

<b>MDG6</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN</b>	
	As Councillor John Stockton had submitted his apologies for the meeting, the Group agreed that Councillor Mike Wharton take the Chair.	
<b>MDG7</b>	<b>NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING</b>	
	The notes of the last meeting held on 15 December 2016 were approved as a correct record.	
<b>MDG8</b>	<b>REVIEW OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS</b>	
	<p><b>LOD2 – Number of Members with a Member Action Plan (MAP)</b></p> <p>The Number of Members with a MAP to date since April 2016 was 55 of 56. MAP's had been circulated electronically to all members of the Group and would be updated every 12 months. The electronic MAP's would be made available to all other Members to be returned to Kathryn. Newly elected Members would continue to have their initial MAP meeting with Mark Reaney and subsequent MAP's with him for the first three years following their election.</p>	KM/ MR
	<p><b>LOD3 – Percentage of Members attending at least one organised training event in the current financial year.</b></p> <p>Since April 2016, 80% (45 of 56 Members) had attended at least one training and development event. The target was 100% for the year 2016-17.</p>	KM
<b>MDG9</b>	<b>LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE</b>	
	<p>Members of the Group asked for their thanks to be recorded to Jonathan Greenough and Annette Drew for the service they provided for Members IT. Members were grateful for the flexible approach they both gave.</p> <p><b>North West Charter for Elected Member Development: Review of Level 1</b></p> <p>The Group discussed the Level 1 Review by North West Employers. Halton was due to be reviewed in 2017/18. The group considered the</p>	KM

	<p>requirements of the Charter over the next few months. Evaluation would continue to be through the Group, the MAP process and Members would be contacted to review their MAPs electronically where appropriate. The Group considered the wider context of evaluation, and the current mechanisms used to obtain feedback via one-to-one discussion and through MAP's. The Group agreed that this was still effective. Kathryn would produce a statement of evaluation for each Group meeting where appropriate setting out events attended and feedback obtained via paperwork and MAP's.</p> <p>Kathryn would contact North West Employers to request a Level 1 review; would check the requirements for 2017 from North West Employers; and would also check that the Development Strategy currently in place was fit for purpose. This would be made available for all Members in due course.</p> <p><b>E-LEARNING DROP IN SESSION</b></p> <p>Alison Scott would liaise with Kathryn and would advertise a date for Members following the election in May. Members also requested an e-mail reminder of how to log in to the E-learning system.</p>	
<b>MDG 10</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS/MEMBER SUPPORT ISSUES</b>	
	<p><b>LCR BRIEFING</b></p> <p>Members asked if a briefing session could be requested for all Members. This would be raised with Ian Leivesley for consideration.</p>	<b>IL</b>
<b>MDG 11</b>	<b>DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING</b>	
	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> The next meeting will be held in June 2017 at 4pm – date to be confirmed.</p>	<b>KM</b>
	The meeting closed at 4.40pm	

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Corporate Policy & Performance Board
<b>DATE:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> September 2017
<b>REPORTING OFFICER:</b>	Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community & Resources
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	Resources
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	External Funding Update
<b>WARD(S)</b>	All

## 1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide a further update to the Board on the work of the Regeneration Non Town Centres (RNTC) Team in securing external funding resources into Halton. The last update was presented to the Board in November 2016.

1.2 The Report covers the following issues:

- An update on the team's priorities/key activities
- Emerging issues in external funding
- Funding statistics for 2012 to end March 2017
- An update on the implications of Brexit on the ESIF programme
- A summary of a recent IDOX report on the External Funding function in local authorities

1.3 Key headlines from the Report include:

- Demonstrable increase in competition for external funding streams, underlined by the success rate of bids submitted having reduced in 2016-17.
- Evidence that local authorities that have a bespoke external funding function/team are more successful in accessing funding.
- An increase in availability of funding for visitor economy and cultural activity, including heritage and the arts.
- The development of a Training Programme by the External Funding Team for Council staff and partners.
- Evidence that the level of demand for funding support is increasing.

## 2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That**

1. **the report be noted; and**

**2. the Board endorse the continued approach securing external funds.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The previous report focuses on the last five financial years (in this case between April 2012 and March 2017). The report focuses on the work of the External Funding Team; however, in relation to funding secured this incorporates the RNTC Team which comprises the Regeneration Team, External Funding Team and the Business Improvement and Growth (BIG) Team. Key work areas for each of the teams are listed below.

3.2 The Regeneration Team is responsible for the delivery of two Core Strategy Key Areas of Change: East

- Runcorn and Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG).
- Sandymoor and Daresbury Urban Extension;
- Sci-Tech Daresbury Enterprise Zone;
- Castlefields and Murdishaw Neighbourhood Improvements;
- HBC Field at 3MG;
- Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan.

3.3 The BIG Team is responsible for:

- The management of all local company expansion and inward investment projects;
- Proactive engagement with the most significant 50 companies in Halton;
- The management of the Council's relationships with external providers of business support services;
- The maintenance of the Evolutive CRM system;
- The management of a comprehensive database of all land and commercial property currently available in the Borough and the delivery of a free commercial property finding service;
- The delivery of the Government's Growth Hub initiative locally;
- The delivery of the ERDF Priority 3 Liverpool City Region Intensive Business Support programme;
- The development, and potentially delivery, of new EU funded business support programmes;
- The dissemination of information concerning business support initiatives to the business community;
- Supporting Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise to deliver and manage of two Business Improvement Districts at Astmoor and Halebank.

3.4 The External Funding Team is responsible for preparing medium to large-scale funding bids (primarily, but not exclusively over £50,000) both for the Council and the voluntary and private sectors across the

Borough, and aims to maximise external funding opportunities for Halton.

The Team consists of the following posts:

- Lead Funding Officer - responsible for large-scale strategic bids recently ERDF, Regional Growth Fund, Growing Places Fund, One Public Estate; heritage, arts and culture lead; Connecting Cheshire lead; manages the Team; prioritisation of workloads; external liaison.
- Funding Officer – responsible for developing applications primarily with Halton’s Local Strategic Partners; leads on Lottery funding, Trusts and Foundations, Landfill funding and Training.
- Funding & Monitoring Officer – provides technical support in making claims for large-scale grants from Lottery, RGF, ERDF, GPF etc.; ensuring that claims are ‘eligible’ and grants meet the funders terms and conditions, once projects have been approved. (In addition to the funding advice service provided, the Team manages, on behalf of Halton BC, approximately £20m of regeneration grants.)
- Funding Development Officer - FIXED TERM TO MARCH 2020 – leads on the delivery of the European Programme 2014-20 for Halton – see Appendix 2
- Funding Support Officer – supports all the above; leads on dissemination of funding information; manages a small caseload of projects.
- The total cost of the Team is £154,476.

Emphasis has been placed more recently on support for colleagues within the Council. To this end, meetings with Divisional Management Teams have been taking place as part of a shift towards developing greater collaborative working with relevant Council Departments, as well as the development and delivery of masterclasses in bid-writing, and targeted information dissemination, in order to maximise external funding opportunities for Council-led projects and initiatives – further information on this is included in Section 6.

Key areas of work for the Team include:

- Maintaining a strategic approach to funding to ensure the most appropriate bids from Halton are submitted and internal competition is averted;
- Undertaking funding searches for specific projects; bid writing and development of supporting documents, e.g. policies and

business plans etc.;

- Dissemination of funding information to target audiences, mainly via the production of monthly Funding Bulletins on 10 themes;
- Lobbying funders, developing strong relationships with key funding bodies, and participating in key forums to ensure Halton gets its fair share of funding;
- Developing strong partnerships with Council colleagues, and the third and private sectors where appropriate, to submit joint bids.
- Develop a series of Masterclasses to be incorporated into an Annual Training Programme.

#### 4.0 **FUNDING CONTEXT AND EMERGING ISSUES**

##### 4.1 **Competition for Funding**

Competition for funding has been high for many years, but seems to be even more so in the current climate. The availability of funding remains strong, but the number of bids per funding stream appears to be on the increase. This has had an impact on the success of funding bids submitted/supported by the the Team, in particular in Quarter 3 2016-17.

Examples of competition for funding include:

- Association of Independent Museums (AIM)/Biffa History Makers Fund – the first round of this received £800k worth of applications, but only had £300k to give out in grants.
- The Big Lottery Fund Coastal Communities Fund Round 6 only supported 15% of applications through to Stage 2.
- Only 24% of bids to the latest round of Veolia Environment Trust were successful.
- The ESF Community Grants programme received £1.6m in applications, with only £270k in the pot.

Halton continues to compete with the larger conurbations of Liverpool and Manchester for some of the larger-scale funding streams.

This is the funding climate within which we are operating; it is therefore more important than ever that any bids that are submitted are of the highest quality if they are going to compete with others.

##### 4.2 **Capacity and Demand**

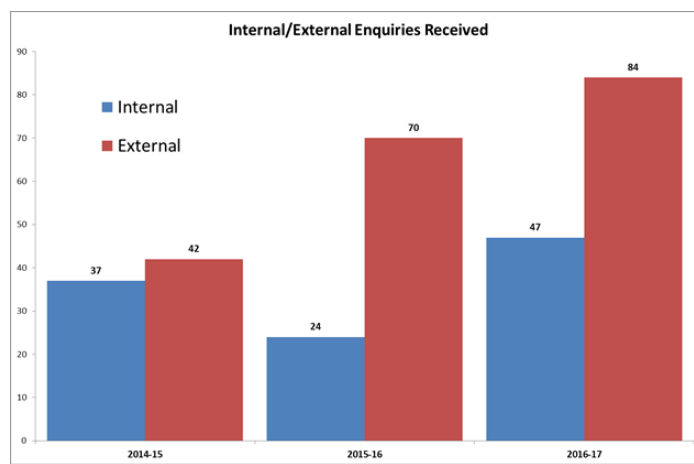
Although the overall success rate of bids has been lower compared with previous quarters, demand for the services of the EFT has grown. In the year 2016-17 we received 131 requests for support with funding. This compares with a total for 2015-16 of 95 and 113 for 2014-15. Approximately one quarter of the 131 enquiries were referred on, for example to Community Development Team or



Business Improvement Team colleagues; 10 bids were submitted; and we continue to work actively on 22 of these enquiries; some of the 131 are awaiting further information.

It is possible that the increase in enquiries has meant that less resource is available to spend on each bid/project; it is therefore imperative that we are in a position to prioritise enquiries to ensure we are focusing on the most appropriate bids. Internally, this can be facilitated through our close working with departments.

This can be broken down into internal and external enquiries as follows:



This could be an indication that the marketing of our services to internal colleagues is working and also that there is an increased demand to look at grant funding to sustain and/or expand services.

An Idox Report in Summer 2016 explores how local authorities are having to adapt to Government funding cuts in an attempt to maintain the delivery of efficient and cost-effective services and highlights the importance of tapping into external funding sources and the role of the External Funding Officer in local authorities.

The report defines external funding as '*funding additional to local authorities annual allocation from central Government and extra to the funds that can be raised from local fees, taxes and charges. It is discretionary money not accounted for in the Formula Spending Share or equivalent, actively sought and applied for and secured through a competitive process, and awarded for specific proposals*'.

The function of the External Funding Officer within local authorities is captured in the following extract from the report:

*In 2004, a CIPFA survey found 91% of local authorities had officers with dedicated responsibility for external funding, with an average six officers in full-time positions. It also found that local authorities with the lowest success in gaining external funding appeared to be*

*those with fewer staff dedicated to bidding for such resources.*

*As competitive bidding for external funds became increasingly important to local authorities, many continued to invest in their external funding team in order to get ahead in the field. A report in the International Journal of Public Sector Management found common traits and activities in seeking external funding. Pre 2010 many local authorities were:*

- *Employing at least two teams of dedicated funding officers – one for Europe and one for SRB (single regeneration budget) funding, with varied responsibility for the Lottery – to seek additional funding from external sources.*
- *Increasing the size of external funding teams*
- *Employing project managers, required for successful bids, from within the council*

*However, since austerity measures were introduced in 2010, cuts in staffing costs have meant that a growing number of authorities no longer have dedicated external funding teams or officers and their responsibilities have been absorbed by other roles. Between 2010 and 2013, local authorities reduced full-time equivalent posts by 16.6%.*

*This loss in dedicated resource and the external funding role being absorbed into other workloads could be viewed as a false economy. This is because core activity is either being side-lined for bidding activity or, most commonly, teams simply do not have the time and resource to engage in external funding over other priorities. Either way, this lack of dedicated resource places staff under pressure.*

The full report is included at Appendix 1.

#### **4.3 Arts, heritage, museums, culture, visitor economy/tourism**

The Team has been undertaking more work in the area of visitor economy and culture (including heritage and the arts) in the last 12 months. There are some significant pots of funding, from, for example, Lottery and Government funding streams.

Examples of work being undertaken in this area include:

- LEP Visitor Economy Working Group
- Creative Conversations Group
- Halton Heritage Partnership
- Support for Halton Libraries in bidding for funding from Arts Council
- Pan Merseyside Arts Group

Resource for this area of work needs to be reviewed as part of the

ongoing workload of the Team; again, indications from relevant Council Departments as to the significance of this area of work, will help in the prioritisation process.

#### 4.4 **ESIF Programme/Funding Development Officer post**

In addition to the above permanent posts, in July 2014 a Funding Development Officer (FDO) with a key responsibility for the promotion and delivery of the European Programme for Halton was appointed on a fixed term basis. The Programme was originally scheduled to run 2014-2020; despite the Brexit process, opportunities will remain over the next four years to access funding via the ESIF programme; the Autumn Statement in November 2016 confirmed the Government's commitment to honour the remaining period of the current programme:

- The Government has confirmed that it will guarantee funding for ESIF projects that continue after the UK has left the EU.
- Funding for new projects will only be honoured by the UK Government if they are good value for money and are in line with domestic strategic priorities
- The Combined Authority has begun to co-ordinate activity and a working group is being established with senior level input from the CA and Local Enterprise Partnership to identify the most pressing issues and coordinate action.

New calls continue to be released, the latest being a call to support SMEs; a bid is being developed for Halton based around managed workspace. It is also anticipated that further specialist input by the FDO will be required to support the ESF-funded apprenticeship hub scheme which is being led by HBC's Employment Learning and Skills Division.

Although funding was allocated to LCR under the ESIF Programme, this still needs to be applied for and managed through a rigorous application, assessment and monitoring process. Specialised resource is required to do this and to maintain Halton's excellent reputation in the draw down and delivery of European Structural funding.

This post has proven crucial to the delivery of the European Programme for the Borough and has resulted in additional investment into the Borough of around £4 million to date in the form of ERDF, ESF and matching funds.

The key achievements of the post are highlighted at Appendix 2.

## 4.5 Training

The Team has begun to develop a free Training Programme which consists of Masterclasses delivered by the Team and Meet the Funder style sessions. These are promoted to HBC colleagues and externally to the voluntary and other public sector partners.

Current planned activity includes:

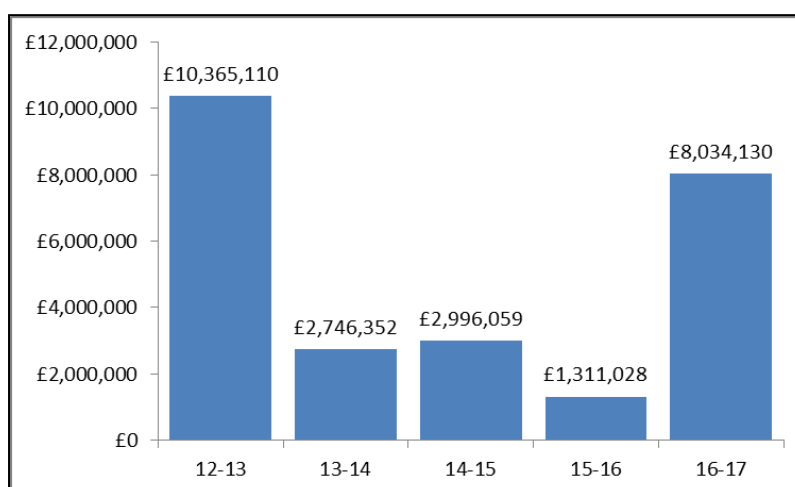
- Bid-Writing Masterclass – delivered quarterly and part of the Corporate Training Calendar
- Meet the Funder session – Big Lottery Fund’s Awards for All grants – planned for May 2017
- Faith Organisations – Funding Streams and Bid-Writing session – planned for June 2017
- How to evaluate your project effectively – planned for Autumn 2017

The training will improve bid-writing skill levels among both internal and external colleagues and also give a greater understanding of the context in which funding bids are submitted helping to ensure that bids are prioritised and of the highest possible quality.

## 5.0 FUNDING DATA

### 5.1 Funding Secured

The graph below shows details of the funding secured by the RNTC Team between April 2012 and March 2017; in 2016/17 the Team helped secure funding of just over £8m and is in the process of supporting pipeline projects worth around £34m. N.B In order to avoid double counting, as far as possible, these figures do not include funding secured by other Council departments.



The total funding secured by the RNTC Team in the five year period was **£25,452,679**. See Appendix 4 for a full breakdown of grants

secured in 2016-17.

**5.2 Cost of the RNTC Team versus funding secured**

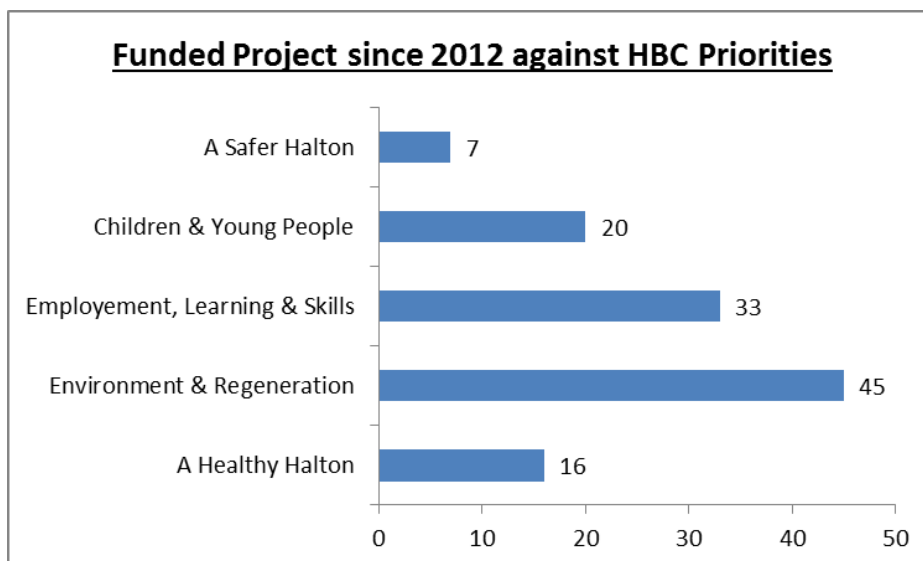
The table below shows the ratio between team costs and funding secured for the last five years.

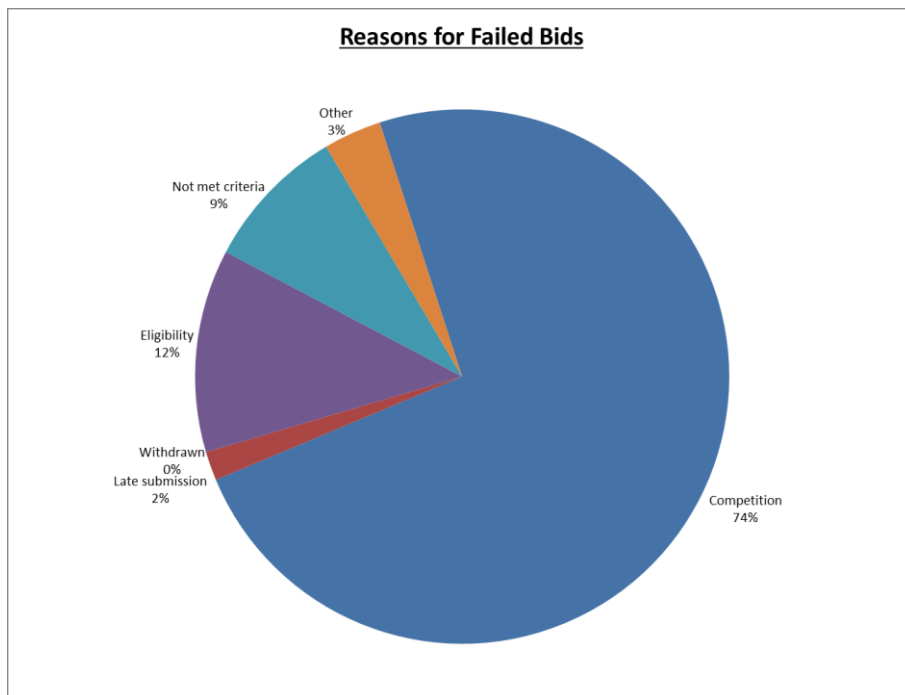
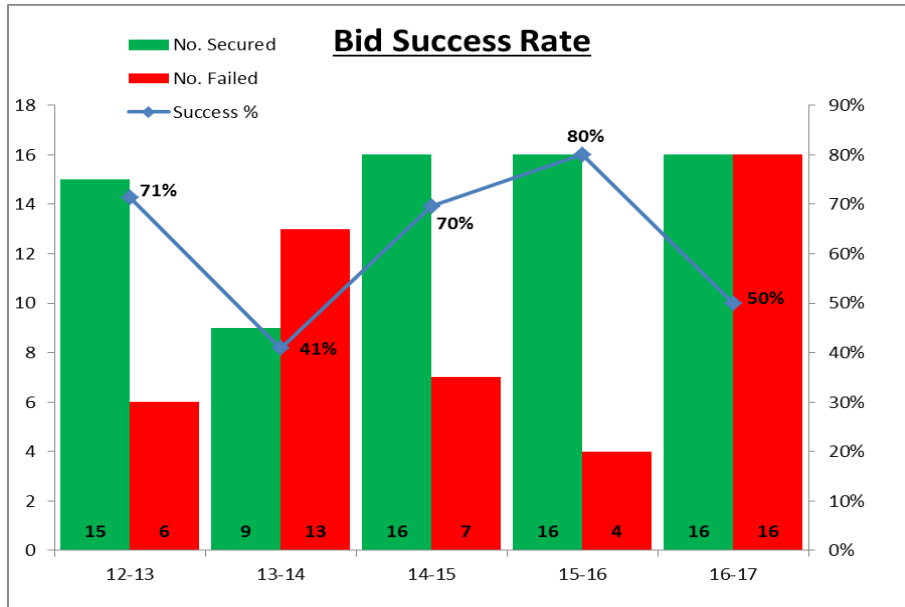
Year	Income Generation/Team Cost
2012-13	£34.10:£1
2013-14	£74.49:£1
2014-15	£63.04:£1
2015-16	£29.61:£1
2016-17	£52.01:£1

Taking a five year average, for every **£1** spent on the team, **£52.33** of grant was secured in funding for the Borough.

**5.3 Bid Success Rate**

The charts below show bid success rates for 2012-2017, as well as details of unsuccessful bid rates and the reasons for these. 61% of bids submitted in the period 2012-17 were successful.





**6.0 CONCLUSION**

6.1 The Team will continue to liaise with all Council Departments on the identification of priorities for funding support, looking at new ways to engage; also to develop support mechanisms for internal colleagues, through for example, the Training Programme.

6.2 Each Division or Department will undertake a similar exercise to record funding applied for and secured/failed for their own area; the External Funding Team would then collate this.

7.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no specific policy implications associated with this report.

8.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The report clearly demonstrates the importance for the Council and the Borough to continue to be able to attract external funding, particularly give the Council's ongoing financial constraints.

9.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

9.1 Failure to maximise the use of external funds will have a detrimental impact on all of the Council's priorities.

10.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

10.1 There are no direct risks associated with the report, however, if the Council wants to maximise its external funding potential there will be lost opportunities to enhance the quality of life within the Borough.

11.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

11.1 There are no equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

12.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None.

# New Directions in Local Government Funding

Today, local authorities are faced with a multitude of challenges as uncertainty looms in a post-referendum landscape, and year-on-year cuts to government funding threaten vital local services and overall financial stability.

This briefing explores how local authorities have adapted to the government funding cuts in attempts to maintain the delivery of efficient and cost-effective services. It takes an in-depth look at the importance of external funding; the role of the external funding officer in local authorities, supplemented with UK-wide examples; and the benefits and challenges that come when competing for resources.

## Background

### *Statistics: past, present and future*

Government funding – along with council tax revenue, fees and charges, and business rates – is one of the four main sources of income to local authorities.

Since 2010, this funding stream has been steadily decreasing year on year as part of overall spending cuts to reduce the UK's deficit and to counter the after effects of the economic downturn.

Headline statistics:

- > Over the 2010 spending period, government funding for local authorities fell by 28% in real terms<sup>i</sup>
- > Spending per person was cut by 23% between 2009-10 and 2014-15<sup>ii</sup>
- > Local authorities in England lost 27% of their spending power between 2010-11 and 2015-16 in real terms<sup>iii</sup>
- > In 2015-16, the funding of central government grants amounted to £68.5 billion, a decrease from £72.4 billion in 2014-15<sup>iv</sup>

These trends show no sign of abating any time soon. In the 2016 Budget, George Osborne announced a further £3.5 billion in cuts to public sector funding by 2019-20, and Communities secretary Greg Clark said that council funding would be reduced by 6.7% between 2016 and 2020.

The Local Government Association (LGA) has projected that by 2018-19, councils will face a combined annual funding gap of over £10 billion.<sup>v</sup>

There have been concerns raised by Parliament UK<sup>vi</sup>, and in a poll of council leaders and chief executives conducted by PwC, that if the current trajectory of funding continues, local authorities are at risk of a serious financial crisis.

### *Increasing pressures*

Although local authorities are continuing to balance their budgets and fulfil their statutory obligations through reduced spending on services, inevitably this has led to pressure on council-provided services, and some authorities are feeling the strain. Reports from local auditors said that 16% of single tier and county councils had difficulties in delivering their 2013-14 budgets, with 22% of metropolitan districts struggling too. In 2013-14, 33% of metropolitan districts required unplanned reductions in service spend in order to balance their budgets.<sup>vii</sup>

Although many savings have been made through greater efficiency, some authorities are using up their reserves more quickly than others in order to maintain their service portfolio.





This is an increasing risk to the future funding of these services. In 2015-16 local authorities were budgeting to draw down £2.2 billion from their reserves to help finance their revenue expenditure.<sup>viii</sup>

Research by the LGA<sup>ix</sup> suggests that once the gains made from efficiencies dry up, savings will need to be made through service reductions. This report predicted that 2015-16 would be the tipping point for councils, where service reductions would start to account for a higher proportion of savings than efficiencies.

## 2 How the cuts have affected services

The time of slashing spending without communities feeling the effects has long gone. Where studies have suggested that the impact of the cuts has been mitigated by efficiency measures, reports have found a marked shift to reduction in frontline services.

A report by the Public Policy Institute for Wales<sup>x</sup> (PPIW) compared the net current spend on different council-run services in England in 2009-10 and 2014-15. The largest cut had been on transport, which decreased by £2.5 billion, while spend on planning and development had been cut by around £1.2 billion.

Table 1: Real terms changes in current net spend (2009-10 to 2014-15)

Service area	Net current spend 2009-10 (£ million)	Net current spend 2014-15 (£ million)
Social care	23,064	22,602
Transport	7,184	4,547
Environmental	5,828	4,940
Cultural	3,811	2,670
Housing	2,990	1,826
Planning and development	2,519	1,294

Source: DCLG (2011 and 2015a). 2009-10 figures given at 2014-15 prices using HM Treasury GDP deflators.

Some services, such as planning and discretionary social care, have seen cumulative cuts of up to 45%.<sup>xi</sup>

A report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies<sup>xii</sup> (IFS) states that cuts to net service spending have tended to be larger in those areas that were initially more reliant on central government grants (as opposed to locally-raised revenues) to fund spending. The cuts to spending per person were also higher on average in areas that saw faster population growth. As a result, London boroughs, the North East and the North West have seen the largest average cuts to spending per person.

According to the report *Coping with the Cuts: Lessons from English Councils' Responses to Budget Reductions*, communities are feeling the effects of the cuts with an increasing proportion of households finding services inadequate, unaffordable, or simply not available anymore. A report by the Audit Commission found that 76% of single-tier and county councils (STCCs) reported increasing fees and charges for services to

cope with the cuts to their spending power.

In a report by UNISON Scotland<sup>xiii</sup>, Lilian Macer, UNISON's Scottish Convener spoke about the damaging effects of cuts to service provision:

**'It's a major assault on services everybody relies on. Some problems may become visible suddenly and dramatically if something goes wrong, for example in food safety, or hospital cleaning where lives can be put at risk. Others may not be noticed in headline news, but are also deeply damaging to the people affected, their families and communities. It could be libraries closing, or the rushed – and very impersonal – 15-minute care visits your grandmother gets, or children whose lives could have been helped and turned around with proper social work support and intervention. Then there is the isolation of people who relied on day care centres that have closed down.'**

Worryingly, a recent survey of council leaders and chief executives in England found that 80% believed that 'some local authorities will fail to deliver the essential services residents require' over the next five years.<sup>xiv</sup>

### Discretionary services

Statutory services have been relatively protected but spending on some discretionary (non-statutory services) has been cut by half.<sup>xv</sup>

Discretionary services are services which local authorities are not legally obliged to provide. They are non-critical services which are viewed as 'nice to have'. While many of these services are relied upon and are the foundation of communities (for example, parks, libraries, leisure centres, environmental conservation, and some youth services), local authorities are finding it difficult to afford the delivery costs.

Arts and heritage services seem to be the first on the hit list. According to figures from the BBC<sup>xvi</sup>, 343 libraries have shut since 2010 and another 111 are set to close this year, while 174 have been transferred to community groups and 50 handed to external organisations.

In a BBC article<sup>xvii</sup>, Cambridgeshire County Council leader Steve Count voiced his concerns about the consistent stripping back of discretionary services. He said:

**'If the government comes up with 40% cuts over the next five years the discretionary services will all but disappear, the roads will decay, and then we will struggle, we will really struggle with services to the vulnerable.'**



Count went on to say that the council intended to turn off street lights after midnight and is considering gritting fewer roads in order to save more money.

Many local authorities have expressed their concern that cutting discretionary services will not be enough to respond to the year-on-year cuts.

In the Guardian<sup>xviii</sup>, Lord Porter said:

**‘Even if councils stopped filling in potholes, maintaining parks, closed all children’s centres, libraries, museums, leisure centres and turned off every street light, they will not have saved enough money to plug the financial black hole they face by 2020.’**

### 3 Enterprising councils

#### *Thinking outside the box*

As local authorities reach the limit of what they can save through cost-cutting measures, they are tasked with looking beyond ‘what we have always done’ and thinking strategically for the long term.

The Department for Communities and Local Government<sup>xix</sup> believes that innovative service delivery is the key to managing service pressures and remaining financially resilient. Funding initiatives such as the Transformation Challenge Award, the Better Care Fund, and the Public Service Transformation Network have been introduced to support local authority service transformation, develop good practice in joining up services, achieve efficiency savings and reduce demand on public services.

Speaking about the latest round of the Transformation Challenge Award, Local Government Minister Kris Hopkins said: **‘By working with the local police, health bodies, Jobcentre Plus, voluntary groups and others they are eliminating waste and creating services which help people first time – not services which send people from pillar to post to get problems sorted.’**<sup>xx</sup>

Empowered by the introduction of the Localism Act 2011 – which gave local authorities greater financial freedoms – many authorities have adopted transformative and more commercial strategies to help generate alternative sources of income and meet future funding challenges.

*Commercial Councils – The Rise of Entrepreneurialism in Local Government*<sup>xxi</sup> found results indicating that councils are behaving innovatively in a number of ways:

- > 94% of authorities share some services with another council
- > More than half of councils (58%) own a trading company; and at the rate of increase, full coverage by 2020 is a possibility
- > Over half of councils (57%) operate a joint venture with the private sector
- > Over a third are using entrepreneurial methods in areas such as waste (46%), leisure and tourism (38%), IT/back office (38%) and housing (36%)
- > Without these entrepreneurial activities, 8/10 say they would have to cut services and raise taxes

The report also found that at present entrepreneurial activities currently make up 6% of council budgets – equivalent to approximately £10 billion in 2012-13.

However, respondents indicated that by 2020

this figure will rise to 18% – a sum potentially worth upwards of £27 billion. They estimated that this would generate up to £2 billion of additional savings each year; a sum equivalent to £100 off each 2019/20 council tax bill.



### 4 External funding and the External Funding Officer role

So where does external funding fit into the local authority income puzzle? It is clear to see that, in the current financial climate of reduced budgets, the need for local authorities to focus on supplementing their income is vital. Seeking alternative sources of funding to deliver local authority priorities and fight against funding loss has never been more important.

#### *External funding*

It is important to define what is meant by external funding in the context of local authorities and the organisations and communities they support.

‘External funding’ is defined as funding additional to local authorities’ annual allocation from central Government and extra to the funds which can be raised from local taxes, fees and charges. It is discretionary money not accounted for within the Formula Spending Share (FSS) or equivalent, actively sought and applied for and secured through a competitive process, and awarded for specific proposals.

Some local authorities also support local groups and organisations in sourcing and applying for funding. This type of activity will be explored further in the partnerships section. For the purpose of this report, external funding is **funding that is sought by a local authority for its own project needs.**

#### *The external funding officer*

The role of the external funding officer is to identify potential sources of income and work with the relevant teams and departments within the local authority to develop applications for funds.

Job guides such as those found on TES Growing Ambitions and Input Youth set out the daily activities that the external funding officer role is likely to include:

- > Researching possible sources of funding for internal and external partners using resources such as **GRANTfinder**

- > Producing reports and advising clients on how to compile effective bids
- > Putting together and giving presentations
- > Attending meetings with relevant and interested parties
- > Working with budgets and analysing statistics
- > Preparing, developing and monitoring funding applications
- > Organising events to disseminate information relating to funding opportunities

External funding officers must keep up to date with the latest funding initiatives and ensure that the relevant council officers and departments are aware of any significant news. They are also responsible for ensuring that different local government departments do not compete for the same funds.

They need to develop good working relationships with organisations that are in partnership with the council, such as the local health authority, fire service, and community and voluntary groups. External funding officers may also represent their area at a national level on committees.

An external funding officer's main responsibilities could include:

- > Researching and investigating possible sources of funding from external funding organisations and attending meetings with interested parties
- > Developing projects that might be eligible for funding
- > Gathering relevant information – such as objectives, criteria, deadlines – and presenting them to relevant council committees
- > Developing partnerships between various sectors in order to access funding for multi-agency initiatives
- > Liaising regularly with a range of departments and organisations including:
  - other council departments,
  - local enterprise partnerships,
  - voluntary organisations working in partnership with the council
- > Keeping and updating a comprehensive database of all external contacts and partners that relate to external funding
- > Advising council staff and partners who are looking for funding on issues such as how to submit bids
- > Setting up and running the matched funding application process
- > Monitoring the progress of applications and writing reports



### ***What skills should an external funding officer possess?***

External funding officers have the following skills:

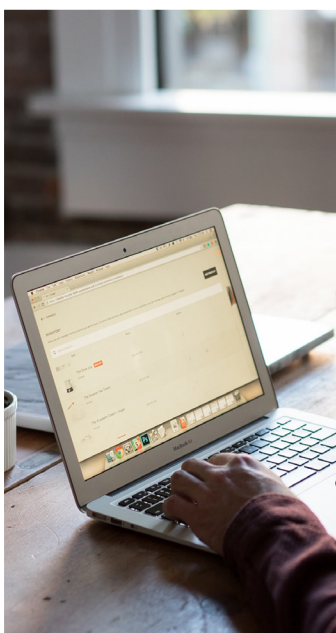
- > Excellent communicators with good negotiation skills
- > Patience and diplomacy
- > Good writing skills – able to write in plain English
- > Good at giving presentations and reports
- > Competent organisers who can plan and prioritise their workload to meet deadlines
- > Able to work well under pressure
- > IT literate
- > Finance skills to help with budgets
- > Another language is helpful for European funding programmes
- > Able to interpret and present statistical analyses
- > Able to think laterally and innovatively
- > Able to work on their own initiative

### ***Changes in external funding and increasing importance***

#### **Reduced resource**

In 2004, a CIPFA survey<sup>xvii</sup> found 91% of local authorities had officers with dedicated responsibility for external funding, with an average six officers in full-time positions. It also found that local authorities with the lowest success in gaining external funding appeared to be those with fewer staff dedicated to bidding for such resources.

As competitive bidding for external funds became increasingly important to local authorities, many continued to invest in their external funding team in order to get ahead in the field. A report in the International Journal of Public Sector Management<sup>xviii</sup> found common traits and activities in seeking external funding. Pre 2010 many local authorities were:



- > Employing at least two teams of dedicated funding officers – one for Europe and one for SRB (single regeneration budget) funding, with varied responsibility for the Lottery – to seek additional funding from external sources
- > Increasing the size of external funding teams
- > Employing project managers, required for successful bids, from within the council

However, since austerity measures were introduced in 2010, cuts in staffing costs have meant that a growing number of authorities no longer have dedicated external funding teams or officers and their responsibilities have been absorbed by other roles. Between 2010 and 2013, local authorities reduced full-time equivalent posts by 16.6%.<sup>xxiv</sup>

This loss in dedicated resource and the external funding role being absorbed into other workloads could be viewed as a false economy. This is because core activity is either being side-lined for bidding activity or, most commonly, teams simply do not have the time and resource to engage in external funding over other priorities. Either way, this lack of dedicated resource places staff under pressure.

The loss of expertise is further exacerbated by the increase of temporary staff and consultants. Whilst consultants and temporary staff can be a cost-effective short-term solution, and can also inject new skills into the authority, they may also lack the organisational knowledge of permanent staff, which is essential in the funding officer role and vital to maintain a long-term, sustainable funding strategy. Recruiting skilled and experienced staff, and reducing the dependence on external skills, is crucial if local authorities are going to adopt change and to think more creatively in the future.

### External funding strategies

Since 2010, there has been a shift towards more strategic bidding for external funding. Both funders and local authorities have targeted their bids to meet strategic aims related to set outcomes which are driven by policy.

This move towards a more coordinated approach is led by Local Enterprise Partnerships determining the strategic local economic growth agenda, as well as councils' own strategic priorities.



In response to this coordinated approach, some local authorities have established external funding strategies, which help to reduce the duplication of projects, and the time and effort contributed by council officers spent on developing funding bids, whilst also weighing up risks and ensuring councils' strategic priorities are met.

North Lanarkshire Council's<sup>xxv</sup> external funding strategy provides an interesting example of the benefits of implementing a funding strategy, along with the risks associated with not having one.

Benefits of an external funding strategy	Risk of not having an external funding strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A co-ordinated, strategic and informed approach</li> <li>• Bids and services are complementing each other, and create better value</li> <li>• Higher quality and standard of applications submitted to funders</li> <li>• Reduced unforeseen work created for council services such as finance, procurement, legal and HR as they were already informed of the funding proposal in advance</li> <li>• Increased transparency and information sharing across service areas</li> <li>• Improved knowledge of which project and what proportion of the council's services come from external funding sources</li> <li>• An increased understanding among council staff and the public about the value that external funding contributes to council services</li> <li>• A single point of call for funders to engage with and communicate with when dealing with the council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lack of a co-ordinated approach</li> <li>• Duplication of bids and services</li> <li>• A poorer standard of application in the eyes of funders</li> <li>• Additional unforeseen work created for council services such as finance, procurement, legal and HR where funding has been granted when they were not previously informed</li> <li>• A lack of transparency across service areas</li> <li>• No clear knowledge of what proportion of the council's services and projects are funded from external funding sources</li> <li>• A deficit of understanding among council staff and the public about the value that external funding adds to council services</li> <li>• No single individual point of call for funders when they wish to engage with the council</li> </ul>

### Benefits of bidding for external funds

Many local authorities are dependent on external funding in order to deliver targeted services, above those they are legally required to provide, to their communities.

In seeking a committee for an external funding strategy for 2014-2020, Inverclyde Council said:

**'Although some organisations use external funding for non-mainstream activities, others see it as an essential part of delivering their objectives and more specifically a way of achieving their service plan targets under financial constraint. The more successful Inverclyde becomes at accessing additional resources the more we are able to extend the range and quality of our services.'**<sup>xxvi</sup>

Bidding for external funding also helps to encourage creative and more strategy-driven service delivery with clear priorities and outcomes. It helps develop greater co-operation between local authorities and other agencies, and a more corporate approach with tighter project management. It supports local authorities in offering improved services and facilities, which helps meet the needs of its residents and, in turn, strengthens the community as a whole.

#### Advantages of applying for external funding:

- > Finances activities that applicants would not normally be able to afford
- > Adds value to existing activities
- > Helps to maximise use of resources and enhance the quality of services
- > Builds the capacity of staff and organisations
- > Helps if applicants need 'one-off' funding – for example, to build a capital asset
- > Encourages partnership working
- > Enhances the reputation of the local authority externally
- > Provides a role for community leadership in developing and accessing funding opportunities
- > Encourages creativity and innovation and prompts organisations to try new ways of working
- > Builds networks of good practice across the country and internationally
- > Delivers additional services to residents and local organisations

#### Challenges of bidding for external funds

As local authorities have the capacity to raise their own source of income they have been viewed as an 'easy target' when it has come to government spending cuts. However, the road to generating revenue is not always a smooth one.

*The cost of the cuts: The impact on local government and poorer communities* reported that:

**'The huge variation between local authorities in their capacity to raise revenue must not be overlooked and the risks attached to local revenue streams (which vary massively from year to year) can undermine an authority's capacity to plan strategically.'**

#### Challenges of bidding for external funding are:

- > Tight timescale to prepare bids
- > Difficult to predict the amount of resource needed to prepare a bid
- > The shaping, or refining, of priorities that takes place to meet the criteria set by funding body
- > Diversity of funding timetables
- > Frequent lateness of approvals
- > Pressure upon staff when time is spent on bid preparation
- > Reluctance of staff to devote time to an activity where the outcome is uncertain
- > Successful bids receiving less funding than originally sought
- > Insufficient resources available to fund the management of successful bids



- > Resource identified as in-kind match funding is already fully utilised
- > The increasing burden of monitoring successful projects and managing expectations
- > Lack of feedback from some funders if application unsuccessful
- > Poor communication and working arrangements between departments
- > Difficulties in seeking, coordinating and implementing funding bids at the same time
- > General reductions in funding availability
- > Lack of knowledge of key contacts within funding organisations
- > Funding criteria can be very specific and restrictive
- > External funding can divert resources from the core business
- > Applications for funding can be driven by the local organisational interests rather than by identified priorities
- > Significant financial risk can exist if projects fail. Funding can be clawed back if the project fails to achieve its objectives, particularly in relation to EU funding
- > It can be difficult to keep track of workforce issues and external funding can create complex employment matters with its emphasis on contracts and secondments

Sustainability is also highlighted as a main problem, with many authorities interpreting this as obtaining further funding support to enable the project to continue. It was also determined in *What Price Competition? The Management of Competitive Funding in UK Local Government* that even a small and successful scheme was likely to run into difficulty in achieving sustainability.

There are concerns from authorities that where funding had been used to enhance services, they could revert to how they were if no further funding was found, leading to potential staff frustrations.

## Match funding

Match funding can cause issues too. As one authority outlines in the *What Price Competition? The Management of Competitive Funding in UK Local Government* report, it can skew local authorities' priorities as to be acceptable for match funding, spending must relate to the project. This money may not otherwise have been spent in this way.

Therefore local authorities are less able to determine their own priorities but are increasingly being pushed towards the objectives of funding bodies – which most often means central government.

The report says that this approach to funding

**'exacerbates the paradoxical situation of encouraging decentralisation of operational activities while requiring centralisation of control and monitoring.'**<sup>xxvii</sup>

If staff time is offered as in-kind match funding, where staff are already employed on other activities, then there needs to be recognition of the impact upon those activities.

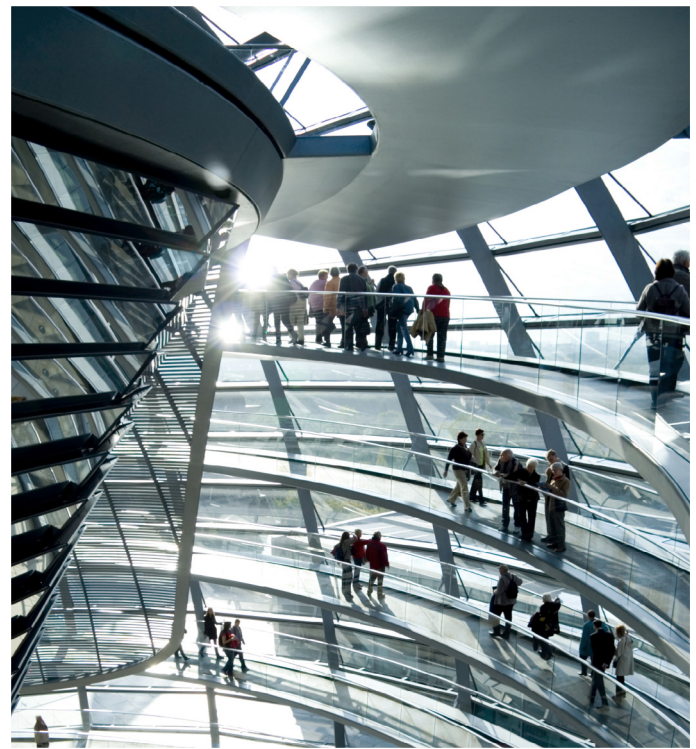
## Shifting eligibility

Many funds are targeted to deprived areas and this can cause a problem in terms of uneven distribution across a local authority. For example, many parts of East Riding of Yorkshire do not meet funders' criteria and therefore miss out on opportunities, whilst Bridlington, Goole and South East Holderness have been successful in attracting funds due to their 'deprived' status.<sup>xxviii</sup>

Shifting socio-economic variants can also mean that local authorities that were once eligible for funding are no longer able to apply. In mid-2010 Boston Borough Council moved out of the bottom 12 most deprived district authorities and therefore they were no longer eligible for European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support.<sup>xxix</sup>

## Partnerships

Many local authority external funding teams also work closely with the voluntary and community sector to support them in bidding for funding. This has become as important to local authorities as securing funding for themselves, as voluntary sector organisations have increasingly had to fill gaps in service provision where council services have been cut or diminished.



However, the VCSE sector has also faced similar funding and staffing reductions as local authorities. A London School of Economics and Political Science report<sup>xxx</sup> stated that voluntary and community sector providers of services for under-fives, young people, and older people were receiving substantially less in grants income than in 2009-10. Like local authorities, the sector has been adapting to survive by seeking to sell services and becoming suppliers of commissioned services.

What is clear is that the knock-on effect of funding cuts affects everyone from the top to the bottom – from the local authority providing much-needed services, to the community group that was involved in the council's funding bid to raise essential funds to provide that service, to the person in the community who relies on the service to live their life.

## Multi-sector bids

The VCSE sector is a vital partner in achieving local authorities' objectives. It is therefore critical that the sector is supported to access the funding that is available to them.

Over the past five years an increasing number of funders have placed an emphasis on multi-sector bids. It has become more common for funders to stipulate the inclusion of the VCSE sector on proposals, especially where funding outcomes are designed to meet the needs of communities. VCSE organisations are often the only lead applicants eligible to submit a bid, or alternatively, applicants are instructed to work in collaboration or gain input from the VCSE sector on a partnership bid.

From a bidding perspective, it is therefore imperative that local authorities work collaboratively with VCSE organisations so that the full range of potential sources of income is made available.

## 5 Ten tips to fast-track your funding knowledge

### 1. Know your priorities

Before starting up a project and identifying relevant funding opportunities, make sure you have clearly identified the need for what you are proposing to do, and ensure it is in line with your authority's corporate priorities. A strategic and coordinated approach will help with an efficient application process and will ensure best use of staff resource.

### 2. Impact on resources

Coupled with enthusiasm for applying for funding should be an understanding that bidding success will require project management resource, buy-in from the Finance team (who will need to lend support in terms of auditing) and a commitment to developing strong working relationships with partners. Where existing resource is used there should be clear guidance about priorities, in recognition that not all the extra requirements may be absorbed into current workloads.

### 3. Bid readiness

Being 'bid ready' is essential when working to tight funding application timescales. When a decision is made to apply for funding, thought should be given to preparing contingency plans for a range of outcomes. As well as having to dedicate staff time to the project, you will also need to ensure that you have the tools in place to help you deliver, for example, suitable administration systems, timesheeting, software etc.



### 4. Stakeholders and beneficiaries

When preparing your project, take a close look at its stakeholders and beneficiaries. With any grant application, funders will always want to know that the grant they have provided is making a long-term difference to the lives of the people benefitting from the activity. The further your project reaches with its benefits, the more the funder will feel they are supporting something worthwhile and getting more for their money than anticipated.

### 5. Quality of the bid

The main factor in how successful a funding application is boils down to the quality of the bid writing. Authorities should ensure that it has sufficient staff with experience of bid-writing and the ability to access expert external resources where these are required.

### 6. Partnership

Bidding often requires support from partners, especially when bidding for EU programmes.

All partners must agree on shared values and measurable outcomes for the partnership to be successful. Clear and open communication is required between partners to help agree on roles, responsibilities and processes.

### 7. Match funding

Many funding sources require significant match funding and applications require careful planning to locate the necessary resource.

Match funding can cause significant problems when attempting to synchronise the funding to fit the timescale of your project. This issue can, however, be solved quite easily by planning your project in stages (e.g. September-March and April-July).



## 8. Effective monitoring

Most funders will expect to see project monitoring and a number of measurable outputs to enable them to assess how successful their investment has been, and to judge whether the project is really making a difference.

To ensure success, you must think about monitoring at the planning stages of your project and try not to leave it until you get your grant.

Set specific targets that you want to measure or milestones that you want to reach, and make a decision about how you are going to measure whether you have achieved them.

## 9. Sustainability

Authorities must think long-term and establish whether the project is a pilot project or an ongoing activity.

You must be clear on how the project will continue after the funding period and think about an exit strategy.

## 10. Avoid the pitfalls

In a highly competitive funding climate, it is a good idea to be familiar with the common reasons why funding bodies reject applications to prevent such issues from arising.

The most common factors include the following:

- > Applicants fail to illustrate why their project is needed, and do not make their plans explicit and concise on their application form.
- > The project is poorly planned and there is no indication of what the money will be spent on.
- > The funder's guidelines have not been examined accurately and applications fail to demonstrate they fulfil the criteria.
- > Applicants budget inaccurately and do not display good financial management.
- > It is not shown that the organisation is well managed and capable of successfully running the project, including effective monitoring and evaluation of the activity.



## 6 Conclusion

As we have seen, economic recessions can occur and more recently, with the EU referendum result, there can be significant shifts in funding arrangements and opportunities.

If local authorities want to future-proof themselves against these realities, a proactive and innovative approach to service delivery, and the funding of these services, will be critical for their financial sustainability.

It is evident that the loss of resource and funding at government level has hit local authorities hard. But what has emerged out of the 'austerity measures' is the resilience of local authorities and the communities they support.

Councils have evolved in the past to help reduce the impact of the economic and political climate on their communities, and they are proving they will evolve again – with greater localism powers and a leap towards more innovative and coordinated thinking – and in response to this it is likely that funding programmes and policy priorities will evolve with them too.





## Are you up to date with the latest funding opportunities?

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W: [www.idoxgrantfinder.co.uk](http://www.idoxgrantfinder.co.uk)



### Looking for further information on the UK post Referendum?

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<http://grants-uk.idoxgroup.com/acton/media/19116/localgovwp>



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- > **ii, x, xiv, xv** Coping with the Cuts: Lessons from English Councils' Responses to Budget Reductions
- > **iii, xi** The Cost of the Cuts: The Impact on Local Government and Poorer Communities
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- > **v, ix** Future Funding Outlook for Councils 2019/20: Interim 2015 Update
- > **xix, xxiv** Financial Sustainability of Local Authorities 2014
- > **xxiii, xxvii** What Price Competition? The Management of Competitive Funding in UK Local Government

## **Appendix 2: ESIF Programme Update March 2017**

The ESIF Programme was originally scheduled to run 2014-2020; despite the Brexit process, opportunities will remain over the next four years to access funding via the ESIF programme; the Autumn Statement in November 2016 confirmed the Government's commitment to honour the remaining period of the current programme:

- The Government has confirmed that it will guarantee funding for ESIF projects that continue after the UK has left the EU.
- Funding for new projects will only be honoured by the UK Government if they are good value for money and are in line with domestic strategic priorities
- The CA has begun to co-ordinate activity and a working group is being established with senior level input from the CA and LEP to identify the most pressing issues and coordinate action.

New calls continue to be released, the latest being a call to support SMEs; a bid is being developed for Halton based around managed workspace. It is also anticipated that further specialist input by the FDO will be required to support the ESF-funded apprenticeship hub scheme which is being led by HBC's Employment Learning and Skills Division.

Although funding was allocated to LCR under the ESIF Programme, this still needs to be applied for and managed through a rigorous application, assessment and monitoring process. Specialised resource is required to do this and to maintain Halton's excellent reputation in the draw down and delivery of European Structural funding.

The Funding Development Officer (FDO) post has proven crucial to the delivery of the European Programme for the Borough and has resulted in additional investment into the Borough of around £4 million to date in the form of ERDF, ESF and matching funds.

The FDO's role has been to support colleagues, internal and external, in developing and delivering projects for the European Programme, including bid writing, project development, claims and liaison. This role has been of invaluable support, in particular to HBC colleagues.

### **Key projects supported:**

#### **Ways To Work**

This is an LCR wide scheme to support people into employment; the Halton element is worth £3.3 million (£1.2 million of this is ESF drawn down as part of the current European Programme; and £833,000 Youth Employment Initiative Funding). The FDO post is currently supporting the Council's Employment, Learning and Skills Division and the 14-19 Programme Teams in managing the project which will be delivered over a three year period.

One element of the project will support local businesses and individuals with temporary work for a period of 6 -12 months, providing individuals with the opportunity to develop their skills. The FDO has been supporting the project in making quarterly claims to the Combined Authority, carrying out a procurement exercise for specialist mentors/coaches and recruitment of staff for the project. In the future the FDO will prepare for Article 13 and 16 audits from DWP, monitor performance and eligible expenditure throughout the lifetime

of the project, keep up to date with ESIF programme rules and regulations, and continue with project development and exploring continuation funding.

### **LCRIBS**

Liverpool City Region's **Business Growth Programme**. This project is part of a wider City Region Integrated Business Support Project (**LCRIBS**) which has secured £450k in funding for Halton alone over three years (£288,000 of this is ERDF drawn down from the current European Programme). The FDO has been supporting the project with the recruitment of staff and specialist consultants, the latter via a lengthy procurement process, ensuring that ERDF regulations are being followed and reflected in necessary paperwork, and in preparing for quarterly claims for the Combined Authority.

### **BBO Digital**

This project will be worth £60,000 for Halton and is a project to support over 50's in accessing training and support to 'go digital'. Sessions will be delivered throughout the Borough and the FDO has been instrumental in developing the Halton element of this LCR-wide project.

### **Low Carbon**

HBC submitted an outline bid under the Low Carbon call in October. The project is to develop a Green Business Park in Halton. Part of the project is to create a solar farm on St Michaels Golf Course that provides renewable energy to local businesses and HBC buildings as a demonstration site for the Liverpool City Region that contributes to our regional MW generation output target. The project also links to HBC's ambitions to develop Boroughwide green business parks and also links to wider Sustainable Urban Development projects such as cycling / walking networks within the LCR.

### **Forums and Groups**

In addition to supporting with specific project development and delivery, the FDO also represents Halton on a number of groups and networks, such as the Ways to Work Performance and Compliance Board, the Local Authority Delivery Partners Group and the LCRIBS Board, Delivery and Marketing meetings.

The post also provides support for HBC's European Portfolio Holder, Cllr Cargill, who is the Halton representative for the Combined Authority on the **ESIF Committee**. This consists of briefing Cllr Cargill on relevant papers prior to ESIF Committee meetings and dealing with any issues coming out of these meetings.

The FDO also represents Halton on the **Mersey Rural Local Action Group**, which involves attending Board meetings, assessing bids, making recommendations for projects to be progressed.

In order to keep up to date with current European Issues the postholder attends the **Local European Issues Forum** where current work programmes are discussed and attends briefing sessions and workshops on current EU calls and funding opportunities.

In summary, the FDO has played a key role in representing Halton at LCR level and in ensuring Halton's profile and reputation are maintained and that the Borough accesses the funding it is eligible to draw down.



### Appendix 3. Current Bid Writing Table

Bid Writing – Number of Bids 21							Total Bidding = £7,199,264		
Ref	Org/Group	Project	Amount	Funder	Deadline	Submitted	Project Lead	EF Lead	Decision Due
659	Catalyst SDC	Running costs & project costs	£2,000,000	Inspiring Science			Meryl Jameson	SD	
798	Connecting Cheshire	Phase 3	£2,000,000	Gainshare			Julian Cobley	SD	
871	Halton Disability Partnership	Continuation Funding	£250,000	Reaching Comms	Anytime		John Abbott	SB/SW	
890	HBC CX	Green Business Parks	£861,000	ERDF		Yes	Jim Yates	LO	
895	HBC Library Service	Ada.Ada.Ada	£80,000	Arts Council			Alison Hoolihan	SB	
893	HBC Library Services	Year of Learning and Culture	£65,792	Arts Council		Yes	Alison Hoolihan	SB	
884	HBC Open Spaces	Pheonix Park disabled play	£50,000	Veolia	22/03/2017	21/03/2017	Richard Shacklady	SW	
881	HBC Public Health	Mindful Me Halton	£77,500	DfE Grant			Eileen O'Meara	SD/SB	
887	HBC Regeneration	Great Places Scheme/STEAM	£1,500,000	Great Places Scheme	-		Steph Davies	SD	
888	HBC Regeneration	Cultural Destinations		Arts Council	26/08/2016		Steph Davies	SD	
882	Just Chill	Youth Worker + Resources	£20,000	Awards for All	Anytime		Jane Bennett	SD	
894	Mako Digital Arts	Switched On project	£9,972	Awards for All	Anytime		Anne-Marie Atherton	SB	
856	St Lukes Church	Youth Work, Roof, Churchyard	£200,000	HLF	Anytime		Barry Horabin	SD	
876	St Pauls Church	OneTwo Sports Ministry	£10,000	Anchor	Anytime	28/10/2016	Greg Sharples	SB	May-17
876	St Pauls Church	OneTwo Sports Ministry	£0	Laing	-	26/10/2016	Greg Sharples	SB	Mar-17
876	St Pauls Church	OneTwo Sports Ministry	£0	Childs	-	21/11/2016	Greg Sharples	SB	Mar-17
876	St Pauls Church	OneTwo Sports Ministry	£5,000	Hemby	-	29/11/2016	Greg Sharples	SB	Feb-17
876	St Pauls Church	OneTwo Sports Ministry	£0	Grace	-	29/11/2016	Greg Sharples	SB	Feb-17
876	St Pauls Church	OneTwo Sports Ministry	£20,000	Paul Hamlyn	Anytime		Greg Sharples	JP	
810	Victoria Park Glasshouses	Development of Glasshouses		HLF Shared Heritage			Paul Wright	SD/SW	
810	Victoria Park Glasshouses	Development of Glasshouses	£50,000	Veolia	22/03/2017	21/03/2017	Paul Wright	SD/SW	

#### Appendix 4. Secured and Failed Funding Bids 2016-17

	Group Name & REF	Project	Outcome	Amount	Month	Ward	Source of Funding	Reason Failed	Resubmitted
Q1	HBC	Ways to Work	Secured	£2,088,522	Apr-16	Boroughwide	ESF		
	Hale Parish Council	New Village Hall	Secured	£10,000	May-16	Hale	Garfield Weston		
	HBC	LCRIBS	Secured	£228,406	Jun-16	Boroughwide	ERDF		
	Hale Parish Council	New Village Hall	Secured	£8,462	Jun-16	Hale	Area Forum		
	HBC Trading Standard	Scam Victims Project	Failed	£200,000	May-16	Boroughwide	Reaching Communities	Competition	No
Q2	Beechwood Com Centre	New Boiler	Failed	£46,450	Aug-16	Beechwood	WREN	Eligibility	
Q3	Halton Heritage Partnership	HHP Continuation	Secured	£9,800	Oct-16	Boroughwide	HLF		
	HBC Regen	Alstom	Secured	£5,000,000	Oct-16	Boroughwide	Combined Authority (LEP)		
	All Saints Church PCC	New Church Boiler	Secured	£2,155	Oct-16	Mersey	Area Forum		
	HBC Open Spaces	Continuation Funding	Failed	£770,000	Oct-16	Boroughwide	Coastal Communities Fund	Competition	
	LCR VE Working Group	Great Places Scheme	Failed	£900,000	Nov-16	Boroughwide	Great Places Fund	Competition	Yes
	Catalyst SDC	Inspiring Science Bid	Failed	£974,000	Nov-16	Boroughwide	Inspiring Science	Competition	Yes
	St Pauls	12SM	Failed	£45,000	Nov-16	Boroughwide	Henry Smith	Competition	
	Astmoor School	Forest School	Secured	£2,300	Dec-16	Halton Castle	MG Timebank		
	Halton Disability Partnership	Running Costs	Failed	£250,000	Dec-16	Boroughwide	Big Lottery Fund	Competition	Yes
	St Pauls	12SM	Failed	£36,000	Dec-16	Boroughwide	Weavers	Competition	No
St Pauls	12SM	Failed	£5,000	Dec-16	Boroughwide	Hilden	Competition	No	
Catalyst SDC	Local Widnesian Hero	Failed	£3,000	Dec-16	Boroughwide	Royal Society Local Heroes	Eligibility		
Q4	Halton Mind	Bright Start	Failed	£17,000	Jan-17	Boroughwide	ESF	Competition	No
	The Foundry Church	CAP Job Club	Secured	£22,000	Jan-17	Boroughwide	ESF		
	St Lukes	Youth Worker	Failed	£10,000	Jan-17	Boroughwide	Anchor Foundation	Competition	
	Catalyst SDC	Baker Family Exhibition	Failed	£36,000	Jan-17	Boroughwide	History Makers Fund	Competition	
	Diverse Active CIC	Mamafit	Secured	£9,997	Jan-17	Boroughwide	Awards for All		
	Nightstop Communities NW	Continuation Funding	Secured	£505,002	Jan-17	Boroughwide	Reaching Communities		
	St Pauls	12SM	Secured	£15,000	Jan-17	Boroughwide	Scripture Union		
	HBC Property Services	OPE Police Station Sites	Secured	£66,280	Feb-17	Boroughwide	One Public Estate		
	Phoenix Park	Playground	Secured	£2,000	Feb-17	Boroughwide	Tesco		
HBC	Include IT Mersey	Secured	£64,206	Feb-17	Boroughwide	ESF			
St Pauls	12SM	Failed	£0	Mar-17	Boroughwide	Postcode Lottery	Eligibility		

St Pauls	12SM	Failed	£5,000	Mar-17	Boroughwide	Masonic Foundation	Eligibility	
MGET	Plastic Resolution	Secured	£9,838	Mar-17	Boroughwide	Awards for All		
MGET	Plastic Resolution	Failed	£9,838	Mar-17	Boroughwide	Merseyside Waste Authority	Competition	No

Total Secured	16	£8,043,968
Total Failed	16	£3,307,288



**REPORT TO:** Corporate Services Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Corporate Complaints (2016 – 17)

**WARDS:** All

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To report on and provide an analysis of Corporate Complaints received during the 2016 – 17 financial year.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### **Context**

3.1 The Council presently administers a 2 stage procedure to deal with corporate complaints whereby the public can seek redress if they believe Council departments have failed to deliver a satisfactory level of service.

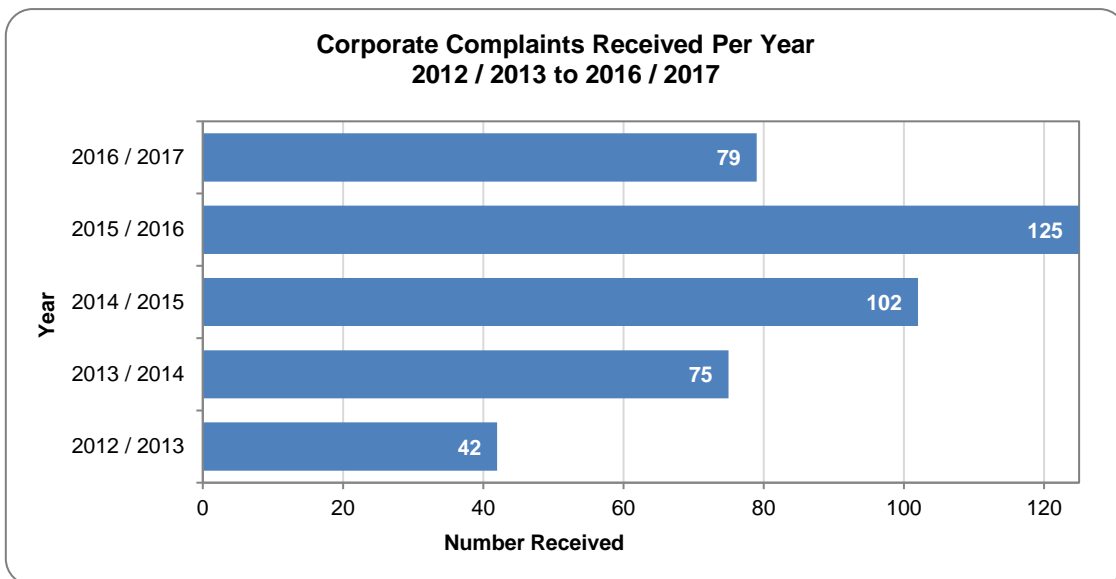
3.2 When complaints are received that have not been raised previously, they are normally directed to the relevant department for matters to be investigated and a response to be provided by a Senior Officer within the service.

3.4 Should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the Council's initial response to their complaint they may request a review of the Council's actions in relation to their complaint. Such reviews are undertaken independently of the service by an Investigating Officer from the Corporate Performance and Improvement Team.

3.5 If the Council cannot resolve matters to the complainant's satisfaction they can request that matters be further considered by the Local Government Ombudsman or, in the context of complaints relating to Freedom of information requests, the Information Commissioner.

### **4.0 CORPORATE COMPLAINTS TREND ANALYSIS 2016-17**

4.1 The chart below provides a breakdown of the number of Corporate complaints received for each of the financial years from 2012 – 13 to 2016 – 17.

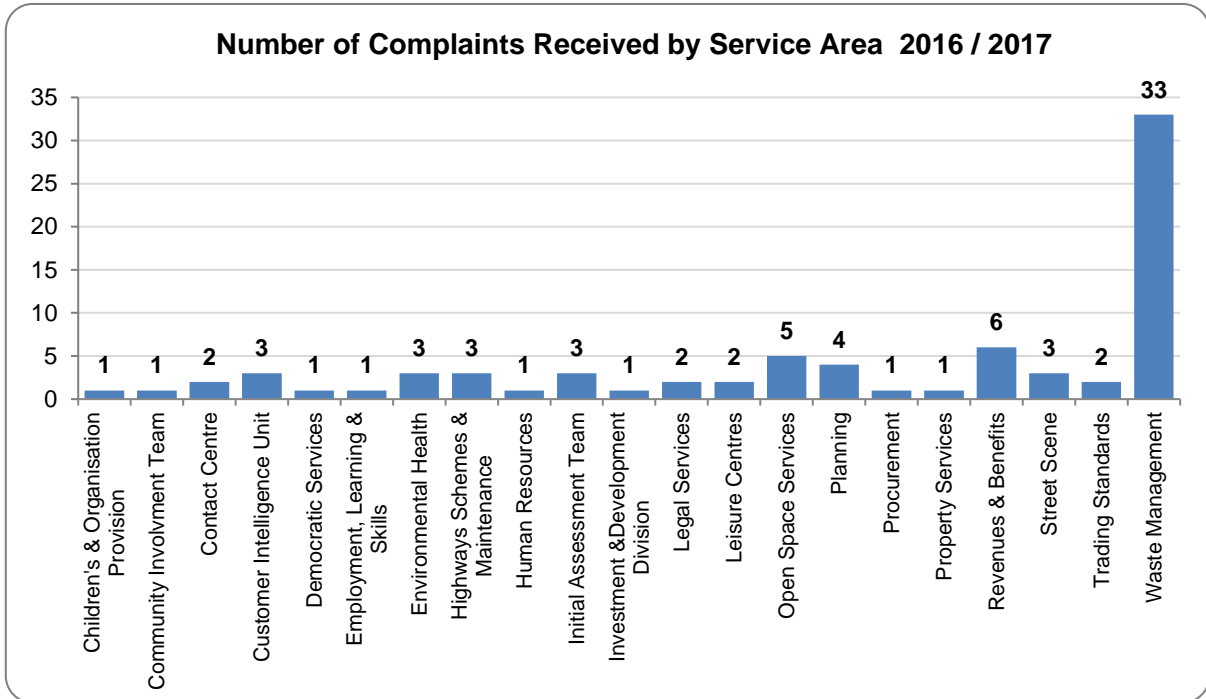


4.2 From the chart, it shown that the number of complaints peaked in 2015-16 but have now fallen back to the 2013-14 levels.

4.3 The table overleaf shows the number of complaints received and resolved during 2016 - 2017 by the Corporate Complaints Team, and the success rate for replying to complainants within the target time for stage one complaints.

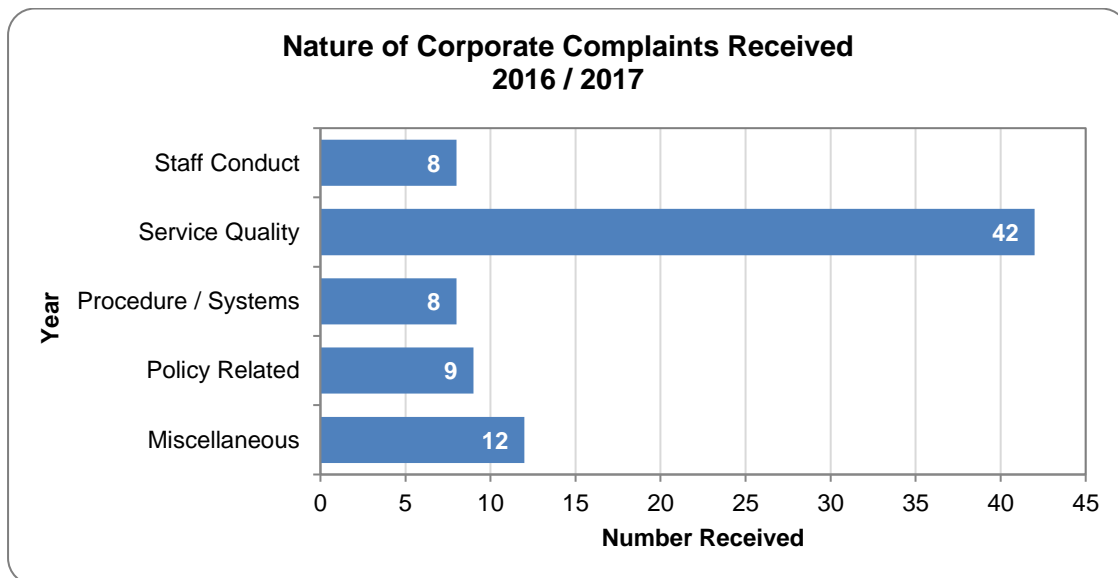
Complaint Stage	Corporate Complaints
Number of complaints resolved at Stage 1	<b>73</b> (92.41%)
Proportion replied to within target time	<b>69</b> (87.34%)
Complaints proceeding to Stage 2	<b>6</b> (7.59%)
Complaints proceeding to the Ombudsman	<b>0</b> (0%)

4.4 As would be expected the nature of those corporate complaints received covered a relatively wide range of Council services as illustrated within the chart below.



4.5 A significant number of complaints related to Waste Management, covering issues such as missed bin or are connected with the bin pull out service available to those qualifying.

4.6 The following chart provides a breakdown of complaints by type for 2016 – 17:



4.7 The majority of those identified as relating to Service Quality had come from complaints relating to missed bin collections. As this is a service that affects the borough's residents as a whole, it is not unexpected that this is an area

that can cause a significant number of complaints. In most cases though, the service was able to contact the individual and have the issue resolved within a day or two of the complaint being received.

- 4.8 There were a relatively small number of complaints concerning staff conduct and in all cases the situations which led to the complaint being made were subject to discussion with individuals concerned. However such complaints raised no specific concerns in relation to either service provision or identified training requirements.
- 4.9 Nine complaints related to the implementation of Council policy, e.g. the maintenance of open spaces or the issuing of event licences, and in such cases the complainant was given a clear explanation of the policy and the reasons as to why it had been introduced.

## 5.0 THE OUTCOME OF COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 The following tables provide a breakdown of the numbers of complaints that were upheld, partially upheld or not upheld during 2016 - 17.

Outcome	Number
Number of complaints Upheld	<b>23</b> (30.38%)
Number of complaints Partially Upheld	<b>32</b> (40.51%)
Number of complaints Not Upheld	<b>23</b> (29.11%)

- 5.2 In relation to Partially Upheld complaints, the majority of these complaints relate to missed bin collections as at the time of recording them it is unclear with it was an operational issue or not. Unfortunately at present the Council has no means to establish if bins were missed due to not being presented for collection by the occupier or as a result of the failure of the crew.
- 5.3 Analysis of the complaints and comments the Council receives provide essential information to help shape and develop services. They complement the wide range of consultation exercises that the organisation undertakes (including postal and telephone surveys, open forums, consultation days etc).
- 5.4 Collectively the Council uses this information, along with that resulting from routine interaction with residents, to help improve the services we provide or commission.

## 7.0 COMPLIMENTS

- 7.1 Following a request by Members this report now provides a short summary of those compliments that have been received concerning the provision of services across the Council during the 2016 – 17 financial year.

7.2 It should be noted that compliments are made and received through a range of communication channels. Whilst steps have been taken to capture such information more consistently the information contained in this report is representative and may not capture every complimentary exchange, for example in relation to human interaction, particularly in regards to inwardly focussed operational support services.

7.3 The following extracts are examples of compliments and positive feedback received during 2016 -17:

*“Hi went to park run this morning and the cafe opened at 8.35am. About 40 people used the toilets and quite a few went in after the park run for a well-earned coffee. Thank you so much for arranging this it did make a big, big, difference. Hope this carried on now every Saturday people were made up.”*

*“Further to my emails yesterday regarding the broken glass under the bridge, I must say thank you for getting the clean-up done so promptly. The person, who did the clean-up opposite the Devonshire Pub, has done an excellent job ”.*

## 8.0 LOCAL GOVERNEMENT OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS

8.1 The following tables provide a summary of the numbers of complaints that were referred to the Local Government Ombudsman during 2016 - 17.

Service Area	Number
Adult and Care Services	<b>8</b> (29.63%)
Education and Children Services	<b>8</b> (29.63%)
Planning and Development	<b>3</b> (11.11%)
Corporate and other	<b>2</b> (7.41%)
Highways and Transportation	<b>2</b> (7.41%)
Benefits and Tax	<b>2</b> (7.41%)
Housing	<b>1</b> (3.70%)
Environment Services	<b>1</b> (3.70%)

8.2 Of the complaints dealt with 24 were not upheld. 5 complaints were upheld and involved a local remedy with the LGO. The numbers slightly differ as 2 complaints that were opened in 2015/16 were closed in 2016/17 and therefore are included in the LGO’s figures for this year.

8.3 Of the 5 cases upheld three related to Education and Children Service and two to Adult Care. The remedies were a fresh School Transport Appeal, a reassessment of care, and in three cases financial redress. Of the three cases two also involved the Council agreeing to change procedures to minimise the risk of the similar complaints reoccurring.

8.4 The fact that over 93% of complaints are not upheld by the Ombudsman can provide some confidence that the Council's own complaints process is robust and aims to resolve fault where it occurs at a local level.

## **9.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Complaints provide essential information and inform the development of Halton Borough Council services and policies. The Corporate Complaints Procedure is regularly reviewed to ensure it continues to conform to best practice and remains fit for purpose.

## **10.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Improvement and quality assessment agendas increasingly consider the robustness of complaints procedures and how they are demonstrably used to inform and drive change.

## **11.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

11.1 It is important for the Council to have robust complaint procedures in place to improve service delivery and ultimately help the achievement of all of its six strategic priority areas.

## **12.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

12.1 An inefficient or ineffective complaints system will fail individuals who want to use it and prevent the organisation from learning from complaints. Whilst complaints can result in positive changes for individuals they are also a key source of intelligence which can be used to influence the design and delivery of services that the organisation provides and commissions.

## **13.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

13.1 All complaint forms are issued with a separate form for monitoring diversity of complainants with regard to age, disability, ethnicity and gender. Unfortunately the majority of corporate complainants choose not to return the monitoring form with their complaint so information collected is extremely limited. However upon the basis of available evidence no specific social groups are overly represented by age, gender, disability etc.

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Enterprise Community & Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy Statement

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1. To amend the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy Statement to reduce to nil the amount of council tax payable by young people leaving care from the ages 18 to 25.

**2. RECOMMENDED: That Executive Board approve the amendment to the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy Statement, to reduce to nil the amount of council tax payable by young people leaving care from the ages 18 to 25.**

**3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Council is responding to a recent Children's Society campaign that identified a range of disadvantages that care leavers typically experience. The campaign calls on local authorities to do more to support families who are struggling with council tax debt, in particular, care leavers. The campaign was supported by the Children's Commissioner for England, who has written to each council asking them to consider granting council tax relief for care leavers.

3.2 The Council agrees with the campaign's principal sentiment that young people's transition out of care and into adulthood is extremely difficult and that managing money for the first time can leave care leavers vulnerable and at risk of falling into debt.

3.3 Corporate parenting is a statutory function of the Council. The underlying principle is that every local authority will seek the same outcomes for young people in care that every good parent would want for their own children.

3.4 Care leavers who were looked after by a local authority rather than their parents are amongst the most vulnerable groups in our community. Outcomes for this group are generally poor and, as corporate parents, the Council wants to keep them safe, make sure their experiences leaving care and moving into independent living are positive and improve their ongoing life chances.

- 3.5 The Council accepts its role as a corporate parent and wants to further support those young people who have left care to be able to live independently as adults. The proposed scheme will reduce to nil the amount of council tax a care leaver pays and so this debt cannot become a problem for them in the future.
- 3.6 The Children's Society details the case for care leavers up to the age of at least 21 to be exempted from paying council tax. However, the Council has a parenting role in some circumstances that lasts until the care leaver is 24, for this reason and in order to keep the scheme administratively easier to support, it is proposed to apply care leavers relief to every care leaver until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 3.7 Under section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 the Council has a general discretionary power to reduce liability for council tax in relation to individual cases or class (es) of cases that it may determine where national discounts and exemptions cannot be applied.
- 3.8 The most cost efficient way of determining the value of care leaver's relief is to calculate how much council tax the care leaver still has to pay after any existing statutory discounts and Council Tax Support (CTS) has been taken into account. Current estimates suggest this would be around £6,000 per annum and therefore this does not represent a significant financial commitment for the Council
- 3.9 Care Leavers relief will be available from the start of the 2018/2019 financial year.

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The policy statement presented in the Appendix would meet the requirements of Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended).

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The cost of any care leavers discounts awarded under the Section 13A Policy would be met in full by the council taxpayer.
- 5.2 The total cost of the relief proposed cannot be determined precisely as the number of care leavers who would continue to reside in Halton cannot be accurately determined and neither can the value of the national discounts and exemptions or CTS they would be entitled to.
- 5.3 Taking into consideration these uncertainties this relief is expected to cost the Council in the region of £6000 per year.

#### **6. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

N/A



**6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

N/A

**6.3 A Healthy Halton**

N/A

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

N/A

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

Depending upon the specific circumstances, the award of discounts under the Section 13A Policy have the potential to affect all of the Council priorities above.

**7. RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The total cost of awards granted may become significant, therefore the number and cost of awards will be closely monitored.

**8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The eligibility criteria and application process relation to the Section 13A Policy will ensure that no particular groups of individuals are excluded.

8.2 In accordance with our equality duty, this proposal will result in more favourable treatment being applied to care leavers living in Halton, in order to advance equality of opportunity, with the overall aim of removing financial barriers, resulting in increased opportunities for employment, education and/or training opportunities.

**9. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Section 13A Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended)	Revenues & Financial Management Kingsway House Widnes	Stephen Baker

**APPENDIX**

**Council Tax**  
**Section 13A Discount**  
**Policy Statement**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) provides the Council with discretionary powers to reduce the amount of council tax liability, in exceptional circumstances where national discounts and exemptions cannot be applied.
- 1.2 This would only be applied in exceptional circumstances and would then be considered on a case-by-case basis or for several taxpayers who may fall into a group due to similar circumstances e.g. those who have had to leave their home due to flooding or fire or care leavers
- 1.3 Council tax legislation provides a wide range of discounts, exemptions and reductions that have the effect of reducing the level of council tax due. Applicants will therefore be expected to have exhausted all other options before making an application under this policy.
- 1.4 Prior to applying this policy, consideration should be given to whether alternative actions should be undertaken. Therefore, this policy will only consider exceptional circumstances, where it is appropriate and fair to provide a discretionary discount.

## **2. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 Section 13A discount awards will be awarded when tax payers experience unforeseen or exceptional circumstances that threaten their ability to pay their council tax.
- 2.2 Given that the cost of any such award has to be met by the Borough's council taxpayers, any applications must meet the underlying principle of offering value for money to council tax payers. This will be achieved by asking for a range of information to support each application.
- 2.3 From time to time Government may introduce a specific scheme in response to an event such as a natural disaster (e.g. flooding). Where such schemes are introduced, funding is normally fully met by Government without impact upon the local council taxpayer.
- 2.4 Any such schemes that are introduced, in so far as they fall to be administered under Section 13A of The Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), will be administered in accordance with instructions and guidance set out by Government.
- 2.5 The Council will consider making a Section 13A award to applicants who meet the qualifying criteria set out below. All applicants will be considered on their individual merits.
- 2.6 Section 3 of this policy details classes of case which may be entitled to a reduction in accordance with Section 13A.

### **3. SECTION 13A (1) (C) DISCRETIONARY RELIEF FOR CARE LEAVERS**

- 3.1 The Council may reduce to nil the council tax liability of care leavers who satisfy all of the following criteria:
- The person is a former relevant care leaver as defined within the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
  - The person is someone for whom Halton Borough Council has acted previously as a corporate parent
  - The person has left care and is aged between 18 and 25
  - The person resides within Halton and is liable to pay council tax to Halton Borough Council with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.
- 3.2 Any award given to an individual case will end on the day before their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday
- 3.3 Where the care leaver is liable for more than one property the discretionary relief will be awarded in respect of only one property, that being the persons sole or main residence.
- 3.4 The amount of relief granted will be the amount of council tax the care leaver still has to pay after any existing statutory discounts and Council Tax Support (CTS) has been taken into account.
- 3.5 Any award given will be automatically granted and any change to the care leaver's circumstances during the financial year will be taken into consideration.

### **4. APPLICATION PROCESS**

- 4.1 The features of the Council's Section 13A Discount Policy are that:
- It is discretionary;
  - An applicant does not have the statutory right to a payment;
  - The operation of the scheme is for the Council to determine;
  - The Council may choose to vary the way in which funds are allocated according to community needs;
  - Other than the normal appeal against the application of discretionary function by Judicial Review, there is no right to a statutory appeal of any application decision. In the interest of fairness the Council will operate an internal review procedure for appeals in a non-discriminatory way;
- 4.2 In order for an application to be considered, there is no formal application form. All applications shall be made in writing, written or by email, by the Council Taxpayer or by somebody authorised to act on their behalf. It should be

submitted to the Council Tax Team under the title of Section 13A Discount application. Applications should relate to the current council tax year, and should include the following information:

- The reason for the request;
- How long the discount is wanted for;
- The steps that have been taken to meet or mitigate the council tax liability;
- The cost of such a discount.

## **5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

5.1 There are no pre-set criteria for the award of a Section 13A council tax discount. Each application will therefore be considered on its individual merits.

5.2 In deciding whether to award a Section 13A discount, the Applicant's particular circumstances will be considered. The Applicant will therefore be asked to provide supporting evidence to substantiate the answers that they give to the questions above. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Income and expenditure statements;
- Any sources of credit such as debit cards, credit cards, store cards, overdraft facilities and loan arrangements;
- Any financial assistance which is likely to be available to the Applicant from other sources.

5.3 Decisions on eligibility for an award will be made by the Operational Director Finance. All awards will be made by crediting the award value to the council tax account to which it applies.

5.4 The Council will notify the Applicant in writing of the outcome within 20 working days of the date the decision is made. Where the request for an award under Section 13A is unsuccessful or is not met in full, the Council will explain the reasons why the decision was made.

## **6. THE RIGHT TO APPEAL**

6.1 Section 13A awards are administered under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) and are not subject to a statutory appeals process. Appeals will therefore be decided by the Council.

6.2 The Council will operate the policy for dealing with appeals about either the decision not to make an award or the amount of an award.

6.3 An applicant who requires further explanation of a Section 13A Discount decision must request this in writing within 20 days of notification of the decision.

- 6.4 An applicant who disagrees with a decision may appeal the decision within 20 days of the original decision. Where possible, the Council will initially try to resolve the matter by explaining the reasons for the decision to the Applicant in writing.
- 6.5 Decisions on appeals will be made by the Strategic Director Enterprise, Community & Resources. If it is decided to reject the appeal, the reasons for the decision will be provided to the Applicant within 20 working days.

## **7. OVERPAYMENTS**

- 7.1 If the Council becomes aware that the information contained in an application for a Section 13A discount award was incorrect or that relevant information was not declared, either intentionally or otherwise, the Council may seek to recover the value of any award made as a result of that application.
- 7.2 The award will be removed from the relevant council tax account and any resulting balance will be subject to the normal methods of collection and recovery applicable to such accounts.

## **8. FRAUD**

- 8.1 The Council is committed to prevent fraud. Any applicant who tries to fraudulently claim a Section 13A discount might have committed an offence under the Fraud Act 2006. If the Council suspects that fraud may have occurred, the matter will be investigated as appropriate and this could lead to criminal proceedings.

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community & Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Discretionary Support Scheme Topic Group - Update

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1. To provide an update on the work of the Discretionary Support Scheme Topic Group following their latest meeting.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION That the Topic Group’s review of progress with the Discretionary Support Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme and Universal Credit, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Discretionary Support Scheme (DSS) is now in its fifth year of operation. Over this period the Scheme has been developed and amended where necessary with the Corporate Policy & Performance Board Topic Group’s input.

3.2 On 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 the Topic Group met to review progress with the Discretionary Support Scheme. They also received an update regarding Discretionary Housing Payments and implementation of Universal Credit. A report received by the Topic Group at its meeting is presented in Appendix 1.

3.3 When responsibility was passed from the Department for Work and Pensions to the Council and the Discretionary Support Scheme was established, the associated grant funding was significantly reduced by Government. The DSS Team and a proportion of the DSS awards granted are funded, but the Board previously agreed to carry forward any unspent DSS funds, in order to provide a reserve which would be used to sustain the Scheme for as long as possible. Details of funding and expenditure are provided in section 3.3 of Appendix 1.

- 3.4 The DSS made over a thousand awards during 2016/17 totalling £167,611. The analysis of applications by type and awards granted were considered in detail.
- 3.5 Expenditure on DHPs has stabilised during 2016/17. This appears to be due to the delay by Government in implementing the reduction in the benefits cap and from reduced spending on under-occupancy (the bedroom tax).
- 3.6 An update was provided on the roll-out of Universal Credit full service in Halton since 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016.
- 3.7 The Topic Group also considered proposals for minor changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which are intended to bring the Scheme into line with national Housing Benefits scheme. These are the subject of a separate report to the Board elsewhere on the Agenda.
- 3.8 It was further noted that work had been undertaken to establish the cost of implementing the Board's previous proposal, to limit the number of liability orders which would be taken out in respect of the same council taxpayers. The potential cost is estimated to be around £150,000 and therefore it was agreed not to implement the change at this time.

#### **4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

- 4.1 The Discretionary Support Scheme and Discretionary Housing Payments have the potential to affect all of the Council priorities.

#### **5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 DSS and DHP payments will be monitored by the Topic Group to ensure they remain within budget.

#### **6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 6.1 The eligibility criteria and application process for DSS and DHP ensure that no particular groups of individuals are excluded.

#### **7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

- 7.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.



**REPORT TO:** Discretionary Support Scheme Topic Group

**DATE:** 19 July 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Updates Regarding;  
- Discretionary Support Scheme  
- Discretionary Housing Payments  
- Universal Credit

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1. To provide updates regarding delivery of the Discretionary Support Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments and Universal Credit.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the latest position regarding the Discretionary Support Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments and Universal Credit, be noted.**

**3.0 Discretionary Support Scheme**

3.1 The Discretionary Support Scheme (The Scheme) is now in its fifth year of operation. During this period the Scheme has been developed and amended where necessary following recommendations by the Topic Group.

3.2 The Discretionary Support Team have developed a broader remit to their role over the past year. In addition to administering the Scheme, they now also provide budgeting support to assist customers to manage their finances. The Team also provide guidance and signposting advice and have attended a number of training courses to help them develop their role.

- 3.3 The funding and expenditure for the Scheme during 2016/17 is shown in the table below.

#### Funding and Expenditure 2016/17

B/f administration grant	£24,148
2016/17 administration grant	<u>£114,380</u>
Total	£138,528
Less DSS team expenditure	£137,513
<b>C/f administration grant</b>	<b>£1,015</b>
B/f DSS reserve	£932,273
2016/17 DSS funding	<u>£150,000</u>
Total	£1,082,273
Less DSS expenditure	£137,606
<b>C/f DSS reserve (incl admin grant c/f)</b>	<b>£945,682</b>

- 3.4 Expenditure during 2016/17 was spread relatively as follows;

	Total Awarded (£)	Monthly % Awarded
April	12,428	1%
May	13,026	1%
June	19,282	2%
July	17,493	1%
August	17,509	1%
September	18,139	2%
October	11,237	1%
November	11,316	1%
December	6,756	1%
January	13,334	1%
February	8,318	1%
March	18,774	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>167,611 *</b>	<b>14%</b>

\*Gross figure (before discounts etc)

- 3.5 The number of awards and average amount of each award paid during 2016/17 was as follows;

Type of Award	Number Granted	Cost (£)	Average Award (£)
Emergency Support	756	43,007	57
Community Support	248	124,604	502
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,004</b>	<b>167,611</b>	<b>167</b>

3.6 The following table shows the number of applications received during 2016/17, together with the number granted analysed between Emergency Support and Community Support;

Breakdown Of Applications		Emergency Support		Community Support	
		Runcorn	Widnes	Runcorn	Widnes
Received Applications	2,529	935	910	292	318
Granted	1,004	398	358	112	136
Awarded Amount £	167,611	22,120	20,886	58,972	65,631
Percentage Awarded	100%	13%	12%	36%	39%
Rejected	1,525	537	552	180	182

3.7 Just over half of the applications received were rejected and the reasons for rejection are detailed below;

Reasons For Rejection	
Not a Halton Resident	74
Customer Sanctioned	38
Alternative help available	420
Requested Cash	4
Requested Fuel Payment	0
Signposted to approved partner to complete application	0
Criteria Check	872
Not a Discretionary Support Application	0
Withdrawn Application	27
Two Awards Within 12 Months	84
Not Eligible	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,525</b>

3.8 Of those applications which were approved, the main categories of award were as follows;

<b>Awarded Items</b>	<b>Number</b>
One Adult to last up to 2 weeks food award	466
Child between 10 and 16 food award	64
Child up to the age of 9 food award	356
2 Adults food award	260
Toiletry Pack	116
Vegetarian food award	10
Gluten Free food award	9
Nut Allergy food award	3
Cold food award	2
Household Items	0
Bedding Only	48
Single Bed with Bedding	161
Single Bed	9
Single Mattress	31
Single Bed Frame Only	17
Double Bed	1
Double Bed with Bedding	12
Double Mattress	23
Double Bed Frame Only	10
Bunk Beds with Bedding	3
Bunk Beds	3
Cot with Bedding	16
Sofa	136
<b>Awarded Items</b>	<b>Number</b>
Set of Curtains	312
Cooker	92
Washing Machine	17
Fridge	9
Kitchen Equipment	154
Table and Chairs	0
Clothing	3
Pram	0
Fuel	250
Removal	15
Cooker Connection	3

3.9 The table below shows where referrals were received from and the percentage of the total this represented, along with the number of awards made;

<b>Signposting</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>%</b>
Ashley House	0	0%
Belvedere	0	0%
Children's Duty Team	0	0%
Citizens Advice Team	139	7%
DWP	1,111	58%
Fuel Supplier	2	0%
Grangeway Court	11	1%
HDL	21	1%
HHT	69	4%
Housing Solution	5	0%
<b>Signposting</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>%</b>
HPIJ	1	0%
LHT	4	0%
Police	3	0%
Riverside	10	1%
SHAP	74	4%
Social Services	23	1%
Welfare Rights	27	1%
Women's Aid	6	0%
Word Of Mouth	397	21%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,903</b>	<b>100%</b>

3.10 Based upon the experience of 2016/17, there is clearly a continued need for the Discretionary Support Scheme and the Scheme appears to be operating well. At this stage it is not proposed to make any changes to the Scheme's application criteria. The Appendix presents three examples of feedback received from customers regarding the support they have received.

#### **4.0 Discretionary Housing Payments**

4.1 In 2016/17 total grant funding of £388,533 was received for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs). Actual expenditure totalled £379,974, leaving an underspent balance of £8,559. This compared with an overspend of £17,656 in 2015/16. In 2016/17 1,201 DHP awards were made compared with 1,516 awards in 2015/16.

4.2 The reason for the reduction in expenditure in 2016/17 can be attributed to two factors. Firstly, the delay by Government in implementing the reduction in the Benefits Cap. Initially we were informed by the DWP that the Benefits Cap reduction would be made in September 2016, but it was actually introduced in December 2016. As a result we did not receive as many DHP applications from claimants impacted by the reduction in the Benefits Cap as anticipated. Secondly, the spend on under-occupancy (Bedroom Tax) has reduced significantly during 2016/17, compared with 2015/16. In 2016/17 £204,966 was awarded, which was 54% of the DHP spend, compared with £264,549 DHP award for 2015/16, which was 73% of total DHP spend.

4.3 The table below shows an analysis of DHP spend for 2016/17;

<b>Purpose of DHP award</b>	<b>Total amount of DHP award £</b>
Benefits cap	44,547
Under occupancy (Bedroom Tax)	204,966
LHA reform	14,840
Other	115,621
<b>Total</b>	<b>379,974</b>

4.4 Of the 1,201 DHP awards paid during 2016/17, 198 were to UC claimants with a total value of £67,420.

4.5 The table below provides a summary of DHP grant funding and expenditure since April 2013.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Grant Funding £</b>	<b>Amount Spent £</b>	<b>Council contribution £</b>	<b>No. of awards</b>
2013/14	382,452	413,562	31,110	2,620
2014/15	386,553	518,310	131,757	2,016
2015/16	343,725	361,381	17,656	1,516
2016/17	388,533	379,974	-	1,201
2017/18 (to date)	406,692	220,166	n/a	621

4.6 We have continued to grant full year awards to those customers who are in properties adapted for a disability, those with foster carer responsibilities and those who are adopting (or going through the process of adoption).

4.7 Rent in-advance cases are only supported through DHP payments if the household are receiving assistance from Housing Solutions, either through statutory homeless duties or those where homeless prevention assistance has been granted.

4.8 There are a wider number of reforms under the Welfare Reform Bill that may impact during 2017/18. These include; reduction in tax credit payments to restrict income to two children where a child is born after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, and restriction of social sector rents to local housing allowance rates. These changes will reduce the income to households and in turn increase the shortfall between income and expenditure.

**5.0 Universal Credit**

5.1 On 27<sup>th</sup> July 2016, Halton Job Centres commenced the roll out of Universal Credit (UC) Full Service. This meant that all new working age claimants must claim Universal Credit (UC), and all claims must be made on-line. The Council agreed with the DWP to provide Universal Support from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, which involved delivering Assisted Digital Support and Personal Budgeting Support.

5.2 In summary, the impact of UC on claimants is as follows;

- 6 weeks wait for the first UC payment is built into the system
- 7 days from the UC application during which the claimant is not paid
- DSS applications provide evidence that the 6 weeks wait causes hardship
- HHT have reported increases in rent arrears for their tenants who are receiving UC
- DWP are administering three systems, UC Live Service, UC Full Service and legacy systems, which causes confusion for customers, DWP staff and Council staff.

5.3 As of May 2017 there were 6,185 UC claimants in Halton. The table below shows the growth in the UC caseload in Halton since April 2015.

<b>Date</b>	<b>UC caseload</b>
April 2015	720
Sept 2015	1,592
Dec 2015	1,901
May 2016	1,990
Aug 2016	2,171

Oct 2016	3,330
Nov 2016	3,779
Dec 2016	4,122
April 2017	5,941
May 2017	6,185

- 5.4 UC Full Service is still being rolled out nationally and neighbouring authorities in the Liverpool City Region are going UC Full Service later this year. Under current plans the DWP intends to commence a managed migration process in 2019. This will see the DWP mandatorily terminating current legacy awards and replacing them with a claim for UC. In this process, transitional protection will apply for those whose UC award is lower than their legacy benefit entitlement. This process is due to be complete in 2022.



## **Case Studies**

### **Example 1 - Community Support**

Mr A Customer from Widnes - This is a special case and highlights the importance of our help and guidance on the Scheme. Mr A is terminally ill and has come to the Council for a second time for assistance with household items, one of the items being a bed. He required a specialist bed, due to the nature of his illness and his size. After doing some research for the customer, it was established that he needed to contact his district nurse to request help with his sleeping arrangements and to possibly get a hospital bed for his home. He did this upon our advice and as a result the following occurred.

It emerged that Mr A had 'slipped through the net'. When the district nurse visited him she was appalled by the way he was having to live and immediately started to put numerous things into place for him and advised he should really be in hospital receiving palliative care. He called to say thank you and to say that without our advice, information and encouragement he may never have made this call or even thought that he needed to. He feels that because of our assistance, life for him and his family is starting to change for the better and he could not express how grateful he was for this and for creating a light at the end of the tunnel for them.

### **Example 2 - Emergency Support**

A customer from Runcorn called immediately after receiving her food parcel and said thank you so much for helping us, she couldn't believe it – the food is amazing and really is a big help.

### **Example 3 - Personal Budgeting Support (PBS)**

Mrs K was originally referred to PBS in April 2016 due to her husband coming out of work and their having to make a joint claim under Universal Credit. They were struggling to adjust to the Universal Credit award and were worried about arrears with rent and keeping up credit cards payments. After looking into her circumstances her rent was manageable and we advised Mrs K to contact the credit card providers and ask them to accept gesture payments which at this point they did and the PBS case was closed.

In June 2016 Mrs K asked her work coach at the DWP to be re-referred for PBS once again. Mrs K has engaged really well and has followed all advice we have provided. Her major concern again was her credit cards, she thought she was behind with her rent but her husband managed to make a payment so her rent is up to date and should remain that way now.

Previously the credit card company had reduced the minimum payment from £119 to £50, however, this was a struggle for the customer to meet the minimum payments. We have therefore worked with Mrs K and the credit card company who have agreed to accept £1 per month payment and suspend all interest on the account until Mrs K gets back on her feet. The Customer was very grateful for all the advice given and said she feels so much better as a result.

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director–Enterprise, Community & Resources

**PORTFOLIO:** Resources

**SUBJECT:** Council Tax Reduction Scheme

**WARD(S):** Borough-wide

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To outline proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19, for which public consultation will be required.

**2. RECOMMENDATION: That the changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme outlined in the report be recommended to Executive Board for public consultation.**

## **3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme was introduced in April 2013 replacing Council Tax Benefit, and is based on the national Housing Benefit scheme. This local scheme ensured that existing support for claimants with disabilities, claimants with children and claimants who are working were maintained. At the end of the Council Tax Reduction calculation a 21.55% reduction is made from every working age award to cover the shortfall in the Government grant allocation for Halton.

3.2 Since April 2013 the national Housing Benefit scheme has been amended by Government regulations, but the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme has not been updated to reflect these changes.

3.3 The national Housing Benefit scheme has been adjusted to take account of changes to other national welfare benefits such as Tax Credits. It is therefore appropriate at this stage to consider broadly aligning the Council Tax Reduction Scheme with the Housing Benefit scheme to achieve a measure of consistency that previously existed in April 2013.

3.4 In 2015 the Chancellor announced that from April 2017 support provided to families through tax credits would be limited to two children, so any subsequent children born after April 2017 would not be eligible for further support. An equivalent change was made in the Housing Benefit scheme to restrict the young person allowance to two children to ensure consistency between both benefits.

3.5 During 2016 the Government removed the Family Premium from the calculation of new Housing Benefit claims. The Family Premium is part of how the needs of any claimant is assessed and is included in their “applicable amount” which is compared with their income.

**4. PROPOSED CHANGES**

4.1 In order to broadly re-align the Council Tax Reduction Scheme with the national Housing Benefit scheme, it is proposed to undertake public consultation with regard to making the changes indicated in Table 1 below for 2018/19. These changes will only affect “new” claimants from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. Existing working age persons currently receiving Council Tax Reduction and pensioners are not affected by the changes.

**Table 1**

(a)	To restrict the young person allowance to 2 children for any children born after 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018.
(b)	To remove the Family Premium from the calculation of new claims made by working age persons from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2018. The Family Premium is part of how we assess the needs of any claimant and is included in their ‘applicable amount’ which is compared with their income. The Family Premium rate is £17.45 per week, and if we followed the change then new claimants may lose up to £3.49 Council Tax Reduction each week. The Family Premium change will not affect those claimants on Universal Credit, Income Support, Income related Employment and Support Allowance or Income based Job Seekers Allowance.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Introducing these changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme will result in a small saving to the Council. However, at this stage it is difficult to estimate the number of new claimants with the particular circumstances shown in Table 1, in order to calculate a meaningful figure.

**6. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES**

6.1 In 2016/17 the Council paid £9.3m in Council Tax Reduction to 13,145 claimants and these proposals will not impact upon this group of residents. In the longer term the changes will impact upon new claimants and this has the potential to affect all of the Council’s priorities.

**7. RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 In the longer term these proposed changes will mean the Council will have to collect more council tax, but it is anticipated that the amount will not be significant.

- 7.2 The proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme will require changes to the computer system used to administer the Scheme, however, these can be accommodated.

**8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 8.1 If it is approved for the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme to go to public consultation then an Equality Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken.

**9. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

- 9.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Enterprise, Community & Resources

**SUBJECT:** Performance Management Reports for Quarter 1 of 2017/18

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To consider, and to raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the first quarter period to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2017-18 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
- Finance
  - Human Resources & Organisational Development
  - ICT and Administrative Support
  - Legal and Democracy
  - Policy & Performance
  - Property Services
  - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services

The report details progress made against objectives and milestones and performance targets and provides information relating to key developments and emerging issues that have arisen during the period.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board**

- 1) Receive the first quarter performance management report;**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification; and**
- 3) Highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be reported at a future meeting of the Board.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Departmental objectives provide a clear statement on what services are planning to achieve and to show how they contribute to the Council's strategic priorities. Such information is central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and

Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

**5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

**6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 Departmental service objectives and performance measures, both local and national are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities. The introduction of a Thematic Priority Based Report and the identification of business critical objectives/ milestones and performance indicators will further support organisational improvement.

6.2 Although some objectives link specifically to one priority area, the nature of the cross - cutting activities being reported, means that to a greater or lesser extent a contribution is made to one or more of the Council priorities.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Not applicable.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Not applicable.

**9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTIONS 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Not applicable

## Corporate Policy and Performance Board– Priority Based Monitoring

Reporting Period: **Quarter 1 – 1st April 2017 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the first quarter of 2017/18 for service areas within the remit of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2015-18 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Board in relation to the Council's priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency i.e.:
- Financial Services
  - Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency
  - ICT Infrastructure
  - Legal and Democracy
  - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
  - Property Services
- 1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 8 of this report.

### 2.0 Key Developments

- 2.1 There have been a number of developments within the Directorate during the period which include:-

#### Finance

#### **Revenues and Financial Management Division**

- 2.2 Following closure of the 2016/17 year-end accounts, the draft Statement of Accounts was signed off as required by the Operational Director on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and passed to Grant Thornton UK LLP for them to start the audit of the accounts. Findings of the audit will be reported to the Business Efficiency Board on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017.
- 2.4 The 2016/17 outturn was reported to the Executive Board on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017. Net expenditure for the year was £0.6m above the approved budget of £98.5m. The level of the general fund balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 now stands at £4.8m. School balances as at year-end total £4.8m which will carry forward into 2017/18. Capital expenditure for the year was £84.8m.
- 2.5 Piloting of 100% retention of business rates for all Councils within the Liverpool City Region commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017, ahead of the national scheme which is expected to be rolled out in 2020. Absence of the Local Government Finance Bill within the recent Queens Speech has placed uncertainty on the progress of business rates retention and on the future progression of local government finance and further information will be provided as this becomes available.



### **Audit, Procurement & Operational Finance Division**

- 2.6 Having previously implemented a successful early payment scheme the Council is now expanding the programme through a partnership with Oxygen Finance. A key objective of the Supplier Incentive Programme (SIP) is to improve the ordering, invoice management and payment processes for the benefit of all parties. The SIP is being re-launched in August and there will be a dedicated micro-site on the Council's website and publicity and marketing literature will be sent to the Council's supplier base.
- 2.7 In July 2017 the Council will go live with a prepaid card solution for Direct Payment users which will remove the need for direct payment clients to manage a separate bank account for their direct payment. It will also provide the Council with real-time information on how clients are utilising their direct payment funding, which will reduce auditing requirements. It is anticipated that prepaid cards will be offered to existing direct payment clients once the new systems become embedded.
- 2.8 The cost of external audit services will reduce following a highly successful procurement process undertaken by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA). Aggregate savings for the sector are expected to exceed £6m per annum, equivalent to a reduction of approximately 18% in the scale fees payable by local bodies. These contracts will cover a five year period commencing with the audit of accounts for 2018/19 with an option to extend the contracts for a further two year period.

### Human Resources, Organisational Development, Policy, Performance and Efficiency

- 2.9 A redesigned operating model has been developed for the Policy, People, Performance and Efficiency Division and this will contribute to meeting future revenue savings. Some restructuring is involved and consultation is to take place with employees in the service from 12th July to 9th August 2017 with the planned implementation date for a final model being 1st December 2017.
- 2.10 A new wellbeing focused absence management policy, implemented on 1st July 2017, has now been communicated to a large number of managers across the Council. The Learning & Development team have had responsibility for the training, supported by the Policy and Employment Relations teams and the business analysis function in ICT Services. Following go-live, implementation will be monitored using statistical data and financial reporting (refer to objective PPPE 03 in Appendix 1).
- 2.11 The Council's Apprenticeship Policy is now in place, designed to enable the Council to meet its obligations, as far as it is economically able to, in respect of an apprenticeship target set by Government. A number of stakeholder sessions were held in quarter 1, and a skills audit has been undertaken to identify opportunities for the development of apprenticeship roles.
- 2.12 At the time of writing, 8 apprenticeship opportunities are at business case stage and it is anticipated that these will be taken through the corporate approvals process, resulting in new starts that will contribute to the Council's target of 20 apprenticeships for 2017/18. A further 5 opportunities have been identified and support will be provided to managers to develop business cases where appropriate. A regional practitioner network continues to consider how collective resources can have the maximum impact, and links have been developed across the Liverpool City Region to ensure efficient and effective apprenticeship recruitment, efficient procurement and delivery of training, as well as some opportunities for funding placements in the City Region local authorities.
- 2.13 Following revised processes for managing agency worker placements the reduction in full year spend has been quantified as £623,000 for the financial year 2016/17, bringing overall spend down to £1.714m (reduced from £3.66m in 2014/15). The number of hours of agency worker usage has reduced from 155,900 hours in 2014/15 to 84,592 in 2016/17. During quarter 2, the revised agency worker processes will be subject to an internal audit to ensure robustness.

- 2.14 Within the Efficiency Programme, a review of Children in Care Services has been undertaken, with an As-Is report scheduled to be considered by the Efficiency Programme Board on 20th July. Recommendations will be developed once that report has been fully considered. The review the use of community assets, and the services delivered from them is underway. A report on The Council's Halton Direct Link facilities was considered by the Efficiency Programme Board in May 17, which has demonstrated efficient use of the facilities across the core operating hours.
- 2.15 The Corporate Induction has been re-designed to better meet the needs of new employees. A new format means that delegates are free to network with one another and engage with service representatives in a 'market-place' type approach. We will continue to add relevant services as they are identified so delegates receive not only key organisational information but health and social advice and guidance, supporting our commitment to developing employee wellbeing in line with the Organisational Development Strategy. Initial feedback from both delegates and service providers has been extremely positive, citing better levels of engagement and increased relevance.

### ICT Infrastructure

- 2.16 Supported by the current rolling capital programme the authority's technology infrastructure has undergone further upgrade and development with continued major changes to its internal network, Server and Desktop and Data Storage Infrastructures and this approach will allow and maintain incremental growth, change and redevelopment of the authority's main computing infrastructure solution.
- 2.17 The investment strategy over the last 4 years has incrementally developed the Halton Cloud Services facility. This facility now comprises of two active/active Data Centre facilities that enable the deployment of change within the authority quickly and efficiently.
- 2.18 This digital strategy fully supports the principle objective set at the start of this rolling programme surrounding the delivery of agile working, access to all applications and associated data sets through centrally managed, seamless, secure and compliant platforms.
- 2.19 The incremental growth of the authorities own communications and data network facilities is an essential aspect of the Halton Technology Programme. Wi-Fi facilities have been utilised throughout the borough for many years effectively, but now require a new focus have to deal with additional agility demands in order to not reduce the user experience or negatively impact upon business processes.
- 2.20 Complimenting all of the server based work the roll - out programme for the replacement desktop systems is now underway with over 500 users and will be rolled out to all users by the project team over the coming months, with user feedback being extremely positive. This will realise considerable opportunity for the identification of further efficiency and service improvement opportunities.

### Legal and Democracy

- 2.21 The Elections team have ensured that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Mayoral Election in May and the General Election in June ran smoothly and efficiently.
- 2.22 Council adopted the revised Constitution in May, and the Legal team also contributed to the new Combined Authority Constitution, which has been approved.

Catering, Stadium and Registration Services

- 2.23 The main focus for Stadium staff over the past few months has been the hosting of the Elton John concert on 18<sup>th</sup> June, the planning both internally and with external partners, particularly in light of recent terrorist attacks, was very detailed and complex. The event has been hailed as a huge success by all parties involved, and the promoters are wholly positive about the venue with the possibility of two concerts being hosted next year.
- 2.24 Considering the enormous competition to host these events it is a clear testimony to the staff employed here of how well organised they are, there was numerous comments on all Social Media with 99% of it being positive.
- 2.25 Whilst gym membership is marginally down on the previous quarter the pitch bookings have continued throughout the spring and early summer, with leisure leagues and soccer sixes making regular Monday and Wednesday night bookings, Liverpool Ladies have also booked the whole pitch one night a week from 6pm till 10pm from July 2017 to April 2018.
- 2.26 Halton Table Tennis club have become the first club in the country to achieve and receive the new Clubmark accreditation with Harry Watson winning a gold medal in the inter-regional finals and the club also winning a double gold and silver for the overall team at this event.
- 2.27 The award winning training programme offered by Halton Borough Council's School Meals Service has seen another 10 students start their NVQ Level 1 and 3 and of last year's students 3 have gone on to be promoted to School Catering Supervisors.
- 2.28 To try and promote healthy eating Halton BC introduced The great Halton Bake off for Primary age students, they had to produce their favourite cakes but with reduced sugar, they had to bake them at the stadium in competition with a number of other schools all linked to Mental Health week.
- 2.29 We have launched three Healthy Eating Salad Bars into High Schools, The Healthy Hut at OCA, The Healthy Salad Bar in the conservatory at Wade Deacon High School and The Healthy Counter and Salad Bar at St Peter and Paul's High School.

Property Services

- 2.30 Both phase 1&2 of the refurbishment of Fairfield Primary are now complete. The phase 3 works, consisting of works to pitches and upgrading the playground area adjacent to the junior school building, are expected to be complete by September 2017. Also work on the Crow Wood Park pavilion is scheduled to commence in August 2017 with a completion date of December.
- 2.31 The works to upgrade the Widnes Market lighting Internally are now mainly complete, the main hall lighting, bulkhead lighting and fan-light spotlighting being complete, the upgrading of the electric meters have also been completed as has the upgrading to the external market lighting. A preferred contractor is now in place for the roofing works, and approval is awaited from Saville's, who act on behalf of Morrison's, in respect of erecting scaffolding on their land. The anticipated start on site is September with completion being anticipated in January 2018.
- 2.32 The two bids submitted by Halton as part of the Liverpool City Region One Public Estate (OPE) bid have both been successful. The value of the bid is approximately £66k in total to undertaken master planning exercises in respect of the Former Police Station and Magistrates Court site and the immediate surrounding area in Widnes, and the current Runcorn Magistrates Court building and surrounding area of Halton Lea., the latter being linked to the healthy new towns programme.

- 2.33 We have obtained a proposal to undertake a master planning exercise at both the Widnes and Runcorn Sites. We have accepted their proposal for the Widnes site and will soon be entering into a contract with them with a view to them commencing the master planning exercise. It is envisaged that this master planning exercise for the Runcorn site will commence later in the year.
- 2.34 Rider Levett Bucknall (RLB) have been appointed to undertake a feasibility study in respect of the proposed Integrated Health & Wellbeing Hub for the Windmill Hill area housing all necessary services. An initial meeting has been held with RLB to discuss the proposal and agree the most appropriate way to proceed ensuring all stakeholders are engaged in the process. It is anticipated that a number of stakeholder engagement sessions will take place over the next few months in order to help shape the proposals and the study is expected to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.

### 3.0 Emerging Issues

- 3.1 A number of emerging issues have been identified during the period that will impact upon the work of the Directorate including:-

#### Finance

- 3.2 The Department for Works and Pensions is rolling out a new initiative known as Wider Use of Real Time Information (WURTI) during 2017 for local authority Benefits Services, and Halton is scheduled to go live in September 2017. This will provide Benefit Processors with desktop access to HM Revenue & Customs' Pay As You Earn information for earnings and non-State Pension information for customers who are in receipt of Housing Benefit and / or Local Council Tax Reduction. This information can be used as evidence when assessing benefit entitlement.
- 3.3 Work is underway in revising the Medium Term Financial Strategy; this is being continually updated as new information is received on a frequent basis. The Budget Working Group (BWG) have had an initial meeting to start the process for identifying future budget savings.
- 3.4 The Public Sector Internal Audit Standards require that an external assessment of a local authority's internal audit function is carried out once every five years by a qualified, independent assessor or assessment team from outside of the organisation. External assessments can be in the form of a full external assessment, or a self-assessment with independent external validation.
- 3.5 The North West Chief Audit Executives' Group has established a 'peer-review' process that is managed and operated by the constituent authorities. This process addresses the requirement of external assessment through 'self-assessment with independent external validation'.
- 3.6 The Council's internal audit service is to be subject to a peer review in September. The review will focus on audit activity from 2016/17 and involve interviews with key stakeholders. On conclusion of the review a report will be produced which will be presented to the Business Efficiency Board.

#### ICT Infrastructure

- 3.7 Following the recent malware incidents across the country considerable efforts have been made to safe guard the authority's server infrastructure with all Windows Server 2003 operating systems removed through upgrades to many of the estates servers now utilizing the latest operating systems where possible.

- 3.8 The Council is by necessity having to make a number of technical security changes as we start to try and slow down the onslaught of malicious emails being received that will inevitably start to impact upon all users.
- 3.9 We are currently at 70'000 malicious emails per day and rising. Over the last few Friday's the 21<sup>st</sup> July and 28<sup>th</sup> July particularly, during the afternoon at around 4pm the authority had 30'000 malicious emails hit the system in less than an hour and this pattern continues – the technical teams are dealing with these ever increasing issues – but for ourselves as users ultimately it means more measures will have to be put in place and this may slow down email transit and potentially limit access to particular mass email blog's or auto generated commercial mails.
- 3.10 Email is increasingly being used by criminals as a delivery mechanism for infecting computers and their associated networks with malicious intent, as well as, attempting to lure users to external websites in order to steal your secure user credentials, banking information and personal data – particularly on your home based devices. Over time and very recently, these emails have become far more sophisticated. Collectively these emails are known as 'spam'.
- 3.11 Whilst the authority will continue to deploy anti-spam protection systems and quarantine techniques it remains the case that all users need to remain vigilant and exercise extreme caution when using e-mail applications in order to maintain the Councils defenses effectively.

### Legal and Democracy

- 3.12 The Legal team are supporting a group of Members in reviewing the Council's committee structures, ensuring that they are fit for purpose. Any changes arising from the review would be expected to be implemented from the next Municipal Year, in May 2018.

### Property Services

- 3.13 Following the devastating fire at Grenfell Tower in London a review of Council owned buildings has taken place and we are not aware of any buildings that have aluminium composite panels present. The incident has prompted a review of the general fire management principles and procedures within our buildings, and in respect of this, Property Services and Risk Management are now working together to review and update any procedures where necessary.
- 3.14 Since the deregulation of the water retail market in April 2017 there is a requirement to procure water services. Discussions have taken place on a Liverpool City Region basis in respect of this and consideration is taking place in respect of the merits of procuring water services on a collective basis. Further discussions will be taking place in due course in respect of the proposed way forward.

## **4.0 Risk Control Measures**

- 4.1 Risk control forms an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and performance monitoring arrangements. As such Directorate Risk Registers were updated in tandem with the development of the suite of 2017 – 18 Directorate Business Plans.

Progress concerning the implementation of all high-risk mitigation measures will be monitored in Quarter 2.

## 5.0 High Priority Equality Actions

- 5.1 Equality issues continue to form a routine element of the Council's business planning and operational decision making processes. Additionally the Council must have evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force in April 2011.

The Council's latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives is published on the Council website and is available via:

[http://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/pdfs/EandD/Equality\\_-\\_objectives\\_progress\\_report\\_-\\_April\\_2013.pdf](http://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/pdfs/EandD/Equality_-_objectives_progress_report_-_April_2013.pdf)

## 6.0 Performance Overview

The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate.

### Financial Management

#### Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
FS 01a	Report Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board - <b>November 2017</b> .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FS 01b	Report to Council - <b>March 2018</b> .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FS 02c	Provide <b>quarterly</b> monitoring reports on the overall budget to Executive Board.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FS 03b	Publish the Statement of Accounts by <b>31<sup>st</sup> August 2017</b> .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FS 04a	Establish Treasury Management Policy and report to Council - <b>March 2017</b> .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FS 04b	Provide monitoring reports to Executive Board on a <b>bi-annual</b> basis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FS 05a	Establish and report prudential indicators to Council - <b>March 2017</b> .	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
FS 05b	Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board on a <b>bi-annual</b> basis.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

#### Supporting Commentary

Progress remains on target to report the Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board in November 2017 and the financial forecast is being regularly updated.














Work has commenced with Management Team and Budget Working Group to develop budget proposals for 2018/19 and the Quarter 1 monitoring report on the overall budget will go to Executive Board on 21 September 2017.

The Audit of Statement of Accounts commenced 01 July 2017, and progress remains on track to publish by 30 September 2017 with a Draft statement published on the Council web-site on 28 June 2017

The 2016/17 Treasury Management Policy was approved by Council on 08 March 2017 and the Half year report is scheduled to be reported to Executive Board on 16 November 2017.

2017/18 prudential indicators were reported to Council on 08 March 2017 as part of Treasury Management Policy and the Quarter 2 monitoring report is on track to be reported to Executive Board on 16 November 2017.

### Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	16 / 17 Actual	17 / 18 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
FS LI 01	Receive an unqualified external audit opinion on the accounts.	Yes	Yes	Awaiting - Sept 17		N / A
FS LI 02	Receive positive annual comment from the External Auditor relating to the financial standing of the Council and the systems of internal financial control.	Yes	Yes	Yes		
FS LI 03	Receive confirmation from External Auditor (annually) that reliance can be placed upon the work of Internal Audit.	Yes	Yes	Yes		
FS LI 04	Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected	95.04%	94.75%+	28.25%		
FS LI 05	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received	97.65%	95.00%+	29.59%		
FS LI 06	Average time for processing new claims (Housing & Council Tax Benefit)	19.94 (Days)	20 (Days)	20.93 (Days)		
FS LI 07	Average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances	2.96 (Days)	5.3 (Days)	4.82 (Days)		

### Supporting Commentary

2016/17 Statement of Accounts audit opinion will be reported to the Business Efficiency Board on 27 September 2017

As part of the 2016/17 audit of the Council's Financial Statements Grant Thornton concluded that their work had identified no material weaknesses that are likely to impact on the Council's financial statements.

As part of the 2016/17 audit, Grant Thornton completed a high level review of the Council's internal audit arrangements and the work that internal audit has completed on the Council's key financial systems. The conclusion from that review is that Grant Thornton did not identify any issues that will impact on their audit approach.

In terms of collection rates and processing times there has been some minor deviation when compared to the same period last year and this is to be expected and there is nothing to indicate that annual targets will not be achieved.

### Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Service

#### Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
PPPE 01a	Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Organisational Development Strategy <b>May 2017</b>	
PPPE 01b	Review and refresh annual training calendar <b>September 2017</b> .	
PPPE 01c	Regular engagement with service managers to identify areas of challenge and develop appropriate bespoke solutions <b>April, September, December 2017, and March 2018</b> .	
PPPE 03b	Monitor impact of new policy at three monthly intervals – support with financial and data analysis <b>September, December 2017, and March 2018</b> .	
PPPE 04d	Ongoing monitoring of agency usage and spend <b>April, September, December 2017, and March 2018</b> .	



#### Supporting Commentary

The Organisational Development Strategy continues to be taken forward and training delivery continues with a policy framework now in place and operational and monitoring arrangements have been scheduled.

An analysis of agency demand is underway with an initial focus on Adult Social Care with resulting recommendations formulated for management consideration.

Monitoring activity continues in this area with meetings with supplier scheduled to enable future analysis and reporting.

#### Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	16 / 17 Actual	17 / 18 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
PPPE LI 01	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate)	8.66 (Days)	9.5 (Days)	2.41 (Days)		



Ref	Measure	16 / 17 Actual	17 / 18 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
PPPE LI 02a	Total Full Time Equivalent Staffing Establishment	3,637	Not applicable	3,490	N / A	N / A
PPPE LI 02b	Total Staff (head count) (indicator for information only)	4,863	Not applicable	4,830	N / A	N / A
PPPE LI 02c	Total Agency Worker usage (number of placements – year to date)	New KPI from 2017/18 onwards	Not applicable	37	N / A	N / A
PPPE LI 02d	Total Agency Worker usage (cumulative cost – year to date)	New KPI from 2017/18 onwards	Not applicable	£366,342 (Gross)	N / A	N / A
PPPE LI 07	Average time to recruit (Management Team approval to employee start date)	61 (Days)	Not applicable	Q1 data available in Q2.	N / A	N / A
PPPE LI 08	Staff turnover rate (Permanent & temporary staff. Excludes casual)	4.05%	Not applicable	1.57%	N / A	N / A

### Supporting Commentary



Levels of sickness absence at Q1 slightly higher than the same period last year and this may reflect a more accurate recording of information following the introduction of new policy in this area.



As reported in Key Developments it is anticipated that agency costs will decline following work being undertaken in this area of operations and training attendance remains positive.

Recruitment times will be reported at Q2 due to the availability of data. During Q1 80 posts were vacated and further information concerning apprenticeships is included in the Key Developments section of this report.

### ICT and Administrative Support Services

#### Key Objectives / milestones







Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
ICT 01b	Further development of Cloud Services Platform - <b>March 2018</b> .	
ICT 01c	SharePoint and Records Management enhancements - <b>March 2018</b> .	
ICT 01e	Further development of commercial ICT opportunity within desktop, hosting and DR provision - <b>March 2018</b> .	

ICT 02a	Continuing improvements, enhancements and potential commercial use of Cloud system - <b>March 2018</b> .	
ICT 02c	Improvement and enhancement of all web based customer interfaces - <b>March 2018</b> .	

### Supporting Commentary

Work has progressed as planned during the first quarter period.

### Key Performance Indicators




Ref	Measure	15 / 16 Actual	16 / 17 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
ICT LI 01	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	99.01%	99.00%	99.07		
ICT LI 02	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	99.14%	99.00%	99.14		
ICT LI 04	Average working days from delivery to completion of a new PC.	9 (Days)	10 (Days)	10 (Days)		

### Supporting Commentary

All indicators remain in line with expected progress at this time of year and are expected to achieve annual target levels.

### Legal & Democracy









### Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
FS 01	Review constitution - <b>May 2017</b> .	
FS 02a	To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting where desired.	
FS 02b	To induct all new members <b>by October 2017</b> .	

### Supporting Commentary

The revised Constitution was approved by Council in May and MAP meetings are continually offered throughout the calendar year with all new Members having been through the induction programme.


**Key Performance Indicators**

Ref	Measure	15 / 16 Actual	16 / 17 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
LD LI 01	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total).	55 (98.21%)	56 (100.00%)	55 (98.21%)		
LD LI 03	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of full instructions (working days).	7 (Days)	10 (Days)	7 (Days)		
LD LI 04	Average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department (working days).	1 (Days)	3 (Days)	1 (Day)		
LD LI 05	% of Executive Board, Executive Board Sub-Committee and Mersey Gateway Executive Board minutes published within 5 working days after the meeting.	100%	100%	100%		

**Supporting Commentary**

Given the Elections no training events were arranged for Members during the Quarter 1 period. All other measures are showing positive levels of performance.









**Community & Environment****Key Objectives / milestones**

Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
CE 02a	Deliver a promotion and educational campaign - <b>September 2017</b> and <b>January 2018</b> .	

**Supporting Commentary**

The introduction of Universal Credit is yet another challenge the service faces in trying to increase/maintain pupil meal numbers, a marketing campaign has been prepared for all Primary schools for the start of the new term (September 2017), this will include taster sessions and visits to Parents Evenings etc.



**Key Performance Indicators**

Ref	Measure	15 / 16 Actual	16 / 17 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
CE LI 01	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Primary Schools.	75.66%	87.00%	77.89%		
CE LI 02	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Secondary Schools.	65.22%	77.50%	73.5%		
CE LI 03	Take up of school lunches (%) – primary schools.	63.3%	65.00%	63.9%		
CE LI 04	Take up of school lunches (%) – secondary schools.	64.7%	57.00%	57.75%		

**Supporting Commentary**

Current levels of take up are encouraging given that these measures are subject to seasonal influence during the spring months.





**Economy, Enterprise & Property****Key Objectives / milestones**

Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
EEP 04a	Develop Options Appraisal for Council's Office Accommodation – September 2017	
EEP 04b	Commence construction of clubhouse and installation of driving range at Widnes Golf Academy – Oct 2017	

**Supporting Commentary**

Options have been presented to Management Team and the detail of the Options Appraisal is presently being developed. Also the driving range construction is proceeding as planned. The commencement of the construction of the clubhouse is scheduled for January 2018.

**Key Performance Indicators**

Ref	Measure	15 / 16 Actual	16 / 17 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
EEP LI 01	Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions indicator (Tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e)	17,804 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e (actual 15/16)	15,882 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e (target 17/18)	16,043 tonnes CO <sub>2</sub> e (actual 16/17)		
EEP LI 03	Occupancy of Widnes Market Hall	84%	84%	83%		

**Supporting Commentary**

The reporting requirements for emissions have been amended whereby the figures for academies are no longer included. The figure for 2015/16 has therefore been amended to reflect the change to ensure the comparison to the 2016/17 figure is meaningful.

The overall emissions for 2016/17 amount to 16,043 tonnes, which equates to a 9.8% reduction from the previous year, well within the target set.

The overall emissions of 16,043 tonnes is broken down into the following five categories:-

School Buildings 5128t, Corporate buildings 5364t, Unmetered supply 3913t, Fleet Transport 1297t & Business Mileage 341t. There was a reduction in emissions across all areas, Street Lighting had the largest annual reduction in the amount of 15.6%.

The annual figure for this indicator is a year behind and therefore only reported in the following year.

The revised target for 2017/18 is 15,882

Market trading conditions remain difficult. The Council now takes a firmer control of rental arrears (with arrears reducing). However this can have a bearing on occupancy and retention rates.

## 7.0 Financial Statements

### Finance Department

#### Revenue Budget as at 30 June 2017

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget To Date £'000	Actual To Date £'000	Variance to Date (Overspend) £'000
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Employees	5,417	1,312	1,268	44
Supplies & Services	361	147	125	22
Insurances	1,299	694	667	27
Concessionary Travel	2,175	346	346	0
LCR Levy	2,175	0	0	0
Rent Allowances	50,200	9,272	9,272	0
Non HRA Rent Rebates	65	12	12	0
Discretionary Housing Payments	386	95	95	0
Discretionary Social Fund	154	31	31	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>62,232</b>	<b>11,909</b>	<b>11,816</b>	<b>93</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Fees & Charges	-164	-65	-74	9
School SLAs	-837	-788	-775	(13)
NNDR Admin Grant	-166	0	0	0
Rent Allowances	-49,800	-11,374	-11,374	0
Clerical Error Recoveries	-400	0	0	0
Non HRA Rent Rebate	-65	-16	-16	0
Discretionary Housing Pmts Grant	-386	0	0	0
Housing Benefit Admin Grant	-510	-127	-127	0
Universal Credits	-130	0	0	0
Council Tax Admin Grant	-221	-221	-221	0
Transfer From Reserves	-251	0	0	0
Council Tax Liability Orders	-421	-264	-264	0
Reimbursement & Other Grant Income	-248	-171	-171	0
LCR Reimbursement	-2,175	0	0	0
Dedicated Schools Grant	-92	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-55,866</b>	<b>-13,026</b>	<b>-13,022</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>6,366</b>	<b>-1,117</b>	<b>-1,206</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>Recharges</b>				
Premises Support	199	50	50	0
Transport Recharges	6	2	2	0
Central Support Recharges	2,451	613	613	0
Support Recharges Income	-4,575	-1,144	-1,144	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-1,919</b>	<b>-479</b>	<b>-479</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Department Expenditure</b>	<b>4,447</b>	<b>-1,596</b>	<b>-1,685</b>	<b>89</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

With regards to expenditure, employee costs is lower than budget profile due to vacant post within Revenue and Benefits and Procurement services.

Further costs have been reduced by utilising external grant to offset staffing costs within Financial Management Division.

Supplies And Services Expenditure is below budget profile as effort has been made within the Divisions to reduce spend.

At quarter one insurances is below budget to date due to amount of liability excesses. These are dependent on amount of claims, so is variable.

Schools SLA income is below the budget profile due to a lower than expected buy-back of the Procurement service.

At this stage the department is forecast to spend within the available budget for the year to 31 March 2018.

**Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Department****Revenue Budget as at 30 June 2017**

	Annual Budget  £'000	Budget To Date  £'000	Actual To Date  £'000	Variance to Date  (Overspend) £'000
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>				
Employees	1,818	437	442	(5)
Employees Training	133	7	5	2
Supplies & Services	138	38	28	10
Apprenticeship Levy	300	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,389</b>	<b>482</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>7</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>				
Fees & Charges	-90	-32	-34	2
Schools SLAs	-416	-389	-389	0
Transfer from Reserves	-98	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-604</b>	<b>-421</b>	<b>-423</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>1,785</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>9</b>
<b><u>Recharges</u></b>				
Premises Support	60	15	15	0
Central Support Recharges	1,081	270	270	0
Support recharges Income	-2,926	-731	-731	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-1,785</b>	<b>-446</b>	<b>-446</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Department Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-385</b>	<b>-394</b>	<b>9</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

In overall terms spend at quarter one is within budget provision.

With regards to Employee costs, these are above the budget profile due to not achieving staff turnover saving targets, but are offset against Supplies and Services budgets for which there has been reduced spending.



**ICT & Support Services Department****Revenue Budget as at 30 June 2017**

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget To Date £'000	Actual To Date £'000	Variance to Date (Overspend) £'000
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>				
Employees	6,838	1,719	1,712	7
Other Premises	56	48	48	0
Supplies & Services	726	117	111	6
Capital Financing	1,594	68	68	0
Computer repairs & Software	525	270	255	15
Communication Costs	385	96	98	(2)
Transfer To Reserves	15	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>10,139</b>	<b>2,318</b>	<b>2,292</b>	<b>26</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>				
Fees & Charges	-1,116	-41	-41	0
Sales	-15	-2	-2	0
School SLAs	-509	-494	-494	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-1,640</b>	<b>-537</b>	<b>-537</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>8,499</b>	<b>1,781</b>	<b>1,755</b>	<b>26</b>
<b><u>Recharges</u></b>				
Premises Support	384	95	95	0
Transport Recharges	5	2	2	0
Central Support Recharges	1,036	259	259	0
Support Recharges Income	-9,925	-2,482	-2482	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-8,503</b>	<b>-2,126</b>	<b>-2,126</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Department Expenditure</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>-345</b>	<b>-371</b>	<b>26</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

In overall terms spending is below the budget at the end of the first quarter.

With regards to expenditure, employee related expenditure is lower than the budget due to staff turnover and vacancies that exist within the Admin Division.

Computer Repair and Software is below budget profile as a result of reduced spend on contracts.

**ICT & Support Services Department****Capital Projects as at 30 June 2017**

Capital Expenditure	2017/18 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
IT Rolling Programme	1,100	379	379	0
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>379</b>	<b>0</b>

**Comments on the above figures.**

It is expected that the full capital allocation will be spent by the financial year end.

**Legal & Democratic Services Department****Revenue Budget as at 30 June 2017**

	Annual Budget £'000	Budget To Date £'000	Actual To Date £'000	Variance to Date (Overspend) £'000
Employees	1,634	417	422	(5)
Supplies & Services	304	86	84	2
Civic Catering & Functions	27	7	4	3
Legal Expenses	223	77	69	8
Mayoral Allowances	22	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>2,210</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Land Charges	-105	-26	-22	(4)
School SLAs	-80	-80	-80	0
Licence Income	-261	-49	-49	0
Other Income	-26	-12	-12	0
Transfer From Reserves	-10	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-482</b>	<b>-167</b>	<b>-163</b>	<b>-4</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>1,728</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Recharges</b>				
Premises Support	187	47	47	0
Transport Recharges	36	9	9	0
Central Support Recharges	313	78	78	0
Support Recharges Income	-1,732	-433	-433	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-1,196</b>	<b>-299</b>	<b>-299</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Department Expenditure</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>4</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

In overall terms, spending is slightly below budget profile at the end of first quarter.

With regards to expenditure, employee expenditure is above budget due to staff turnover saving targets not being achieved.

A new contract in relation to Legal Expenses has just been awarded, and dependant on number of cases, it is expected that this will result in reduction of costs.

With regards to Income Land Charges are dependent on number of applications, so generation of income is variable dependant on buoyancy of housing market.

At this stage the department is forecast to spend within the available budget for the year to 31 March 2018.

## Community &amp; Environment Department

Revenue Budget as at 30 June 2017

	Annual Budget	Budget To Date	Actual to Date	Variance to Date (Overspend)
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>				
Employees	13,355	3,512	3,606	(94)
Other Premises	1,950	830	820	10
Supplies & Services	1,580	399	377	22
Book Fund	167	49	48	1
Hired & Contracted Services	1,127	230	235	(5)
Food Provisions	570	193	205	(12)
School Meals Food	1,903	291	288	3
Transport	55	21	16	5
Other Agency Costs	432	87	84	3
Waste Disposal Contracts	5,775	1,444	1,458	(14)
Other Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Grants To Voluntary Organisations	67	14	1	13
Grant To Norton Priory	172	87	88	(1)
Rolling Projects	0	74	74	0
Capital Financing	84	2	0	2
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>27,237</b>	<b>7,233</b>	<b>7,300</b>	<b>(67)</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>				
Sales Income	-2,125	-510	-487	(23)
School Meals Sales	-2,244	-482	-497	15
Fees & Charges Income	-5,588	-1,889	-1,830	(59)
Rents Income	-297	-50	-21	(29)
Government Grant Income	-1,186	-31	-31	0
Reimbursements & Other Grant Income	-663	-256	-255	(1)
Schools SLA Income	-84	-77	-74	(3)
Internal Fees Income	-216	-32	-20	(12)
School Meals Other Income	-2,096	-1,371	-1,386	15
Catering Fees	-182	-45	-8	(37)
Capital Salaries	-123	0	0	0
Transfers From Reserves	-8	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-14,812</b>	<b>-4,743</b>	<b>-4,609</b>	<b>(134)</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>12,425</b>	<b>2,490</b>	<b>2,691</b>	<b>(201)</b>
<b><u>Recharges</u></b>				
Premises Support	1,760	440	440	0
Transport Recharges	2,072	669	669	0
Departmental Support Services	9	2	2	0
Central Support Services	3,467	943	943	0
Asset Charges	85	0	0	0
HBC Support Costs Income	-449	-254	-254	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>6,944</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>1,800</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Department Expenditure</b>	<b>19,369</b>	<b>4,290</b>	<b>4,491</b>	<b>(201)</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

The net Department budget is £ 154,000 over budget profile at the end of the first quarter of the 2017/18 financial year.

Employee spend is currently over budget due to staff turnover saving targets not being achieved and casual and agency usage at the stadium and for catering being greater than expected. Agency spend is double what it was at the same stage last year, though has been necessary to maintain service standards and cover absences.

Food and bar provisions are also currently overspent by £12,000 to date. This is mainly due to spend at the Stadium. Stadium Catering and Bars being greater than at expected at this point of the year.

Income sources for the Department have in the past struggled to meet targets, and with savings targets increased by £ 538,000 this year it will be even more difficult to achieve.

Sales income is currently short of the target to date by £23,000 which is mainly due to Stadium Bars, Catering and Civic Catering.

Fees and charges income will again struggle to meet the budgeted target this year. Currently income to date is £47,000 under the profiled expectation, mainly due to income generation at the Stadium and within Open Spaces. Increased income targets on Open Spaces are yet to show any real results and chargeable works are slow this year. The Stadium is below income targets on fitness memberships, and executive suite hire.

Internal fees are under budget target so far and mainly due to little room hire income received in Leisure Centres, Stadium Catering and Fitness.

Catering fees which is also an internal income source is already £37,000 adrift of the income target to date.

**Capital Projects as at 30 June 2017**

	2017-18 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
Stadium Works	30	0	0	30
Peel House Cemetery Works	383	0	0	383
Runcorn Cemetery Extension	9	0	0	9
Open Space Schemes	600	100	90	510
Childrens Playground Equipment	55	0	0	55
Upton Improvements	13	0	0	13
Playground – The Glen	25	0	0	25
Playground – Runcorn Hill Park	75	0	5	70
Playground – Crow Wood Park	450	0	0	450
Landfill Tax Credit Scheme	160	0	0	160

Phoenix Park	110	0	0	110
Sandymoor Playing Fields	600	50	24	576
Victoria Park Glass House	150	0	0	150
Widnes Recreation	0	0	7	-7
Litter Bins	20	0	0	20
Norton Priory Project	455	0	0	455
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,135</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>3,016</b>

**Economy Enterprise & Property****Revenue Budget as at 30 June 2017**

	Annual Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance to Date
	£'000	£'000	£'000	(Overspend) £'000
Employees	4,681	1,119	1,126	(7)
Repairs & Maintenance	2,219	420	418	2
Premises	41	1	1	0
Energy & Water Costs	650	109	84	25
NNDR	546	503	491	12
Rents	352	170	169	1
Economic Regeneration Activities	42	0	0	0
Supplies & Services	3,109	443	444	(1)
Grant to Non Vol Organisations	75	9	9	0
Agency Related	1	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>11,716</b>	<b>2,774</b>	<b>2,742</b>	<b>32</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>				
Fees & Charges	-250	-34	-36	2
Rent – Markets	-789	-197	-197	0
Rent – Investment Properties	-187	-35	-35	0
Rent – Commercial Properties	-850	-152	-147	(5)
Government Grant	-3,156	-315	-315	0
Reim & Other Income	-237	-180	-180	0
Recharges to Capital	-161	-18	-18	0
Transfer from Reserves	-830	-89	-89	0
Schools SLA Income	-517	-435	-440	5
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-6,977</b>	<b>-1,455</b>	<b>-1,457</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Net Operational Expenditure</b>	<b>4,739</b>	<b>1,319</b>	<b>1,285</b>	<b>34</b>
<b><u>Recharges</u></b>				
Asset Rental Support Costs	4	0	0	0
Premises Support Costs	1,746	438	438	0
Transport Support Costs	23	6	6	0
Central Support Service Costs	1,865	512	512	0
Repairs & Maintenance Recharge Income	-2,412	-603	-603	0
Accommodation Recharge Income	-2,624	-656	-656	0
Central Support Service Recharge Income	-1,890	-473	-473	0
<b>Net Total Recharges</b>	<b>-3,288</b>	<b>-776</b>	<b>-776</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Department Expenditure</b>	<b>1,451</b>	<b>543</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>34</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

Economy Enterprise & Property Departmental budget is projected to be slightly under budget profile at year end. The significant budget variances are listed below.

The negative variance on employee costs is due to targets against staff turnover savings not being met due to the low number of vacancies held within the Department.

Following reconciliation by the energy providers, we have received a number of refunds relating to previous years utility charges.

NNDR expenditure is below budget due to the revaluation of a number of council properties.

A delay in the Court Service relocating to Rutland House has resulted in the department not achieving the anticipated income target set for Commercial Property.

Every effort will be made to ensure that expenditure on controllable budgets is kept to a minimum within the Department for the remainder of the financial year. It is forecast net spend at year end will be below the annual budget.

**Capital Projects as at 30 June 2017**

Capital Expenditure	2017/18 Capital Allocation £'000	Allocation to Date £'000	Actual Spend £'000	Total Allocation Remaining £'000
3MG	4,591	29	29	4,562
Sci Tech Daresbury – EZ Grant	483	0	0	483
Johnsons Lane Infrastructure	66	0	0	66
Decontamination of Land	50	0	0	50
Venture Fields	6,000	6	6	5,994
Former Crossville Site	1,150	860	860	290
Signage at The Hive	87	0	0	87
Widnes Market Refurbishment	1,294	38	38	1,256
Equality Act Improvement Works	300	33	33	267
Linnets Club House	1,379	189	189	1,190
Milton Road (Former Simms Cross Caretakers House)	14	0	0	14
Widnes Road Car Park, 29-31 Moor Lane & Land at Halebank	235	2	2	233
The Croft	30	0	0	30
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>15,679</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>1,157</b>	<b>14,522</b>

**Comments on the above figures.**

**3MG** – Majority of the work on the rail siding is near completion. Rail has been in use since 28 June. Alstom will be operational on site 5 August.



**Sci Tech Daresbury EZ Grant** - Grant to be drawn down over this financial year to pay for JV design and planning fees for the next phase of the EZ – Project Violet (3 new buildings). Works have been commissioned by the JV and are underway with a submission date for planning anticipated in the October 2017.




**Johnsons Lane** – Work is now complete on site and final payment has been made to contractors.

**Equality Act Improvement Works** - Work at Norton Priory is now complete. Projects in the forthcoming months relate to Linnets Club House, Crow Wood Park Pavilion and the Vine Street Centre.





## 8.0 Application of Symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

### Progress Symbols

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
Green 	Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the annual target <u>is on course to be achieved</u>.</i>
Amber 	Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the annual target is on course to be achieved</i>
Red 	Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain</u> that the objective will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.	<i>Indicates that the target <u>will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</i>

### Direction of Travel Indicator

Green 	Indicates that performance <i>is better</i> as compared to the same period last year.
Amber 	Indicates that performance <i>is the same</i> as compared to the same period last year.
Red 	Indicates that performance <i>is worse</i> as compared to the same period last year.
N / A 	Indicates that the measure cannot be compared to the same period last year.