

Annual Report 2016

Version Control:	
Document Name:	Annual Report
Version:	Version 1.0
Author:	Corporate Support Assistant
Approved by:	Corporate Support Manager
Date Approved:	
Review Date:	

A. Introduction

This is Barrow Borough Council's Annual Report for 2016; a year where there has been both challenges and opportunities. This report allows you to see work that the Council has completed or is on-going within the budget to achieve and complete the objectives and priorities set.

Also this report summarises the past year's achievements against our priorities throughout 2016. A summary of the Council's annual accounts for the financial year April 2015 to March 2016 is also included, this outlines where the money has been spent in order to benefit the residents of the Borough. Additionally in this report there is a section showing the Council's Performance Indicators from the first two quarters in the current financial year against the previous year.

B. Barrow Borough Council's Vision

Barrow Borough Council's vision is to enhance the economic and social future of the Borough to meet the needs and aspirations of our community.

In order to deliver this vision, the Council has recognised the following priorities to produce tangible benefits to the community.

Housing

The Council is committed to continuing to provide a greater choice of good quality housing and regenerate the oldest and poorest housing in the Borough.

The agreed objectives for the upcoming year are:

- Adopt the Local Plan.

Regeneration and Public Realm

The Council is committed to working with partners and service providers to enhance the built environment and public realm.

The agreed objectives for the upcoming year are:

- Agree plans to complete the Renewal Area;
 - Rawlinson Street,
 - Greengate Street, and
 - Development of cleared site.

Local Economy

The Council is committed to work on mitigating the effects of cuts in public spending, their impact on the local economy and working to secure a long term economic recovery for the community.

The agreed objectives for the upcoming year:

- Support development of Marina Village.
- Work with Barrow Business Improvement District Company.
- Maximise opportunities for the Borough from the BAE Systems site improvement programme.
- Review the use of capital assets.
- Support Barrow Island Growth Scheme.
- Promote support available to low income households;
 - Council Tax Support,
 - Discretionary Housing Payments, and
 - Disabled Facilities Grants.

Service Delivery

The Council strives to provide good quality, efficient and effective services while reducing overall expenditure.

The agreed objectives for the upcoming year are:

- Implement the 2016-2020 Budget Strategy.
- Agree the Council Plan.
- Complete reception area improvements and review customer contact.
- Improve the customer experience.

C. About Barrow Borough Council

Barrow Borough Council is one of six second tier councils in Cumbria.

Our responsibilities include:

- Setting a balanced budget for delivering the Council's services
- Collecting household waste
- Cleaning the streets
- Regenerating the Borough

- Providing a development control and building control service
- Managing food, alcohol and hackney carriage service
- Collecting council tax and business rates
- Administrating the council tax and housing benefit service
- Leisure and Cultural services including the Forum, Park Leisure Centre, Dock Museum and all public parks and playgrounds
- Provide social housing

Achievements against priorities in 2015

Priority: Housing: the Council is committed to continuing to provide a greater choice of good quality housing and regenerate the oldest and poorest housing in the Borough.

Objectives:

- **On going** – Refurbishment of flats on Barrow Island from Clusters of Empty Homes funding continuing; 155 completed so far. Completion of the Renewal Area works.
- **Completed** – Group repair scheme for 25 dwellings on Rawlinson Street delivered. Council owned stock all meet decent homes standard.

Priority: Regeneration and Public Realm: the Council is committed to working with partners and service providers to enhance the built environment and public realm.

Objectives:

- **On going** – Enhanced heritage offer at the Dock Museum under review. Public realm works on Barrow Island underway.
- **Completed** – Crematorium building and office facilities modernised. Street cleansing and waste collection contract renewed with service improvements.

Priority: Local Economy: the Council is committed to work on mitigating the effects of cuts in public spending, their impact on the local economy and working to secure a long term economic recovery for the community.

Objectives:

- **On going** – Road access into Marina Village underway. Town centre improvement plan commissioned with Cumbria County Council. Support for low income families continuing. Furness Economic Development Forum continuing to develop the local supply chain, skills and employment.

- **Completed** – Worked with local businesses to set up a Business Improvement District. Shop front group awarded; 6 in 2016-2017.

Priority: Service Delivery: the Council strives to provide good quality, efficient and effective services while reducing overall expenditure.

Objectives:

- **On going** – Budget Strategy 2016-2020 service proposals being implemented. Customer service and customer interactions to be reviewed.
- **Completed** – Budget strategy for 2016-2020 agreed; deficit elimination by 2020. The Council's website has been rebranded.

The forum presents Silver Sunday



Silver Sunday is a national annual event and a special day to celebrate older people with over 400 events taking place across the U.K.

The day is a way to thank older people for the contribution they have made to the community, thousands are able to get out of their homes, attend a special event and gain the opportunity to make new friends.

The forum is proud to have been part of this special day since it was founded in 2012. Over four hundred people attended this year's event, which was a record number with all enjoying a day of free activities.

Individuals as well as organisations gave up their time for free helping make the day the huge success it was. We look forward to continuing with this annual event which is always held on the first Sunday in October.

Other Achievements

The Council are pleased to be able to provide confirmation that during the entire 2015-2016 financial year we have been able to maintain a once-per-week waste collection.

In this current financial year the Council have took on two new apprentices; in IT Services and Democratic Services. The Council are hoping to take on more apprentices in the near future.

The Council recognises members of staff that haven't had any sickness absence each year. For the financial year April 2015 to March 2016, 106 members out of 239 had not taken any days sickness.

Performance Indicators

Indicator	Q2 2015/16	Q2 2016/17
Average time to process new housing benefit claims		Target = 18 days
	16.4 days	14.4 days
Average time to process new council tax support claims		Target = 18 days
	16.2 days	14.8 days
Average time to process changes of circumstances for housing benefit claims		Target = 7 days
	5.8 days	5.4 days
Average time to process changes of circumstances for council tax support claims		Target = 6 days
	5.4 days	4.0 days
Park Leisure centre activity numbers	123,804	141,035
Dock museum visitor numbers	29,007	34,139
The forum ticket sales	19,404	19,307
Income from Pay and display ticket sales	£304,580.29	£286,385.00
Percentage of local land charges searches completed in 5 working days		Target = 100%
	86.6%	88.6%
Percentage of council tax collected		(Annual)Target = 96.6%
	56.60%	56.45%
Percentage of NNDR collected		(Annual) Target = 98.4%
	57.37%	56.79%
Average days of sickness per employee	4.12	3.64
Right to buy sales	3	4
Average household recycling percentage	35.08%	34.17%
Number of disabled facilities grants	35	27
Percentage of Planning applications processed; major applications in 13 weeks and others in 8 weeks		
Major		Target = 78.8%
	50.0%	86.6%
Minor		Target = 62.6%
	61.3%	57.2%
Other		Target = 82.7%
	74.1%	80.0%

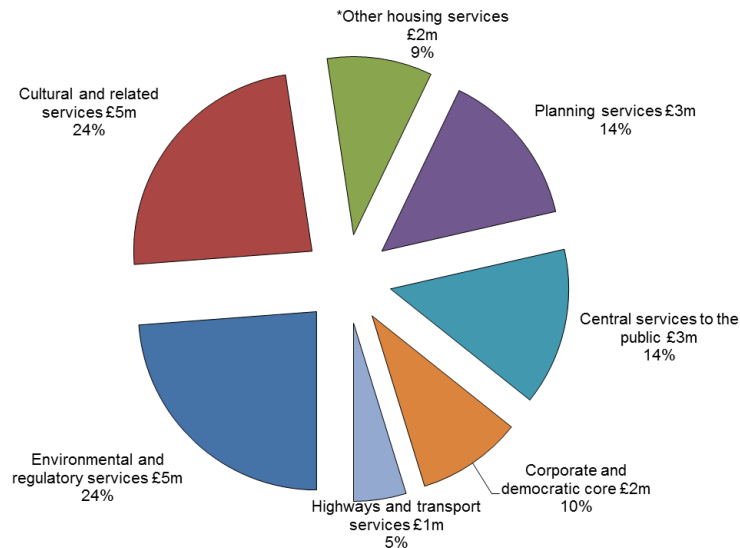
Summary of Accounts 2015-2016

Why produce a summary?

We recognise that the Council's accounts are complex and not all readers will have the time to study the level of detail that we are required to publish. This summary provides the headline numbers from our 2015-2016 Accounts to provide a good understanding of the financial activity in the year.

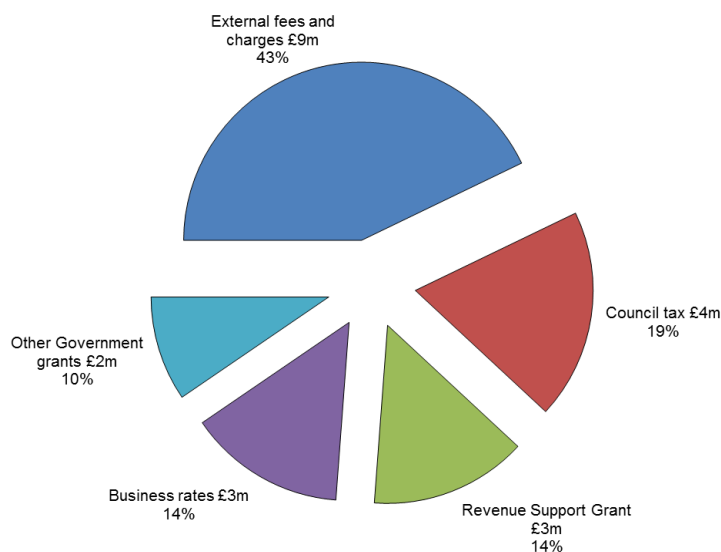
General Fund

The General Fund revenue account covers income and expenditure on all services other than Council owned dwellings. The Council's services have been analysed over the General Fund service areas and the pie chart below shows the gross expenditure for 2015-2016 which totalled £21m:



**Other housing services include the net cost of housing benefits, after Government subsidy.*

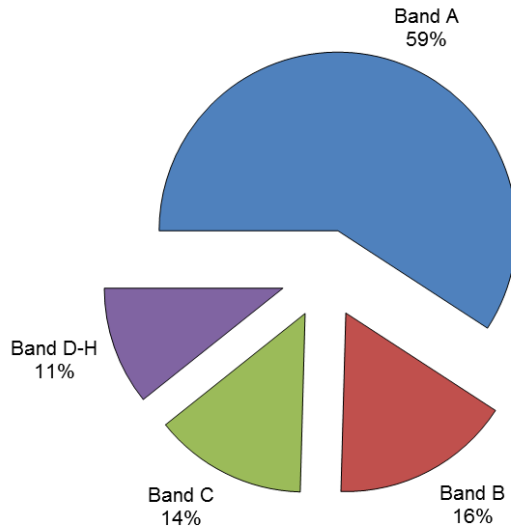
How these costs were paid for is set out in the following pie chart:



How much was our share of Council Tax?

Council Tax is calculated against bands A to H, with band D being used as the average.

The properties within Borough were in the following bands for 2015-2016:

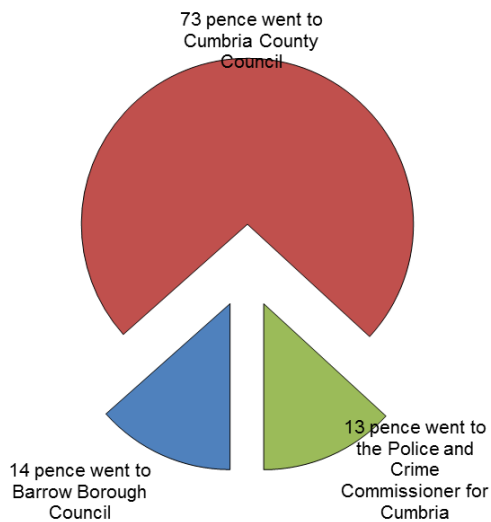


Band A represents 59% of properties in the Borough and carried a total Council Tax charge of £1,076.09 for 2015-2016. This was made up of the Borough Council's requirement plus the Council Tax collected on behalf of others, as follows:

- Barrow (unparished) £144.63
- Cumbria County Council £789.74
- Police and Crime Commissioner for Cumbria £141.72

Parish Councils also set a Council Tax requirement that the Borough Council collect.

For every £1.00 paid:



The costs of running Council houses in 2015-2016

The Council had 2,660 dwellings to manage and maintain. The expenditure and income relating to these dwellings is held separately in the Housing Revenue Account. The result for 2015-2016 was a reduction in the financial reserves of £1m.

Expenditure	
Repairs and maintenance	£5m
Supervision and management	£4m
Depreciation and revaluation of dwellings	£2m
Other expenditure items	£2m
Total expenditure	<u>£13m</u>

Income	
Dwelling rents	£10m
Other income	£2m
Total income	<u>£12m</u>

Spend on big projects and investment in our assets

Capital expenditure is considered to be for the benefit of the local community over a period greater than a year; it must also meet the definition of capital expenditure.

Where we spent capital	
Improving Council dwellings	£1m
Improving other public assets	£1m
Improving private sector homes	£1m
Total capital investment	<u>£3m</u>

How the investment was paid for	
Housing reserves	£1m
General Fund reserves	£1m
Capital grants and receipts	£1m
Total capital financing	<u>£3m</u>

Independent audit

The Council's accounts are subject to an independent audit by Grant Thornton UK LLP. The 2015-2016 accounts were signed by Grant Thornton UK LLP on the 22nd September, 2016, with no issues arising. The full Statement of Accounts is available on the Council's website.