

BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting, Wednesday, 22nd January, 2014
at 2.00 p.m. (Committee Room No. 4)

NOTE: Group Meetings at 1.15 p.m.

A G E N D A

PART ONE

1. To note any items which the Chairman considers to be of an urgent nature.
2. To receive notice from Members who may wish to move any delegated matter non-delegated and which will be decided by a majority of Members present and voting at the meeting.
3. Admission of Public and Press

To consider whether the public and press should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any of the items on the agenda.

4. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations by Members and/or co-optees of interests in respect of items on this Agenda.

Members are reminded that, in accordance with the revised Code of Conduct, they are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests or other registrable interests which have not already been declared in the Council's Register of Interests. (It is a criminal offence not to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest either in the Register or at the meeting).

Members may however, also decide, in the interests of clarity and transparency, to declare at this point in the meeting, any such disclosable pecuniary interests which they have already declared in the Register, as well as any other registrable or other interests.

5. To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th December, 2013 (copy attached) (Pages 1-18).
6. Apologies for Absence/Attendance of Substitute Members.

FOR DECISION

- (D/R)** 7. Recommendations of the Housing Management Forum, 16th January, 2014 – **(TO FOLLOW)**.

- (R/D) 8. Budget Proposals 2014-2015 (Pages 20-35).
- (R) 9. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme - Uprating (Pages 36-37).
- (R) 10. Armed Forces Covenant – Long Term Empty Premium (Pages 38-39).
- (D) 11. Local Government Association – Corporate Peer Challenge (Pages 40-41).
- (D) 12. Efficiencies Grant Projects (Pages 42-44).

PART TWO

- (D) 13. Efficiency Support Grant – Senior Management (Pages 45-46).

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPH 1 OF PART ONE OF SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION (VARIATION) ORDER 2006

- (R) 14. Establishment – Budget 2014-2015 (Pages 47-53).

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPH 1 OF PART ONE OF SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION (VARIATION) ORDER 2006

- (R) 15. Units 9 and 10 James Freel Close – Re-roof (Pages 54-55).

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPH 3 OF PART ONE OF SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION (VARIATION) ORDER 2006

- (D) 16. Fell Street Public Convenience Cleaning (Pages 56-58).

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPH 3 OF PART ONE OF SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION (VARIATION) ORDER 2006

**NOTE (D) - Delegated
(R) - For Referral to Council**

Membership of Committee Councillors

Pidduck (Chairman)
Sweeney (Vice-Chairman)
Barlow
Bell
Biggins
Garnett
Graham
Guselli
Hamilton
Irwin
Richardson
Seward

For queries regarding this agenda, please contact:

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Published: 14th January, 2014.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting: Wednesday 18th December, 2013
at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillors Pidduck (Chairman), Sweeney (Vice-Chairman), Barlow, Biggins, Hamilton, Irwin and Pemberton.

82 – Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th November, 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

83 – Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bell, Garnett, Graham, Guselli, Richardson and Seward.

Councillor Pemberton substituted for Councillor Guselli.

84 – Housing Management Forum: Recommendations

The recommendations of the Housing Management Forum held on 28th November, 2013 were submitted for consideration.

N.B. The Minutes are reproduced as **Appendix 1** to the Minutes of this meeting.

RESOLVED:- That the recommendations of the Housing Management Forum be agreed as follows:-

Rent Strategy

1. To agree to bring forward convergence with market (target) rents to 2014/15 from 2015/16 and to further dispense with Target Rents and agree that the 2014/15 budget be developed on the basis of Option 3 and to note the potential effect on individual rents modelled at Appendix A to the report;
2. To agree in principle that the Garage rents budget is developed at the same rate as Dwellings point 2; and
3. To agree to further exploration and consultation with tenants of the proposals outlined in Point 3 to formulate and present a Rents Strategy and implementation plan by the end of the financial year.

Scrutiny of Anti-Social Behaviour Policies and Procedures

1. To note the contents of the Housing Manager's report; and
2. To adopt the four-stage scrutiny process for future scrutiny reviews.

Cumbria Choice: Choice-Based Lettings Scheme

1. To note the information within the Housing Manager's report; and
2. To agree to fund the Cumbria Choice Co-ordinator post for a further 12 months.

Brook Street Garage Area

To agree that Barrow Amateur Boxing Club (BABC) be given a 12-month option to provide the Council with a business plan and proposals for use of the above area as a training facility and to agree appropriate terms for the lease of the land.

Relocation of Housing Service

To agree to the relocation of the Housing Service to the Town Hall during 2014.

Void Property Gas and Electricity Meters

To agree that Officers proceed with the appointment of British Gas to manage gas and electricity meter related problems affecting void properties.

85 – Budget Consultation

The Borough Treasurer informed the Committee that the budget timetable and assumptions for 2014-2015 had been presented at the meeting of this Committee on 16th October, 2013. The public consultation opened after this Committee had agreed to recommend the budget proposals to Council on 21st January, 2014. The consultation responses would be compiled for the Budget Council, so the consultation ended on 20th February, 2014.

The potential use of social media had been reviewed to increase the number of responses to the budget consultation. She had found that it was not common practice to use social media, largely because it was unregulated and any information posted did not belong to the Council and anybody could comment. The budget consultation was a consultation with the taxpayers of the borough and those were the only comments that the Council sought. Using social media, there was no way to ensure that respondents were both from the relevant local authority and were only responding once.

As an alternative and as more of a strategic course of action, Management Board were currently compiling a mailing list of stakeholders. That stakeholder mailing list would be used for more than the budget consultation, but it would be the first time that it had been used. That approach had recently been used by Copeland Borough Council as part of their budget consultation.

She also recommended that the Council carried out the public consultation for the budget proposals by posting on the Council's website as in previous years and also by mailing stakeholders directly.

RESOLVED:- To agree that the budget consultation with the public be carried out on the Council's website as usual plus the direct mailing of stakeholders.

86 – Tourism: Morecambe Bay Branding

The Executive Director informed the Committee that Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council had jointly commissioned a study by Cairn Consulting into tourism branding for Lancaster District.

That recommended a destination brand "Morecambe Bay", which extended beyond the boundaries of the Lancaster District to include South Cumbria and destinations such as Carnforth, Heysham, Silverdale, Arnside, Grange, Ulverston and Barrow-in-Furness, Dalton-in-Furness and the islands of Barrow. Morecambe Bay was a unique, landscape which had influenced the history and culture of its surroundings.

Until local government re-organisation in 1974, Barrow-in-Furness had been part of Lancashire North of the Sands. It received television coverage from Granada and BBC North West and commercial radio from "The Bay" radio station. Its population had traditionally looked across the Bay for services such a specialist healthcare in Manchester, Preston and Blackpool; transport links via M6, Manchester airport and rail journeys via the Furness line linking to the West Coast Mainline. In the last decade the cross bay link had strengthened with Morecambe Bay Hospitals Trust being established and opportunities created by organisations such as the Morecambe Bay Partnership.

The District Councils around the Bay, Cumbria Tourism and Marketing Lancashire had discussed the proposal. Cumbria Tourism would use the Morecambe Bay brand for that part of South Cumbria outside the National Park. That included the Lake District Peninsulas.

To further progress the work, a Morecambe Bay Core Funders Group of the Morecambe Bay Branding Group had now been formed. A creative brief would be jointly commissioned by the Core Funders Group comprising Officers from the District Councils, representatives of Cumbria Tourism and Marketing Lancashire, representative of the Furness Line Community Rail Partnership, representation from Cumbria and Lancashire LEPS, invited private sector representatives with Bay wide interests and Morecambe Bay Partnership.

The Council was asked to contribute £1,000 towards the project. That would form part of the consideration of the 2014/15 budget.

RESOLVED:- To adopt the Morecambe Bay brand for tourism promotion within the Borough.

87 – Dundalk Street Over 60's Club

The Executive Director informed the Committee that the Council owned Dundalk Street Over 60's Club.

The club was a single storey brick building built in the early 1970's and consisted of a community hall with integral kitchen and toilet facilities. There were small garden areas to front and rear. An attached bungalow was now in private ownership.

The building had, over the years, been used by various community groups and was subject to a Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) grant in 2007. The fund had been awarded in the hope that, after refurbishment, a local community group would take leasehold ownership of the centre and manage it accordingly and in line with Council policy relating to community centre assets.

Unfortunately, following attempts by both the Council and Cumbria County Council, a tenant had not been forthcoming and the building stood empty and unused.

Acceptable alternative uses for the building would include residential conversion and/or demolition and rebuild subject to planning.

The Commercial Estate Manager now sought approval to declare the asset surplus to requirements and that the property be offered on the open market. If no acceptable offers were received it was proposed to dispose of the asset through auction.

RESOLVED:- To agree that Dundalk Street Over 60's Club be declared surplus to requirements and that the Commercial Estate Manager be authorised to dispose of the centre of the terms reported.

88 – Borough Kennels Future Operation

The Executive Director informed the Committee that the Borough Kennels had provided a facility for the Council to discharge a statutory duty to home stray dogs for up to seven days. The current practice was that after the seven day period, stray dogs were invariably adopted by one of two local welfare charities who then pay a daily board fee for the animal whilst seeking to re-home it.

The amount of time and resource that the Council spent on the kennels could be viewed as disproportionate to its statutory requirement. (Many authorities discharge their responsibility by homing strays for seven days in private kennels prior to reclamation, euthanasia or adoption by another organisation or person).

The report advised members of the costs to the Borough in running the service and asked for member approval to run a competitive tendering process to determine whether an alternative provider would take on the operation. Members were asked to consider that, should an alternative provider not be found, the Council moved to minimum statutory provision at the end of the current budget strategy. (i.e. placing stray dogs in private kennel facilities for the minimum statutory period).

RESOLVED:- To agree that the Assistant Director - Community Services commenced a competitive tendering process for the outsourcing of the Borough

Kennel operation in order to allow the Council to meet statutory obligations whilst reducing expenditure and realising a saving in management time.

89 – Restructuring of Senior Management Team

The Executive Director informed the Committee that postholder CPT 010 had applied for voluntary redundancy and that presented the opportunity to restructure senior management by creating a Director of Resources post responsible for all internal Council services. Other departmental restructures were now proposed and would be subject to consultation with Trades Unions. Members would formally consider the proposals in January 2014.

RESOLVED:- To note the report of the Executive Director.

90 – Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning Service Maintenance Contract

The Executive Director informed the Committee that the existing two year contract with Integral Ltd for the provision of service maintenance and repairs of the Councils Heating, Ventilation and air conditioning contract expired on 1st February, 2014.

The Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) was the gazette of record for the European Union. Around 2500 new notices were advertised every week - these included invitations to tender, prior information notices, qualification systems and contract award notices. A full OJEU tender exercise had been completed on the basis of a two year contract with the option to extend for a further two years with negotiation.

Five companies had made the shortlist and they were invited to submit bids via the North West e-tendering portal - The Chest. The Chest had been used by most of the 41 local authorities in the region. Within the five shortlisted companies two had opted out of the process, one did not reply and the remaining two submitted completed, competitive tenders.

Integral Ltd were the incumbent supplier and were providing a good quality service, they were also the best economic value and it was therefore recommended to awarded them the contract for the next two years.

The original contract delivered good value and there had been an improvement in reliability of the Council's heating plant. That had led to a reduced number of unforeseen repairs, making it easier to manage the available budget. Opportunities to drive greater value out of the contract by absorbing further maintenance fields had been implemented to deliver some cashable savings.

RESOLVED:- To agree to appoint Integral Ltd under the Standard Terms and Conditions within the Councils Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for two years to run until 31st January, 2016.

91 – Appointment of Contractor for Farm Street Playground, Barrow Island

The Executive Director reminded the Committee that as part of the Barrow Island regeneration project £200,000 of external funding from the Big Lottery Fund had been made available to Barrow Island Community Trust. Barrow Island Community Trust had agreed to spend that money on a complete refurbishment of an existing playground on Farm Street, Barrow Island.

A shortlist of four competent companies had been selected from previous projects of a similar nature that had been completed for the Council.

The companies were invited to submit bids via the North West e-tendering portal - The Chest. The Chest had been used by most of the 41 local authorities in the region. The selection criteria had been agreed with the bidders at the start of the process, and evaluations had been completed following these quality guidelines.

Due to the grant being for a fixed amount the four companies had been asked to submit designs with their quotations. Their quotation being no more than £200,000 and no less than £180,000. The design had been evaluated by a panel of five local community representatives using the published criteria.

The evaluation had been carried out on the basis of best value i.e. 20% for Cost and 80% Quality.

Before the Contract was signed and sealed the Council would need to be satisfied that the necessary funding agreement was in place and also that there was an agreed funding mechanism to cover the whole cost of the project between Big Lottery Fund/Barrow Island Community Trust and the Council. The external funding would also need to cover the Council's costs in addition to any professional fees, where necessary. Wicksteed Leisure Ltd had agreed to provide an expenditure profile to ensure the Big Lottery Fund external funding was drawn down in a timely manner.

RESOLVED:- (i) To agree to award a fixed price tender evaluated on the basis of an agreed quality criteria; and

(ii) To appoint Wicksteed Leisure Ltd under the Standard Terms and Conditions within the Council's Contract Standing Order and Financial Regulations, subject to receipt of a satisfactory offer letter from the Big Lottery Fund.

<p style="text-align: center;">REFERRED ITEMS</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">THE FOLLOWING MATTERS ARE REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR DECISION</p>
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92 – Barrow Borough Polling District Review

The Electoral Registration Officer informed the Committee that in compliance with Section 17 of the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 every council in England and Wales must introduce compulsory review periods for polling districts and polling places in its area within the period of 16 months beginning with 1st October, 2013.

Local political parties, MP, Borough and County Councillors had been consulted and views were also invited from electors within the Parliamentary Constituency Barrow and Furness as well as persons who may have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons with disability.

No comments had been received regarding the proposals.

RECOMMENDED:- To recommend the Council that no changes be made to the Polling Districts and Polling Places.

93 – Council Priorities 2013-2016

The Executive Director informed the Committee that a policy document had been drafted to set out a clear direction for the Council in the medium term. It re-stated the Vision Statement of the Council, sets out the key priorities for the period 2013-2016 and gave details of objectives, actions and expected outcomes which would form the basis of the Council's performance monitoring over the period.

He commented that the Young People's Employment Scheme for the Council was scheduled to take place in Q3 in 2013/14 and not in 2015/16 as stated in the Council Priorities Policy Document.

RECOMMENDED:- To recommend the Council to approve the Council Priorities 2013-2016 document.

94 – Regrading Applications/Rewards for Business Improvement Team

The Executive Director informed the Committee that Management Board had examined the Council's establishment to identify those posts which had taken on significant additional duties and responsibilities and concluded that 13 posts should be regraded.

Management Board had also given consideration to how best to recognise the substantial contribution made to improving the efficiency of the Council by the Business Improvement Team and recommend that each of the four members of the team received an ex gratia payment of £1,000.

He commented that an appeal had been lodged by Postholder OHS 030. That post had therefore been excluded from the posts recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDED:- To recommend the Council:-

1. To agree that the Management Board's proposal to regrade 12 posts be approved with effect from 8th November, 2013; and
2. To agree that an ex gratia payment of £1,000 be made to the four members of the Business Improvement Team.

The meeting ended at 3.10 p.m.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: Thursday 28th November, 2013
at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillors Hamilton (Chairman), Barlow, Irwin, Johnston, Murray and Pointer.

Tenant Representatives:- Mr A. McIntosh, Mr W. McEwan and Mr W. Ward.

30 – Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 29th August and 31st October, 2013 were taken as read and confirmed.

31 – Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership

Mr W. McEwan had replaced Mrs K. Warne for this meeting only.

32 – Rent Strategy

The Housing Manager reported that whilst the various Welfare Reforms and Self-Financing changes were challenging they also presented the Housing Service with an opportunity to improve the way rents were determined, demanded and collected and transform service delivery.

1. Dwelling Rents

Rents within the HRA 30-year business plan had been predicated at 3% on the assumption that they would be determined using RPI +0.5% plus an additional uplift to bring Local Authority rents up to market (Target) rents by 2015-16.

He stated that today he was guided to use the September CPI of 2.7% + 1% (3.7%) and informed that the opportunity to uplift to market rents would cease after 2014-15.

This would mean that the Housing Service would lose the mechanism to harmonise individual rents where there were anomalies and to match their market equivalents and the Housing Manager suggested that consideration be given to bring rents in line with market (target) rents in 2014-15 highlighted as Option 3 in the table below and to dispense with target rents in any future rent determination or calculation.

The effect on the Council's rents would be as follows:-

OPTIONS	52 Weeks	48 Weeks	+/- from 2013
Current average rents	£71.40	£77.35	
OPTION 1: 2014 (uplift at 3.7%)	£74.04	£80.21	£2.86
OPTION 2: 2014 (uplift at 3.7% + partial convergence)	£74.69	£80.92	£3.57
OPTION 3: 2014 (uplift at 3.7% + full convergence)	£75.34	£81.62	£4.27

The difference in gross income between options 2 & 3 was £94,412 per annum (£10,544,605).

Under the recommendation at Option 3, rents on an individual property basis would differ but all remained within their individual £2 cap (assuming an increase of 3.7%).

The Housing Manager attached as an appendix, examples of the effect of applying Option 3 for the different property types.

2. Garage Rents

It was normal practice to recommend that garage rents were increased in line with residential properties provided that there was a healthy demand. The 2014/15 budget would develop on this basis.

For example a 3.7% increase would generate £7,072 and the effect on individual garage charges would be as follows:-

	No	2013/14	3.70%	2014/15
Garage rate 1	27	£6.43	£0.24	£6.67
Garage rate 2	448	£8.88	£0.33	£9.21
Increase	475	£191,129	£7,072	£198,201

There was a 160 strong waiting list for garages with one vacancy and the proposed new rent appeared on par with the private sector.

The Housing Manager therefore suggested that Members give consideration to develop the budget on this principle.

3. Service Delivery

Historically, dwelling and garage rents had been debited to tenants' accounts every Monday with 4 non collectable weeks - probably as a convenience to the Council's opening arrangements and in an era when Housing Benefit was paid on the same day and when tenants predominantly paid weekly and in cash.

The Council's collection and arrears processes, procedures and tenancy agreements were in line with this practice but were increasingly becoming out of kilter with today's practice.

- Today more tenants received their income (or main benefits) 4 weekly and paid increasingly by remote, direct or automated means.
- In the future Universal Credit would be paid to tenants on a fixed but personal calendar month date.

Consideration also needed to be taken on the impact of these changes and would need to offer customer focused solutions which still protected the Council's rental income and help it manage arrears efficiently. The Housing Manager also wanted to encourage this channel shift and make sure that policies and agreements were aligned and that the Council's processes were capable of delivering the service.

Initially the Housing Manager suggested that the Council explore and consult its tenants and internally on the following key aspects:-

- Eliminate non collectable weeks;
- Introduce monthly/any day rent groups where debits match 'income' dates; and
- Determining rent increases in the future.

He stated that there may well be new and better ways of rent accounting and changes that are looked at which may reduce costs and add more certainty to business planning over the next few years.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. To agree to bring forward convergence with market (target) rents to 2014/15 from 2015/16 and to further dispense with Target Rents and agree that the 2014/15 budget be developed on the basis of Option 3 and to note the potential effect on individual rents modelled at Appendix A to the report;
2. To agree in principle that the Garage rents budget is developed at the same rate as Dwellings Point 2; and
3. To agree to further exploration and consultation with tenants of the proposals outlined in Point 3 to formulate and present a Rents Strategy and implementation plan by the end of the financial year.

33 – Scrutiny of Anti-Social Behaviour Policies and Procedures

The Housing Manager reported that the Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party was established in September, 2013 in line with the regulatory emphasis on co-regulation and the requirement for meaningful scrutiny by residents.

The main aims of the Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party were:-

- To drive continuous improvement in performance and customer service excellence through the process of resident led self-regulation;
- To ensure tenants' views, aspirations and priorities were central to, and directly influence the Housing Service strategic direction and that this could be clearly evidenced; and
- To conduct two or possibly three scrutiny projects each year, which resulted in making evidence, based recommendations to Housing Management Forum and Executive Committee.

The Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party agreed the scope and the timeframe of the project at the outset, based around the following stages:-

Stage 1: Fact Finding

This included a presentation by the Anti-Social Behaviour Consultants – ASB Action Ltd on the current Anti-Social Behaviour Service by the Tenancy Services Team and an examination of the policy and procedures and performance data obtained from the 'Star Survey'.

Stage 2: Further investigation, compare and challenge

The Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party selected the following as their main areas of focus:-

- Review of the Anti-Social Behaviour Policies and Procedures;
- Access to the service and information provided to residents about the service; and
- Performance Issues – Timescales for ASB complaints to be dealt with;

A further area to be examined as part of the wider service review was also considered:-

- Review of the tenancy agreement in line with changes to Anti-Social Behaviour policies and procedures;

The key activities undertaken at this stage were:-

- Information noted from the presentation by ASB Action Ltd;
- Document review of policies, procedures, incident diaries and case review diary – ongoing;
- Review of ASB Policy - Revised Policy Statement agreed by Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party on 25th October, 2013;
- Tenancy Services Team meeting to review draft Policy and Procedures 25th November, 2013;
- Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party to meet 26th November, 2013 to review initial draft Procedures;
- Good practice review of other organisations' service literature and website - ongoing; and
- Tenant Audit – interviews to take place of tenants who have been victims of Anti-Social Behaviour to hear their views and 'learn from any positive/negative comments'.

An evidence file was being compiled with detailed minutes of meetings and interviews with tenants and staff. The Operations Manager and Assistant Operations Manager attended each meeting to respond to the points raised and to

suggest improvements to be made. The Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party was chaired by a tenant representative.

Stage 3: Analysis and recommendations

The Operations Manager and Assistant Operations Manager were to assist Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party to share and understand the findings from the scrutiny exercise to agree recommendations for how the service might be improved for residents.

Stage 4: Implementation and review

A meeting would be arranged of the Tenants' Scrutiny Working Party and Tenancy Services Team to agree an action plan to implement the improvements identified. Monitoring progress against the agreed actions would be the responsibility of the Operations Manager.

The final report would be presented to Housing Management Forum in January 2014.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. To note the content of the Housing Manager's report; and
2. To adopt the four-stage scrutiny process for future scrutiny reviews.

34 – Cumbria Choice: Choice-Based Lettings Scheme

The Housing Manager reported that the Countywide Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme had been in operation since April 2011. Included within the original contribution costs was the funding of the Cumbria Choice Co-ordinator post. The Partnership needed to consider the position on continuing to finance the post beyond its present 12 month term which would end in May 2014.

The co-ordinator role had been responsible for the following tasks for the partnership:-

- Co-ordinating the system upgrade testing;
- Testing and upgrading the CBL website;
- Administration of the Facebook Page;
- Promotion of Cumbria Choice through social media;
- Continuation and development of the reporting element, producing reports for Project Board;
- Chairing Operations Group to resolve operational issues across the partnership to ensure consistency of the policy; and
- Facilitating and monitoring any Review requests from applicants.

The contribution cost for the Housing Service would be £3,407.88 to fund the role for a further 12 months. The additional value and savings provided by the coordinator post included:-

- Making best use of the reporting system;
- Reducing the amount spent on paper forms and staff time across the partnership by raising IT awareness and skills to boost the use of the system online; and
- Reducing staff time in resolving operational issues across the partnership and facilitating any review challenges from applicants.

The partnership had agreed in principle the approach to finance the post for a further 12 months which would coincide with end of the Abritas contract and allow the Partnership to consider the best approach going forward in terms of CBL system and co-ordinator role.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. To note the information within the Housing Manager's report; and
2. To agree to fund the Cumbria Choice Co-ordinator post for a further 12 months.

35 – Brook Street Garage Area

The Housing Manager reported that there was a disused garage site on property behind Brook Street.

There had also previously been playground equipment on that area but this had been removed some years ago. The land had restricted access and was surrounded by residential accommodation.

Within very close proximity was the location of Brook Street Gym and they had approached the Housing Manager to request the Council lease the land to them for the purpose of creating additional training area for the Barrow Amateur Boxing Club (BABC).

There had been discussion regarding this matter previously but the club would like the Council to give them a firm commitment that the land would be available to them.

Following discussion, it was clear the club needed to seek funding from third parties and carry out further investigations into the practicality of the land being used in the way they suggest.

In order to facilitate this process the Housing Manager asked Members to agree giving the club a 12-month option to provide the Council with a proposal for the site and confirmation that funding was in place to improve the area.

RECOMMENDED:- To agree that Barrow Amateur Boxing Club (BABC) be given a 12-month option to provide the Council with a business plan and proposals for use of the above area as a training facility and to agree appropriate terms for the lease of the land.

36 – Relocation of Housing Service

The Housing Manager reported that the Council held a lease on Cavendish House until 2018. However, the lease contained a break clause which would allow the Council to end the lease in December 2014.

At the present time the Council paid a substantial rent to a third party for the lease of Cavendish House.

As a result of changes in the Council over the last 12 months there was now under-used office space in the Town Hall. This had enabled the Council to look how it could make best use of its office space, to improve income and efficiency and the delivery of services.

Following these considerations it was now proposed that the Housing Service look to relocate to the Town Hall and take the opportunity to end its lease at Cavendish House.

The Housing Manager asked the Forum to agree this proposal and he would keep Members informed as the proposal was developed.

RECOMMENDED:- To agree to the relocation of the Housing Service to the Town Hall during 2014.

37 – Void Property Gas and Electricity Meters

The Housing Maintenance Manager reported that when a property became vacant there were often problems associated with the existing gas and electricity meters that caused re-letting delays and consequently led to rental loss.

Common problems included clearing former tenant meter debts, meter tampering, processing of former bills and dealing with debt management companies. This inevitably took Officers a significant amount of time and effort to co-ordinate and required lengthy telephone calls to a number of agencies and utility suppliers.

Officers had held unsuccessful discussions with several utility companies in an attempt to simplify the existing void meter process. Having spoken to other landlords in the North West region it was clear that the problem was common throughout the housing sector.

In September 2013 a representative from British Gas approached Officers with a proposal to offer the Council a free of charge “Void Management Energy Service”. The scheme provided a “one stop shop” aimed at increasing revenue, reducing administration costs, managing debt and bills and helping tenants with their energy needs.

The scheme required the Council to confirm by e-mail the former tenant details, the date the property became vacant along with any exiting meter readings. British Gas would then assign the void to a Personal Account Manager who would (where necessary) arrange for the existing meters to be transferred (15 working days), debts to be cleared/chased and a new meter to be installed ready for the new tenant to move in to. The scheme also provided a free £5.00 out of tenancy credit allowance for each meter whilst the property remained empty.

Whilst British Gas clearly derived the benefit from being the nominated utility supplier at the time of tenancy sign up tenants had no contractual obligation to remain with British Gas and may choose an alternative supplier should they wish.

The scheme offered by British Gas was presently in operation at a number of North West based landlords including One Vision Housing, Bolton at Home and City West Housing Trust.

RECOMMENDED:- To agree that Officers proceed with the appointment of British Gas to manage gas and electricity meter related problems affecting void properties.

38 – Performance Information Report

The Housing Manager submitted information relating to the Housing Management Performance 2013/14 and Best Value Performance Indicators. The information is attached at **Appendix A** to these Minutes. He provided a brief commentary to assist Members in their understanding of the key trends.

RESOLVED:- To note the Performance Information reports.

39 – Planned Investments and Planned Maintenance 2013/14

The Housing Manager reported information relating to the Planned Investment and Planned Maintenance Programme for 2013/14. The information is attached at **Appendix B** to these Minutes.

RESOLVED:- To note the information.

The meeting closed at 2.27 p.m.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

APPENDIX A

Performance Indicator	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13	Apr - Jun 2013	Apr -Sept 2014	Target (Median)
£ Rents Collection					
£ Rent & Service Charges due	£9,228,558	9,728,187	2,502,106	5,370,404	£10,923,715
£ Rent collected	£9,134,875	9,604,739	2,342,289	5,120,073	£ 10,596,004
Rent collected as % of rent due (inc ft)	98.98%	98.73%	93.61%	95.34%	97%
£ Current Arrears (dwellings)	£181,230	£203,623	£295,660	£430,358	£175,679
£ Former Arrears (dwellings)	£92,499	£135,745	£153,108	£204,630	£128,081
Write Offs (Gross)	£75,538	£38,573	£1,695	£17,501	£50,000
Tenants evicted for rent arrears	6	5	3	10	10
Current tenants arrears % of rent owed inc arrears b/f	2.0%	2.1%	11.8%	8.0%	5%
Former tenants arrears % of rent owed	1.0%	1.4%	6.5%	4.0%	3%
£ Rent arrears Garages	£1,824	£1,452	£1,923	£6,458	£ 3,750
£ Rent Arrears Shops	£16,602	£22,146	£19,609	£19,759	£ 25,000
Void management					
Tenancy Turnover %	10.3%	10.4%	3.5%	7.5%	8.05%
Total number of re-lets	278	245	101	201	217
No. of Voids	227	277	94	204	218
Ends due to Under Occupation			9	29	
Average relet time for dwellings (CORE)	37	32	29	30	28
£ rent loss through vacant dwellings	£ 100,227	£ 111,607	£ 32,550	£ 82,191	£ 109,685
£ rent loss due to vacant garages	£5,098	£2,290	£1,161	£1,583	£ 4,500
£ rent loss due to vacant shops	£16,546	£5,000	£1,000	£1,021	£ 4,000
% properties accepted on first offer	86.4%	78.4%	75.5%	77.1%	70%
Loss per Void (Rents, Repairs, Arrears)	£ 2,846	£ 2,684	£ 1,774	£ 1,795	£2,000
Maintenance					
No. Repair Orders issued (Tenant Demand)	11,587	10,109	2,846	5,521	9,197
Responsive & Void repairs per property	4.3	3.7	1.1	2.1	3.4
P1 & P2 as a % of total repairs	61.7%	63.8%	59.8%	59.1%	47.5%
% all responsive repairs completed on time	87.3%	77.1%	69.8%	70.8%	96.3
P1 % emergency repairs completed on time	94.6%	94.6%	77.0%	83.5%	96.7
P2 % urgent repairs completed on time	78.9%	77.3%	71.0%	71.0%	94.6
Average end-to-end time for all reactive repairs (days)	12.25	19.78	18.56	23.6	8.2
Percentage of repairs completed 'Right First Time'	78.5%	79.79	N/A	N/A	88.8
Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made	77%	61%	N/A	N/A	96.8
Appointments made as a percentage of repair orders (exc gas & voids)	NA	100%	N/A	N/A	94.1
Percentage of dwellings with a valid gas safety certificate	99.89%	100%	100.0%	99.9%	99.8%
Percentage of homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard	0%	0%	0%	0%	0.2%
*Average energy efficiency rating of dwellings (based on RD SAP 9.83)	69.2	69.2	69.2	69.2	68.90%
Equality & Diversity					
ASB cases reported	82	72	26	35	143
Percentage of closed ASB cases that were successfully resolved	91%	99%	100%	100%	88%
% Diversity Information : Age	100%	100%	98%	100%	100%
Gender	100%	100%	89%	93%	98%
Ethnicity	95%	82%	87%	91%	75%
Disability	100%	100%	89%	93%	75%
Sexuality	56%	52%	45%	46%	55%
Religion or belief	57%	53%	45%	47%	55%
Percentage of Stage 1 complaints upheld	22%	40%			NA

HOUSING MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

APPENDIX A

Satisfaction	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13	Apr -Jun 2013		Target (Median)
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's services overall		88%			83%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with repairs and maintenance		87%			79%
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their views are taken into account		78%			64%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of the home		90			N/A
Percentage of residents satisfied with the neighbourhood as a place to live		84%			82%
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their rent provides value for money		90%			N/A
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their service charges provide value for money		81%			N/A
Value for Money - Direct Costs per property	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13	Apr -Jun 2013	Apr-Sept 2013	Target (Median)
Overhead per property	£ 324	£ 274	£ 140		130
Major & Cyclical works	£ 1,256	1100			1200
Responsive Repairs	£ 480	391			375
Void Repairs	£ 167	166			150
Rent Arrears & Collection	£ 54	59			65
Community Involvement	£ 38	36			35
Anti Social Behaviour	£ 41	41			40
Neighbourhood Mgt (Estates/Tenancy)	£ 102	105			100
Housing Options	£ 36	36			40
Leasehold	£ 70	134			
Total staff turnover	7.0%	5.9%	2.0%	3.9%	
Ave. working days lost / sickness absence	14.0	18.9	2.1	4.0	
Housing Property	Apr-June 2013	Apr-Sept 2013			
HSE	1282	1280			
FLATS	1247	1247			
BUNGALOWS	157	157			
TL DWELLINGS	2686	2684			
TL DISPERSED (FLATS)	8	8			
COMMUNITY CENTRES	5	5			
LEASEHOLDS	205	205			
GARAGES	486	486			
SHOPS	20	19			
TOTAL PROPERTIES	3410	3407			
SOLD PROPERTIES	SOLD 2011/12	2012-13	SOLD 2012/13	Apr-Sept	SOLD 2013/14
HSE	3	252,750	6	152,210	4
FLAT	1	42,160	2	19,320	1
LAND	1	0	0	0	0
TL	4	294,910	8	171,530	5
HOMELESSNESS	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13	Apr-June 2013	Apr-Sept 2013	
Homeless ave. days in temporary dispersed accommodation	59	57	18	30	
Homeless ave. days in temporary B&B accommodation	20	27	35	24	
Homeless Total Cases Closed	752	903	169	335	
Homeless Advice	339	408	63	119	
Homeless Prevention	114	170	57	117	
Homeless Applications	185	147	14	27	
Homeless Successful Preventions	85	148	32	65	
Eligible Homeless (Owed a full duty)	29	30	3	7	
HOUSING REGISTER	Actual 2011/12	Actual 2012/13	Apr-June 2013	Apr-Sept 2013	
Applicants on housing register					
Active Direct Applicants		1471	1189	1226	
Active Transfer Applicants		346	297	305	
Cumbria Choice Register	1745	1817	1486	1531	

PLANNED INVESTMENTS 2013-14

SCHEME	CONTRACTOR OR SUPPLIER	AVAILABLE BUDGET	NO OF PROPERTIES	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	START DATE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE	CONTRACTOR	COMMENTS	Leasholders affected?
RE-ROOFING WORKS (GRIFFIN)	DLP Roofing	£300,000	157	£ 347,600	Apr-12	Dec-13	DLP SERVICES	COMPLETE	Yes
REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£227,120	120	£ 168,109	1.4.2013	31.3.14	K WILSON	50% COMPLETE	No
BATHROOMS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£300,000	200	£ 64,055	1.4.2013	31.3.14	AB MITCHELL	70% COMPLETE	No
KITCHENS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£500,000	300	£ 198,979	1.4.2013	31.3.14	AB MITCHELL	70% COMPLETE	No
HEATING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£500,000	200	£ 202,372	1.4.2013	31.3.14	AB MITCHELL INTEGRAL	60% COMPLETE	No
PAINTING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£200,000	500	£ 92,954	1.4.2017	31.3.14	GH JONES	95% COMPLETE	Yes

HOUSING MAINTENANCE COMMITMENTS 2013-14

	Funding Available 2011-12	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	Weekly Available	Gross Comm. as a % funds available
Tenant Demand Repairs	£ 750,000	£ 410,584	£ 14,423	55%
Preliminary Cost	£ 265,096	£ 194,532	£ 5,098	73%
Voids	£ 200,000	£ 53,320	£ 3,846	27%
Gas Servicing	£ 280,000	£ 223,714	£ 5,385	80%
Decoration Vouchers	£ 75,000	£ 13,193	£ 1,442	18%
Disrepair Claims	£ 15,000	£ -	£ 288	0%
Environmental Impmts	£ 25,000	£ 8,712	£ 481	35%
Disabled Adaptations	£ 300,000	£ 70,846	£ 5,769	24%
Electrical Testing	£ 75,000	£ 37,754	£ 1,442	50%
Door Entry Maintenance	£ 20,000	£ 10,316	£ 385	52%
Total	£2,080,096.00	£1,022,971.00	£38,559.54	

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE		Part One (R/D) Agenda Item 8
Date of Meeting:	22nd January, 2014	
Reporting Officer:	Borough Treasurer	
<p>Title: Budget Proposals 2014-2015</p> <p>Summary and Conclusions:</p> <p>This report presents the budget proposals for 2014-2015. The General Fund revenue budget is based on the Budget Strategy agreed on 24th January 2012; 2014-2015 will be the third year of the four year plan. The Housing Revenue Account for 2014-2015 is proposed as a balanced budget. The Capital Programme and Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2014-2015 are also included as is the position on reserves and balances.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>To recommend the Council:</p> <p>(R) 1. To approve the revised 2013-2014 General Fund revenue budget as £12,769,580 together with a contribution to reserves of £414,570;</p> <p>(R) 2. To approve the creation of five Trainee posts, together with the required movements in reserves as set out in Section 3;</p> <p>(R) 3. To set the 2014-2015 General Fund revenue budget as £10,638,490 including £93,640 for parish precepts, together with a contribution to reserves of £116,440 and a 1.9% increase in the borough element of the Council Tax;</p> <p>(R) 4. To agree the items included within the 2014-2015 budget as set out in sections 6.2, 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8;</p> <p>(R) 5. To agree the prices increases referred to in Section 6.11 and that car parking prices are not increased for 2014-2015;</p> <p>(R) 6. To agree the movements in reserves set out in Sections 6.12 and 6.13;</p> <p>(R) 7. To decline the Council Tax Freeze Grant offered for 2014-2015 referred to in Section 6.15;</p> <p>(R) 8. To approve the Housing Revenue Account budget and the individual recommendations contained in the report referred in Section B;</p> <p>(R) 9. To approve the Capital Programme for 2013-2014 to 2016-2017 as referred to in Section D;</p>		

(R) 10. To approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2014-2015 to 2016-2017 as referred to in Section E together with the borrowing Approval Limit of £55m; and

Members are recommended:

(D) 11. To agree the proposed budget consultation set out in Section F.

Report

A. General Fund

1. Budget Strategy

The approved Budget Strategy covers the financial years 2012-2013 to 2015-2016. The Budget Strategy is designed to reduce the Council's core budget to the levels that will be supported by the financial settlement and income from Council Tax. The long term aim is to have a sustainable budget.

If no action had been taken and the Budget Strategy was not implemented, then by 2015-2016 the shortfall on the revenue budget was estimated to be £5m. The Budget Strategy policies were implemented at the start to allow their sustainability to be established over the strategy period. This allowed the early savings to release funds into reserves to control any ups and downs in the assumptions used and to deal with any items outside of the sensitivity analysis of the Medium Term Financial Plan. The reduction achieved in the first two years of the Budget Strategy is £3m and the existing policies will continue to achieve savings by 2015-2016 of £4.4m.

2. Projected outturn for 2013-2014

The revised budget for 2013-2014 of £12,769,580 is shown in **Appendix 1**. This has increased since the quarter 2 report, by £176,270 'Faster and Further' Efficiency Support Grant that has been awarded to the Council for the performance against the business plan submission and £150,000 for the Weekly Collection Support Scheme allocation for 2013-2014; this has been received into revenue rather than capital.

The original budget for 2013-2014 included a contribution to reserves, for future budget support and restructuring, of £710,620. The revised contribution to reserves for future budget support and restructuring has increased to £1,125,190.

The increase of £414,570 is a result of items set out below; those from the first half of the year have already been reported:

Contributions in (added):

- £603,250 one-off return from the revision to the MMI Scheme of Arrangement provision as highlighted in the closing of the 2012-2013 accounts. Further correspondence has been received and it is now more likely that 28% of the total liability paid and 15% of on-going claims settled will be sufficient. The provision will be reviewed each year end and adjusted accordingly.
- £161,890 continuing saving from capital re-programming earlier in the year and additional investment interest earned.
- £67,700 continuing saving from contract inflation below budget estimates identified in quarter two.

Contributions from (used):

- £149,890 previously agreed one-off transfer for Welfare Support – discretionary housing payments.
- £56,970 previously agreed one-off transfer for Welfare Support – Citizens Advice Bureau and Barrow and District Disability Association.
- £74,380 one-off transfer for Trainees. This is explained in the following paragraph.
- £5,000 one-off subscription to Keep Our Future Afloat (last of a three year commitment) as previously reported.
- £65,720 one-off cost of professional services used during the year to cover staff shortages and fund specific works. The majority of these have already been reported.
- £10,000 continuing cost of works in default as required, this amount has been previously reported.
- £34,000 continuing cost of the loss in recycling rewards due to the reduction in recycling tonnage. This reduction has been reflected in the 2014-2015 budget.
- £22,310 one-off cost of various other items including the 2011-2012 DWP benefit claim settlement, additional NNDR to be paid, less one-off grants received. The majority of these have been reported in the quarterly reports.

The continuing savings and costs are included in the 2014-2015 budget.

Members are asked to approve the 2013-2014 revised budget as £12,769,580 and a contribution of £414,570 to the Restructuring Reserve for 2013-2014.

3. Trainees

When the Budget Strategy was proposed, it was anticipated that the Council would look to introduce trainees by 2015-2016.

With the Pay and Grading review now ended, the reserve that was previously established to cover consultancy fees and protection for downgrading, now becomes available. Rather than add this back into the Restructuring Reserve, it is proposed that the reserve is renamed as the Trainees Reserve and that £74,380 is added to the £175,620 already set aside. This will result in a reserve of £250,000 that will fund five trainees on three year contracts with training and progression built into the contract of employment. There will be an entry level qualification requirement and the trainees would be between 16 and 18 years of age. The Trainees would begin their contract in September 2014 and it is hoped that during the three years, permanent employment in established posts is achieved, however there will be no contractual commitment from the Council to continue employment. To continue for the three year contract the annual examinations must be passed, a single re-sit for each year will be allowed. The Trainees will commence on scale point 8 of the Council's Salary Scale and an incremental advance will be dependent on passing the annual examinations and progress in the workplace. The cost from the reserve for 2014-2015 is £45,850. If the initial trainees are successful in gaining employment during their three years, then additional trainees would be recruited until the reserve is depleted.

Members are asked to approve the reserves and the creation of five Trainee posts on the establishment for a period of three years from the commencement of the contract of employment.

4. 2014-2015 Financial Settlement

Compared to the final 2013-2014 financial settlement, the provisional 2014-2015 financial settlement is:

Item	2013-2014	2014-2015	Movement
Revenue Support Grant	£3,987,342	£2,987,703	£999,639 down 25%
Business Rate Retention	£2,652,670	£2,704,345	£51,675 up 1.9%
Homeless Prevention	£94,434	£93,021	£1,413 down 1.5%
2011-2012 Freeze Grant	£108,795	£108,309	£486 down 0.4%
Returned funding (one-off)	-	£7,349	£7,349 up one-off
Total	£6,843,241	£5,900,727	£942,514 down 13.8%

The provisional financial settlement for 2014-2015 provided in January 2013 was for £5.961m. The provisional financial settlement is now £5.901m, plus a separate grant for the Business Rates cap of £29,587, making £5.931m. This results in a shortfall against the Medium Term Financial Plan of around £30k. This has been reflected in the 2014-2015 proposed budget.

The 2014-2015 financial settlement is issued under consultation and that ends on 15th January, 2014. A final settlement notice will then be issued for 2014-2015 and any significant changes will be included in the papers for the Budget Setting report to Full Council.

5. Proposed budget for 2014-2015

The proposed General Fund revenue budget for 2014-2015 is £10,638,490 including £93,640 for parish precepts (**Appendix 1**).

The latest Medium Term Financial Plan estimated the 2014-2015 budget to be:

- Net Revenue Budget £11,073,790
- Total Revenue Financing £10,267,750
- Deficit £797,040
- Less the Budget Setting Support £600,000, leaving £197,040 coming from the Restructuring Reserve.

Changes in the Net Revenue Budget

Item	2014-2015
Current Medium Term Financial Plan	£11,073,790
Reduced recharges to capital and HRA	£185,970
Reduced DWP benefit admin grant	£64,150
Reduced income from parking enforcement	£50,630
Reduced recycling reward scheme	£49,840
Cost of agreed re-gradings	£13,110
Additional costs of Individual Electoral Registration	£7,000
Increased income from property rent	(£147,500)
Reduction in estimated inflation on contracts and specifications	(£147,470)
Reduction in software maintenance costs	(£23,890)
Increased external interest earned	(£23,000)
Soccer Centre net income share	(£13,940)
Net cost from establishment changes	£27,510
Net of all other items	£5,850
Proposed budget	£11,122,050

Changes in the Total Revenue Financing

Item	2014-2015
Current Medium Term Financial Plan	(£10,276,750)
Revenue Support Grant	£29,710

Business Rate Retention Scheme	£1,000
Council Tax base and support scheme	(£167,730)
New Homes Bonus	(£127,280)
Council Tax support grant matches loss in DWP admin grant	(£77,720)
2012-2013 Council Tax surplus	(£19,720)
Proposed budget	(£10,638,490)

There is additional income of £361,740 and a net increase in the Net Revenue Budget of £48,260. This makes the reduction in the use of reserves £313,480. The current Medium Term Financial Plan needed to use £197,040 from reserves and the proposed 2014-2015 budget now results in a contribution to reserves of £116,440.

Members are asked to recommend that the Council set the 2014-2015 General Fund revenue budget at £10,638,490 including £93,640 for parish precepts, together with the contribution of £116,440 to the Restructuring Reserve for 2014-2015.

6. Items within the proposed budget

The following items are included in the 2014-2015 proposed budget:

6.1. Trainees

Paragraph 3 sets out the introduction of five trainees on three year contracts. This will be funded from reserves.

6.2. Housing Solutions Officer

To support the Council's Homelessness Strategy and the Welfare Reform changes, it is proposed that an additional post be added to the Housing Solutions team. This post will be funded from the Homelessness Prevention grant that the Council receives annually. The grant is known for the next two years and grant can be set aside in 2013-2014 to allow a three year contract to be awarded. The post will be retained as long as the grant is received. The post is Scale 6 which is commensurate with the other Housing Solutions Officers already in post.

6.3. Director of Resources Restructuring

The Establishment Report on today's agenda sets out the proposed restructuring from the establishment of the Resources Directorate. The saving for the year is £58,130, however for 2014-2015 this is reduced for the period of transition to £24,800. This is included in the proposed 2014-2015 budget.

6.4. Regeneration and the Built Environment Restructuring

The Establishment Report on today's agenda also sets out the proposed restructuring within the Planning, Development and Environmental Health departments. The net cost of the restructuring is £44,310.

6.5. Soccer Centre

Now that the Soccer Centre has opened a prudent estimate of the income share has been included in the 2014-2015 budget. The income generated by the facility is used to fund the contractors running costs of the Centre and the Council's financing costs. Any income above that is shared and for the Council, the estimated additional income net of property costs is £13,940. It is possible that this figure will be higher as the Centre is proving to be a popular venue.

6.6. Individual Electoral Registration

The estimated additional costs of Individual Electoral Registration are being funded by a Government grant, however the grant awarded at present does not cover the full costs associated with the additional stationery, printing and postage. It is possible that further grant will be secured, but to ensure that sufficient budget is available £7,000 has been added to the budget.

6.7. Medical Referee fees

£1,900 to increase the medical referees fees for the Cremation service. The current fee is £10 per signature and has not been increased for five years. It is proposed that this payment is increased to £12 per signature. This fee is recovered as part of the cremation fees.

6.8. Morecambe Bay branding

£1,000 to contribute to the Morecambe Bay branding partnership as adopted at the Executive Committee of 18th December, 2013.

6.9. Council Tax increase

The budget includes an increase in the Barrow Borough Council element of the Council Tax of 1.9% and Band A goes up from £141.93 to £144.63. This is an annual increase of £2.70, or 5 pence a week. 42% of the chargeable dwellings in the borough are in Band A.

The Council Tax Base for the financial year 2014-2015 has been set at:

- The Whole Borough area 17,875.87
 - Barrow unparished 14,394.19
 - Dalton with Newton Town Council 2,204.79
 - Askam and Ireleth Town Council 1,029.11
 - Lindal and Marton Parish Council 247.78

6.10. Car parking pay and display

No increase is proposed for car parking pay and display tickets, contract parking permits or staff parking permits.

6.11. Other price increases

Fees and charges have been increased by a minimum of 2.5% or to recover the costs of the service in accordance with the Budget Strategy and these are set out in **Appendix 2**. Building Control prices are set out on a complex schedule; 2.5% will be applied consistently across their pricing structure.

6.12. Movements in reserves

The following movements in reserves are included in the proposed 2014-2015 budget for approval:

- £44,920 from the public buildings reserve to fund major works and one-off items:
 - Dock Museum £6,400
 - Park Leisure Centre £11,910
 - Barrow Park £4,640
 - Crematorium £500
 - Duke Street Shops £1,800
 - Barrow Market £6,000
 - Commercial Properties £12,670
 - Town Hall £1,000
- £56,290 from the sports facilities reserve. This has historically been referred to as the Park Vale reserve and Members are asked to rename this as Sports Facilities Reserve. The reserve has been budgeted to be spent as a contribution to the Academy sports facilities in 2014-2015.
- One-off items from the Restructuring Reserve:
 - £10,000 as a budget for dealing with work in default.
 - £2,000 to produce the official street guide during 2014-2015.
 - £1,000 to support the welcome of P&O cruise ship Adonia.

6.13. Welfare Support reserve

This Committee on 20th March, 2013 agreed to extend the transitional support to the Citizens Advice Bureau and Barrow and District Disability Association (CAB & BDDA). The extension was agreed because of the number of changes from the Welfare Reforms that will have an impact on the number of people needing help and advice. Some of the welfare reform changes have been implemented or have commenced in 2013-2014, but there are still more to follow, in particular Universal Credit.

It is currently anticipated that Universal Credit will be applied in Cumbria during 2016-2017. At that time there will be a Local Services Support Framework which will deliver welfare benefits advice and assistance, to be funded by the DWP. At this point the Council's responsibilities will change as it will no longer be the Housing Benefits administration authority, although the DWP funding may come through the Council so that services are commissioned locally. There are still some decisions to be made and

guidance to be issued for the Universal Credit Local Services Support Framework to be implemented.

Given the timeframe involved and the impact that welfare reform has on residents, Members are asked to consider awarding the full grant to CAB & BDDA for 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. This would be funded by a new reserve called the Welfare Support reserve.

The Welfare Support reserve would be funded from disaggregating the current 'Grants to External Bodies' reserve, leaving the arts, sports and discretionary relief as it is and transferring the remaining balance into the Welfare Support reserve, £38,040. Also in this reserves would be the additional transition grant agreed in March 2013, £56,970, and the amount set aside for discretionary housing payments in March 2013, £149,890. This totals £244,900.

The cost of awarding the full grant for each year is £56,970. This would leave £73,990 which would remain available to top-up the discretionary housing payments as and when required, until 2016-2017 or until housing benefits administration is no longer the Council's responsibility.

Members are asked to approve the creation of the Welfare Support reserve from the existing reserves as detailed and that full support is awarded to the CAB & BDDA for the next three years. Following this, in 2017-2018, the support would reduce to 50% as originally set out in the Budget Strategy external support policy.

6.14. Other reserve movements

The following reserve movements have been previously agreed or are being credited to revenue as the related expenditure is defrayed:

- £20,000 from the insurance excesses reserve.
- £600,000 from the Budget Setting Support reserve.
- £52,040 from the CCTV reserve.
- £44,610 from the earmarked revenue grants reserve.

6.15. Council Tax Freeze Grant 2014-2015

The Government have proposed a grant worth a 1% council tax rise that would be paid for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 for a freeze in 2014-2015. The provisional amount for Barrow is £46,131. The budget has been based on a 1.9% increase and as Members are aware, that increase builds into the Council Tax demand year on year. The Council Tax increase for 2014-2015 will generate £72,310 and comparing the offer in terms of the Budget Strategy, the Council would receive grant of £92,262 but would have lost £145,990 by 2015-2016 (the loss would be £75,080 in 2016-2017).

7. Revenue Spending Power 2014-2015

The reduction that has been applied to all local authorities is capped at 6.9%. However, this is a cap on Revenue Spending Power and not the same as the cash grant received.

Compared to 2013-2014 (adjusted) the Revenue Spending Power has been calculated as:

Item	2013-2014	2014-2015
Council Tax excluding parishes	£3,732,880	£3,737,650
Revenue Support Grant	£3,987,342	£2,987,703
Business Rate Retention	£2,652,670	£2,704,345
Homeless Prevention	£94,434	£93,021
2011-2012 Freeze Grant	£108,795	£108,309
Returned funding (one-off)	-	£7,349
Business Rate cap grant	-	£29,587
Council Tax grant to parishes	(£17,224)	(£17,224)
New Homes Bonus	£189,801	£372,858
New Homes Bonus top slice	£23,173	£9,526
Benefit admin grants	£594,713	£549,057
New burdens grants	£16,402	£16,402
Efficiency Support Grant	£1,175,118	£1,175,118
Indicative 2014-2015 Freeze Grant	-	£46,131
Estimated Revenue Spending Power	£12,558,104	£11,819,832
Reduction in 2014-2015		£738,272
Reduction in 2014-2015		5.88%

The New Homes Bonus top slice is a notional figure and the actual amount to be returned will be notified to the Council in May 2014. The £9,526 is not included in the 2014-2015 proposed budget.

The Efficiency Support Grant is not guaranteed to be awarded and is essentially ring-fenced in its use – it is not for recurring expenditure or running costs. Excluding the Efficiency Support Grant, the Revenue Spending Power for 2014-2015 is £10,644,714. The reduction in 2014-2015 is then £1,913,390, 15.24%. The average reduction is 2.9% (excluding the GLA).

The conditions attached to bidding for the 2014-2015 Efficiency Support Grant are not yet known but it is expected that a further business case will be required to secure the one-off grant.

8. 2015-2016 Financial Settlement

Compared to the provisional 2014-2015 financial settlement, the illustrative 2015-2016 financial settlement is:

Item	2014-2015	2015-2016	Movement
Revenue Support Grant	£2,987,703	£1,984,489	£1,003,214 down 33.6%
Business Rate Retention	£2,704,345	£2,778,987	£74,642 up 2.76%
Homeless Prevention	£93,021	£92,990	£31 down 0%
2011-2012 Freeze Grant	£108,309	£108,272	£37 down 0%
Returned funding (one-off)	£7,349	-	£7,349 down one-off
Total	£5,900,727	£4,964,738	£935,989 down 15.9%

The 2015-2016 financial settlement anticipated in the Medium Term Financial Plan followed the Budget Strategy expectation that the Council's sustainable funding level would be achieved in 2014-2015 and that the financial settlement would then slightly improve (2% up on Revenue Support Grant and Business Rate Retention). The expected financial settlement was £6,076,200 and the illustrative financial settlement is £4,964,740, down by £1,111,460 on the Medium Term Financial Plan. However, in the summer a technical consultation on the financial settlement was issued and outlined the proposed funding reductions that could be expected in this financial settlement. From this it was anticipated that instead of a 2% increase, there would be a 10% decrease in the Revenue Support Grant element. The revised financial settlement for the Medium Term Financial Plan became £5,713,340, down by £362,860.

The increased shortfall in core funding of £748,600 takes the Budget Strategy gap from £5.012m to £5.761m, increasing the deficit from £0.6m to £1.349m. However, the financial settlement papers state: *"The Government has also developed an illustrative spending power for 2015-16. As 2015-16 is the first year of a new spending round a large number of grant allocations are only indicative and are likely to change. The Efficiency Support Grant will be at least the same in 2015-16 as 2014-15 but eligibility for the grant and final amounts are only illustrative at this time and will be subject to final calculations that will be made in Autumn 2014 and on LA performance."*

9. Revenue Spending Power 2015-2016

The illustrative Revenue Spending Power shows that the reduction that has been applied to all local authorities has been capped at 6.9%, but the cap has not yet been set.

Compared to the 2014-2015 (adjusted) Revenue Spending Power, 2015-2016 has been calculated as:

Item	2014-2015	2015-2016
Council Tax excluding parishes	£3,737,650	£3,742,428
Revenue Support Grant	£2,987,703	£1,984,489
Business Rate Retention	£2,704,345	£2,778,987
Homeless Prevention	£93,021	£92,990
2011-2012 Freeze Grant	£108,309	£108,272
Returned funding (one-off)	£7,349	-
Business Rate cap grant	£29,587	£29,587
Council Tax grant to parishes	(£17,224)	(£17,224)
New Homes Bonus	£372,858	£555,915
New Homes Bonus top slice	£9,526	£24,221
Benefit admin grants	£77,713	-
New burdens grants	£16,402	-
Efficiency Support Grant	£1,175,118	£1,175,118
Indicative 2014-2015 Freeze Grant	£46,131	£46,131
Indicative 2015-2016 Freeze Grant	-	£46,190
Estimated Revenue Spending Power	£11,348,488	£10,567,104
Reduction in 2015-2016		£781,384
Reduction in 2015-2016		6.89%

The Efficiency Support Grant was set up as a two year grant to move authorities to their future sustainable funding level. Adding the grant into 2015-2016 has allowed the core funding to be reduced; core funding is used for revenue which represents the Council's ongoing service delivery costs. Again, the Efficiency Support Grant is not guaranteed to be awarded and is ring-fenced. Excluding the Efficiency Support Grant, the Revenue Spending Power for 2015-2016 is £9,391,986. The reduction in 2015-2016 is then £1,956,502, 17.24%. The average reduction is 1.8% (excluding the GLA).

If the Efficiency Support Grant ends as originally indicated, then the Revenue Spending Power could be reduced by the notional 6.9% cap, or £783,050.

10. Medium Term Financial Strategy

The impact of the financial settlement on 2015-2016 will be reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan. However, to highlight the impact using 2014-2015 as an illustration, the funding for the next three years is shown below:

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Net Revenue Budget	£11.1m	£11.1m	£11.1m	£11.1m
Total Revenue Financing	(£10.6m)	(£10.6m)	(£10.6m)	(£10.6m)
Deficit	£0.5m	£0.5m	£0.5m	£0.5m
Plus reduction in settlement		£0.8m	£0.8m	£0.8m
Illustrative deficit	£0.5m	£1.3m	£1.3m	£1.3m
Budget Setting Support	(£0.6m)	(£0.6m)	-	-
Restructuring Reserves	£0.1m	(£0.7m)	(£1.3m)	(£1.3m)
Total movement in reserves	(£0.5m)	(£1.3m)	(£1.3m)	(£1.3m)

Illustrative reserve balances	31/3/15	31/3/16	31/3/17	31/3/18
Budget Setting Support	£0.6m	-	-	-
Restructuring Reserves	£2.7m	£2.0m	£0.7m	(£0.6m)
Total movement in reserves	(£0.5m)	(£1.3m)	(£1.3m)	(£1.3m)

The reserves required to fund the same budget level for the three years following 2014-2015 is £3.3m based on this illustration. The Restructuring Reserve stands at £2.7m as estimated for 31st March 2014.

Members are asked to agree that the Medium Term Financial Strategy be to continue the Budget Strategy aim to eliminate the deficit in the core budget. This will require the continued use of reserves to set the pace of change and achieve long term financial resilience.

The fully revised Medium Term Financial Plan will be presented to this Committee following the Budget Setting for 2014-2015.

Some of the options that will potentially be available to meet the deficit reduction challenge will be estimated in the Medium Term Financial Plan and include the Cumbria Business Rates Pool, reducing external interest payments, reviewing contracts, further efficiency savings and cost cutting measures. However there will also be inflation pressures on the budget to take into account and the potential 2014-2015 award of Efficiency Support Grant will be needed to pay for the required changes.

B. Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account budget was presented to the Housing Management Forum on 16th January, 2014. The report is attached as **Appendix 3** and Members are asked to consider the report and recommend the Housing Revenue Account budget to Council for approval.

The Housing Revenue Account is a balanced budget for 2014-2015 with a 3.7% rent increase for dwellings and garages.

C. Reserves and Balances

The projected reserves and balances at 31st March are:

Reserve	31/3/2013	31/3/2014	31/3/2015
VAT exemption	£250,000	£250,000	£250,000
Insurance excesses	£79,730	£59,730	£39,730
Uninsured losses	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000
Public buildings	£725,000	£465,510	£420,590
Trainees (ex. pay and grading)	£175,620	£250,000	£204,150
Cremator relining	£45,500	£45,500	£45,500
Festival Fund	£12,420	-	-
Market Refurbishment	£50,650	-	-

Sports Facilities	£56,290	£56,290	-
Grants to External Bodies	£240,740	£57,650	-
Welfare Support	-	£244,900	£187,930
CCTV	£137,770	£87,410	£35,370
Budget Setting Support	£1,800,000	£1,200,000	£600,000
Restructuring	£1,455,560	£2,580,750	£2,684,190
Specific Grants (ring-fenced)	£1,070,550	£572,460	£527,850
Woodbridge Haven (ring-fenced)	£22,430	-	£43,360
James Freel Close (ring-fenced)	£494,650	£422,480	£567,000
General Reserve	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000
Total	£8,116,910	£7,792,680	£7,105,670

Summary	31/3/2013	31/3/2014	31/3/2015
Committed	£5,529,280	£5,797,740	£4,967,460
Ring-fenced	£1,587,630	£994,940	£1,138,210
General Reserve	£1,000,000	£1,000,000	£1,000,000
Total	£8,116,910	£7,792,680	£7,105,670

The General Fund balance at 31st March, 2014 is expected to be £2m and this is not expected to change during 2014-2015.

Level of reserves and balances

In accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, I confirm that I am satisfied that the budget assumptions and estimates are robust, and that I consider the level of reserves held by the Council to be adequate.

D. Capital Programme

The Capital Programme was last presented to this Committee on 16th October, 2013, and the variations made to the programme are attached at **Appendix 4**. The Capital Programme is reported in **Appendix 5** and includes the programme for 2013-2014 to 2016-2017.

2016-2017 has been added to the programme and an indicative £500,000 has been included as borrowing. The revenue impact of this will be included in the Medium Term Financial Plan. The capital financing for the programme is included in the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators.

The programme requires £626k of usable capital receipts to be fully funded. The projects in future years will not be commissioned until sufficient funding is in place as usual.

Members are asked to recommend the Capital Programme to Council for approval.

E. Treasury Management

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement is reported in **Appendix 6**. The strategy covers 2014-2015 to 2016-2017 and is based on a low risk, prudent approach providing adequate security and liquidity before considering investment return. The strategy is based on the current treasury management portfolio and the proposed Capital Programme. The impact of the strategy is included in the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budgets and is in line with the Budget Strategy & Medium Term Financial Plan and self-financing for the HRA.

Members are asked to recommend that Council approve and adopt Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the indicators that it sets out. Members are asked to specifically approve the Authorised Limit for 2014-2015 of £55m as set out in the strategy report.

F. Budget Consultation

Once the budget proposals are agreed by this committee, public consultation will commence immediately on the Council's website and with stakeholders until 19th February, 2014. This report will be made available via a link on the website with the feedback prompt:

- Do you have any comments in relation to the recommendations contained in the budget report?

In addition, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will meet to discuss the budget proposals on 30th January, 2014.

The Council will meet on 4th March, 2014, to consider the results of the consultation process and recommend any amendments as necessary. At this meeting, the Council is to approve the budgets and set the Council Tax for 2014-2015.

(i) Legal Implications

It is a statutory requirement to set the budgets, prudential indicators and the Council Tax.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no significant implications. The latest available information and available trends have been used in setting the budget.

(iii) Financial Implications

The financial implications are included in the report.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no significant implications.

The recommendation has no detrimental impact the built environment or public realm.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Budget preparation files
DCLG financial settlement information

**General Fund
Budget 2014-2015**

Appendix 1

	Actual 2012-2013	Original 2013-2014	Revised 2013-2014	Budget 2014-2015
Staff pay	4,601,324	4,486,110	4,503,040	4,676,750
Pension accounting	259,087	0	0	0
Staff other costs	173,799	106,900	266,570	109,180
Transport	104,883	103,320	108,360	102,460
Property	2,051,500	1,930,040	2,091,050	2,037,940
Supplies and services	4,664,131	2,575,390	2,596,560	2,585,170
Contracts	6,459,773	6,655,090	6,575,150	6,704,460
Benefits	26,830,321	20,445,750	20,566,660	21,142,050
Benefits grants	(27,052,968)	(20,350,750)	(20,290,590)	(21,069,070)
External income	(8,300,336)	(6,666,480)	(6,978,220)	(6,858,750)
Direct Costs	9,791,514	9,285,370	9,438,580	9,430,190
Internal recharges	2,938,053	2,864,580	2,836,160	2,734,840
Capital charges	13,462,792	1,816,660	3,574,800	1,594,570
Internal income	(3,658,145)	(3,826,360)	(3,791,710)	(3,470,870)
Indirect Costs	12,742,700	854,880	2,619,250	858,540
Net Expenditure	22,534,214	10,140,250	12,057,830	10,288,730
External interest earned	(38,130)	(20,000)	(55,000)	(48,000)
External interest paid	584,643	659,050	584,650	584,650
Minimum Revenue Provision	935,369	955,660	903,170	959,280
Capital expenditure financed from revenue resources	2,215,591	0	1,726,530	0
Items excluded from Council Tax	(12,898,949)	(1,816,660)	(3,574,800)	(1,594,570)
Items included in Council Tax	889,721	1,164,870	1,164,870	1,135,410
Movements in reserves	(599,321)	85,520	(37,670)	(687,010)
Net Revenue Budget	13,623,138	11,168,690	12,769,580	10,638,490
Budget Funded by:				
Revenue support grant	(120,065)	(4,109,380)	(4,109,380)	(3,113,620)
NDR pool income	(6,193,783)	(2,733,860)	(2,733,860)	(2,787,120)
New homes bonus	(161,028)	(212,970)	(212,970)	(372,860)
New Burdens	(121,218)	(16,400)	(94,710)	(94,120)
Local Services Support Grant	(113,470)	0	0	0
Weekly Collection Support Scheme	(250,000)	(250,000)	(400,000)	(250,000)
Other Government grants	(2,085,778)	0	(1,372,580)	(29,590)
Collection fund - Barrow	(4,577,796)	(3,823,640)	(3,823,640)	(3,971,460)
Collection fund - surplus	0	(22,440)	(22,440)	(19,720)
Total Revenue Financing	(13,623,138)	(11,168,690)	(12,769,580)	(10,638,490)

Fees & Charges				
Allotments		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
Allotment Small Plot	40 to 200 sq yards	£44.00	£45.00	2.27%
Allotment Standard Plot	201-400 sq yards	£88.15	£90.50	2.67%
Allotment Large Plot	401-600 sq yards	£132.20	£135.50	2.50%
Allotment Very Large Plot	601-800 sq yards	£176.30	£180.70	2.50%
Garage Plots		£88.15	£90.35	2.50%

Fees & Charges				
Cemetery & Crematorium		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
Sale of Grave		£450.00	£461.00	2.44%
Interment for 1		£431.00	£442.00	2.55%
Interment for 2		£431.00	£442.00	2.55%
Interment for 3		£462.00	£474.00	2.60%
Headstone		£82.00	£84.00	2.44%
Full Kerb		£82.00	£84.00	2.44%
Headstone & Kerb		£103.00	£106.00	2.91%
Small Headstone		£26.00	£27.00	3.85%
Vase		£26.00	£27.00	3.85%
Crem kerbs		£26.00	£27.00	3.85%
Small Headstone & Crem Kerbs		£26.00	£27.00	3.85%
Standard Tablet		£26.00	£27.00	3.85%
Small Tablet	6" x 10" by tree	£11.00	£12.00	9.09%
Additional Inscription		£26.00	£27.00	3.85%
Grave Maintenance	Planting twice yearly	£300.00	£314.00	4.67%
	2nd year heather	£180.00	£189.00	5.00%
	Rate 1	£256.00	£262.40	2.50%
	Rate 2	£154.00	£157.85	2.50%
Book of Remembrance	2 lines	£30.00	£32.40	8.00%
	5 lines	£48.00	£50.40	5.00%
	5 lines & emblem	£84.00	£88.80	5.71%
	8 lines	£72.00	£76.80	6.67%
	8 lines & emblem	£108.00	£114.00	5.56%
White Memorial Card		£24.00	£26.80	11.67%
Coloured Memorial Card		£48.00	£50.40	5.00%
Leather Bound Booklet		£72.00	£76.80	6.67%
Additional Fee for Emblem (cards/books)		£48.00	£50.40	5.00%
Cremation	Resident	£636.00	£652.00	2.52%
	Non Resident	£636.00	£652.00	2.52%
	Environmental surcharge	£52.00	£53.00	1.92%
	Memorial service	£103.00	£106.00	2.91%
	Body parts	£16.00	£16.50	3.13%
Cremation Grave		£155.00	£159.00	2.58%
Interment of Ashes	Resident	£165.00	£170.00	3.03%
	Non-resident	£165.00	£170.00	3.03%
Plastic urn		£21.00	£21.50	2.38%
Wooden casket		£41.00	£42.00	2.44%
Scattering of ashes		£21.00	£21.50	2.38%

Fees & Charges				
Cemetery & Crematorium		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
Memorial Plaques	Green slate tablet & plaque	£192.00	£201.60	5.00%
	Bronze plaque	£120.00	£127.20	6.00%
	Renewal fee - 10 years	£36.00	£38.40	6.67%
	Rose & plaque	£144.00	£151.20	5.00%
	Memorial tree	£96.00	£100.80	5.00%
	Perspex plaque	£42.00	£44.40	5.71%
	Memorial seat	£528.00	£554.40	5.00%
	Seat plaque	£96.00	£100.80	5.00%
Miscellaneous	Records search fee	£15.00	£16.50	10.00%
	Plastic urn	£20.00	£21.50	7.50%
	Wooden casket	£40.00	£42.00	5.00%

Fees & Charges				
Dock Museum		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
Hall Hire		£133.50	£136.85	2.51%

Fees & Charges				
Leisure Centre		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
Casual Swim	Junior / Senior Citizen	3.10	3.10	0.00%
	Leisure Card - Junior / Snior Citizen	2.50	2.50	0.00%
	Adult	4.70	4.70	0.00%
	Leisure Card - Adult	3.70	3.70	0.00%
Family Swim	Leisure Card	9.00	9.00	0.00%
	Junior / Senior Citizen/Adult	11.10	11.10	0.00%
Swimming Lessons (10 week course)	Junior	54.80	54.80	0.00%
	Adult	70.20	70.20	0.00%
Aquarobics	Junior/Senior Citizen	3.50	3.60	2.86%
	Leisure Card - Junior/Senior Citizen	2.60	2.70	3.85%
	Leisure Card - Adult	4.00	4.10	2.50%
	Adult	5.00	5.10	2.00%
Badminton Tennis Peak	Junior / Senior Citizen	5.10	5.20	1.96%
	Leisure Card - Junior/Senior Citizen	4.20	4.30	2.38%
	Leisure Card - Adult	5.50	5.60	1.82%
	Adult	7.20	7.40	2.78%
Badminton Off Peak	Junior / Senior Citizen	4.10	4.20	2.44%

Fees & Charges				
Leisure Centre		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
	Leisure Card - Junior/Senior Citizen	3.50	3.60	2.86%
	Leisure Card- Adult	3.90	4.00	2.56%
	Adult	5.10	5.20	1.96%
Table Tennis	Adult (per table)	5.10	5.20	1.96%
	Leisure Card - Adult	3.90	4.00	2.56%
	Junior/Senior Citizen	4.10	4.00	-2.44%
	Leisure Card - Junior/Senior Citizen	3.50	3.60	2.86%
5 a side court (casual)	Junior	24.60	25.20	2.44%
	Adult	35.90	36.80	2.51%
5 a side court (Series non-vatable)	Junior	20.50	21.00	2.44%
	Adult	29.90	30.60	2.34%
Rollerskating including skate hire	Junior	2.60	2.70	3.85%
	Adult	3.60	3.70	2.78%
Sports Hall Party	Junior	66.60	68.25	2.48%
Club Pulse - Casual Use	Adult - Peak	5.60	5.70	1.79%
	Adult - Off Peak	4.10	4.20	2.44%
	Induction	25.60	26.25	2.54%
Club Max - Casual Use	Junior	2.60	2.70	3.85%

Fees & Charges				
Leisure Centre		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
Spin Cycling	Adult	5.00	5.10	2.00%
	Leisure Card - Adult	4.00	4.10	2.50%
	Senior Citizen	3.50	3.60	2.86%
	Leisure Card - Senior Citizen	2.60		
Fitness Classes (inc Dance Mats)	Adult	5.00	5.10	2.00%
	Leisure Card - Adult	4.00	4.10	2.50%
	Junior/Senior Citizen	3.50	3.60	2.86%
	Leisure Card - Junior/Senior Citizen	2.60		
Sports Courses - per session (Gymnastics, trampolining, climbing)	Junior	5.50	5.60	1.82%
	Adult	7.00	7.00	0.00%
Climbing Wall	Adult	3.60	3.70	2.78%
	Leisure Card - Adult	2.60	2.65	1.92%
	Junior	2.60	2.65	1.92%
	Leisure Card - Junior	2.10	2.15	2.38%
Soft Play	Child sessions	2.60	2.70	3.85%
	Soft Play Party	66.60	68.00	2.10%
	Sensory Room - (30 minutes)	2.80	2.90	3.57%
Miscellaneous Hire	Commrcial hire - court - series	9.10	9.30	2.20%
	Commercial hire - court - casual	10.50	10.80	2.86%

Fees & Charges				
Leisure Centre		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
	School hire - court - series	3.60	3.70	2.78%
	School hire - court - casual	4.30	4.40	2.33%
	Studio hire - 2 hrs	16.40	16.80	2.44%
	Studio hire - half day	21.90	22.40	2.28%
	Studio hire - full day	35.90	36.80	2.51%
Leisure Card	Leisure Card - in Borough	18.60	18.60	0.00%
	Leisure Card - out Borough	22.90	22.90	0.00%
	Leisure Card - Junior	10.30	10.30	0.00%
Leisure Pool Hire - 45 mins - casual	Leisure pool only	49.80	51.00	2.41%
	Leisure pool with flume and waves	65.20	66.80	2.45%
Leisure Pool Hire - 45 mins - series	Leisure pool only	41.50	42.50	2.41%
	Leisure pool with flume and waves	54.30	55.65	2.49%
Leisure Pool Party		76.90	77.00	0.13%
Training Pool Hire	Club hire - 45 mins	51.25	52.55	2.54%
	Club hire - 60 mins	68.25	69.95	2.49%
	Pool hire - 45 mins	61.50	63.00	2.44%
	Pool hire - 60 mins	82.00	84.00	2.44%
	Lane hire - 45 mins - casual	10.25	10.50	2.44%
	Lane hire - 45 mins - series	8.50	8.70	2.35%

Fees & Charges				
Leisure Centre		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
School Swimming	Leisure Pool - half hour with instructor	37.90	38.85	2.51%
	Leisure Pool - half hour without instructor	27.70	28.40	2.53%
	Training Pool - half hour with 1 instructor	51.25	52.55	2.54%
	Training Pool - half hour with 2 instructors	61.50	63.00	2.44%
	Training Pool - half hour without instructor	41.00	42.00	2.44%

Fees & Charges				
Barrow Park		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
Bowling	OAP Green Hire	£10.25	£10.50	2.44%
	Evening Green Hire	£17.50	£18.00	2.86%
	1 hour casual user	£1.25	£1.35	8.00%
	Child	£0.50	£0.50	0.00%
Putting	Adult	£1.50	£1.60	6.67%
	Child	£1.00	£1.00	0.00%

Fees & Charges				
Indoor Market		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
Stall	Single	£40.71	£41.75	2.55%
	Double	£77.55	£79.50	2.51%
Miscellaneous	Charity table	£5.00	£5.00	0.00%
	Promotional space	£10.00	£10.00	0.00%
	Stockroom	£16.88	£17.30	2.49%
Outdoor Market				
Small stall	Day	£10.50	£10.75	2.38%
	3 days - paid in advance	£26.50	£27.20	2.64%
Medium stall	Day	£13.00	£13.35	2.69%
	3 days - paid in advance	£32.75	£33.60	2.60%
Corner stall	Day	£15.00	£15.40	2.67%
	3 days - paid in advance	£37.50	£38.50	2.67%
Small /medium/corner	Non-market day per day	£5.50	£5.60	1.82%

Fees & Charges	Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
Land Charges			
Full search	£97.50	£100.00	2.56%
LLC1 Form	£45.00	£46.00	2.22%
Con 29 Form (Part 1)	£52.50	£53.80	2.48%
Parcel of land full official search	£19.50	£20.00	2.56%
Parcel of land con 29 only	£17.50	£18.00	2.86%
Con 29 part II optional enquiries	£10.50	£10.75	2.38%
Part II Optional Enquiry No 22 when submitted with Part I	£18.50	£19.00	2.70%
Verification of information NOT supplied by Barrow Borough Council	£19.00	£19.50	2.63%

Fees & Charges				
Estates		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
	Grazing - per acre	£200.00	£205.00	2.50%
	Legal Fees	£75.00	£77.00	2.67%
	Stable Licence Fee	£100.00	£102.50	2.50%

Fees & Charges				
		Charges 2013/2014	Charges 2014/2015	% Increase
Town Hall				
Banqueting Hall/Drawing Room/Council Chamber	Subsidised rate - Hourly	£37.70	£38.70	2.65%
	Subsidised rate - Half Day	£90.50	£92.80	2.54%
	Subsidised rate - Full Day	£113.00	£115.80	2.48%
	Non-profit Making Bodies - Hourly	£75.40	£77.30	2.52%
	Non-profit Making Bodies - Half Day	£113.00	£115.80	2.48%
	Non-profit Making Bodies - Full Day	£196.00	£200.00	2.04%
	Commercial Rate - Hourly	£150.80	£154.60	2.52%
	Commercial Rate - Half Day	£226.20	£231.90	2.52%
	Commercial Rate - Full Day	£377.00	£386.50	2.52%
Committee Room No 4/Law Library	Subsidised rate - Hourly	£12.10	£12.40	2.48%
	Subsidised rate - Half Day	£56.60	£58.00	2.47%
	Subsidised rate - Full Day	£82.90	£85.00	2.53%
	Non-profit Making Bodies - Hourly	£24.10	£24.70	2.49%
	Non-profit Making Bodies - Half Day	£56.60	£58.00	2.47%
	Non-profit Making Bodies - Full Day	£82.90	£85.00	2.53%
	Commercial Rate - Half Day CAPITA ONLY	£68.50	£70.20	2.48%
	Commercial Rate - Full Day - CAPITA ONLY	£98.00	£100.00	2.04%

Charges apply Monday - Friday 9.00am till 4.00 pm

Sundays and Bank Holidays - All charges double

30% discount for multiple room hire

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	(R) Agenda Item 6
Date of Meeting: 16th January, 2014	
Reporting Officer: Jane Coles, Business Support Manager	
<p>Title: Housing Revenue Account 2014/15</p> <p>Summary and Conclusions:</p> <p>The purpose of this report is to agree a Housing Revenue Account Budget for the financial year 2014/15.</p> <p>The report also provides an Expected Outturn Budget for the current year 2013/14 and information regarding balances.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note the information at (1) 2. Note the information on balances and Voluntary Repayment Provision at (2) 3. Note the information in point (3) and agree 2014/15 budgets as shown in Appendix A. 4. Agree the Dwelling Rent increase of 3.7% at (4) and note the information in Appendix B. 5. Agree the Garage increase of 3.7% at (5) 6. Note the information at (6) 	

Report

The purpose of this report is to agree a Housing Revenue Account Budget for the coming financial year 2014/15. Information about the Expected Outturn Budget and balances for the current year is also included.

The current year Outturn and proposed 2014/15 HRA budget is attached at **Appendix A.**

Previous assumptions on rent increases were based on guidance that stated that the annual RPI +0.5% plus an additional uplift to bring Local authority rents up to market (Target) rents by 2015/16 should be used and rents within the HRA 30-year business plan were predicated at 3%.

Guidelines now suggest we should use the annual CPI (2.7%) + 1% to determine future rent increases.

In November we asked and you agreed that we could bring forward convergence to Target (market rents) in 2014/15 and dispense with Target rents in any future rent considerations. Attached at **Appendix B** are examples of the effect of applying the increases to a range of property types.

We also asked and you agreed that Garage rents increase at the same % rate as dwellings

We are expected to manage expenditure incurred in maintaining tenancies and stock from the rents collected and we suggest that any surpluses be applied across the following:

- (1) debt repayment
- (2) increased investment in stock
- (3) investment projects where the need or the return is clearly identifiable

1. Expected Outturn Budget 2013/14

The outturn for the year forecasts a net surplus of £10,370. Key factors are:

- HRA Income will be higher than expectations
- Water charges, Repair and Leasehold Major Work recharges account for the increased revenue under other services and facilities
- Water repayment charges also account for the above budget expenditure
- Right to Buy sales are on course to meet budget expectations leaving a dwellings stock of 2685 by 31st March 2014
- Increased time taken to relet voids, particularly 2 bedroom flats, has reduced dwelling rent income
- Tenancy terminations have increased by 40% ytd which is mainly attributed to under/over occupation movement

2. Balances on the Expected Outturn for 2013/14

The above is likely to result in the following movement in balances.

2.1 Major Repair Reserve balance as at 31 March 2013 : £130,562

The above funds are not expected to be spent by year end and will carry forward.

2.2 Housing Revenue Account balance 31 March 2013 : £1,991,094

2.3 Breakdown of Balance on Account

Housing Revenue Account as at 31 March 2013 : **£1,991,094**
(of which the £788k was the Maintenance element)

Forecast Surplus 2013/14 : **£ 10,370**

Estimated Balance at year end : **£2,001,464**

2.4 Voluntary Repayment Provision

Provision as at 31 March 2013 : **£1,739,934**

Set Aside for 2013/14 : **£1,069,970**

Provision at year end : **£2,809,904**

3. Proposed HRA Budget 2014/15

In proposing the budget for 2014/15 the following factors have been taken into account:

- 3.1 The Settlements Payments Determination provided a budgetary and business planning framework for rental income and management of tenancy, major repair and maintenance expenditure. However, guidelines now suggest increases in line with the annual CPI of 2.7% + 1% raising gross rent income to £10.46 million (including convergence uplift).
- 3.2 Bringing forward convergence adds another £94k to rent income which is marginally less than it would have been a year later. The additional increase, when applied to individual properties, remains within the £2 limit (Constraint).
- 3.3 The 30 year business plan expects an annual Set Aside of £869,970; however the Set Aside for 2014/15 will be £295,690 higher making a total Set Aside for 2014/15 of £1,165,800.
- 3.4 The Welfare Reforms have had a knock on effect on arrears and loss of rental income because of the increased number of voids. We will need to increase the bad debt provision by £33k.
- 3.5 The net income from water charge collection will be £188,912.
- 3.6 I would like to propose that we open up a training opportunity and career path through Housing Service by way of an apprenticeship. It would be Scale 1 total annual cost of £18,000 and whilst provided for within the proposed budget we would hope to work with Cumbria Housing Partnership to recover some of the cost.

- 3.7 It's necessary to carry out Housing Stock survey to update and inform the programme of major works improvements at an estimated cost of £30k.
- 3.8 The budget has allowed for investment projects to be considered which improve the appearance and safety of certain neighbourhoods and this is further considered within the Maintenance budget elsewhere on this agenda.
- 3.9 There is a further need to employ a Planned Maintenance Project Manager on SO2 at total cost of £33,000 to manage and coordinate the various investment projects and a Mobile Caretaking handyman to carry out minor repairs to voids and around the estates on scale 1 with a total annual cost of £18,000.
- 3.10 The Housing department conducted a walkabout of the estates looking at repairs and overall condition during 2013/14. The Housing Management Chair has asked that bi annual site inspections for the whole forum be organised for 2014/15. Provision has been made within the budget to accommodate the cost.

4 Dwelling Rents

- 4.1 The effect for this authority is as follows:

Calculation for 2013/14

CPI in September 2012 = 2.7% + 1% = 3.1% increase to Barrow Borough Council rents

Plus or minus a maximum of £2.00 to move the property to its individual target rent.

	52 Weeks	48 Weeks	Average Rent increase over 48 weeks	
2013/14	£71.40	£77.35		£4.27
2014/15	£75.34	£81.62		
Increase	5.52%	5.52%		

Attached at Appendix B are further details of the resultant rents for different property types. Rents on an individual property basis will differ.

- 4.2 The housing Major Repairs and maintenance budget has been increased to allow for additional stock investment and environmental improvements and allows a total £2,075 per dwelling based on a stock level of 2,685.

5 Other Charges

- 5.1 Garage Charges

It was approved by the 28th November HMF to apply the same uprate to garage rents. Therefore the proposed budget includes a 3.7% increase on

garage charges which generates £7,547. The effect on individual garage charges would be as follows:

	2012/13	+3.7%
Garage rate 1 (27)	£6.43	£6.67
Garage rate 2 (459)	£8.88	£9.21
Increase	£203,977	£211,525

There is a 160 strong waiting list garages with few vacancies and the proposed new rent appear on par with the private sector.

- 5.2 We have recently reviewed the service and facility charges for supported, furnished and dispersed properties and conclude that they are about right. I suggest that we leave them as is provided we continue to recover their cost.

6 Business Improvement Initiatives

Initiatives for 2014/15 will include:

- Moving the Housing Service to the Town Hall and using the opportunity to redesign our structure, design and processes to fit in and improve service delivery
- Reduce the management effort of administrating and managing the Responsive Repair contract in particular the way that the payments are structured and processed.
- In consultation with tenants develop a more meaningful Rent Strategy which outlines how rent increases are determined in the future and how we can improve our collection and arrears service and processes.
- Maximise the online technology to meet customers' needs.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no, minor or significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has financial implications as detailed.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no detrimental impact the built environment or public realm.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has little impact on users with disabilities and Furness Equality and Diversity Partnership have been consulted.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Nil

Capital Programme Variations

Project	Adjustments	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Programme at 16th October		£10,033,282	£3,199,500	£2,898,000
North Central Renewal	Project variation	£300		
Group Repair - Central Area A & E	Project variation	£15,000		
Group Repair - Central Area A & E	Funding from grant reserves	£122,290		
Borrowing reduced		-£122,290		
Rural Regeneration - Roa Island Jetty	Re-profile budget	-£183,175	£183,175	
IT Equipment & Development	ESG funding	£105,000		
Miscellaneous Properties	No 11 Smallholding		£15,000	
Roof Top Car Park	Revised project	-£260,937	£50,000	£50,000
Roof Top Car Park	ESG funding	£30,000		
Market Hall	ESG funding		£30,000	
Market Hall	Funding and profile	-£22,000	£130,000	
Market Hall	Reduced funding from reserves	-£5,350		
Market Hall	UCR revised funding	£5,350		
Town Hall	Funding from reserves	£34,490		
James Freel Close Business Units	Rounding	£1		
Marina Village	Revised funding from reserves	-£1,670		
Asset Investment Fund	Movements in the period	£17,287		
Capital Programme		£9,767,578	£3,607,675	£2,948,000

Capital Programme 2013-2016

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total 2013-2016
Capitalised planned maintenance	2,295,920	1,834,000	1,878,000	2,094,000	8,101,920
Housing IT	38,412	-	-	-	38,412
Total Investment in public housing	2,334,332	1,834,000	1,878,000	2,094,000	8,140,332
Disabled facilities grants	600,000	600,000	600,000	600,000	2,400,000
Private Sector Housing Condition Survey	18,967	-	-	-	18,967
Total Investment in private housing	618,967	600,000	600,000	600,000	2,418,967
Central Property Refurbishments	1,417	-	-	-	1,417
North Central Renewal	6,283	-	-	-	6,283
Group Repair - Marsh Street	14,181	-	-	-	14,181
Group Repair - Central Area A & E	1,517,292	34,500	-	-	1,551,792
Rawlinson Street Corridor	200,000	100,000	-	-	300,000
Investment in Housing Market Renewal	1,739,173	134,500	-	-	1,873,673
Total Investment in housing	4,692,472	2,568,500	2,478,000	2,694,000	12,432,972
Cemetery	277,310	-	-	-	277,310
Crematorium	56,000	-	45,000	-	101,000
Dock Museum	233,934	6,000	-	-	239,934
Forum 28	124,520	-	-	-	124,520
Leisure Centre	600,000	-	-	-	600,000
Market Hall	121,629	160,000	-	-	281,629
Public Conveniences	21,082	-	-	-	21,082
Roof Top Car Park	180,000	50,000	50,000	-	280,000
Town Hall	837,490	-	-	-	837,490
Total Investment in Public Buildings	2,451,965	216,000	95,000	-	2,762,965
Craven House	600,000	-	-	-	600,000
Play Areas	6,580	-	-	-	6,580
Barrow Park	43,000	-	-	-	43,000
James Freel Close Business Units	212,100	-	-	-	212,100
Phoenix Court Business Centre	6,934	-	-	-	6,934
Town Centre Shop Front Grants	55,332	-	-	-	55,332
Miscellaneous Properties	-	15,000	-	-	15,000
Abbey Road THI	7,886	-	-	-	7,886
104 Abbey Road (Cookes Building)	35,153	-	-	-	35,153
102 Abbey Road	27,182	-	-	-	27,182
School Street Former Presbyterian Church	42,855	-	-	-	42,855

Capital Programme 2013-2016

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	Total 2013-2016
Link Road	78,881	-	-	-	78,881
Marina Village	433,330	-	-	-	433,330
IT Equipment & Development	165,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	345,000
Refuse and Recycling Containers	12,725	290,000	40,000	40,000	382,725
CCTV Equipment	50,000	-	-	-	50,000
Total Investment in other public assets	1,776,958	365,000	100,000	100,000	2,341,958
Ireleth Road Watercourse	7,695	-	-	-	7,695
Coastal Defence Work West Shore Park	615,000	-	-	-	615,000
Rural Regeneration - Piel Island	10,634	-	-	-	10,634
Rural Regeneration - Roa Island Jetty	-	183,175	-	-	183,175
Rural Regeneration - Coastal Protection	27,842	-	-	-	27,842
Total Investment in Community Initiatives	661,171	183,175	-	-	844,346
Retentions	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	100,000
Asset Investment Fund	160,012	250,000	250,000	255,000	915,012
Total	9,767,578	3,607,675	2,948,000	3,074,000	19,397,253

Funding of Capital Programme

Borrowing Requirement Non Housing	2,677,710	435,000	390,000	500,000	4,002,710
DCLG Grant	600,000	806,384	399,000	399,000	2,204,384
Area Based Grant	369,000	-	-	-	369,000
Lottery	7,886	-	-	-	7,886
Arts Council	5,000	-	-	-	5,000
DEFRA	335,000	-	-	-	335,000
Cumbria County Council	132,286	-	-	-	132,286
Private Contributions	150,000	-	-	-	150,000
HRA MRR	2,295,920	1,834,000	1,878,000	2,094,000	8,101,920
Contributions from Earmarked Reserves	1,412,860	30,000	-	-	1,442,860
Usable Capital Receipts	1,781,916	502,291	281,000	81,000	2,646,207
Total	9,767,578	3,607,675	2,948,000	3,074,000	19,397,253

Treasury Management Strategy Statement

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Council is required to operate a balanced budget, which broadly means that cash raised during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Council's low risk appetite, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer term cash flow planning to ensure that the Council can meet its capital spending obligations. This management of longer term cash may involve arranging long or short term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses. On occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council risk or cost objectives.

CIPFA defines treasury management as:

"The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

1.2 Reporting requirements

The Council is required to receive and approve, as a minimum, three main reports each year, which incorporate a variety of policies, estimates and actuals.

Prudential and treasury indicators and treasury strategy (this report) -
The first, and most important report covers:

- the capital plans (including prudential indicators);
- a minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy (how residual capital expenditure is charged to revenue over time);
- the treasury management strategy (how the investments and borrowings are to be organised) including treasury indicators; and
- an investment strategy (the parameters on how investments are to be managed).

A treasury management monitoring report – This will update members with the progress of the capital position, amending prudential indicators as necessary, and whether the treasury strategy is meeting the strategy or whether any policies require revision. This is incorporated into the quarterly finance reports.

An annual treasury report – This provides details of a selection of actual prudential and treasury indicators and actual treasury operations compared to the estimates within the strategy.

Scrutiny

The above reports are required to be adequately scrutinised before being recommended to the Council. This role is undertaken by the Executive Committee.

1.3 Treasury Management Strategy for 2014-2015

The strategy for 2014-2015 covers two main areas:

Capital issues

- the capital plans and the prudential indicators;
- the minimum revenue provision (MRP) strategy.

Treasury management issues

- the current treasury position;
- treasury indicators which limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council;
- prospects for interest rates;
- the borrowing strategy;
- policy on borrowing in advance of need;
- debt rescheduling;
- the investment strategy;
- creditworthiness policy; and
- policy on use of external service providers.

These elements cover the requirements of the Local Government Act 2003, the CIPFA Prudential Code, CLG MRP Guidance, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code and CLG Investment Guidance.

1.4 Treasury management consultants

The Council uses Sector as its external treasury management advisors.

The Council recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the organisation at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon our external service providers.

It also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. The Council will ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented, and subjected to regular review.

2 THE CAPITAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2014-2015 – 2016-2017

The Council's capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. The output of the capital expenditure plans is reflected in prudential indicators, which are designed to assist members' overview and confirm capital expenditure plans.

2.1 Capital expenditure

This prudential indicator is a summary of the Council's capital expenditure plans, both those agreed previously, and those forming part of this budget cycle. The table below summarises the above capital expenditure plans and how these plans are being financed by capital or revenue resources. Any shortfall of resources results in a funding borrowing need:

Capital expenditure £000	2013-14 Estimate	2014-15 Estimate	2015-16 Estimate	2016-17 Estimate
Non-HRA	7,434	1,774	1,070	980
HRA	2,334	1,834	1,878	2,094
Total	9,768	3,608	2,948	3,074
Financed by:				
Capital receipts	1,782	502	281	81
Capital grants	1,599	807	399	399
Capital reserves	2,296	1,834	1,878	2,094
Revenue reserves	1,413	30	-	-
Total	7,091	3,173	2,558	2,574
Net financing need for the year	2,678	435	390	500

2.2 The Council's borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement)

The second prudential indicator is the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR is simply the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure above, which has not immediately been paid for, will increase the CFR. The CFR does not increase indefinitely, as the minimum revenue provision (MRP) is a statutory annual revenue charge which broadly reduces the borrowing need in line with each assets life. The Council is asked to approve the CFR projections below:

£000	2013-14 Estimate	2014-15 Estimate	2015-16 Estimate	2016-17 Estimate
Capital Financing Requirement				
CFR – Non-HRA	24,874	24,350	23,795	23,367
CFR – HRA	23,289	22,123	21,254	20,383
Total CFR	48,163	46,473	45,049	43,740
Movement in CFR	705	(1,690)	(1,424)	(1,299)

Movement in CFR represented by:				
Net financing need for the year (above)	2,678	435	390	500
Less MRP/VRP and other financing movements	(1,973)	(2,125)	(1,814)	(1,799)
Movement in CFR	705	(1,690)	(1,424)	(1,299)

2.3 Minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy statement

The Council is required to pay off an element of the accumulated General Fund capital spend each year (the CFR) through a revenue charge (the minimum revenue provision - MRP), although it is also allowed to undertake additional voluntary payments if required (voluntary revenue provision - VRP).

CLG regulations have been issued which require the full Council to approve an **MRP Statement** in advance of each year. A variety of options are provided to councils, so long as there is a prudent provision. The Council is recommended to approve the following MRP Statement.

For capital expenditure incurred before 1 April 2008 or which in the future will be Supported Capital Expenditure, the MRP policy will be:

- **Based on CFR** – MRP will be based on the CFR (option 2);

These options provide for an approximate 4% reduction in the borrowing need (CFR) each year.

From 1 April 2008 for all unsupported borrowing the MRP policy will be:

- **Asset life method** – MRP will be based on the estimated life of the assets, in accordance with the proposed regulations (this option must be applied for any expenditure capitalised under a Capitalisation Direction) (option 3);

These options provide for a reduction in the borrowing need over approximately the asset's life.

There is no requirement on the HRA to make a minimum revenue provision but there is a requirement for a charge for depreciation to be made (although there are transitional arrangements in place). The HRA Business Plan under self-financing includes a voluntary revenue provision to repay the debt on the account.

2.4 Use of resources and the investment position

The application of resources (capital receipts, reserves etc.) to either finance capital expenditure or other budget decisions to support the revenue budget will have an ongoing impact on investments unless resources are supplemented each year from new sources (asset sales etc.).

2.5 Affordability prudential indicators

The previous sections cover the overall capital and control of borrowing prudential indicators, but within this framework prudential indicators are required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. These provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the Council's overall finances. The Council is asked to approve the following indicators:

2.6 Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream.

This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream.

%	2013-14 Estimate	2014-15 Estimate	2015-16 Estimate	2016-17 Estimate
Non-HRA	12%	13%	15%	14%
HRA	18%	18%	15%	14%

The estimates of financing costs include current commitments and the proposals in this budget report.

2.7 Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on council tax.

This indicator identifies the revenue costs associated with proposed changes to the three year capital programme recommended in this budget report compared to the Council's existing approved commitments and current plans. The assumptions are based on the budget, but will invariably include some estimates, such as the level of Government support, which are not published over a three year period.

Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on the band D council tax

£	2013-14 Estimate	2014-15 Estimate	2015-16 Estimate	2016-17 Estimate
Council tax band D	-	-	-	-

2.8 Estimates of the incremental impact of capital investment decisions on housing rent levels.

Similar to the council tax calculation, this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of proposed changes in the housing capital programme recommended in this budget report compared to the Council's existing commitments and current plans, expressed as a discrete impact on weekly rent levels.

Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on housing rent levels

£	2013-14 Estimate	2014-15 Estimate	2015-16 Estimate	2016-17 Estimate
Weekly housing rent levels	-	-	-	-

This indicator shows the revenue impact on any newly proposed changes, although any discrete impact will be constrained by rent controls.

3 BORROWING

The capital expenditure plans set out in Section 2 provide details of the service activity of the Council. The treasury management function ensures that the Council's cash is organised in accordance with the the relevant professional codes, so that sufficient cash is available to meet this service activity. This will involve both the organisation of the cash flow and, where capital plans require, the organisation of appropriate borrowing facilities. The strategy covers the relevant treasury / prudential indicators, the current and projected debt positions and the annual investment strategy.

3.1 Current portfolio position

The Council's treasury portfolio position at 31 March 2013, with forward projections are summarised below. The table shows the actual external debt (the treasury management operations), against the underlying capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement - CFR), highlighting any over or under borrowing.

£000	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
External Debt					
Debt at 1 April	39,479	39,479	39,479	39,479	39,479
Expected change in Debt	-	-	-	-	-
Actual gross debt at 31 March	39,479	39,479	39,479	39,479	39,479
The Capital Financing Requirement	47,458	48,163	46,473	45,049	43,750
Under / (over) borrowing	7,979	8,684	6,994	5,570	4,271

Within the prudential indicators there are a number of key indicators to ensure that the Council operates its activities within well-defined limits. One of these is that the Council needs to ensure that its gross debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2014-15 and the following two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years, but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue purposes.

The Borough Treasurer reports that the Council complied with this prudential indicator in the current year and does not envisage difficulties for the future. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in this budget report.

3.2 Treasury Indicators: limits to borrowing activity

The operational boundary. This is the limit beyond which external debt is not normally expected to exceed. In most cases, this would be a similar figure to the CFR, but may be lower or higher depending on the levels of actual debt.

Operational boundary £m	2013-14 Estimate	2014-15 Estimate	2015-16 Estimate	2016-17 Estimate
Total	42	42	42	43

The authorised limit for external debt. A further key prudential indicator represents a control on the maximum level of borrowing. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by the full Council. It reflects the level of external debt which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term:

1. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003. The Government retains an option to control either the total of all councils' plans, or those of a specific council, although this power has not yet been exercised.

2. The Council is asked to approve the following authorised limit:

Authorised limit £000	2013-14 Estimate	2014-15 Estimate	2015-16 Estimate	2016-17 Estimate
Total	55	55	55	55

Separately, the Council is also limited to a maximum HRA CFR through the HRA self-financing regime. This limit is currently:

HRA Debt Limit £000	2013-14 Estimate	2014-15 Estimate	2015-16 Estimate	2016-17 Estimate
Total	36,367	36,367	36,367	36,367

3.3 Borrowing strategy

The Council is currently maintaining an under-borrowed position. This means that the capital borrowing need (the Capital Financing Requirement), has not been fully funded with loan debt as cash supporting the Council's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary measure. This strategy is prudent as investment returns are low and counterparty risk is relatively high. Against this background and the risks within the economic forecast, caution will be adopted with the 2014-15 treasury operations. The Borough Treasurer will monitor interest rates in financial markets and adopt a pragmatic approach to changing circumstances:

- *if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a sharp FALL in long and short term rates (e.g. due to a marked increase of risks around relapse into recession or of risks of deflation), then long term borrowings will be postponed, and potential rescheduling from fixed rate funding into short term borrowing will be considered.*
- *if it was felt that there was a significant risk of a much sharper RISE in long and short term rates than that currently forecast, perhaps arising from a greater than expected increase in world economic activity or a sudden increase in inflation risks, then the portfolio position will be re-appraised with the likely action that fixed rate funding will be drawn whilst interest rates were still relatively cheap.*

Any decisions will be reported to the appropriate decision making body at the next available opportunity.

The Council will maintain the current prudent borrowing strategy to support the approach of minimising counterparty risk.

Treasury management limits on activity

There are three debt related treasury activity limits. The purpose of these are to restrain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of any adverse movement in interest rates. However, if these are set to be too restrictive they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs / improve performance. The indicators are:

- Upper limits on variable interest rate exposure. This identifies a maximum limit for variable interest rates based upon the debt position net of investments
- Upper limits on fixed interest rate exposure. This is similar to the previous indicator and covers a maximum limit on fixed interest rates;
- Maturity structure of borrowing. These gross limits are set to reduce the Council's exposure to large fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing, and are required for upper and lower limits.

The Council is asked to approve the following treasury indicators and limits:

£m	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Interest rate exposures			
	Upper	Upper	Upper
Limits on fixed interest rates based on net debt	42	42	43
Limits on variable interest rates based on net debt	13	13	13
Maturity structure of fixed interest rate borrowing 2014-15			
	Lower	Upper	
Under 12 months	0%	20%	
12 months to 2 years	0%	20%	
2 years to 5 years	0%	50%	
5 years to 10 years	0%	75%	
10 years and above	0%	100%	

3.4 Policy on borrowing in advance of need

The Council will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will be within forward approved Capital Financing Requirement

estimates, and will be considered carefully to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated and that the Council can ensure the security of such funds.

Risks associated with any borrowing in advance activity will be subject to prior appraisal and subsequent reporting.

3.5 Debt rescheduling

As short term borrowing rates will be considerably cheaper than longer term fixed interest rates, there may be potential opportunities to generate savings by switching from long term debt to short term debt. However, these savings will need to be considered in the light of the current treasury position and the size of the cost of debt repayment (premiums incurred).

The reasons for any rescheduling to take place will include:

- the generation of cash savings and / or discounted cash flow savings;
- helping to fulfil the treasury strategy;
- enhance the balance of the portfolio (amend the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).

Consideration will also be given to identify if there is any residual potential for making savings by running down investment balances to repay debt prematurely as short term rates on investments are likely to be lower than rates paid on current debt.

All rescheduling will be reported to the Executive Committee, at the earliest meeting following its action

4 ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

4.1 Investment policy

The Council's investment policy has regard to the CLG's Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance") and the revised CIPFA Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes ("the CIPFA TM Code"). The Council's investment priorities will be security first, liquidity second, then return.

In accordance with the above guidance from the CLG and CIPFA, and in order to minimise the risk to investments, the Council has below clearly stipulated the minimum acceptable credit quality of counterparties for inclusion on the lending list. The creditworthiness methodology used to create the counterparty list fully accounts for the ratings, watches and outlooks published by all three ratings agencies with a full understanding of these reflect in the eyes of each agency. Using the Sector ratings service potential counterparty ratings are monitored on a real time basis with knowledge of any changes notified electronically as the agencies notify modifications.

Further, the Council's officers recognise that ratings should not be the sole determinant of the quality of an institution and that it is important to continually assess and monitor the financial sector on both a micro and macro basis and in relation to the economic and political environments in which institutions operate.

The assessment will also take account of information that reflects the opinion of the markets. To this end the Council will engage with its advisors to maintain a monitor on market pricing such as "credit default swaps" and overlay that information on top of the credit ratings.

Other information sources used will include the financial press, share price and other such information pertaining to the banking sector in order to establish the most robust scrutiny process on the suitability of potential investment counterparties.

The aim of the strategy is to generate a list of highly creditworthy counterparties which will also enable diversification and thus avoidance of concentration risk.

The intention of the strategy is to provide security of investment and minimisation of risk.

Investment instruments identified for use in the financial year are listed in paragraph 5 under the 'specified' and 'non-specified' investments categories. Counterparty limits will be as set through the Council's treasury management practices – schedules.

4.2 Creditworthiness policy

The primary principle governing the Council's investment criteria is the security of its investments, although the yield or return on the investment is also a key consideration. After this main principle, the Council will ensure that:

- It maintains a policy covering both the categories of investment types it will invest in, criteria for choosing investment counterparties with adequate security, and monitoring their security. This is set out in the specified and non-specified investment sections below; and
- It has sufficient liquidity in its investments. For this purpose it will set out procedures for determining the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed. These procedures also apply to the Council's prudential indicators covering the maximum principal sums invested.

The Borough Treasurer will maintain a counterparty list in compliance with the following criteria and will revise the criteria and submit them to Council for approval as necessary. These criteria are separate to that which determines which types of investment instrument are either specified or non-specified as it provides an overall pool of counterparties considered high quality which the Council may use, rather than defining what types of investment instruments are to be used.

The minimum rating criteria uses the lowest common denominator method of selecting counterparties and applying limits. This means that the application of the Council's minimum criteria will apply to the lowest available rating for any institution. For instance, if an institution is rated by two agencies, one meets the Council's criteria, the other does not, then the institution will fall

outside the lending criteria. Credit rating information is supplied by Sector, our treasury consultants, on all active counterparties that comply with the criteria below. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria would be omitted from the counterparty (dealing) list. Any rating changes, rating watches (notification of a likely change), rating outlooks (notification of a possible longer term change) are provided to officers almost immediately after they occur and this information is considered before dealing. For instance, a negative rating watch applying to a counterparty at the minimum Council criteria will be suspended from use, with all others being reviewed in light of market conditions.

The criteria for providing a pool of high quality investment counterparties (both specified and non-specified investments) is:

- Banks 1 - good credit quality – the Council will only use banks which:
 - i. are UK banks; and/or
 - ii. are non-UK and domiciled in a country which has a minimum sovereign long term rating of AAAand have, as a minimum, the following Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor credit ratings (where rated):
 - i. Short term – F1, P-1,A-1
 - ii. Long term – AA-, Aa3, AA-
 - iii. Viability / financial strength – B (Fitch / Moody's only)
 - iv. Support – 2 (Fitch only)
- Banks 2 – Part nationalised UK banks – Lloyds Banking Group and Royal Bank of Scotland. These banks can be included if they continue to be part nationalised or they meet the ratings in Banks 1 above.
- Banks 3 – The Council's own banker for transactional purposes if the bank falls below the above criteria, although in this case balances will be minimised in both monetary size and time.
- Building societies. The Council will use all societies which:
 - i. meet the ratings for banks outlined above;
 - ii. Have assets in excess of £500 million;or meet both criteria.
- Money market funds
- UK Government (including gilts and the DMADF)
- Local authorities and parish councils
- Supranational institutions

Country and sector considerations - Due care will be taken to consider the country, group and sector exposure of the Council's investments. In part, the country selection will be chosen by the credit rating of the sovereign state in Banks 1 above. In addition:

- no more than 10% will be placed with any non-UK country at any time;
- limits in place above will apply to a group of companies;
- sector limits will be monitored regularly for appropriateness.

Use of additional information other than credit ratings. Additional requirements under the Code require the Council to supplement credit rating information. Whilst the above criteria relies primarily on the application of credit ratings to provide a pool of appropriate counterparties for officers to use, additional operational market information will be applied before making any specific investment decision from the agreed pool of counterparties. This additional market information (for example Credit Default Swaps, negative rating watches/outlooks) will be applied to compare the relative security of differing investment counterparties.

Time and monetary limits applying to investments. The time and monetary limits for institutions on the Council's counterparty list are as follows (these will cover both specified and non-specified investments):

	Fitch Long term Rating (or equivalent)	Money Limit	Time Limit
Limit 1: long term	AA-	£2m	5yrs
Limit 2: short term Council's own bank	F1	£10m	1 year
Limit 3: Short term banks and building societies	F1 or eligible institution with £500m of assets	£3m	1 year
Other institutions limit	-	£5m	1 year
DMADF	AAA	Unlimited	1 year
Local authorities	-	£5m	1 year

The proposed criteria for specified and non-specified investments are shown in paragraph 5 for approval.

4.3 Country limits

The Council has determined that it will only use approved counterparties from countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of AA+ from Fitch. This list will be added to, or deducted from, by officers should ratings change in accordance with this policy.

4.4 Investment strategy

In-house funds. Investments will be made with reference to the core balance and cash flow requirements and the outlook for short-term interest rates (i.e. rates for investments up to 12 months).

Investment returns expectations. Bank Rate is forecast to remain unchanged at present, so the revenue budget is based on achieving a weighted average return of 0.47%.

Investment treasury indicator and limit - total principal funds invested for greater than 364 days. These limits are set with regard to the Council's liquidity

requirements and to reduce the need for early sale of an investment, and are based on the availability of funds after each year-end.

The Council is asked to approve the treasury indicator and limit: -

Maximum principal sums invested > 364 days			
£m	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Principal sums invested > 364 days	£1m	£1m	£1m

4.5 Investment risk benchmarking

These benchmarks are simple guides to maximum risk, so they may be breached from time to time, depending on movements in interest rates and counterparty criteria. The purpose of the benchmark is that officers will monitor the current and trend position and amend the operational strategy to manage risk as conditions change. Any breach of the benchmarks will be reported, with supporting reasons in the mid-year or Annual Report.

Security - The Council's maximum security risk benchmark for the current portfolio, when compared to these historic default tables, is:

- **0.1% historic risk of default when compared to the whole portfolio.**

Liquidity – in respect of this area the Council seeks to maintain:

- Liquid short term deposits of at least £2m available with a week's notice.
- Weighted average life benchmark is expected to be 0.15 years, with a maximum of 0.75 years.

Yield - local measures of yield benchmark

- Investments – internal returns above the 7 day LIBID rate

and in addition that the security benchmark for each individual year is:

	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years
Maximum	0.03%	0.12%	0.10%	0.08%	0.06%

Note: This benchmark is an average risk of default measure, and would not constitute an expectation of loss against a particular investment.

4.6 End of year investment report

At the end of the financial year, the Council will report on its investment activity as part of its Annual Treasury Report.

5 TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICE (TMP1) – Credit and Counterparty Risk Management

The CLG issued Investment Guidance in 2010, and this forms the structure of the Council's policy below. These guidelines do not apply to either trust funds or pension funds which operate under a different regulatory regime.

The key intention of the Guidance is to maintain the current requirement for councils to invest prudently, and that priority is given to security and liquidity before yield. In order to facilitate this objective the guidance requires this Council to have regard to the CIPFA publication Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes. This Council adopted the Code on 14/3/2002 and will apply its principles to all investment activity. In accordance with the Code, the Borough Treasurer has produced its treasury management practices (TMPs). This part, TMP 1(5), covering investment counterparty policy requires approval each year.

Annual investment strategy - The key requirements of both the Code and the investment guidance are to set an annual investment strategy, as part of its annual treasury strategy for the following year, covering the identification and approval of following:

- The strategy guidelines for choosing and placing investments, particularly non-specified investments.
- The principles to be used to determine the maximum periods for which funds can be committed.
- Specified investments that the Council will use. These are high security (i.e. high credit rating, although this is defined by the Council, and no guidelines are given), and high liquidity investments in sterling and with a maturity of no more than a year.
- Non-specified investments, clarifying the greater risk implications, identifying the general types of investment that may be used and a limit to the overall amount of various categories that can be held at any time.

The investment policy proposed for the Council is:

Strategy guidelines – The main strategy guidelines are contained in the body of the treasury strategy statement.

Specified investments – These investments are sterling investments of not more than one-year maturity, or those which could be for a longer period but where the Council has the right to be repaid within 12 months if it wishes. These are considered low risk assets where the possibility of loss of principal or investment income is small. These would include sterling investments which would not be defined as capital expenditure with:

1. The UK Government (such as the Debt Management Account deposit facility, UK treasury bills or a gilt with less than one year to maturity).
2. Supranational bonds of less than one year's duration.
3. A local authority, parish council or community council.
4. Pooled investment vehicles (such as money market funds) that have been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency. For category 4 this

covers pooled investment vehicles, such as money market funds, rated F1, P-1, A-1 by Standard and Poor's, Moody's or Fitch rating agencies.

5. A body that is considered of a high credit quality (such as a bank or building society). For category 5 this covers bodies with a minimum short term rating of F1, P-1, A-1 (or the equivalent) as rated by Standard and Poor's, Moody's or Fitch rating agencies.

Within these bodies, and in accordance with the Code, the Council has set additional criteria to set the time and amount of monies which will be invested in these bodies. This criteria is:

	Fitch Long term Rating (or equivalent)	Money Limit	Time Limit
Limit 1: long term	AA-	£2m	5yrs
Limit 2: short term Council's own bank	F1	£10m	1 year
Limit 3: Short term banks and building societies	<i>F1 or eligible institution with £500m of assets</i>	£3m	1 year
Other institutions limit	-	£5m	1 year
DMADF	AAA	Unlimited	1 year
Local authorities	-	£5m	1 year

Non-specified investments –are any other type of investment (i.e. not defined as specified above). The identification and rationale supporting the selection of these other investments and the maximum limits to be applied are set out below. Non specified investments would include any sterling investments with:

	Non Specified Investment Category	Limit (£ or %)
a.	<p>Supranational bonds greater than 1 year to maturity</p> <p>(a) Multilateral development bank bonds - These are bonds defined as an international financial institution having as one of its objects economic development, either generally or in any region of the world (e.g. European Investment Bank etc.).</p> <p>(b) A financial institution that is guaranteed by the United Kingdom Government (e.g. The Guaranteed Export Finance Company {GEFCO})</p> <p>The security of interest and principal on maturity is on a par with the Government and so very secure. These bonds usually provide returns above equivalent gilt edged securities. However the value of the bond may rise or fall before maturity and losses may accrue if the bond is sold before maturity.</p>	<p>AAA long term ratings</p> <p>£10 million</p> <p>1 year</p>
b.	<p>Gilt edged securities with a maturity of greater than one year. These are Government bonds and so provide the highest security of interest and the repayment of principal on maturity. Similar to category (a) above, the value of the bond may rise or fall before maturity and losses may accrue if the</p>	<p>£5 million</p> <p>5 years</p>

	bond is sold before maturity.	
c.	The Council's own banker HSBC	£20 million
d.	Building societies not meeting the basic security requirements under the specified investments. The operation of some building societies does not require a credit rating, although in every other respect the security of the society would match similarly sized societies with ratings. The Council may use such building societies which have a minimum asset size of £500m, but will restrict these type of investments to £2 m and a time limit of 1 year.	£3 million 5 years
e.	Any bank or building society that has a minimum long term credit rating of AA-, for deposits with a maturity of greater than one year (including forward deals in excess of one year from inception to repayment).	£3 million 1 year
f.	Any non-rated subsidiary of a credit rated institution included in the specified investment category. These institutions will be included as an investment category subject to the parent bank having the necessary credit rating to qualify in its own right.	£5 million 1 year
g.	Local authorities	£5 million 1 year

The monitoring of investment counterparties - The credit rating of counterparties will be monitored regularly. The Council receives credit rating information (changes, rating watches and rating outlooks) from Sector as and when ratings change, and counterparties are checked promptly. On occasion ratings may be downgraded when an investment has already been made. The criteria used are such that a minor downgrading should not affect the full receipt of the principal and interest. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria will be removed from the list immediately by the Borough Treasurer, and if required new counterparties which meet the criteria will be added to the list.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	(R) Agenda Item 9
Date of Meeting: 22nd January, 2014	
Reporting Officer: Borough Treasurer	
<p>Title: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme – Uprating</p> <p>Summary and Conclusions:</p> <p>The Council adopted the Local Council Tax Reduction Default Scheme for 2013-2014 and again for 2014-2015. For 2013-2014 the amounts used in determinations were prescribed and matched those used for Housing Benefit assessments; items such as pension allowances and non-dependent deductions. These items are uprated each year by the DWP, but only for Housing Benefits from 2014-2015, it is for each authority to set the uprating for Council Tax Support assessments.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>To recommend the Council to approve the policy of applying the annual uprating issued for Housing Benefit, to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.</p>	

Report

The Council adopted the Local Council Tax Reduction Default Scheme for 2013-2014 and again for 2014-2015.

For 2013-2014 Statutory Instrument 2012/2886 set out the Default Scheme which continued to use the same data for assessments as used for Housing Benefit determinations.

In his written statement to Parliament on 5th December 2013, the Minister of State for Pensions announced his proposals for the social security benefit rates that will apply from April 2014. There will be no Statutory Instrument issued for the Default Scheme for Council Tax Support to uprate allowances as this is now a matter for individual billing authorities; these are Local Schemes.

The uprating of Housing Benefit for 2014-2015 has been published in the Housing Benefit Circular A24/2013 (revised), issued by the DWP in December 2013. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-benefit-for-local-authorities-circulars>.

Members are recommended to apply the uprating of Housing Benefit for the purposes of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. This continues the effect of applying the Default Scheme and means that Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support are determined on the same underlying basis. This should be adopted as a policy so that the annual uprating can be applied to Housing Benefits and Council Tax Support each year.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has no financial implications beyond the existing cost of the Default Scheme.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no implications.

The recommendation has no detrimental impact the built environment or public realm.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Nil

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	(R) Agenda Item 10
Date of Meeting: 22nd January, 2014	
Reporting Officer: Borough Treasurer	
<p>Title: Armed Forces Covenant – Long Term Empty Premium</p> <p>Summary and Conclusions:</p> <p>It is Council policy to apply a 50% premium to properties that have been empty for more than two years. This report seeks Members approval to vary this and exclude properties owned by Armed Forces personnel that are liable for a long term empty premium.</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>To recommend to Council that the long term empty premium is not applied to properties owned by Armed Forces personnel that are liable for a long term empty premium and to apply this retrospectively from 1st April, 2013.</p>	

Report

This Committee on 19th September, 2012 agreed a number of technical changes to Council Tax discounts and premiums. These changes were implemented from 1st April, 2013, to mitigate the costs of adopting the default Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

A case has arisen concerning the premium charged on a long term empty property owned by Armed Forces personnel. The 50% long term empty premium has been applied to the Council Tax charge for the property, as it is applied to all long term empties.

Given that armed forces personnel stationed away from home or still serving will have a restricted amount of time to work on an empty property and as a signatory of the armed forces covenant, Members are recommended to vary the application of the premium and not apply this to properties owned by armed forces officers that are liable for a long term empty premium and to apply this retrospectively from 1st April, 2013.

As an indication of the costs involved, the Band D element of Council Tax attributable to the Council (unparished) is £212.89 for 2013-2014, so the 50% premium would be £106.45. It is not known how many properties this may apply to but it is not believed to be many.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The financial implications are identified in the body of the report.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no implications.

The recommendation has no detrimental impact the built environment or public realm.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Nil

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	(D) Agenda Item 11
Date of Meeting: 22nd January, 2014	
Reporting Officer: Executive Director	
<p>Title: Local Government Association – Corporate Peer Challenge</p> <p>Summary and Conclusions:</p> <p>The Peer Challenge Review raised a number of key issues and an Action Plan to address them has been prepared</p> <p>Recommendations:</p> <p>To agree that the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan be approved.</p>	

Report

Members agreed to support a Peer Challenge in June 2013. The team visited the Council between 18th and 20th September, 2013. Their report has been placed on the Council's website and can be viewed at www.barrowbc.gov.uk.

The report raises a number of key issues and in response Officers have prepared an Action Plan explaining how the Council should respond to the various actions proposed. This Action Plan forms **Appendix 7**.

(i) **Legal Implications**

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) **Risk Assessment**

The recommendation has no implications.

(iii) **Financial Implications**

The recommendation has no financial implications.

(iv) **Health and Safety Implications**

The recommendation has no implications.

The recommendation has no detrimental impact the built environment or public realm.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.

Background Papers

Peer Review Final Report December 2013.

PEER REVIEW ACTION PLAN 2014**APPENDIX 7**

Ref	Action	Information	Council Response
1.	Council has committed and enthusiastic staff and is encouraged to do more to thank staff for their efforts and should consider bringing staff together in appropriately sized groups to discuss topical issues.	The Peer Review Team undertook focus groups with frontline and middle-management staff. The team found staff to be committed and enthusiastic and understood the changes the Council has had to make. The staff are a strong asset to the Council and should be thanked for their efforts and engaged in topical issues.	The Council are attempting to engage staff more fully, establishing channels of communication through the requirement for staff meetings, use of slice groups and open agendas for Management Group. The Executive Director and Council Leader have agreed to meet all staff twice per annum.
2.	The Council should act quickly and decisively to establish clear strategic direction.	The Council should establish clear strategic direction based upon what is important to the Borough and where the Council needs to focus its effort and resources. The Peer Review Team found a lack of clarity regarding where responsibility and ownership for key strategic issues lay within the Council. At the present time the Council seems to be focussed on its service delivery role rather than setting a strategic direction.	The Council Executive Committee has agreed priorities for the period 2013-2016, including outcomes and targets as a basis for performance management on 18 th December, 2013. The Council agreed a Workforce Strategy in September 2013 and this was updated in December 2013.
3.	Little opportunity for senior political and managerial leadership to jointly and informally consider key strategic issues.	The occasions when senior managers and politicians come together informally to discuss key strategic matters and emerging issues are limited. The Council has made a start by meetings between the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director and Borough Treasurer, Council Leader and Deputy Leader and Chair of the Planning Committee, but a wider range of Members and Officers should be engaged on a more frequent basis.	The Council will create a Joint Board comprising the Senior Management Team and Chair and Vice Chairs of the Executive, Planning, Licensing and Audit Committees and the Chair of the Housing Management Forum to discuss strategic issues and act as a sounding board for discussion of future policy initiatives. Joint Board will meet on four occasions in the municipal year or as required.
4.	Council to develop a more outward looking focus engaging across a much wider geography than it does at present.	The key policy decisions affecting the Council over the coming years will be made outside the Borough and the Council needs to engage to a greater extent with decision makers, including local businesses, Cumbria County Council, the LEP, Local Government and other sources of learning.	The Council's approach to the SEP and our joint working with partners to produce a Furness Economic Development strategy shows our commitment to wider engagement. We have established a working group on joint working with Cumbria County Council.

5.	Decision making within the Council appears to be poorly informed and un-strategic with limited contextual performance and financial information.	Performance and financial information reported to the Council is limited and lacks analysis that is helpful. Financial information and performance information are reported to the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committee respectively. Financial and performance reporting need to be more closely aligned.	The six indicators reported to Overview and Scrutiny are interim pending the publication of targets linked to the Council's new priorities (see 2 above). The 'priorities' document will complete the three Council documents that will shape the future direction of the Council and will align financial and performance information. Progress on all these documents will be reported to the Executive Committee. We do not agree that the quarterly budget updates are difficult to understand.
6.	Effective contract management of larger contracts is required.	The Council has significant expenditure on a number of major contracts with the private sector. Good two-way communication between the Client and Contractor, supported by good governance is essential for effective management of these contracts to ensure they deliver the service required and represent value for money.	We have obtained support from Consultants via the LGA to advise on one of our largest contracts and new performance targets and cost savings are being negotiated. The Council are open to dialogue and potential renegotiation of our larger contracts.
7.	Greater engagement of managers in corporate decisions and clearer autonomy and responsibility for managers.	Council managers should be more fully engaged in corporate decision making, including decisions on fees and charges and wider corporate financial issues. Managers know their service well and should be given more autonomy and responsibility to operate their service within defined budgets for their service. Managers should be expected to manage within a defined budget and clear expectations about what they need to deliver.	<p>Managers are requested to provide details of their fees and charges annually as part of the budget process. The examples set out in the report stem from preparation of the budget strategy. Income is tracked and reported to the Executive Committee as part of updating Members on the budget and an assessment is made of the risk this presents to achievement of the strategy.</p> <p>We have sought to engage managers to participate in discussions on key issues facing the Council through Management Group and encouraging a two-way dialogue with departmental managers, staff and senior management.</p> <p>We are supporting commercial skills awareness training.</p>

			We will give consideration to greater manager delegation, particularly in the Park Leisure Centre, Dock Museum and Forum.
8.	Refocus the Council on provision of customer orientated services, including re-thinking assumptions about how customers contact the Council, how to improve cross-authority customer care and how to improve the customer experience.	Customers are limited in the activities they can undertake online and traditional service routes predominate. Services need to be re-thought from the customer experience point of view minimising the number of different transactions with Council staff. Several public sector bodies have premises in Barrow and this lends itself to a more co-ordinated multi-agency service hub.	The Council will consider establishment of a second Business Improvement Team, who will focus upon the 'customer experience' and how this can be improved. We have also started meetings on improved services with Cumbria County Council to reduce misdirected calls and co-locate services which work together.
9.	The Council needs to establish an effective performance management framework.	Whilst an improved performance management system is a priority for the Council, there is much work to do to establish this. There is a poor understanding of the performance appraisals process.	Agree that the establishment of an improved performance management framework is a priority, but it must be based upon agreement of the Council's strategic priorities, which will be considered by Executive Committee in December, 2013 and Council in January, 2014. The Council had planned to introduce a refreshed performance management framework in 2014 based on these priorities.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE		(D) Agenda Item 12
Date of Meeting:	22nd January, 2014	
Reporting Officers:	Assistant Director (Regeneration and Built Environment) and Technical Services Unit Manager	
Title: Efficiencies Grant Projects		
Summary and Conclusions:		
<p>Research and trials of low energy, LED lighting has been completed in a number of Council properties with a view to confirming the suitability of this lighting for a share of the efficiency grant. The projects recommended have all been tested with at least two written quotations being received.</p>		
Recommendations:		
<p>To approve allocation of the efficiency grant to the following projects:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Changing Town Hall Lights to LED panels. £43,265;2. New Lighting on Poolside at the Park Leisure Centre, £13,365;3. New Lighting to the Market Hall, landlord areas. £30,000; and4. Allocate £40,000 from the efficiencies grant to cover the LED lights already installed on the rooftop car park.		

Report

Background

1) Town Hall Light Fittings. The current fittings in the town hall are at least five years old and many are in need of re-lamping if not replacement of the fittings. LED technology has improved dramatically over the last couple of years and now performs well compared to existing fluorescent light fittings. Fittings can be suspended from chains as many are in our offices or recessed into suspended ceilings. Replacing all fittings in the offices and corridors with LED panels will deliver a saving of 60,000 kwh per year worth nearly £7,000 per annum.

2) Replacing floodlights on poolside at the Park Leisure Centre with new LED floodlighting. This would replace 10 x 1.1kw with 10 x 400w saving 7kw per hour while also reducing repair costs and improving light levels. These lights have been designed to work in air temperatures of up to 70°c and 60% humidity and have been widely used in Dubai. They are therefore to be more reliable in the pool atmosphere as well as saving 34,640kwh per annum worth nearly £4,000 per annum.

3) Based on the light fittings proposed for the leisure centre and town hall offices a draft plan for new LED lighting at fitted in Barrow Indoor Market would reduce consumption from 400w per fitting to 94w. Further strip lights around the hall can also be replaced with LED equivalents delivering a 50% saving. This would reduce consumption by 33,262 kWh per year worth nearly £3,700 per annum. Introduction of light boxes and LED ribbons could also be used to follow some of the creative ideas used in the Mall into the main hall enhancing light levels and the appeal of the Market.

The sum proposed is provisional and subject to further trials.

The Table below summarises the project costs and payback:-

Project title	Benefits	Current energy Consumption kWh Per annum and current rate £	Projected Energy Consumption kWh Per annum and current rate £	Cost	Net Saving PA	Payback period
Changing Town Hall Office lights to LED panels	Reduction of 50% electricity consumption and also cost of office lighting	109,760 kwh / £12,557	49,367 kwh / £5,648	£43,265	£6,909	6.2 years
Replacing poolside lighting at the Park Leisure Centre with LED flood lights	Reduction of lamp kwh from 10 x 1100w each to 10 x 400w. Saving of 7 kwh. Plus reduced breakdowns currently four a year, cost £1,000 pa to rectify.	54,450 kwh / £5,989	19,800 kwh / £2,178	£13,365	£3,811	3.5 years
Phase One, Replacing Market Hall lights with LED panels. Main hall, pelmet lights, low level corridors inc meat mall, loading bay and refuse bay. Does not include stalls or counters.	Reduction of lamp kwh from 50 x 77w to 50 x 24. 24 x 400w to 24 x 94w. 125 x 80w to 125 x 34w. Saving of 20 kw per hour plus enhanced lighting.	50,194 kwh / £5,522	16,932 kwh / £1,862.5	£30,000	£3,660	8 years

(i) Legal Implications

None identified, a minimum of two written quotations has been obtained for each project.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The Payback period for the pool light project may not be realised if it is longer than the proposed transfer of the Leisure Centre to trust.

(iii) Financial Implications

The savings would be realised from reductions to the venues electricity consumption over future years. Budgets can be trimmed in advance to make sure that the savings are not lost by increased use elsewhere and to ensure savings are captured.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

Trials have been undertaken in a number of Town hall offices and also on poolside to monitor lux levels. The town hall lighting project will be rolled out gradually to ensure the individual needs in each office are considered. Installation will be undertaken by electricians already vetted as competent and under contract.

(v) Equality and Diversity

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation.

(vi) Health and Well-being Implications

The recommendation has little impact on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service. Possible improvement to light quality expected.

Background Papers

Nil