BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting, Wednesday, 29th November, 2017
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 October, 2017 (Pages 1- 13).

6. Apologies for Absence/Attendance of Substitute Members.

FOR DECISION

(D/R) 7. Recommendations of the Housing Management Forum, 2nd November, 2017 (Pages 15-20).

(R) 8 Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services (Pages 21-35).

(D) 9. Leisure Tender Evaluation Panel (Pages 36-37).

(D) 10. Annual Audit Letter (Pages 38-39).

(D) 11. Budget Timetable and Assumption (Pages 40-42).

(D) 12. Universal Credit Full Service (Pages 43-45).

(R) 13. Consultation on Council Plan (Pages 46-47).

(R) 14. Neighbourhood Planning Protocol (Pages 48-52).

(D) 15. Local Plan Update (Pages 53-57).

(D) 16. UK Shared Prosperity Fund (Pages 58-59).

(D) 17. The 2018 Boundary Review – Revised Proposals for new Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries (Pages 60-61).

(R) 18. Off Street Parking Places – New Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for Council Owned Car Parks and Land (Pages 62-64).

(R) 19. The Council's IT Strategic Plan (Pages 65-66).

(D) 20. Land in Church Street, Barrow-in-Furness (Pages 67-68).

(D) 21. Establishment Matters (Pages 69-71).

PART TWO

(D) 22. Kennels Opening Hours (Pages 72-74).

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPHS 1 & 2 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

Councillors Pidduck (Chairman)
Sweeney (Vice-Chairman)
Barlow
Biggins
Brook
Cassells
Hamilton
R. McClure
Maddox
Pemberton
D. Roberts
Williams

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Published: 21st November, 2017.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting: Wednesday 18th October, 2017
at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillors Pidduck (Chairman), Sweeney (Vice-Chairman), Biggins, Brook (Items 10 to 18 only), Hamilton, R. McClure (Items 1 to 15 only), Maddox, Pemberton and Williams.

Also Present:- Phil Huck (Executive Director), Sue Roberts (Director of Resources), Colin Garnett (Assistant Director – Housing) (Items 1 to 7 only), Jon Huck (Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer) and Sandra Kemsley (Democratic Services Officer).

55 – The Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and Access to Information (Variation) Order 2006

Discussion arising hereon it was

RESOLVED:- That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2 (Minute No. 66) and Paragraph 3 (Minute Nos. 64 and 65) of Part One of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

56 – Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th September, 2017 were agreed as a correct record.

57 – Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barlow, Cassells and D. Roberts.

58 – Housing Management Forum: Recommendations

The recommendations of the Housing Management Forum held on 14th September, 2017 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:-

Recharge Proposal: Amendment to the 'Standard Repair Charge Pricelist'

To agree the principle that future charges will be based on the actual cost of the Schedule of Rate item at the time of the repair being completed.

Fire Safety

1.	To note the Council's approach to fire safety in the residential housing stock;

2.	To agree actions to review Risk Assessments in residential flats with enclosed communal access and for Shops and Community Centres in the housing stock; and

3.	To agree that the cost of such surveys be identified within the existing agreed maintenance budget.

Management of Communal Entrances

1.	To acknowledge and agree the presence of Residents' belongings in communal routes was unacceptable;

2.	To agree that no action would be taken at the current time to provide alternative storage arrangements for such possessions but that the position may be reviewed at a future date; and

3.	To agree the approach of the Housing Service to adopt an approach of negotiation with Residents in order to resolve the problem but that in some instances resorting to legal action may be the only option.

59 – Council Finances and Performance

The Committee considered a detailed report of the Director of Resources.

She informed the Committee that the Statement of Accounts contained a new financial statement. The objective of the analysis was to demonstrate how the funding available to the Council had been used in providing services in comparison with the resources consumed or earned in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. The analysis also showed how that expenditure had been allocated for decision making purposes between the Council's Divisions.

The report also sets out the Council finances and performance for the period ended 30th June, 2017. The report included the General Fund, Capital Programme, Treasury Management, Reserves and Balances and the Housing Revenue Account.

RESOLVED:- To note the financial and non-financial performance information.

60 – Business Rates 100% Retention Pilot

The Director of Resources informed the Committee that the Council was currently a member of the Cumbria Business Rates Pool. That enabled the Council to retain additional business rate income which contributed to balancing the revenue budget. Each year the members of the Pool had to consider the risks and rewards of the Pool and considered whether the Pool should continue. The decision on membership of the pool had been delegated to the Director of Resources. From the Pool commencement

in April 2014 to the end of March 2017, the Council's gained from the Pool had been £259k with a further £63k held as a Pool volatility reserve.

From April 2020 the Government was intending to introduce 100% retention of business rates which would see the replacement of Revenue Support Grant, Rural Services Delivery Grant and other grants funded by the 50% of business rates currently paid to Government. Adjustments would be made to tariffs and top-ups to equalise nationally the amounts of business rates retained compared to need and ability to generate income from Council tax. A number of authorities had been piloting the new approach to funding from April 2018 and further pilot bids had been invited for the 2018-2019 financial year but on a different basis to the current pilots.

Cumbrian authorities had worked together to assess the feasibility and desirability of a pilot for Cumbria. Overall it had been estimated that there would be additional income retained by Cumbrian authorities compared to the current arrangements but the actual amount would be dependent upon the level of business rate income for 2018-2019 and was therefore not certain. Initial estimates had suggested the additional income could be between £1.1m and £9m. A proposed methodology had been prepared which would ring-fence the income from the current arrangements and then distribute the additional gain from the pilot between a Cumbria investment fund (20%) and each authority based on their grants forgone. A table considered by the Committee illustrated the distribution based on the higher estimate of £9m extra gain from the pilot; £187k for the Council.

There were a number of risks and opportunities around the pilot. The level of risks around a single-year pilot was much lower than the risks of the new arrangements continuing beyond April 2019. Particular risks were around the level and timing of refunds of rates arising from successful challenges to rateable values. Risks also arose from the resetting of the baselines expected in April 2020 when it was uncertain whether there would be future net increases or decreases in rates due. If the level of rates due were to fall below the new baselines to be set in April 2020 then there was much more risk to the income of individual authorities if in a pool. There were also risks around the sustainability of assumptions which had been adopted in order to get a pilot bid which could be acceptable to all parties by the tight deadline. Ideally many of the proposals would have had a longer period for careful consideration.

She informed the Committee that the pilot would be for a one year period only and would not be extended beyond 2018-2019.

The key concerns considered by the Committee were:-

What the Council may be losing out on following the Fairer Funding review and move to 100% business rate retention in 2020;

Weighing up the gains against the risks – monitoring requirements for a pilot would be greater than the current pooling arrangement;

The operation of and access to the Cumbria investment fund – ideally a Full Council decision, but the bid timescale did not allow for that; and

Should the current Pool continue instead, that must be with the existing membership.

The Government planned for the continuation beyond 2018-2019 were also not certain. Any pilot bid had to be submitted by 27th October, 2017. Due to the timescales imposed by Government, Cumbria Officers were still working on the potential bid and its advantages and disadvantages. It was proposed that the final decision on the pilot be delegated to the Leader of the Council, Executive Director and Director of Resources.

RESOLVED:- To delegate to the Leader of the Council, Executive Director and Director of Resources the final decision on whether to join the Cumbria 100% business rate pilot and the content of the bid.

61 – Executive Director Performance Appraisal 2017/18

The Executive Director reminded the Committee that Performance Appraisal had been rolled out across the authority with all staff receiving an appraisal from their line manager. The Executive Director had been appraised against the agreed objectives for 2016/17 which had been reported to this Committee on 7th September, 2016. It had been agreed that performance against these objectives had been satisfactory.

During the meetings it had been noted that the Council Plan had been completed and was due to be considered as a consultation draft. It had been agreed that the Executive Director be responsible for co-ordination and overall delivery of the priorities and objectives in the Council Plan, and that assessment of performance in 2017/18 and beyond should be against the agreed objectives.

RESOLVED:- To note the Executive Director's objectives for 2017/18 as reported.

62 – Risk Management Policy

The Executive Director informed the Committee that the Council's Risk Management Policy had been received and updated. The policy sets out the Council's approach to risk management and the assessment process adopted.

RESOLVED:- To approve the Risk Management Policy.

63 – Public Spaces Protection Orders

The Executive Director reminded the Committee that in October 2017 the Council Designated Public Place Orders that covered various parts of the Borough were due to expire. These orders would be replaced by Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO's) granted under Section 60 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act, 2014.

There were currently nine designated public places in the Borough to control consumption of alcohol as follows: Barrow Public Park; Green Heart Den; Barrow Town Centre; Vickerstown, Walney Island; Four Groves; Dalton Leisure Centre; Ormsgill Community Centre; Dalton Town Centre and Vulcan Road Estate.

He informed the Committee that District Councils were responsible for making a PSPO, but Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers could also play a role in enforcing the orders. The above orders provided the Police and others within a designated area to tackle drinking of alcohol where there was associated anti-social behaviour which had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality.

Section 60 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act, 2014 allowed for current orders to be extended for three years and that he was satisfied that the risk of anti-social behaviour in the absence of the DPPO's listed above was significant.

RESOLVED:- To agree that the Designated Public Places Orders be extended for a period of three years.

64 – Land between Beach Street and Sharp Street, Askam-in-Furness

The Committee considered a report that detailed the current position regarding the disposal of Council-owned land between Beach Street and Sharp Street, Askam-in-Furness.

RESOLVED:-

1.	To note the report; and

2.	To authorise the Assistant Director of Regeneration and the Built Environment to proceed with the disposal of the land between Beach Street and Sharp Street, Askam-in-Furness as detailed in the report.

65 – Inspira - 237-241 Dalton Road, Barrow-in-Furness

The Committee considered a report that detailed the current position with regards to 237-241 Dalton Road, Barrow-in-Furness.

RESOLVED:-

1.	To note the report; and

2.	To authorise the Assistant Director of Regeneration and the Built Environment to negotiate a new lease for 237-241 Dalton Road, Barrow-in-Furness to Inspira on the terms reported.

66 – Employment Matters

The Committee considered a report that requested delegation for the Director of Resources to negotiate any payment as part of a settlement agreement. The settlement would be funded from existing financial reserves.

RESOLVED:- To agree the delegation requested for the Director of Resources to negotiate any payment as part of a settlement agreement.

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│                      REFERRED ITEMS                          │
│                                                              │
│  THE FOLLOWING MATTERS ARE REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR DECISION  │
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67 – Travel and Subsistence Claims

The Director of Resources informed the Committee that Casual users were currently reimbursed for car journeys inside the Borough at 40p and outside the Borough at 30p. A single casual user rate would simplify the claiming process and given the last full year of mileage, would potentially increase spend by £500. Casual users were required to provide certain documentation prior to traveling; some would be charged a small fee for business insurance which the increase may contribute to.

For professional training, Officers generally travelled by train or the training was locally sourced. Occasionally Officers travelled by car and the current (rather historic) mileage rate was 10.6p per mile. It was proposed that the mileage rate was ended and the Officers claimed either the casual or essential user rate as applicable to them.

Car journeys for interview candidates were currently reimbursed at the training rate of 10.6p. As that rate had ended it was proposed that the casual rate of 40p be applied.

The current subsistence allowances had been in place since November 2011. The maximum allowances now proposed were:-

Breakfast £5 and lunch £7 unchanged, but where someone had a large breakfast or lunch and not both, the allowance may roll together;

Dinner increased to £18 from £12 – the majority of reimbursements come in for dinner and the current average was around £15, the maximum rate was set for four or more years and was £18 to reflect that;

Hotel including all meal allowances in London up £10 to £150;

Hotel including all meal allowances outside London up £10 to £130;

Interview candidates travelling to Barrow from more than 30 miles away incurring an overnight stay, increase from £56 to £75; and

Interview candidates' meal allowances to be split by the HR Department and subject to the Officer daily maximum combined of £30, currently £20.72.

Claims for travel and subsistence must be submitted within three months of the journey or costs being incurred.

It was also proposed that there was an initial three month amnesty for Officers and Members to bring their claims up to date.

The provisions for Officers applied to Members; Members were casual users for mileage allowance.

The effective date for the journeys or costs incurred would be from 1st February 2018 onwards.

RECOMMENDED:- To recommend the Council:-

1. To approve the casual user mileage rate at 40p for in and out of Borough Claims;

2. To approve the ending of the separate training mileage leaving officers to claim at their usual rate;

3. To approve the casual mileage rate for reimbursing interview candidates;

4. To approve the updated subsistence allowances set out in Section D of the report;

5. To approve the three month cut-off period for claims, with an initial three month amnesty;

6. To agree that the Officer allowances applied to Members; and

7. To approve the effective date as 1st February, 2018.

68 – Minor Amendment to the Constitution

The Director of Resources informed the Committee that the Assistant Directors currently had delegations under The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 on behalf of the Council. The Environmental Health Manager had a different delegation which must be mirrored onto the Assistant Directors delegations for consistency and to allow any future action to be undertaken.

It was recommended that (v) Issuing community protection notices be added to the current Assistant Director delegation in respect of The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

RECOMMENDED:- To recommend the Council to agree that the Constitution be amended to include to the current Assistant Director's delegation in respect of The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014:

(v) Issuing Community Protection Notices.

69 – Dog Control and Borough Council Kennelling Service

The report of the Executive Director covered several aspects of the services the Council provided in relation to dogs and the Borough Kennels.

He informed the Committee that the Budget Strategy 2016-2020 had anticipated a saving of £30,000 pa during 2017/18 from the Borough Kennels budget. That was to be achieved by outsourcing the kennels service to either a local or national animal welfare charity or through a contracted service with a private provider. Although the private provider route cannot be fully ruled out, there had been very limited interest in either option, and the most likely outcome was that the kennels would be retained in house.

That had been reported to this Committee in June when the broad service delivery options had been presented. Given the above the only viable option remained a zero based budget with the Council's services being provided to meet the minimum statutory requirements.

In that regard it was important the Council agreed its policy on stray dogs, and a draft policy was considered. The policy made clear the purpose of the Borough Kennels was to fulfil the Council's statutory obligations to provide an acceptance point for stray dogs. It also defined – in the absence of any statutory definition what was considered to be a stray dog. The policy also made clear that every effort would be made to re-home strays, but they would not be held for an indefinite period.

The policy covered how the Council would deal with strays, but also sought to act as a deterrent to those owners who allowed their dogs to stray. The policy made clear that the costs of kennelling fees and administrative fees would be recovered from all owners prior to their dog being returned to them. No exceptions would be made to the policy. A full review of fees and charges would be undertaken as part of the 2018/19 budget.

In order to meet the saving requirements agreed for the kennels service, significant changes to the opening hours of the kennels were under consideration and would be reported to the next meeting of this Committee, following staff consultation.

He also informed the Committee that the Council currently had four local Orders covering the exclusion and control of dogs in various areas of the Borough as follows: Dogs Exclusion from Various Play Areas; Dogs on Leads Order 2008; Dogs on Leads by Direction Order 2008; and Dogs Exclusion Order 2008.

Under the terms of the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 the Orders would expire unless they were extended under Section 60 of the same Act by 20th October, 2017. It was considered that the likelihood of anti social behaviour occurring if the Orders lapsed was significant, and the above Orders should be extended for the maximum period of three years allowed under Section 60 of the Act.

RECOMMENDED:-

1.   To recommend the Council to agree that the Stray Dogs Enforcement Policy be adopted; and

2.   To undertake a full review of fees and charges for the Council kennelling service as part of the 2018/19 budget; and

3.   To agree that the duration of the following local orders:

    (i)   Dogs Exclusion from Various Play Areas
    (ii)   Dogs on Leads Order 2008
    (iii) Dogs on Leads by Direction Order 2008
    (iv)   Dogs Exclusion Order 2008

    be extended under Section 60 of the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 for a period of three years.

The meeting closed at 3.30 p.m.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Meeting: Thursday 14th September, 2017
at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:- Councillors Hamilton (Chairman), Blezard, Brook and McEwan.

Tenant Representatives:- Mrs M. Anderson and Mr E. Lynch.

Officers Present:- Colin Garnett (Assistant Director - Housing), Paula Westwood (Democratic Services Officer - Member Support) and Katie Pepper (Democratic and Electoral Services Apprentice).

11 – Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th June, 2017 were taken as read and confirmed.

12 – Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Tenant Representatives, Mr M. Gray and Mr A. McIntosh.

13 – Recharge Proposal: Amendment to the 'Standard Repair Charge Pricelist'

The Assistant Director - Housing informed Members that at their meeting on 1st December 2011 they had agreed recommendations regarding the Rechargeable Policy, as follows:-

- Stricter management of Responsible Repairs which fell outside the responsibility of the Tenancy Agreement in order to reduce the overall volume and cost of repairs;

- Agreed the principles outlined in the Rechargeable Repair Policy proposal and recovery procedures from current and former Tenants and Leaseholders; and

- Agreed the transfer of the responsibility for Rechargeable Repairs from the Borough Treasurer's Department to Housing.

He explained that the aims and objectives of the Recharge Policy remained unchanged and that current Tenants take a responsible attitude towards the maintenance of their home through the payment of necessary repairs which were deemed as negligent or where deliberate damage had been caused and that Tenants or former Tenants were recharged for repairs required which were not fair wear and tear or due to damage.

He added that whilst the procedure for recovering monies owed by Tenants or former Tenants was well established, the Standard Repair Charge Pricelist had been based on prices submitted by Vinci Facilities and was now out of date. Since the original price list had been agreed, a new Contractor was now in place and there had been changes to the Schedule of Rates cost to the Council for delivering repairs.

In light of the above, he had requested that Members agreed to the principle that future charges would be based on the actual cost of the Schedule of Rate item at the time of the repair being completed.

RECOMMENDED:- To agree the principle that future charges would be based on the actual cost of the Schedule of Rate item at the time of the repair being completed.

14 – Fire Safety

The Assistant Director - Housing reported that since the introduction of the Regulatory Reform Act - Fire Safety 2005, the Council in its role as a Landlord had the responsibility to ensure that appropriate action was taken to protect its Tenants from the event of a fire. He advised that risk assessments had been completed some 10 years ago and had been reviewed annually. The assessments had focused on three storey residential properties. He advised that from time to time various actions to improve safety for Residents had been identified including removing the opportunity for Residents to keep refuge in communal areas, linked heat and smoke detectors throughout three-storey blocks to ensure a fire in one location would ensure a warning to all Residents and the design of communal entrance doors.

He reported that following recent national events, Officers had considered the Council's approach to completing fire assessments. It was noted that there were 48 x three-storey and 75 x two-storey flats in the Council's Housing Stock. It was most likely; following the concerns about fire safety in high rise property, there would emerge over time further guidance and a review of Building Regulations suggesting changes to current practices. Whilst the Council did not have any properties over three storeys, he advised Members that it was appropriate for them to consider the issue in the context of the Council's own Housing Stock.

The Assistant Director - Housing had suggested it may be appropriate to consider a specialist adviser to work with the Council's Technical staff to review the Council's current position and complete new assessments. He had also highlighted the following:-

•   Current assessments were for three-storey property only, perhaps that should be extended to two-storey with enclosed communal entrances;

•   There were 21 shops under the management of the Housing Service, some had separate living accommodation above which were rented to an individual not linked to the occupier of the shop; and

•   The Council had three operating Community Centres.

He advised that previously, Officers' views had been that the most significant risks related to three-storey properties. However, for the sake of completeness he recommended appointing a specialist adviser and including all of the properties listed above.

He advised Members that he was in the process of obtaining estimates for completing the assessments and expected the cost to be below £20k. No specific monies had

been identified in the maintenance budget for that purpose but he suggested it would be possible to fund it from the existing agreed budget.

RECOMMENDED:-

1.   To note the Council's approach to fire safety in the residential housing stock;

2.   To agree actions to review Risk Assessments in residential flats with enclosed communal access and for Shops and Community Centres in the housing stock; and

3.   To agree that the cost of such surveys be identified within the existing agreed maintenance budget.

15 – Management of Communal Entrances

The Assistant Director - Housing submitted a report highlighting to Members an issue in enclosed communal access routes in flats and requested them to consider an approach to dealing with the matter.

The issue specifically related to residential properties where access to such properties was via an enclosed communal entrance used by all Residents in the block.

He advised that following a complaint by a Resident to the Fire Service regarding mobility scooters being stored in communal entrances, a Fire Officer had visited the block in question with a member of the Technical Team. The Fire Officer had made it clear that the parking of such disability scooters was unacceptable to the Fire Service as they, can in themselves be a fire hazard because they are powered by a battery and secondly were a hazard should the particular block need to be evacuated.

He advised that following the visit, Housing Officers had carried out a one off survey of all blocks to establish the extent of the problem. From that survey it was evident that there were a number of instances where Tenants' or visitors' possessions were evident in communal stairwells.

Whilst complaint initially received related to mobility scooters, the survey had revealed an array of possessions from bikes to prams to Residents clearly trying to improve the appearance with plants and pieces of carpet.

He advised Members that it had been the Council's practice to tackle such problems in the past and that Residents had been regularly requested not to leave, for example bikes in such areas.

In light of the above, Members had been asked to acknowledge that Housing should adopt the approach that communal entrances should be kept clear and action should be taken to remove such hazards. Members had been asked to consider the following approach:-

•   The Council would publicise by directly targeting Residents in properties with enclosed communal entrances that they should be kept clear of any possessions;

- The Council would seek to identify Residents who did not follow the advice by visiting, looking at alternative arrangements and negotiating a solution;

- The Council would only use legal action as a very last resort should Residents not co-operate, which would most probably be an injunction in the first instance;

He added that of course the final option would be the least desirable, as should it be a mobility scooter, such actions could be interpreted as being heavy handed. With regards to that, the Assistant Director - Housing had advised Members that this report had been shared with the Barrow & District Disability Association and that as yet no formal written response had been received.

The Assistant Director - Housing had also requested Members to take the following points into consideration:-

1) The proposal was about reducing hazards for the benefit of all Residents in the block. However, the Resident with the disability scooter may be reliant upon it to enable them to get out and that approach may be distressing. However, for the safety of all, the issue needed to be tackled and the Council would adopt an approach that was as sensitive as possible in order to seek a solution;

2) Where Residents had plants or small pieces of carpet, they had previously been interpreted as them improving the appearance of the area over and above what the Council had done. Should such not deem to be a hazard to all Residents should an evacuation be required, at this time the Council would not focus on that issue but would review it after new Fire Risk Assessments had been completed; and

3) The Council had considered the option to provide storage for mobility scooters in particular. It was not clear that this could be a universal solution and secondly who would meet the cost. As the process of dealing with the matter progressed, the Council would consider the options with regard to this.

It was noted that with reference to the Tenancy Agreement, and the draft revised Agreement, both had provision to exclude such activities.

Members had been advised that the Council's current working arrangements did not allow for weekly visits to such blocks, but that the Mobile Caretaker Team and cleaning services carried out at the blocks periodically would ensure regular visits and reporting systems pertinent to the blocks.

RECOMMENDED:-

1. To acknowledge and agree the presence of Residents' belongings in communal routes was unacceptable;

2. To agree that no action would be taken at the current time to provide alternative storage arrangements for such possessions but that the position may be reviewed at a future date; and

3.   To agree the approach of the Housing Service to adopt an approach of negotiation with Residents in order to resolve the problem but that in some instances resorting to legal action may be the only option.

16 – Planned Investment and Planned Maintenance 2017/18

The Assistant Director - Housing submitted information relating to the Planned Investment and Planned Maintenance Programme for 2017/18. The information is attached at **Appendix A** to these Minutes.

He advised that all of the major external works now had Contractors on site and that in respect of the window replacements, no progress had been made at present and the works may not be totally completed this year.

RESOLVED:- To note the information.

17 – Performance Information Report

The Assistant Director - Housing submitted information relating to the Housing Performance Indicators for 2017/2018 in comparison with previous years. The information is attached at **Appendix B** to these Minutes.

He advised that the transfer to Universal Credit had increased rent arrears as new claimants on Universal Credit had to wait six weeks in order to receive their first payment.

RESOLVED:- To note the information.

The meeting closed at 2.25 p.m.

PLANNED INVESTMENTS 2017/18

SCHEME	PROCUREMENT TYPE	AVAILABLE BUDGET	EXPEND. TO DATE	ESTIMATED START DATE	ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE	CONTRACT OR	COMMENTS	Leaseholder affected?
RE-ROOFING AND POINTING WORKS ROOSEGATE ESTATE PHASE 4	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£490,000	£225,452	1.4.2017	1.8.2017	DLP Roofing	100% COMPLETE Final account stage	No
WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENTS VARIOUS HOUSING AREAS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£200,000	£0	1.4.2017	1.4.2018	TOP NOTCH	0% COMPLETE	No
WALNEY RENDER & DAMP PROOFING WORKS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£234,000	£0	1.4.2017	1.4.2018	DLP Roofing	SCAFFOLDING ERECTED WORKS IMMINENT	Yes
DALTON CAVITY WALL TIE REPLACEMENTS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£150,000	£0	1.4.2017	1.4.2018	DLP Roofing	SCAFFOLDING ERECTED WORKS ONGOING	No
CRAVEN PARK COURT RE-ROOFING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£120,000	£759	1.10.2017	1.4.2018	DLP Roofing	DUE TO COMMENCE WORKS IN OCTOBER 2017	Yes
YEW TREE ESTATE RE-ROOFING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£240,000	£0	1.10.2017	1.4.2018	DLP Roofing	DUE TO COMMENCE WORKS IN OCTOBER 2017	Yes
COMMUNAL ENTRANCE LIGHTING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£40,000	£0	1.11.2016	1.4.2018	GEORGE JONES	DUE TO COMMENCE IN NOVEMBER 2017	Yes
COMMUNAL ENTRANCE PAINTING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£10,000	£0	1.11.2017	1.4.2018	GEORGE JONES	DUE TO COMMENCE IN NOVEMBER 2017	Yes
GARAGE IMPROVEMENTS	CUMBRIA ROOFING	£75,000	£0	1.4.2017	1.4.2018	CUMBRIA ROOFING	GARAGE SITES IDENTIFIED WORKS DUE TO START OCTOBER 2017	No
REWIRES	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£306,000	£113,005	1.4.2017	1.4.2018	K WILSON	50% COMPLETE	No
BATHROOMS	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£126,000	£117	1.8.2017	1.4.2018	WRIGHT BUILD	PRE START SURVEYS IN PROGRESS	No
HEATING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£420,000	£24,313	1.4.2017	1.4.2018	AFM GAS Ltd	10% COMPLETE	No
PAINTING	CUMBRIA HOUSING PARTNERS	£180,000	£17,595	1.4.2017	1.4.2018	G JONES	10% COMPLETE	Yes

HOUSING MAINTENANCE COMMITMENTS 2017/18

	Funding Available 2016-17	EXPENDITURE TO DATE	Weekly Available	Gross Comm. as a % funds available
Tenant Demand Repairs	£1,394,575	£203,039	£26,819	15%
Voids	£480,038	£85,098	£9,232	18%
Gas Servicing	£293,000	£76,708	£5,635	26%
Decoration Vouchers	£30,000	£8,051	£577	27%
Environmental Improvements	£25,000	£5,557	£ 481	22%
Disabled Adaptations	£250,000	£9,103	£ 4,808	4%
Electrical Testing	£81,000	£9,353	£1,558	12%
Door Entry Maintenance	£19,176	£5,324	£ 369	28%

HOUSING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Rent Arrears & Collection Dwellings (exc. Dispersed)	Actual 2015/16	Actual 2016/17	Apr-June 2017/18
£ Rent & Service Charges due (Including empty properties)	£11,416,157	£11,258,442	£2,951,021
£ rent loss due to empty dwellings (voids)	£149,667	£163,054	£37,030
£ Rent collected from Current Tenants	£11,267,074	£10,997,130	£2,698,975
£ Rent collected from Former Tenants	56,798	£85,881	£18,005
Total Rent collected as % of rent due	98.69%	97.70%	74.96%
£ Current Arrears	£360,453	£396,319	£461,177
£ Former Arrears	£230,070	£264,642	£259,731
Write Offs (Gross)	£105,959	£98,187	£18,116
Tenants evicted for rent arrears	17	25	3
£ Rent Arrears UC claimants	£36,011	£56,031	£76,003
Arrears & Collection - Other Properties			
£ Rent arrears Dispersed (Homeless)	£1,778	£3,375	£3,351
£ Rent arrears Garages	£2,294	£7,648	£9,157
£ Rent Arrears Shops	£5,028	£6,070	£5,717
£ rent loss due to empty Dispersed (Homeless)	£35,255	£30,663	£7,926
£ rent loss due to empty Garages	£1,308	£1,377	£286
£ rent loss due to empty Shops	£0	£18	£0
Void & Lettings (General Needs)			
Total Dwellings	2633	2603	2595
Total number of re-lets	254	248	63
% of re-lets accepted on first offer	62.2%	68.1%	60.3%
Number of re-lets that underwent Major Works	101	94	21
Average relet time in days (Standard)	38	12	15
Average re-let time in days (Major Works)	60	40	42
Average re-let time in days (all re-lets)	46	52	53
Number of units vacant and available for letting at period end	31	37	32
Number of units vacant but unavailable for letting at period end	12	5	10
No.Tenancies terminated	271	261	64
Tenancy Turnover %	**10.3%**	**10.0%**	**2.5%**
ASB			
Number of new anti-social behaviour cases reported	84	29	4
Number of closed successfully resolved ASB cases	1	25	6
Number of closed unresolved anti-social behaviour cases	66	1	0
Repairs & Maintenance			
Average number of calendar days taken to complete repairs	15	18	12
Percentage of repairs completed at first visit	96.4%	95.5%	95.5%
% all responsive repairs completed on time	86.7%	85.9%	90.5%
Number Repair Orders completed	10,290	6,190	989
Average Responsive repairs per property	3.9	2.4	0.4
Appointments kept as a percentage of appointments made	88.0%	82%	87.6%

Major Works & Cyclical Maintenance			
Percentage of dwellings with a gas safety certificate renwed by anniversary	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of homes that fail to meet the Decent Homes Standard	0.49%	0%	0%
*Average SAP rating of dwellings at end of year (based on RD SAP 9.83)	69.4	69.4	69.4
Homeless			
Homeless ave. days in temporary dispersed accommodation	70	77	38
Homeless ave. days in temporary B&B accommodation	22	62	3
Homeless Total Cases Closed	894	1099	128
Homeless Advice	227	492	81
Homeless Prevention	385	326	63
Homeless Successful Preventions	158	277	61
Eligible Homeless (Owed a full duty)	17	11	6
Staff satisfaction with employer	**Actual 2015/16**	**Actual 2016/17**	**Apr-June 2017/18**
Average permanent employee headcount	53	53	51
Number of leavers	3	0	2
Ave. working days lost / sickness absence	18.8	13.1	15.2
Customer contact & complaints			
The number of Stage 1 complaints upheld in the year	2	4	0
Percentage of complaints resolved at first contact	unavailable	unavailable	unavailable
Water Charge Collection			
Direct Debit payers	793	772	789
Successful applications for Support Tarifs	570	562	563
Housing Register			
Cumbria Choice Register	1242	1186	1206
Active Direct Applicants	1018	960	969
Active Transfer Applicants	224	226	237
Housing Stock			
Houses	1252	1223	1218
Flats	1213	1221	1221
Bungalows	156	156	156
General Needs Dwellings	**2621**	**2600**	**2595**
Dispersed	10	12	12
Homeless (Cold Weather Provision)	3	1	0
New Lives Project	2	2	2
Adelphi Court	12	12	12
Total Dwelling Stock	**2648**	**2627**	**2621**
Community Centres	5	5	5
Leaseholds	208	212	213
Garages	489	504	504
Shops	19	19	19
TOTAL PROPERTIES	**3369**	**3367**	**3362**

RTB Properties / Land (Values)			
Houses	£498,310	£1,170,025	£190,740
Flats	£0	£87,820	£13,500
Bungalows	£0	£0	£0
Land	£0	£0	£0
TL	**£498,310**	**£1,257,845**	**£204,240**
Satisfaction			
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the landlord's services overall	90%	90%	90%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with repairs and maintenance	91%	91%	91%
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their views are listened to	80%	80%	80%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the quality of the home	91%	91%	91%
Percentage of residents satisfied with the neighbourhood	86%	86%	86%
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their rent provides VFM	88%	88%	88%
Percentage of tenants satisfied that their service charges provide value for money	83%	83%	83%

Relet & Terminations run from 1/4/17 to 31/3/18

BOROUGH OF BARROW-IN-FURNESS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

29th November, 2017

(D)/(R)   **AGENDA ITEM NO. 7**

RECOMMENDATIONS

OF THE

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

2nd November, 2017

*Subject to the protocol agreed by Council

The recommendations of the meeting of the Housing Management Forum held on 2nd November, 2017 are attached.

COPIES OF THE DETAILED REPORTS ON THESE ITEMS HAVE BEEN CIRCULATED PREVIOUSLY TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

The Council has agreed that the following protocol should operate:-

- The Executive Committee shall automatically agree any such recommendation or refer it back for further consideration.

- If on re-submission the Executive Committee is still unwilling to approve the recommendation, it is automatically referred to full Council for decision.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	**(D)**
Date of Meeting: **2nd November, 2017**	**(i)**
Reporting Officer: **Colin Garnett, Assistant Director - Housing**	

Title: **Housing Revenue Account Finances**

Summary and Conclusions:

The HRA remained in a position that unless significant reductions in expenditure were agreed, would move into deficit by 2019/20. The Assistant Director - Housing's report provided an update on the work of the Housing Service Review Working Group (HSRWG) to consider options for reducing expenditure in the next two years, and had also been tasked with considering future arrangements to maintain a balanced HRA. His report provided options for possible reduction in expenditure for consideration and subsequent inclusion in the HRA budget preparations for 2018/19.

Recommendations:

1. To agree the reductions proposed in the Assistant Director - Housings report;

2. To note the expenditure identified which would be considered by the Executive Committee; and

3. To acknowledge the ongoing threats to the HRA and the continued approach of the HSRWG to develop a medium term Financial Plan.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	**(D)**
Date of Meeting: **2nd November, 2017**	**(ii)**
Reporting Officer: **Colin Garnett, Assistant Director - Housing**	

Title: **Rent Collection Arrangements**

Summary and Conclusions:

The purpose of the Assistant Director – Housing's report was to raise a number of questions regarding the Council's current arrangements for rent collection, in particular the number of payable weeks in a year and the option of charging rent in advance.

Recommendations:

1. To agree to the Council moving to a 52/53 week collection arrangement from the start of the next financial year subject to consultation with Tenants; and

2. To agree the Council investigate further the options and benefits for introducing rent payment in advance at the start of a new Tenancy.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	**(D)**
Date of Meeting: **2nd November, 2017**	**(iii)**
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Assistant Director - Housing	

Title: United Utilities Contract for the Collection of Water Charges

Summary and Conclusions:

The five year Contract to collect Water Charges on behalf of United Utilities was coming to an end. The purpose of the Assistant Director - Housing's report was to consider whether the Council would like to continue the arrangement.

Recommendations:

To agree to extend the contract the Collection of Water Charges for a further year.

HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM	**(D)**
Date of Meeting: 2nd November, 2017	**(iv)**
Reporting Officer: Colin Garnett, Assistant Director - Housing	

Title: Radon Gas

Summary and Conclusions:

The purpose of the Assistant Director - Housing's report was to inform Members of the need to undertake periodic testing of housing assets to ensure the risk from exposure to radon gas was mitigated.

Recommendations:

1.   To acknowledge the progress made to date with regard to checking radon gas levels within the housing stock;

2.   To agree that Officers may proceed with the monitoring of medium to high risk properties in line with the process outlined in this report; and

3.   To agree to the additional cost required (£8347.50) to conclude the monitoring process.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting:	**29th November, 2017**	
Reporting Officer:	**Director of Resources**	

Title: Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services

Summary and Conclusions:

This report sets out the considerations and conclusions regarding the Council's Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services that are contracted-out until the 30th September, 2018. Officers are seeking Members' instructions and have made recommendations for some aspects of the services concerned.

Recommendations:

To recommend the Council:-

1.   To agree that the telephony licences and support are competitively procured from the market;

2.   To agree that Customer Services is insourced;

3.   To agree that customer services across the Council are reviewed as part of a service re-design project;

4.   To agree that the Revenues and Benefits services are considered as a single service division;

5.   To agree that continued outsourcing and insourcing are the service delivery models considered for Revenues and Benefits; and

6.   To agree to recommend the Council either:-

        (i)   Tender the Revenues and Benefits service division; or
        (ii) Insource the Revenues and Benefits service division.

Report

Background

1.1   The Council has seen significant reductions in Government funding from the Spending Review 2010 onwards. The demand for services has not decreased during that time, but staffing and other costs had to be reduced. Clearly staffing levels equate to service delivery and the

Council's staffing has reduced from 250 FTE to 200 FTE since 2010; this is 20% during the Budget Strategy periods. £5m of net cost has been removed from the General Fund revenue budget, with a further reduction of £2.7m required from the current Budget Strategy.

1.2 The Council has changed the way some services are delivered, largely due to managing the impacts of reduced staffing resources, but also from efficiencies in processes and service re-design. Projects undertaken in relation to the Business Improvement Team, Transition Grant and Efficiency Support Grant have been key during the period of change. The Council recognises that there are further efficiencies required and retains an "efficiency pot" for Service Managers to continually challenge their services in terms of value for money principles.

1.3 In addition to reviewing the possibility of services being outsourced during the formation of the current Budget Strategy discussions with Members, it was recognised that the main service contracts would be due for review during the period covered. These contracts were all of differing lengths, but all remained fixed during the original Budget Strategy period and the Council was therefore unable to access any meaningful savings and efficiencies to assist with the £5m challenge. For the current Budget Strategy an assessment was made in order to estimate a contribution to the budget deficit reduction challenge and for contracting as a whole; this estimate was £1.5m.

Services

2.1 Members will recall that the current Budget Strategy includes consideration of the services currently contracted out to Liberata UK Limited, the current contract ends on 30th September, 2018; having commenced originally on 1st October, 1998.

2.2 In the Summer of 2016, there were discussions with the Administration concerning the future delivery of the services provided under this contract and there has been an ongoing dialogue, ultimately concluding in this report before Members today. Officers are seeking Members' instructions and have made recommendations for some aspects of the services concerned.

2.3 The services provided within the original contract and subsequent changes, are:

- Revenue Collection; billing, collection and recovery.
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Administration; service administration, prevention of fraud (duty reduced by DWP) and other benefit services.
- Management, Advice, Training, Control and Government Returns; collaborative working, advice and publicity, system control and development.

- Information Technology (IT) systems and services supporting Revenues and Benefits.
- Customer Services; front-facing and telephone services.
- Telephony; system and support.

2.4 It is recommended that the telephony provision is procured through a normal market-testing exercise and is outside the scope of the remainder of this report.

Service Bundles

3.1 There are a variety of ways to package or bundle the services, if the services are to be split up. The information technology required to support the services has not been included as a separate service bundle and is considered in Section 14; the options are somewhat dependent on the service delivery model. Possible service bundles are as follows (for example 1 Council Tax only, 2 Business Rates only and so on):

Possible service bundles:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Council Tax	✓					✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Business Rates		✓				✓				✓	✓
Housing Benefits			✓				✓		✓	✓	✓
Council Tax Support				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Customer Services					✓						✓

3.2 These are all logical service splits, but not every option can be considered in detail and those where economies of scale would be lost need to be discounted. The services all fit with the Council Plan Priority 5 'Providing Efficient and Effective Services', however there is a strong case for some sub-division.

Service Delivery Models

4.1 The service delivery models that could be used include:

- Continued outsourcing; market tendering of the services/service bundles - a market exists to facilitate outsourcing.
- Insourcing; bringing the services/service bundles back in-house.
- Sharing; with another local authority.
- Trading company; wholly-owned.

4.2 These models could be applied to different service bundles giving, as before, many possible options as shown in the table above.

4.3 The continued outsourcing option does not include a contract extension as the current contract has already been extended, giving a contract life of 20 years. To be able to demonstrate value for money outsourcing

must be subject to formal market testing; and to demonstrate compliance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders.

Planning

5.1 Before considering the services/service bundles and the service delivery models to review, Members are reminded that the services will need to be specified to some degree, performance targets established, information technology reinstated, TUPE applied, exit plans laid down and either a tendering timetable and project plan or a transition timetable and plan established.

5.2 External support will be required to assist with the implementation of agreed Council policy.

Customer Services

6.1 For service bundles, it is proposed that Customer Services is removed from further consideration and is provided in-house (insourced). There are several reasons for this recommendation:

- Control and direction of service delivery;
- Integration of service delivery;
- Service re-design, including technology investment (the current hardware and software is held directly by the Council);
- Opportunity to review the customer experience;
- Access review;
- Economies of scale within the Council;
- 2017-2018 contract cost £112k; therefore opportunity to save.

6.2 If agreed, the future arrangements for customer services across the Council will be reviewed and the subject of a further report.

Revenues and Benefits

7.1 Consideration of the remaining services and bundling those in ways other than all together, has been ongoing for some time. It is Officers conclusion that Revenues and Benefits are too closely related for there to be any quantifiable gain in splitting or subdividing parts of the services or functions. This conclusion has potential positive implications for what may be tendered, meaning that bundling the whole provides the best chance of a competitive offer. This is the same for the option of an insourced service, but makes the offer less attractive for sharing, where individual services may be more ably taken on by another local authority rather than potentially doubling up the whole of their current operations.

7.2 The wholly-owned trading company, as a service delivery model, has been discounted by Officers as overly complex and of no real benefit in delivering these services without exploring trade with other authorities; this option has many potential risks, particularly financial (establishing a

place in the market, creating capacity, attracting business, unique selling point, and so on). I suggest that this is not the time for the Council to consider such a model, the Council does not have the capacity to deal with this option; any feasibility study would be resource intensive and may jeopardise the implementation of the Budget Strategy as a whole.

7.3 This report will now focus on the realistic and achievable options for future service delivery in terms of Revenues and Benefits.

7.4 The recommended service bundle is the whole of Revenues and Benefits and the delivery models that will need to be considered are continued outsourcing (market tendering) and insourcing. In order to present this assessment of service delivery options in a comparable manner, the key factors are presented in the following sections with the risks and opportunities set out for Members to consider.

7.5 Therefore, the challenge for Members is to decide whether to tender the Revenues and Benefits service, or to bring the service in-house and manage accordingly.

Risk Management

8.1 This report sets out the risks associated with the decisions that Members are asked to consider for Full Council. The position has been presented fully but summarised to pertinent points as far as possible. The risks are reflected for the outsourced and insourced service delivery models to provide a balanced picture for Members. The main overall risk for the Council is service continuity and sections 9-18 are intended to address the factors that may impact on achieving that outcome.

Service delivery

9.1 The front-facing service is currently delivered from Cornwallis Hall in the Town Hall building; the other back office services are not on Council premises. The Council's preference is for customers to be able to contact the Officers that handle their claims, awards or cases. To enable this to be the type of service delivered, the services should be co-located if possible and practical.

9.2 The Service performance is measured using DWP Single Housing Benefit Extracts and locally determined targets which are produced on a monthly basis. The Council sets the targets for the services which include measurements on turnaround, accuracy, collection rates and wait times.

9.3 The Revenues and Benefits service contract cost for 2017-2018 is over £2.8m and there will be additional spend from "New Burdens" funding related to welfare reform changes which are largely passed on to the

current contractor. Service costs are covered in Section 16 of this report.

9.4   The services have experienced changes during the current contract period and further changes are planned; external changes from welfare reforms for example. These are covered in Section 18 of this report.

9.5   **Outsourced:** the Council can specify where the services are to be based and accommodation costs would then be built into tenders. This has an impact on the pricing model for bidders and if Council premises were to be used, they would be given over to the contractor for the contract period. The Council can specify the performance targets and should consider performance measures within the contract.   The services cost falls to the market to be set; a competitive tendering process will realise the best price for this Council as there are many factors that potential contractors have to consider – fit with other contracts, volumetrics, location, required performance levels and so on. It may be difficult to have a demand-based contract for these services but significant step changes, such as the impact of Universal Credit, should be included so there is clarity to the nature and treatment of service changes.

9.6   **Insourced:** the Council can specify where the services are to be based and can be flexible about those arrangements should the size and shape of the services change over time; both front of house and back office accommodation would need to be identified, if there is insufficient existing space then external costs would be incurred (rent, utilities and so on). The Council can specify performance targets for the services as now.   The cost of the services can be forecast as a budget and compared to other authorities through benchmarking. Flexibility within the services can be planned in the medium term and potential resilience arrangements with external providers are more common than they used to be; this creates flexibility with the resource demands on the services, although significant stepped change will require service reduction and review.

Service performance

10.1   The service performance indicators for 2017-2018 are:

- 14 days turnaround for new claims
- 6 days turnaround for changes in circumstances
- Appeals dealt with or a request for further information is issued within 4 weeks
- Local authority error covered by subsidy retained
- 99% of new claims decided within 14 days of receiving all information
- 80% of reconsiderations and appeals processed and notified within 4 weeks

- No more than 10% of financial errors identified from the daily random sample
- No more than 10% of non-financial errors identified from the daily random sample
- 96.8% Council Tax collected in-year (the remainder collected later)
- 98.6% Business Rates collected in-year (the remainder collected later)
- Customers seen within 6 minutes of arrival
- Customer telephone calls answered within 3 minutes of queuing

10.2 **Outsourced:** the Council can specify the performance targets and measures in the contract specification. Performance measures that provide challenge to the contractor should be incorporated within the contract, including specific triggers and actions which require a rectification expectation but go further for service failures and under-performance.

10.3 **Insourced:** the Council can specify the performance targets for the services. There would be perhaps more timely intervention from internal management processes and Management could introduce corrective action as part of the greater control exercised over the service.

Service resilience

11.1 As with other front-facing customer focussed services; continuity is a key factor to consider. The staffing arrangements for the front-facing services and other customer interactions (telephone and online) should be seamless and the back office processes continuous.

11.2 **Outsourced:** when services are outsourced the risk to the service resilience is bought into the contract; the contract is for a continuous service and the contractor is then obliged to provide service resilience. The Council can specify service resilience within the contract specification, for the contractor to deliver.

11.3 **Insourced:** any staffing structure would have to consider service resilience and service design, but this can be achieved. The Council could retain external service resilience for any transition period or for future unexpected resourcing requirements.

Service design

12.1 The processing of claims and payments, the billing, collection and recovery of amounts due and the dealing with customers, all require established procedures. The determination of Housing Benefit is mandated by the DWP, the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme is determined by the Council, the billing and collection methods are prescribed in regulation. It is very clear what the services are, but the working practices and procedures to achieve the desired outcome (a compliant and VFM service) must be in place and quality assured.

Many of the work processes are a continuation of Council processes and have been amended with specific approval from the Client Section and the Chief Finance Officer (of the time). Several procedures require formal approval by the Council, such as the writing off of bad debts, so will be retained by the Council, however the service is provided.

12.2 **Outsourced:** existing process documents, procedures and policies would be included as part of the contract specification. The Council would continue to control changes to existing processes and so on, but should include the expectation for efficiency and innovation to be proposed through business cases with benefits realisation.

12.3 **Insourced:** existing process documents, procedures and policies would continue to be used. Change control would sit within quality assurance and existing officer delegation. As with all Council services, efficiency and innovation would be expected to be proposed through business cases with benefits realisation.

Staffing

13.1 Customer interactions depend on having professional, well-trained and well-mannered staff. Alongside Customer Services, the Council's customer presentation or customer face is planned for review and any revised or new standards coming from that will apply equally to the Revenues and Benefits services. All staff, including management, requires the same qualities with the addition of technical expertise and specific skill sets.

13.2 The Client Section is retained by the Council under the requirements of the contracting out regulations. Where functions of a local authority are contracted out, the authority is required to ensure that a checking procedure is followed. This procedure requires a random sample of decisions on claims made each day, of not less than 10% of those decisions, provided to the local authority for checking within two working days of that day; and to take all reasonable steps to prevent contractor errors identified by the local authority from recurring. The Client Section also controls changes to process and procedure as previously noted and provides effective support in monitoring the current contract.

13.3 **Outsourced:** TUPE would be applied to the current staff employed by the current contractor and any new contractor. Any vacancies would be filled by the contractor from their existing resources or by recruitment. The Client Section would continue but may need increasing given service changes and the monitoring of a new contractor.

13.4 **Insourced:** TUPE would be applied to the current staff employed by the current contractor and the Council. Any vacancies would be filled by recruitment. Until the Council has decided on the service delivery model, the staff that may qualify for TUPE is unknown. There may be fewer staff than required to run the service and any transition plan would

need to take account of recruitment and a service resilience contract could be in place to deal with any initial resourcing problems. The Client Section would no longer be required and would be merged into the Revenues and Benefits services. The staffing structure would be aligned to the Councils' current establishment and the TUPE working requirements to achieve this would need to be resourced.

IT hardware and software

14.1 When the Revenues and Benefits service was originally outsourced, the IT hardware and software were provided by the Council. When the contract was extended the specific IT elements were incorporated into the contract, so currently the Council's IT Department do not support the Revenues and Benefits hardware or software. Whether or not this approach changes needs to be considered once the service delivery model is selected.

14.2 The Council's direct licences for the software currently used were novated (assigned) to the contractor some years ago. The licences and support arrangements would be novated back to the Council. All related data belongs to the Council and would be returned as well; this would need to be a controlled process that complies with any Data Protection requirements. The contractor or the Council may consider retaining the hardware and software that supports the service on-site or maybe utilise a cloud facility. Hardware that was passed to the current contractor would need to be returned on a like-for-like basis; this will be part of any transition plan.

14.3 **Outsourced:** any licences or support contracts would novate back to the Council and the servers could either be established in-house with the contractor utilising the systems from here (or a cloud), or these could be novated again and the IT be included in the scope of the contract specification.

14.4 **Insourced:** any licences or support contracts would novate back to the Council and the servers could either be established in-house or a cloud. There may be resource implications, including TUPE, which would be part of any transition plan. The Council would need to establish a relationship with the current software providers and assess the available options.

Other contracts

15.1 There will be other related contracts that need to either be novated, ended, amended or acquired. These will need to be listed and investigated. The Council may have existing frameworks or other arrangements that can be included or accessed.

15.2 **Outsourced:** any contracts that the Council novated would be returned and could be retained or reassigned to the contractor. Any frameworks

or other arrangements that the Council has in place will be incorporated into the contract specification. The contractor would be required to make any other arrangements and may use their own existing arrangements.

15.3 **Insourced:** any contracts that the Council novated would be returned. Any frameworks or other arrangements that the Council has in place will be used. Any other service specific requirements would need to be sourced.

Benchmarking

16.1 The cost of these services can be benchmarked from data collated nationally and this benchmarking would apply to either service delivery model. The latest national benchmarking data is summarised below. When specifying the services, the Council must establish the level of service that is required. The Council Plan recognises that services tend to be more towards the acceptable than the desirable due to resource constraints; this is reflected in the extrapolation of the benchmarking as far as possible.

16.2 Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) is the independent company established to take on responsibilities related to local public audit following the Audit Commission's closure. PSAA continued the Audit Commission's publication of value for money profiles and these have been used to create the comparisons using the statistical nearest neighbours (2014), single tier and District Councils, and also the Cumbrian District Councils.

16.3 The latest year published is 2015-2016. There are a handful of authorities that did not complete the Government returns which feed into the benchmarking data; these have been excluded to avoid any distortion effect. The Cumbrian authorities with submitted returns are Allerdale Borough Council, Carlisle City Council, Eden District Council and South Lakeland District Council. Barrow Borough Council is excluded from the averages in order to show the relative position.

16.4 HB administration

This can be defined as the net spend on housing benefits administration divided by the average number of housing benefit claimants (yearly)
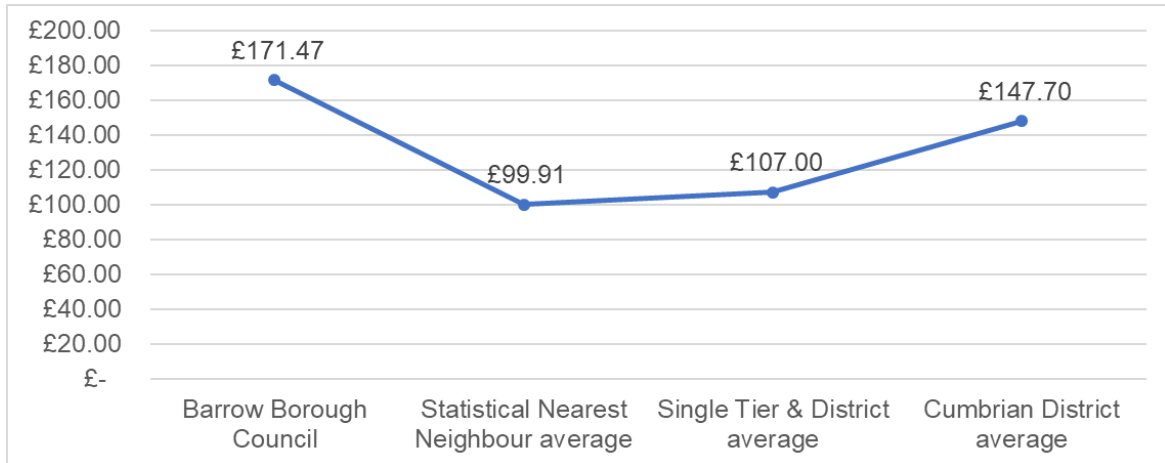
16.5 CTS administration

This can be defined as the spend on Council tax local support scheme administration per chargeable dwelling
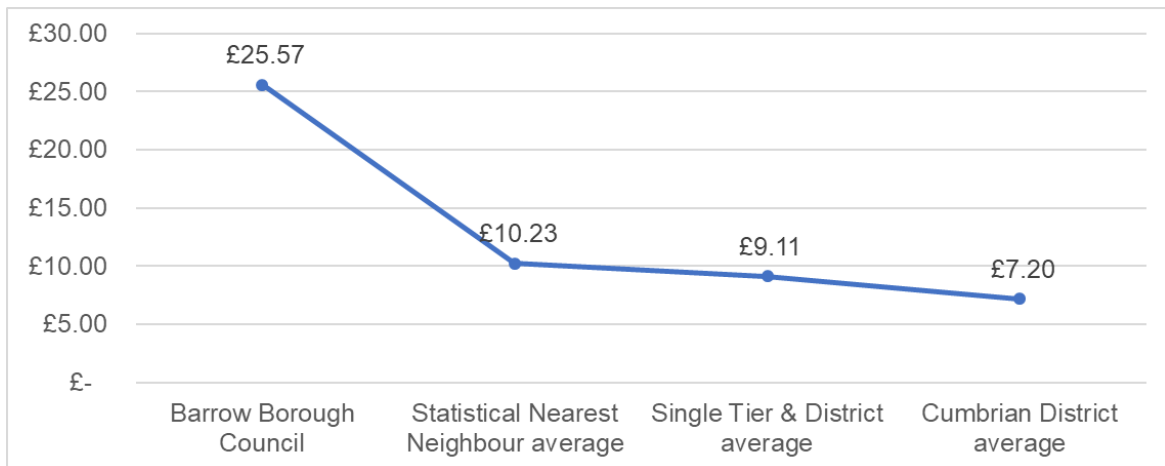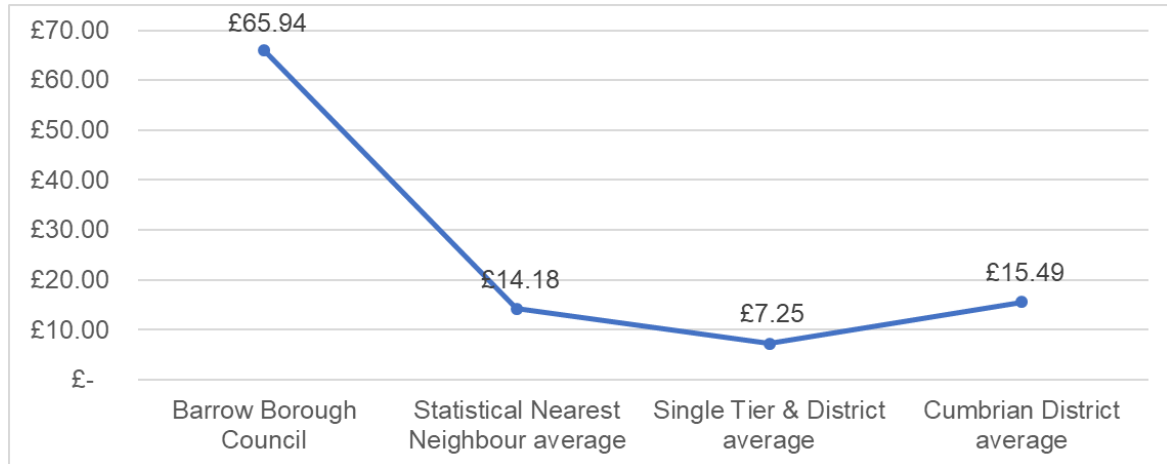

16.6 Council Tax collection

This can be defined as the net current expenditure on Council tax collection per chargeable dwelling
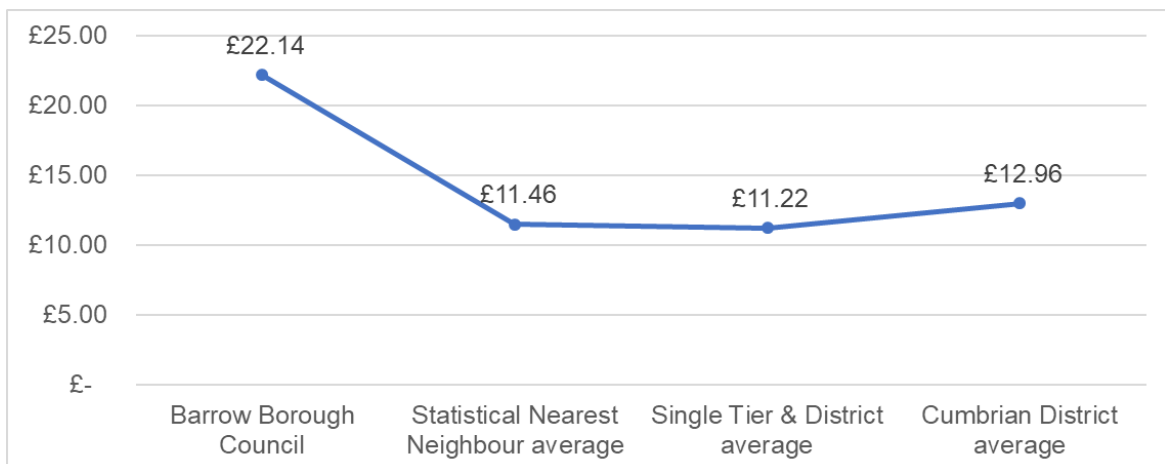
16.7   NNDR collection

This can be defined as the net spend on non-domestic rates collection per non-domestic property

16.8   In estimating an initial cost reduction for the Budget Strategy the current 'cost per' for Barrow Borough Council was applied to the above activity from the same period (2015-2016) and a 20% target was applied; this has been validated against all of the benchmarked costs and shows a potential cost reduction of a minimum of £750k.

16.9   **Outsourced:** when competitively tendering, the cost of the services is determined by the market. Given the estimated cost reduction target, an affordability threshold could be included in the specification.

16.10 **Insourced:** the services costs would be calculated as cost centre budgets with staff costs, office costs, support costs and so on. Estimates indicate that cost centre budgets would be within the benchmarked estimate.

Organisational Fit

17.1   The Council has retained skills and knowledge of Revenues and Benefits as the Section 151 Officer remains responsible for these operations. There are aspects that require Section 151 Officer formal review and sign-off and this has been handed between post holders during the 20 year contract. Key areas retained by the Section 151 Officer are the sign-off of the DWP housing benefit subsidy claims and managing the audit, the review and sign-off of the NNDR Government returns, setting the Council tax base, signing off the annual billing, among others. The Council sets the strategic direction for the services but impact is limited in terms of operations because that is contracted out and also as a regulated service, is very much about compliance with the requirements placed on local authorities.

17.2 The Client Section has detailed and extensive knowledge of Revenues and Benefits as they are required to re-perform determinations from the sample checks of the contractors work, perform further checks as they or the Section 151 Officer determines, review and agree procedural or process changes, check that agreed changes are implemented and working correctly including regulatory changes which are required, regularly review key aspects of performance and review contractor requests including write offs.

17.3 The Council has utilised the skills and knowledge of the Internal Audit Department in assisting the external appointed auditor in performing the checks on housing benefit claims for subsidy purposes. This involves re-performing a sizeable sample of the determinations made during the year and reviewing their accuracy for the claimants and the DWP subsidy. This knowledge has been acquired from the increased requirements for testing over time, but mainly from the pre-skilled staff that the Internal Audit Department retained and from which the Council benefitted when the service was insourced in April 2017.

17.4 The Council retains control of all monetary transactions and that would remain in place under any service delivery model; the receipt and attribution of income which is then recorded in the Revenues and Benefits systems, the processing and submission of direct debit files, the payment of housing benefit and any revenue refunds. The Council also retains the requirements of accounting (standards) for these services and the transactions flowing from the services.

17.5 **Outsourced:** the contract specification would set out the expected skills and knowledge of the contractor. The Council's skills and knowledge would continue in order to manage the contracted services and perform the client role. There may be additional resources required within the Client Section.

17.6 **Insourced:** any staff that TUPE applied to would transfer to the Council with their existing skills and knowledge; the Client Section would be merged into the Revenues and Benefits services; the duties performed by the Section 151 Officer and the Internal Audit Department would continue but some aspects could be merged into the services.

Service Developments

18.1 There are known and upcoming service developments that need to be reflected in the services. Also, these are not exactly the same services that the Council originally tendered back in 1998, there have been changes in legislation (such as the ending of Council tax benefit and the national non-domestic rates pool, and the introduction of universal credit), that have been incorporated during the life of the current contract. The services must continue to be developed to incorporate both national and local policy.

18.2   Changes that are known or upcoming are Universal Credit full service for working age claimants and later for pension age claimants; continued review of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme; grant arrangements for temporary accommodation; grant arrangements for supported accommodation; business rate pooling, new reliefs, business rate monitoring and modelling; the business rate reset leading to the reliance on Council tax and business rates for Council financing, as Government grant and primarily Revenue Support Grant disappears.

18.3   **Outsourced:** these service developments can be recognised within the contract specification; they may also require a greater internal resource for the Client Section. Not all of the upcoming changes would be contracted out; the allocation of the grant based former housing benefits would remain with the Council for instance, but is currently covered by the housing benefit work within the contract. Quite where each of the future service developments will fall in terms of operation is not entirely known and the contract specification should allow for these variations.

18.4   **Insourced:** the Council has to decide how to deal with regulatory changes and rather than do that in conjunction with a contractor, would make the changes directly. These changes will reduce aspects of the services from where they stand today and this will lead to reductions and changes in the resources required over time. This must be recognised as any redundancies from service changes would be dealt with by the Council, through established procedures. It is not possible to schedule all of these changes at the present time.

Next Steps

19.1   Members are asked to agree a recommendation for Council regarding the service delivery model for the Revenues and Benefits services. Once that resolution is passed work on either tendering or insourcing will commence and further reports will come to this committee.

19.2   Both options will incur cost for the Council and the Transformation Reserve will be utilised in accordance with existing policy.

Recommendations

20.1   Members are asked to recommend that Council agree that, the telephony licences and support are competitively procured from the market; Customer Services is insourced; customer services across the Council are reviewed as part of a service re-design project; the Revenues and Benefits services are considered as a single service division; outsourcing and insourcing are the service delivery models considered for Revenues and Benefits; and agree to recommend that Council either: tender the Revenues and Benefits service division or insource the Revenues and Benefits service division.

(i)   Legal Implications

Competitive tendering would comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and Contract Standing Orders.

(ii)   Risk Assessment

The risks are set out in the body of the report.

(iii)   Financial Implications

The financial implications are set out in the body of the report.

(iv)   Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(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** **9**
Date of Meeting: **29th November, 2017**	
Reporting Officer: **Director of Resources**	

Title: **Leisure Tender Evaluation Panel**

Summary and Conclusions:

This report requests approval for the use of an Evaluation Panel in scoring the Leisure Contract tendering process.

Recommendations:

To endorse and agree the use of an Evaluation Panel for the actual scoring of the Leisure Contract tendering process.

Report

In accordance with Contract Standing Orders, when the Council is selecting and tendering with contractors, evaluations are performed against the criteria set out for each contract. This is usually a number of officers evaluating and scoring independently and then an aggregate result is produced.

Members will recall that the Council has retained specialist leisure consultants for the Leisure Contract that is currently in the tendering process. As part of the service procured, the Council accesses the 'tools' that the consultants provide; these include an affordability assessment, template documentation, facilitating the Market Interest Day and evaluation methods among others.

For the Leisure Contract the approach to evaluating the tenders, and the selection stage, varies from normal practice as the submissions are independently reviewed but only scored as a group when the Evaluation Panel is convened. This does not breach Contract Standing Orders but is brought to committee as a one-off variation from normal practice. Management are satisfied that this approach allows for all panellists to air their views and discuss any aspects of submissions before ultimately setting the score as a group, or deciding upon any pass/fail status. This is a significant contract for the Council and robust evaluations are a vital component in the process.

Members should note that the selection stage is now completed and the Evaluation Panel approach was used.

Members are recommended to endorse and agree the use of an Evaluation Panel for the actual scoring of the Leisure Contract tendering process.

(i)   Legal Implications

The Council is complying with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and Contract Standing Orders.

(ii)   Risk Assessment

There are no risks associated with one-off variation to the evaluation process.

(iii)   Financial Implications

There are no financial implications.

(iv)   Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(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** **10**
Date of Meeting: **29th November, 2017**	
Reporting Officer: **Director of Resources**	

Title: Annual Audit Letter

Summary and Conclusions:

The Annual Audit Letter for the year ended 31st March, 2017, has been produced by the External Auditors. In summary, the Council obtained an unqualified financial statements opinion and in terms of value for money, the Council put in place proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources during the year ended 31st March, 2017.

Recommendations:

To receive the External Auditors report and raise any questions.

Report

The External Auditors have produced the Annual Audit Letter, attached at **Appendix 1** which summaries the work carried out for the year ended 31st March, 2017.

I would like to highlight the following sections of the Annual Audit Letter:

Financial statements opinion
The Council provided the draft accounts for audit on 2 June 2017. This was almost a month earlier than the previous year and was a positive outcome reflecting effective forward-planning by management. This demonstrates the Council is in a strong position to produce the draft 2017/18 financial statements by 31 May 2018 as required by the regulations. We gave an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements on 22 September 2017.

Value for money conclusion
We were satisfied that the Council put in place proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources during the year ended 31 March 2017. We reflected this in our audit opinion on 22 September 2017.

Table 1: **Accounts Risks** - These are the risks which had the greatest impact on our overall audit strategy and where we focused more of our work

- Valuation of property, plant and equipment – assurances satisfactory
- Valuation of pension fund net liability – no issues

Table 2: **Value for money risks** – These are the significant risk arrangement areas we reviewed in forming our VfM conclusion

- Budget Strategy – implementation and delivery of the strategy, particularly the major savings estimated for the Leisure and Revenues and Benefits contracts
- Provision of Council-owned housing – future financial stability

The detailed audit findings were reported to the Audit Committee on 21st September, 2017, in the Audit Findings Report which is published with the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement on the Council's website.

(i) Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii) Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(iii) Financial Implications

The recommendation has no financial implications.

(iv) Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(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

Grant Thornton
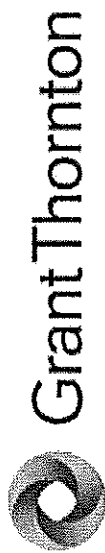
The Annual Audit Letter
for Barrow Borough Council

Year ended 31 March 2017

October 2017

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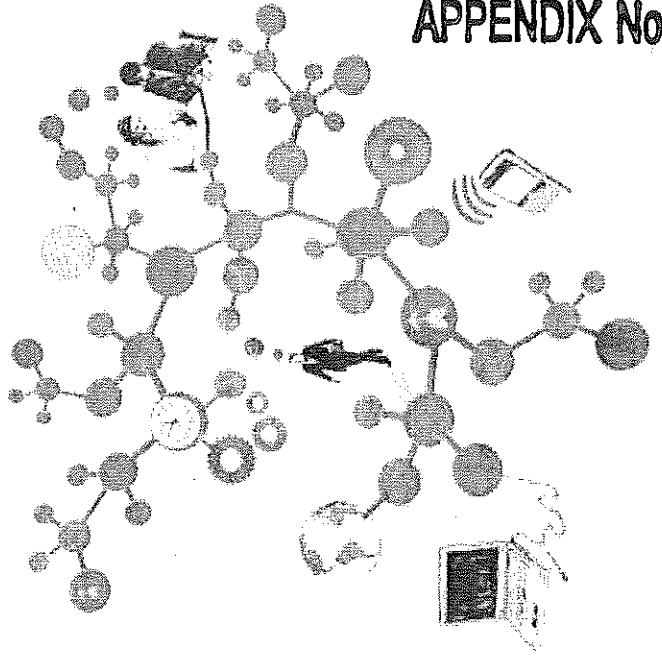
Contents

Executive summary

Purpose of this letter

Our Annual Audit Letter (Letter) summarises the key findings arising from the work we have carried out at Barrow Borough Council (the Council) for the year ended 31 March 2017.

This Letter provides a commentary on the results of our work to the Council and its external stakeholders, and highlights issues we wish to draw to the attention of the public. In preparing this letter, we have followed the National Audit Office (NAO)'s Code of Audit Practice (the Code) and Auditor Guidance Note (AGN) 07 – 'Auditor Reporting'.

We reported the detailed findings from our audit work to the Council's Audit Committee, as those charged with governance, in our Audit Findings Report on 21 September 2017.

Our responsibilities

We have carried out our audit in accordance with the NAO's Code of Audit Practice, which reflects the requirements of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 (the Act). Our key responsibilities are to:

- give an opinion on the Council's financial statements as outlined in section two; and
- assess the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, known as the value for money conclusion, as outlined in section three.

In our audit of the Council's financial statements, we comply with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) (ISAs) and other guidance issued by the NAO.

Our work

Financial statements opinion

The Council provided the draft accounts for audit on 2 June 2017. This was almost a month earlier than the previous year and was a positive outcome reflecting effective forward-planning by management. This demonstrates the Council is in a strong position to produce the draft 2017/18 financial statements by 31 May 2018 as required by the regulations. We gave an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements on 22 September 2017.

Value for money conclusion

We were satisfied that the Council put in place proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources during the year ended 31 March 2017. We reflected this in our audit opinion on 22 September 2017.

Certificate

We certified that, we had completed the audit of the accounts of Barrow Borough Council in accordance with the requirements of the Code on 22 September 2017.

Certification of grants

We also carry out work to certify the Council's Housing Benefit subsidy claim on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions. Our work on this claim is not yet complete, but it will be finalised by the statutory deadline of 30 November 2017. We will report the results of this work to the Audit Committee in our Annual Certification Letter.

Working with the Council

We would like to record our appreciation for the assistance and co-operation provided to us during our audit by the Council's staff.

Grant Thornton UK LLP
October 2017

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Audit of the accounts

Our audit approach

Materiality

In our audit of the Council's accounts, we applied the concept of materiality to determine the nature, timing and extent of our work, and to evaluate the results of our work. We define materiality as the size of the misstatement in the financial statements that would lead a reasonably knowledgeable person to change or influence their economic decisions.

We determined materiality for our audit of the Council's accounts to be £895,000, which is 2% of the Council's revenue expenditure – cost of services. We used this benchmark as, in our view, users of the Council's accounts are most interested in how it has spent the income it has raised from taxation and grants during the year.

We also set a lower level of specific materiality for senior officer remuneration, exit packages and related party transactions.

We set a lower threshold of £44,000, above which we reported errors to the Audit Committee in our Audit Findings Report.

The scope of our audit

Our audit involves obtaining enough evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements to give reasonable assurance they are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or error. This includes assessing whether:

- the Council's accounting policies are appropriate, have been consistently applied and adequately disclosed;
- significant accounting estimates made by the Director of Resources are reasonable; and
- the overall presentation of the financial statements gives a true and fair view.

We also read the Narrative Report and Annual Governance Statement to check they are consistent with our understanding of the Council and with the accounts included in the Statement of Accounts on which we gave our opinion.

We carry out our audit in line with ISAs (UK and Ireland) and the NAO Code of Audit Practice. We believe the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Our audit approach was based on a thorough understanding of the Council's business and is risk based.

Table 1 overleaf sets out the key risks we have identified and the work we performed in response to those significance estimation related risks with the results of this work.

Audit of the accounts

Table 1: Accounts Risks - These are the risks which had the greatest impact on our overall audit strategy and where we focused more of our work

Risks identified in our audit plan	How we responded to the risk	Findings and conclusions
Valuation of property, plant and equipment (PPE) Our work addressed the risk that the Council's property, plant and equipment and investment property portfolio valuation is not materially misstated. The Council revalues its non-housing assets on a rolling basis over a five year period. The Code requires that the Council ensures that the carrying value at the balance sheet date is not materially different from the current value. This represents a significant estimate by management in the financial statements. In accordance with the relevant guidance, Council dwellings are revalued annually.	As part of our audit work we: • reviewed management's processes and assumptions for the calculation of the estimate. • reviewed the competence, expertise and objectivity of the experts management used. • reviewed the instructions issued to valuation experts and the scope of their work. • discussed with the valuer the basis on which the valuation was carried out and challenged the key assumptions. • reviewed and challenged the information used by the valuer to ensure it is robust and consistent with our understanding. • evaluated the assumptions made by management for those assets not revalued during the year and how management has satisfied themselves that these assets held at carrying value are not materially different to current value. • tested a judgemental sample of revaluations made during the year to ensure they were input correctly into the Council's asset register	Our work provided sufficient assurances that the rolling valuation programme had been appropriately designed and implemented and that valuations had been provided on an appropriate basis. Valuations undertaken had been appropriately accounted for in the financial statements. Management has agreed to consider obtaining valuations of individually significant assets on a more frequent basis. This will assist management to obtain further assurance that the value of property, plant and equipment is fairly stated in the Balance Sheet at the end of each reporting period.
Valuation of pension fund net liability The Council's pension fund net liability, as reflected in its balance sheet represents a significant estimate in the financial statements.	As part of our audit work we: • identified the controls put in place by management to ensure that the pension fund liability is not materially misstated. We also assessed whether these controls were implemented as expected and whether they were sufficient to mitigate the risk of material misstatement. • reviewed the competence, expertise and objectivity of the actuary who carried out your pension fund valuation. This provided an understanding of the basis on which the valuation was carried out. • undertook procedures to confirm the reasonableness of the actuarial assumptions made. • reviewed the consistency of the pension fund asset and liability and disclosures in notes to the financial statements with the actuarial report from your actuary	Our audit work did not identify any issues in respect of the valuation of the pension fund net liability.

Audit of the accounts

Audit opinion

We gave an unqualified audit report opinion on the Council's accounts on 22 September 2017.

The Council made the accounts available for audit in line with the agreed timetable, and provided a good set of supporting working papers.

Issues arising from the audit of the accounts

We reported the key issues from our audit of the accounts to the Council's Audit Committee on 21 September 2017.

Two adjustments to the primary statements which impacted on the Council's reported surplus for the year were agreed with managements: one of these adjustments increased expenditure by £314,000 and the other reduced expenditure by £325,000 resulting in a net improvement of £11,000 in the reported surplus.

Six other adjustments identified were amended by management, but these did not impact on the reported financial position. The most significant adjustments were:

- a loan of £1M due for repayment in less than 12 months had been incorrectly classified as part of long-term borrowing in the Balance Sheet;
- operating lease commitments were overstated by £1.428m. The treatment in the draft accounts reflected the Council's assessment that its new contract for the provision of waste services included an operating lease. Review of the contract and discussion with management confirmed that that the risk and reward arrangement was actually constituting a finance lease and consequently adjustments were made to the operating leases disclosure.
- a capital grant received from Public Health England had been classified as a non-specific revenue grant in error. Adjustment were made to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account and the Movement in Reserves Statement to reclassify the grant.

Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report

We are required to review the Council's Annual Governance Statement and Narrative Report. The Council published these documents on its website with the draft accounts in advance of the national deadlines.

Both documents were prepared in line with the relevant guidance and were consistent with the supporting evidence provided by the Council and with our knowledge of the Council. Management revisited the original draft Annual Governance Statement prior to sign-off to streamline the document to ensure it set out more clearly the key elements of the Council's governance arrangements.

Other statutory duties

We also have additional powers and duties under the Act, including powers to issue a public interest report, make written recommendations, apply to the Court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law, and to give electors the opportunity to raise questions about the Council's accounts and to raise objections received in relation to the accounts.

We did not use our other statutory duties.

Value for Money conclusion

Background

We carried out our review in accordance with the NAO Code of Audit Practice (the Code), following the guidance issued by the NAO in November 2016 which specified the criterion for auditors to evaluate:

In all significant respects, the audited body takes properly informed decisions and deploys resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.

Key findings

Our first step in carrying out our work was to perform a risk assessment and identify the key risks where we concentrated our work.

The two key risks we identified and the work we performed are set out in Table 2 overleaf.

Overall VfM conclusion

We are satisfied that in all significant respects the Council put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, for the year ending 31 March 2017.

Value for Money

Risk identified	Work carried out	**Table 2: Value for money risks** – These are the significant risk arrangement areas we reviewed in forming our VfM conclusion Findings and conclusions
Budget Strategy In our 2015-16 Audit Findings Report we noted that the Council had developed a budget strategy in September 2016 and that significant detailed work would need to be undertaken by officers and members to realise the savings associated with the re-provision of the leisure and the revenues and benefit service.	We assessed the Council's arrangements with those officers responsible for developing and implementing the detailed plans required to deliver the necessary savings. We assessed whether sufficient progress was being made with the plans to realise the strategy.	The Council has made progress to implement the savings schemes set out in the Budget Strategy. Two of the savings schemes represent approximately £1.25m of the total savings of £2.37m per year, which the Council needs to deliver and our work focussed on these. A Delivery Plan for the implementation of the strategy was considered by the Executive Committee in November 2016. We set out below our understanding of the current position in relation to the two major savings schemes and our assessment of the arrangements currently in place. **Leisure Contract** The Council has been working with external consultants to take forward the procurement of an outsourcing partner to deliver leisure services in the Borough. At the time of preparing the Budget Strategy, the Council had identified that savings of around £470,000 per annum could be delivered through outsourcing the Forum and the leisure centre under a new contract which is due to be in place by 1 April 2018. Prior to going out to tender, the Council commissioned an early market engagement exercise which provided some assurance that the market would come forward with a bid to provide services at the Forum and the leisure centre. This indicates that appropriate arrangements were in place to inform the approach set out in the Budget Strategy. However, our review of the relevant documentation suggests there was only limited evidence that there was market appetite for running the services provided by the Forum on terms that would be acceptable to the Council. The original plans have now been revised following further work so that the outsourcing exercise is confined to the leisure centre. The timing has also changed: due to an existing contract for the provision of fitness and gym facilities on the leisure centre site, a decision was taken to postpone the commencement date for the new contract to 1 August 2018. Officers have provided assurance that the savings targeted in the approved budget strategy can still be achieved even though the Council now only intends to outsource the running of the leisure centre. The Council is confident that the market will come forward with a proposal to run the service where any payment due from the Council to the outsourcing partner is significantly less than the current cost of running the facility. This reflects an expectation that an outsourcing partner will be able to generate more income and have lower overheads than the existing arrangements. We understand from the Director of Resources that the Council recently held a well-attended event for prospective bidders interested in tendering for the leisure contract. More detailed projections have now been produced to support the revised estimate linked to the outsourcing of the leisure centre. However, officers recognise that there is still some uncertainty that a provider will come forward with a proposal on terms that will be sufficient to ensure the Council can deliver the required savings. Alongside any savings generated from the leisure centre outsourcing, management has confirmed that they intend to find additional savings through making changes to the way in which services are delivered at Forum. Management understands that the Council may still need to find savings in other areas to achieve the reduction in net expenditure set out in the Budget Strategy. **Revenues and Benefits Contract** The Council's existing arrangements for the provision of the revenues and benefits service expire on 30 September 2018. Management has indicated that they intend to provide Members with the opportunity to consider a range of options in relation to future service provision. Management has explained that their focus in the period to 31 March 2017 has been on the leisure outsourcing. Management need to ensure there is sufficient flexibility built into the timetable to enable a full range of options to be considered and that the expiry date of the existing contract does not restrict the best value for money options available.

Value for Money

Table 2: Value for money risks – These are the significant risk arrangement areas we reviewed in forming our VfM conclusion

Risk identified	Work carried out	Findings and conclusions
Provision of Council-owned housing Recent changes in government policy has negatively impacted on the 30-year business plans local authorities were required to produce when they took on additional housing debt as part of the re-financing of Council housing in 2011/12. These changes pose a risk to the sustainable provision of Council-owned housing if they are not addressed.	We assessed the Council's arrangements with those officers responsible for developing and implementing the detailed plans required to deliver the necessary savings. We will assess whether sufficient progress is being made with the plans to realise the strategy.	Management recognise the pressure presented by changes in government policy. The Council has prepared a detailed projection for the Housing Revenue Account ('HRA'), which models the impact of the reduction in rents imposed by the central government and the continuation of the existing trend whereby increasing numbers of Council tenants are taking advantage of the opportunity to purchase their Council property under the terms of the right to buy scheme. To balance the 2017-18 HRA budget management established a Housing Service Review Group and savings totalling £268,000 were agreed of which the majority relates to a reduction in the voluntary provision for repayment of debt. Looking ahead to 2018-19, management has forecast that if further remedial action is not taken the deficit on the HRA will be £300,000 in 2018-19 and around £500,000 each year from 2019/20 onwards. We understand the aforementioned working group has been tasked with identifying further savings, as well as changes to the service which could increase income. There is a recognition amongst senior managers at the Council and Members that the sustainability of the service depends on management continuing to bring forward changes which reduce the cost of running the service. Maintenance represents the main cost associated with the housing function. The Council has worked hard to ensure that all bar four of its properties meet the government's decent homes standard. There has also been extensive work undertaken to review maintenance contracts to ensure these meet the Council's requirements and provide value for money. In January 2017, the Council identified that further planned maintenance was required to rectify problems with the roofs and the damp insulation on some properties in the Borough. These works had not been identified as part of a condition survey in 2014 and the need to undertake the work became apparent after repairs to the affected properties were required. We understand that in both cases the coastal climate experienced by the Borough has had a significant impact. Therefore when planning scheduled maintenance, the Council will need to factor in instances where components within the Council dwellings most at risk from climate-related degradation are likely to require renewal or replacement sooner. New accounting arrangements affecting the HRA come into effect from the 2017-18 financial year. This is because the five-year transitional period introduced after the major self-financing reforms introduced in 2012-13 has ended. Under the new arrangements, depreciation is charged to the Housing Revenue Account and there is no longer any provision for an adjustment to be made to cap the amount charged to the HRA at an amount equal to the amount set aside to fund major repairs as part of the Council's business plan. The Council needs to ensure its medium term financial plan for the HRA takes account of the consequence of these changes as the impact could be significant, especially as the value of the Council's dwellings has increased in recent years due to trends in the local market and changes in guidance issued to valuers. Increases in the value of Council dwellings lead to an increase in the depreciation charge.

Appendix A: Reports issued and fees

We confirm below our final fees charged for the audit and we confirm that no other services were performed.

Fees

	Proposed fee £	Actual fees £	2015/16 fees £
Statutory audit	51,119	51,119	51,119
Housing Benefit Grant Certification	13,733	TBC	16,168
Total fees (excluding VAT)	**64,852**	**TBC**	**67,287**

The proposed fees for the year are in line with the scale fee set by Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA)

Grant certification

Our fees for grant certification cover only housing benefit subsidy certification, which falls under the remit of PSAA.

Our grant certification fee is still an estimate, as our work on the Council's housing subsidy claim is on-going and will not be finalised until the 30 November 2017 deadline.

Reports issued

Report	Date issued
Audit Plan	23 March 2017
Audit Findings Report	21 September 2017
Annual Audit Letter	6 October 2017

		Part One
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE		**(D)** **Agenda Item 11**
Date of Meeting: 29th November, 2017		
Reporting Officer: Director of Resources		

Title: **Budget Timetable and Assumptions**

Summary and Conclusions:

This report sets out the 2018-2019 budget timetable and assumptions.

Recommendations:

To note the 2018-2019 budget timetable and assumptions.

Report

The timetable for the 2018-2019 budget setting process is as follows:

Date	Meeting	Item
29 November 2017	Executive Committee	Budget assumptions
6 December 2017	Overview and Scrutiny	Budget assumptions
18 January 2018	Housing Management Forum	Housing Revenue Account budget
7 February 2018	Executive Committee	Budget proposals
1 March 2018	Full Council	Budget and Council tax setting

The assumptions used in setting budget estimates for 2018-2019 are:

Item	Assumption
Services	No service reductions
	No demand-led increases assumed
	No alternative delivery models
Budget strategy	Savings built into the budget projections
Staff pay	Static establishment
	Employee natural progression and National Living Wage
	Superannuation rate 15.7%
	Continued 1% pay award assumed
Property costs	Utilities 5% average increase
	NNDR based on 2017 revaluation
Grants to external bodies	Funded until 2020-2021
Contracted services	Revenues, benefits and customer services 3.8%
	Grounds maintenance 3.2% indexation
	Waste and street cleansing 2.5%
	Building cleaning 4%

Item	Assumption
Income	Discretionary income as per service delegations
	No reduction in recycling tonnage
	3% increase in recycling reward rate
Treasury management	Temporary surplus cash reducing by £3m each year
	Investment income based on bank rate forecasts
	All PWLB fixed rate, maturity reflected in budget estimates
	No new borrowing drawn down
	Financing based on agreed Capital Programme
Pension deficit funding (not ongoing superannuation)	2.2% annual increase from triennial valuation
Revenue support grant	From the settlement
Retained business rates	Increased by SBRR multiplier each year
	No loss of rateable value
	No exceptional growth
	No exceptional increase in RV appeals
	No reduction in the collection rate
	Tariff from the settlement
	Section 31 grants continuing
	Levy continuing (into Pool)
	Pool membership continues
New homes bonus	No further awards due to threshold
Council tax	No reduction in the collection rate
	Base to be estimated on most recent information
	Band D £5 increase
Council tax support	Default scheme continued
Prior year collection fund result	Return of surplus from 2016-2017
All other items not specifically mentioned above	Efficiencies will maintain the cost envelope

These assumptions are the basis for estimating the budgets for 2018-2019; the budget proposals report will identify any significant variances or changes.

(i)   Legal Implications

It is a statutory requirement to set the Council's budgets and the Council tax.

Members should be aware of the provisions of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, which applies to Members where they are present at a meeting of the Council or the Executive Committee and at the time of the meeting an amount of Council tax is payable by them and has remained unpaid for at least two months, and any budget or Council tax calculation, or recommendation or decision which might affect the making of any such calculation, is the subject of consideration at the meeting.

In these circumstances, any such Members shall at the meeting and as soon practicable after its commencement disclose the fact that Section 106 applies to

them and shall not vote on any question concerning these matters. It should be noted that such Members are not debarred from speaking on these matters.

Failure to comply with these requirements constitutes a criminal offence, unless any such Members can prove they did not know that Section 106 applied to them at the time of the meeting or that the matter in question was the subject of consideration at the meeting.

(ii)   Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(iii)   Financial Implications

The financial assumptions set out in the body of the report will be the basis for the 2018-2019 budget setting.

(iv)   Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(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 12
Date of Meeting: 29th November, 2017	
Reporting Officer: Director of Resources	

Title: **Universal Credit Full Service**

Summary and Conclusions:

This report provides an update on the rollout of Universal Credit Full Service.

Recommendations:

1. To note the update; and

2. To agree that if the provision of personal budgeting and assisted digital support cannot be contracted out, then the Council is unable to provide these services for the DWP.

Report

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment for people in and out of work. It is determined and administered by the DWP.

Universal Credit replaces six legacy benefits:

- income based job seekers allowance
- income related employment and support allowance
- income support
- working tax credit
- child tax credit
- housing benefit (currently administered by the Council)

Council tax support is not included in Universal Credit and must be claimed separately direct from the Council; forms will be supplied to the local Job Centre Plus.

Universal Credit payments are made direct to claimants as part of the Government's drive to make people more responsible for their own money, however direct payment of housing costs for vulnerable customers can be negotiated between the DWP and the landlord; Alternative Payment Arrangement.

The Live Service commenced in December 2014 and the impact on the housing benefit caseload has not been significant. The Full Service commences in April 2018 and will cover a broad range of claimants. The claimants not affected by this change are those of pension age, those in supported accommodation and self-employed; their migration will be in later years.

Across Cumbria, Allerdale and Copeland Councils are already Full Service; Carlisle and Eden Councils commence Full Service in May 2018 and South Lakeland in June 2018. All postcodes assigned to the Barrow Job Centre Plus will be part of the Barrow Full Service from April 2018; the neighbouring authorities are aware of this.

After the transition from Live to Full Service, the DWP will begin moving all remaining existing benefit claimants to the Full Universal Credit Service in 2019; this is likely to be a multi-year transition.

During the Live Service phase, the Council has had a partnership/grant agreement with the DWP to provide support to the UC service centres, to perform some manual processes that were previously automated, to provide personal budgeting support and to provide assisted digital support. Whilst the work from the service centres has increased and the manual processes continued, the number of customers accessing personal budgeting and assisted digital support has been low.

The agreement with the DWP is direct with the Council and the Council has, under the Live Service, contracted the service centre and manual processes to the benefits contractor. The personal budgeting and assisted digital support has been contracted to Barrow Citizens Advice Bureau.

Under Full Service it is expected that the number of customers will significantly increase. The Council does not have existing arrangements with any other organisations that are able to provide personal budgeting and assisted digital support.

The Council is currently liaising with the DWP and Barrow Citizens Advice Bureau regarding extending the service provision, but if the grant level is inadequate (this service will not be subsidised by the Council) or if demand will outpace the facilities and services that Barrow CAB can provide, the Council may have to decline the request to provide these services for the DWP; the two services will be considered separately.

The Council is also expected to continue holding an annual landlord forum and while in the short/medium term this can include a housing benefits update, it is hoped that the DWP will attend for Universal Credit updates.

Further updates will be provided as necessary. Members are recommended to note the update and agree that if the provision of personal budgeting and assisted digital support cannot be contracted out, then the Council is unable to provide these services for the DWP.

(i)   Legal Implications

There are no legal implications; the services are agreed voluntarily by the Council with the DWP. Any contracted out service would be through a formal agreement.

(ii)   Risk Assessment

The risk to the Council comes from contracting out a service with an agreed payment which is beyond the DWP funding; early discussions are taking place to mitigate this risk.

(iii)   Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for the General Fund. The DWP funds the services required under the agreement and the Council will fund any contracted out services.

(iv)   Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(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 13**
Date of Meeting: **29th November, 2017**	
Reporting Officer: **Executive Director**	

Title: **Consultation on Council Plan**

Summary and Conclusions:

The Council Plan has been subject to a number of consultation meetings with key partners and a summary of key points raised in the consultation and a slightly amended version of the plan are presented.

Recommendations:

To recommend the Council to approve the Council Plan 2017-2020.

Report

The Council Plan was approved for consultation in June, 2017 (Minute 28 refers). Members agreed that there should be an 'in depth' consultation process engaging with key partners through meetings to discuss the plan and any amendments they recommended to the consultation document. The Plan has also been advertised on the Council's website. Since June, consultation meetings have been carried out with the following organisations:-

- Cumbria Constabulary
- Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership
- Furness College
- Barrow Business Improvement District
- Cumbria County Council
- South Lakeland District Council
- Furness Economic Development Forum
- Locality Health and Well Being Forum
- Cumbria County Council Local Committee
- BAE Systems
- Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group
- Homes and Communities Agency

A meeting with Voluntary Representatives is planned for early December.

The principal outcome of the consultation process has been one of support for the Council's vision, priorities and objectives and a willingness to engage to ensure their delivery over the timescale of the plan. Consultees thought the plan was clearly articulated and set a new direction for the future of the area. Some textual alterations were suggested and agreed and these are highlighted in the final version of the Plan appended to this report at **Appendix 2**.

The principal issues to emerge from the consultation were:-

i) Strong support for the inclusion of a public health priority within the plan.
ii) Support for a local economic/community development plan for a specific area of the Borough, including support from Cumbria LEP.
iii) Pre-early intervention and support to children and families from the most deprived wards.
iv) Strong support for increasing the skills and aspirations of the working age population and school and college students.
v) The need to build strong alliances and partnerships to promote the area at a regional and national level.
vi) Strong support for the need to develop and improve the operation of the night time economy in Barrow.

Officers are currently preparing the Action Plan which disaggregates the objectives into measurable actions which will be reported to Members in due course.

(i)   Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii)   Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no implications.

(iii)   Financial Implications

There are no financial implications from the recommendations.

(iv)   Health and Safety 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

November 2017

BARROW-IN-FURNESS BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL PLAN 2017 – 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Council Plan is the strategic document that will guide all the Borough Council's decisions on how much we spend, what we do and how we do it. It covers the period 2017-2020. It is also a longer term strategy setting the broad direction for future plans.

In 2017 Barrow Borough is experiencing the best of times and worst of times. The local economy is booming as never before as a result of the Astute and Dreadnought Submarine Programmes, offshore energy developments and investment by local companies. Beyond the Borough planned investment at GSK and Moorside contribute to a once in a generation economic opportunity. However, public sector resources and the ability to provide high quality public services have reduced significantly as has the public sectors ability to influence and shape the economic growth mentioned above. Increasingly, public services in the Borough are shaped by providing the acceptable not the desirable.

These two trends present the Borough with a unique set of challenges which can only be addressed through partnership, collaboration and alliances with others, bringing fresh thinking and new approaches to bear on long standing problems, being prepared to 'think the unthinkable' and lobbying consistently and intelligently for the resources our community needs.

As a Council we have to recognise that between 2010 and 2020, and excluding a decade of compound inflation, our income will have reduced by 40%. In practical terms this means between these two dates we will be spending a much greater proportion of our money on services we have to provide by law such as environmental health, planning and waste collection, rather than on services we are not required to provide such as leisure and economic development. This constrains our ability to achieve what we want to acting on our own, and increasingly we must work with others forming partnerships and influencing other organisations.

THE BOROUGH

We are a geographically small, densely populated and urbanised Local Authority, completely different to any other Cumbrian District Council. Our population is 67,500 and is falling slightly. As we form only part of our Travel to Work Area and operate within a two tier system of local government, key economic decisions which affect the Borough such as the location of housing and employment and improvement of infrastructure lie beyond our immediate control. The BAE shipyard continues to dominate the economy though there are other significant growth sectors. Our housing stock is dominated by high density pre 1919 terraced properties which comprise 50% of the stock. Dalton-in-Furness is the other large settlement in the Borough. It has experienced significant housing growth over the last 20 years and is a vibrant small market town.

THE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Our 36 Councillors are elected by local people for a four year term to oversee the delivery of services for which the Borough Council is responsible and to act as leaders of their community. Barrow has a "two tier' structure of local government with Cumbria County Council, who have 11 Councillors covering Barrow Borough, providing strategic services including highways, adult and children's services and waste disposal. The Borough Council carries out its business through 4 standing committees and a Forum which deals with housing matters. To ensure transparency and challenge Council appoints a committee to critically scrutinise its decisions.

Councillors are supported by 243 Officers. The number of officers has reduced by around 20% since 2010. The management structure of the Council comprises 2 Directors and 3 Assistant Directors who are responsible for delivery of all local services. The senior management structure of the Council has halved in response to Government cuts since 2010. By law we are responsible for delivering housing services, Planning and building control, environmental health and licensing services, refuse collection, cleansing and waste collection services to the public. We choose to deliver leisure, economic development and regeneration services. All services are supported by finance, personnel, legal and other central functions.

The Council, comprising all 36 elected Councillors, is responsible for taking all decisions, but to make this manageable it gives 4 committees covering planning, environmental health, audit and finance and policies responsibility to carry out most of its functions.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES

It is the Council's view that local government structures in Cumbria need to be reformed if local democracy is to be strengthened, economic development maximised and local government services are to be placed on a sustainable financial footing. There is no clear policy from Government on how this could be achieved and no consensus within Cumbria on future structures or indeed the need for change. Nonetheless, the Borough Council's view is that there needs to be a community of economic and other interests across a local authority area and better and more effective co-ordination and delivery of services. This leads the Council to conclude that a sub-county unitary based upon a functional economic area offers the most appropriate structure to meet the tests above. We do not expect this solution to yield significant savings in the short term, but it would offer a more coherent, understandable, effective and engaging local government structure and we will work with interested parties to move this forward.

GOVERNANCE

The Council spends public money. It is therefore highly regulated to ensure public funds are spent properly, efficiently and legally. Financial regulation to assess compliance with national and local requirements is provided by Appointed Auditors. Our own Internal Audit services carry out financial and procedural checks both to support the Appointed Auditors work and for the Councils own purposes. Council appoint an Audit Committee to oversee this function. Council agrees financial and contractual regulations which guide how expenditure is undertaken. We also operate agreed anti-fraud, corruption and 'whistle blowing' policies and an anonymous Fraud Hotline.

The Councils Constitution sets out the way that it will conduct its activities including registration and declaration of interests and codes of conduct for both Officers and Members. The Constitution is reviewed annually. Council also operates a Complaints Procedure setting out an escalating series of reviews to try to resolve complaints, ultimately leading to consideration by the Local Government Ombudsman if the matter cannot be resolved. In 2015/16 85 complaints were received; 9 were considered by the Local Government Ombudsman and 1 was upheld.

In terms of this Plan, Council has adopted a performance management framework setting out how the cascade of actions from the Councils vision, objectives and actions will be monitored and assessed by Councillors. Finance to support this plan is determined through annual budgets set within the financial context of the medium term Budget Strategy and is detailed in the Councils Medium Term Financial Plan which is updated annually. Information on progress with the Budget Strategy, the annual budget, Council objectives, actions and service performance is reported to Councillors on a quarterly cycle and through the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement.

RESOURCES

The Council has suffered a substantial reduction in resources since 2010. Between 2010 and 2020, excluding inflation the amount of money we have to spend on our community will have reduced by 40% as a result of reductions in grant from central government. In 2016/17 we were – proportionately – the worst hit local authority in England. We have sought to manage this reduction in our resources through preparation of two budget strategies. The 2011-2016 strategy removed £5m from our revenue budget and was achieved by 2014/15. The second budget strategy was agreed in 2016/17 in response to a further round of government cuts and will remove a further £2.7m from our budget largely through contract efficiencies.

Our current net budget 2017/18 is £9,729,940.

Government have made clear their policy that local authority services should be funded through local taxation and that all Government grant to local authorities will cease by 2020. To compensate Government have agreed to return a higher proportion of business rate income to local authorities. This policy will present significant financial challenges for the Borough Council beyond those addressed through our budget strategies because the Borough's residential and commercial tax base is low compared to other district authorities in Cumbria. This challenge is compounded by high levels of deprivation, poor health and unemployment which results in a need for higher public expenditure.

We currently employ 243 staff (200 full time equivalents) to deliver our services. We have a stable workforce with very limited staff turnover although this is beginning to change as growth in the local economy offers new opportunities to staff and this is to be welcomed. As with many public sector bodies we struggle to recruit professional staff and have a policy of 'growing our own' by engaging trainees and apprentices in posts with a trajectory through to professional qualifications. All staff receive an (at least) annual appraisal, linking their activities to the Councils objectives with performance targets set as appropriate. We have a workforce strategy which sets out how we will seek to develop and train our staff for the challenges of local government.

The Borough Council owns and manages its housing stock which comprises 2,627 homes. It is one of only 3 local authorities in the North West region who do so. All our stock meets decency standards set by Government.

Government have imposed a reducing cap on rents in the social rented sector of 1% per annum to 2020. Coupled with the impact of 'Right to Buy' this will present significant medium term financial challenges to our housing revenue account which we have to plan for.

LAND AND BUILDINGS

The Borough Council holds significant land and building assets in addition to the 2,627 homes. There are operational buildings and land for service delivery, such as the Town Hall, Dock Museum, Leisure Centre, Forum, playgrounds, open spaces, car parks and so on; other assets held generate revenue for the Council through our commercial estate, to support long and short term regeneration programmes and support the Council's priorities for the Borough. As our ability to support partner organisations financially has diminished, we have increasingly used our extensive land and buildings portfolios to support regeneration and third sector organisations who help us to deliver our objectives. We will continue to seek innovative opportunities to do this.

OUR VALUES : HOW WE DO THINGS

Our values are:-

- The Council will maintain shared values including leadership values (openness, support and respect) both for the Council and its officers. These are defined in the constitution and reflect public expectations about the conduct and behaviour of individuals.

- The Council will use shared values as a guide for decision making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the Council. This is demonstrated by adherence to the constitution.

- The Council has adopted formal codes of conduct defining standards of personal behaviour for Members and officers.

- The Council maintains the Audit Committee to raise awareness and take the lead in ensuring high standards of conduct are embedded within the Council's culture.

- The Council has put in place arrangements to ensure that Members and staff of the Council are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders. The Council has put in place appropriate processes to ensure that these arrangements are workable including declaration of interests and anti-corruption policies.

OUR VISION

Our vision for the Borough is a healthy population, with high aspirations, living in good quality housing with decent jobs in a diverse economy.

OUR STRATEGY

The background information above sets out the context of the Council Plan. Councillors have worked with advisers from the Local Government Association to prepare a first draft of the Plan and this has been refined in a series of workshops involving County Council Members and Officers. At the outset we recognised we could not deliver our objectives on our own and that partnership and alliance building would form a key input to the proposals. We recognised three ways in which we could deliver our objectives; direct delivery – where the Borough Council is responsible for delivering the service; partnership – where responsibility for what we want to achieve is shared with other local organisations such as County Council, Local Enterprise Partnership or Health Sector; and influencing where responsibility for delivering objectives lies entirely beyond the scope of local partners.

The Borough Council has agreed that efficient and effective services underpin everything we do and should be recognised as a cross-cutting priority.

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE SERVICES

The Borough Council exists to provide community services and leadership and this plan sets out our key priorities for this to 2020. To implement these priorities and meet the Council's legal obligations, the Council will continue to provide or commission a wide range of statutory and discretionary services. In order to do this the Council must maintain a financially stable position based upon short and medium term financial projections so we can offer well run, value for money, services that are valued by the public and meet the tests of governance set out above. Given the severe constraints on Council income this means we will think and act more like a business, drive efficiencies from our services, generate more income and support innovation and best practice within services.

The Borough Council has, therefore, identified the following cross-cutting objectives which will apply to all services:

1. Provide short and medium term financial stability in the General Fund by implementing the agreed 2016-2020 Budget Strategy
2. Measuring customer satisfaction with our services
3. Developing a more cost effective procurement process by maximising the use of purchasing frameworks
4. Refreshing and implementing our workforce strategy

5. Identifying opportunities to generate additional income
6. Provide training and support for innovation and adoption of best practice within services and requiring managers to demonstrate this

In addition we have identified four thematic priorities:

- Developing the local economy to secure a long term economic future for all our community
- A strong and vibrant town centre community
- Closing the gap on health inequalities
- Providing a greater choice of good quality housing and regenerating the oldest and poorest housing in the Borough

Under each priority we have noted where the objective involves.

D – Direct delivery by the Borough Council

P – Those with whom we will seek to work in Partnership where responsibility for what we want to achieve is shared with others

I – Those organisations we would seek to influence as responsibility for what we want to achieve lies entirely beyond the scope of local partners

These are set out in more detail on the following pages.

Current Situation	Issues	Objectives
BAE Systems, specialising in submarine construction, is the largest employer in the Borough with 8,000 employees.	A broader base for the economy, continuing to diversify by business size and sector is required.	**LE1** Secure Regeneration of 'Waterfront Barrow' by continuing to market commercial and residential development opportunities, attract external funding and continuing to hold and assemble land required for development
23% of employment in the Borough is in manufacturing – this compares with 8% nationally.	Strong investment and employment growth in the local economy with high levels of employment in manufacturing programmes out to the late 2030's.	D – Planning and Building Control P – Cumbria Local Enterprise, Cumbria County Council, Homes and Communities Agency I – Developers, potential investors
The percentage of people in the Borough educated to NVQ Level 4 is lower than County and National percentages.	Develop economic resilience beyond current shipyard programmes.	**LE2** Lobby for improvements in road and rail infrastructure through partnerships with businesses and other public sector organisations
Furness Economic Development Forum estimates that by 2021 West Cumbria will receive new investment of £20 bn. The Keeping our Future Afloat Campaign estimates that by 2060 this will equate to a growth of £4.2 bn in Gross Value Added for Barrow – 9% of the target of the Northern Powerhouse Narrative (2016).	Limited ability to directly deliver economic growth objectives – Council needs to influence local, regional and national agencies to achieve its ambitions.	P – Local businesses, Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Cumbria County Council, Furness Economic Development Forum I – Highways England, Transport for North, Northern Rail
In 2015 74.8% of the working age population of the Borough were economically active compared to 77.8% nationally.	Greater understanding of the economic consequences of worklessness and high levels of deprivation.	**LE3** Promote the Borough to support economic growth
	Skills shortfalls in some sections of the population.	P – Furness Economic Development Forum I – Private sector businesses

LE4

Work in partnership with others to provide business and supply chain support and advice

P – Furness Economic Development Forum, Cumbria Chamber of Commerce

I – local companies

LE5

Increase the skills of the working age population

P – Furness Economic Development Forum, Furness College, Furness Education and Skills Partnership

LE6

Increase the skills and aspirations of our school and college students

P – Nursery, primary and secondary schools, Furness College, Furness Education and Skills Partnership

LE7

Continue to support Furness Economic Development Forum programmes to secure economic growth, skills development, quality of life and infrastructure improvements

D – Accountable Body for Coastal Communities Fund

P – Furness Economic Development Forum
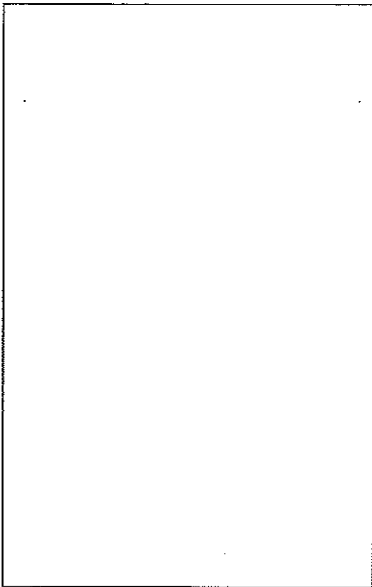
LE8

To recognise the importance of the Morecambe Bay economic area and work with our neighbouring authorities to jointly market and develop the economy of the area

P – South Lakes District Council, Lancaster City Council

I – Northern Powerhouse, Highways England, Transport for the North, Northern Rail

Current Situation	Issues	Objectives
Barrow is a significant comparison and convenience destination for areas outside the Borough including parts of Copeland, South Lakeland and the Lake District National Park.	Continuing contraction of Barrow town centre retail offer through impact of on-line sales and competition from edge of centre retailing.	**TC1** Improving the leisure, cultural and retail offer in Barrow town centre.
The vacancy rate for retail units in Barrow town centre is above the national average.	Newly created BID will lead on regeneration of the town centre retail offer.	D – Street cleansing, waste collection, planning, Market, Forum P – Barrow Business Improvement District, Cumbria County Council, arts organisations I – Commercial Agents, retailers, developers
The Borough is relatively self contained in terms of retail expenditure with low levels of expenditure leakage to other destinations.	High levels of disrepair in pre 1919 terraces on the edge of the town centre and a declining market for these properties.	**TC2** Diversifying and improving the operation of the night time economy including mitigation of its impact upon residents.
Growth of edge of centre shopping and internet retailing will impact upon the vitality and viability of the town centre.	Persistent pockets of deprivation around Barrow town centre.	D – Licensing of premises and businesses P – Barrow Business Improvement District, Cumbria Constabulary, Police and Crime Commissioner, Residents Associations I – Operators, Service providers
A Business Improvement District was created for Barrow Town Centre in 2016.	Low demand for small scale residential new build in town centre.	**TC3** An effective planning function based on preparation of a masterplan for the town centre. D – Local Planning, Development Control P – Cumbria County Council, Barrow Business Improvement District,
There are 59 national retailers operating in Barrow town centre		
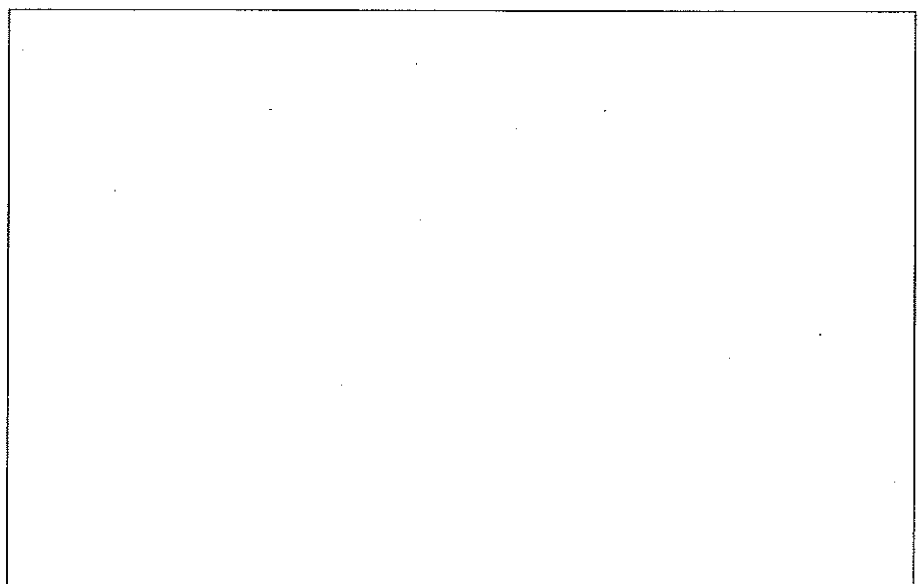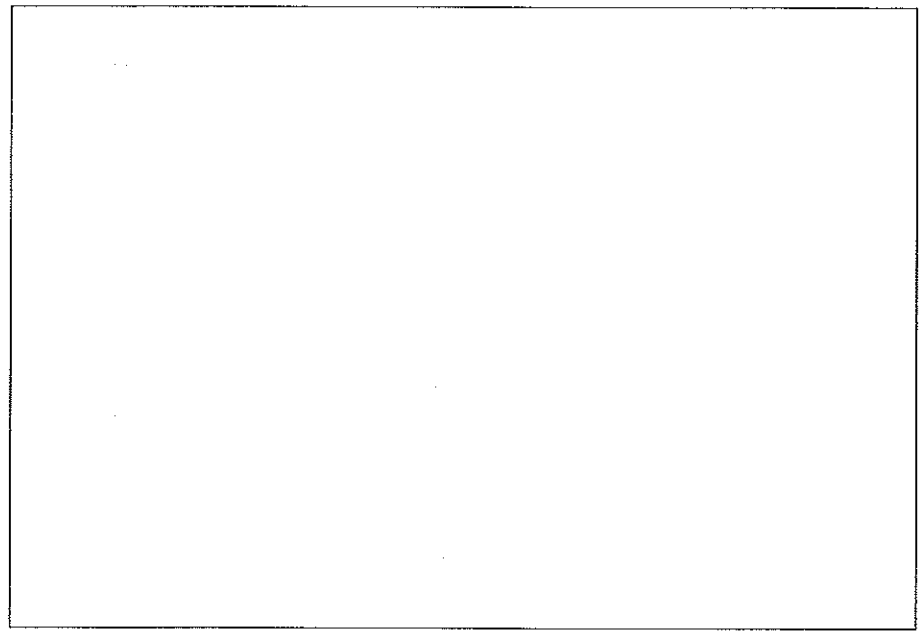
TC4

Improving quality and choice in the housing offer in the town centre.

D – Housing improvement (public and private), Planning

P – Cumbria County Council, Social rented sector developers

I – Developers, landlords

TC5

Improvement to infrastructure designed to achieve the safe and convenient movement of vehicles and pedestrians to and within the town centre.

P – Cumbria County Council, Barrow Business Improvement District

TC6

Improve the cleanliness of the town centre

D – cleaning and waste collection services

Current Situation	Issues	Objectives
Male life expectancy at birth in Barrow is 76.9 years, 3.9 years lower than the district with the highest life expectancy, 2.1 years lower than the Cumbria average and 2.5 years lower than the England average.	The 'health gap' in Cumbria – the difference between those areas with the best health outcomes and those with the worst has stayed constant, though health in all areas has improved.	**HI1** Encourage greater use of leisure facilities including parks, woodlands and open spaces.
Female life expectancy at birth in Barrow is 81.6 years, 3 years lower than the district with the highest life expectancy, 0.9 years lower than the Cumbria average and 2.1 years lower than the England average.	Barrow has high levels of coronary heart disease, cancers and lung disease linked, in part, to the legacy of heavy industry in the town.	D – provision of leisure services, woodlands and open spaces P – Cumbria County Council, Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group, Sports Council, Sports bodies, Local Health and Well Being Forum
Eight communities within Cumbria are classified as being amongst the 3% most deprived nationally; this comprises 2.3% of the County population. Half of the communities are in Barrow-in-Furness.	Barrow on the majority of health indicators has the poorest health outcomes in Cumbria.	**HI2** Engagement in activities to reduce health inequalities.
	The primary agencies to deliver this priority will be the Clinical Commissioning Group, Cumbria County Council and Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, however, many of the Borough Council's activities will impact upon health outcomes. Housing and leisure are particularly influential.	D – Councillors P – Morecambe Bay Channel Commissioning Group, Cumbria County Council, Local Health and Well Being Forum **HI3** Participate in targeted public health campaigns identified by the Locality Health and Wellbeing Forum.
Child Poverty In Barrow, 20.4% of all children are living in poverty. Central Ward has the greatest proportion of children living in poverty at 48.4%. Four wards fall between the bottom	Barrow has significant poverty which cross-cuts across childhood issues around obesity, emotional wellbeing and children being school ready linking through to educational achievement and	P – Local Health and Well Being Forum, Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group, Cumbria County Council

10% nationally for levels of child poverty. Hindpool, Central, Risedale and Barrow Island.

School Readiness
The DfE reported that in 2013/2014 56.8% of Cumbrian pupils achieved 5+ GCSEs at grades A* - C (including English & Maths) at Key Stage 4, which is the same as the national average. However, Barrow had lower proportions of pupils achieving the above levels of attainment (50.5% and 47%).

Rates of **youth unemployment** are particularly high in Barrow (5.8%). The Barrow Island ward also has youth unemployment rates more than five times the national average.

Obesity
Rates of 4-5 year olds with excess weight in Barrow are worse than the national average. Barrow also experienced increases in excess weight over the last year and currently being rated the worst out of all local authorities in England (30.6%). Between 2011/2012 and 2013/2014, Hindpool (Barrow), Risedale (Barrow), Ormsgill (Barrow) and Newbarns (Barrow) had significantly higher rates of 4-5 year olds with excess weight than the national average. Wards Hindpool and Central in Barrow also has worse rates of 10-11 year olds with excess weight than the national average between 2011/2012 and 2013/2014.

employment.

A multi-agency pilot to provide pre-early help intervention support to children and young families as a method to address key issues in the family environment to prevent children & young families issues escalating.

HI4
Maintaining the Council's housing stock to ensure it meets the decency standard.

D – Housing Services

HI5
Agreeing a third sector strategy to improve health and well-being in the Borough.

P – Council for Voluntary Service, Cumbria County Council
I – third sector organisations

HI6
Support Cumbria County Council Pilot in Greengate Children's Centre – Parenting Relationship Enrichment Programme (PREP). Identifying key issues for children and young families and providing support through Children Health & Wellbeing Coaches (CHAWCS) in the family home.

D – CCC Barrow Local Committee, CYPWG, Action for Children
P – Barrow Borough Council, Furness Academy, Children's Services

Tooth Decay & Hospital Admissions

Barrow has significantly higher rates of tooth decay in children aged 5 (1.45 compared to 0.94 nationally).
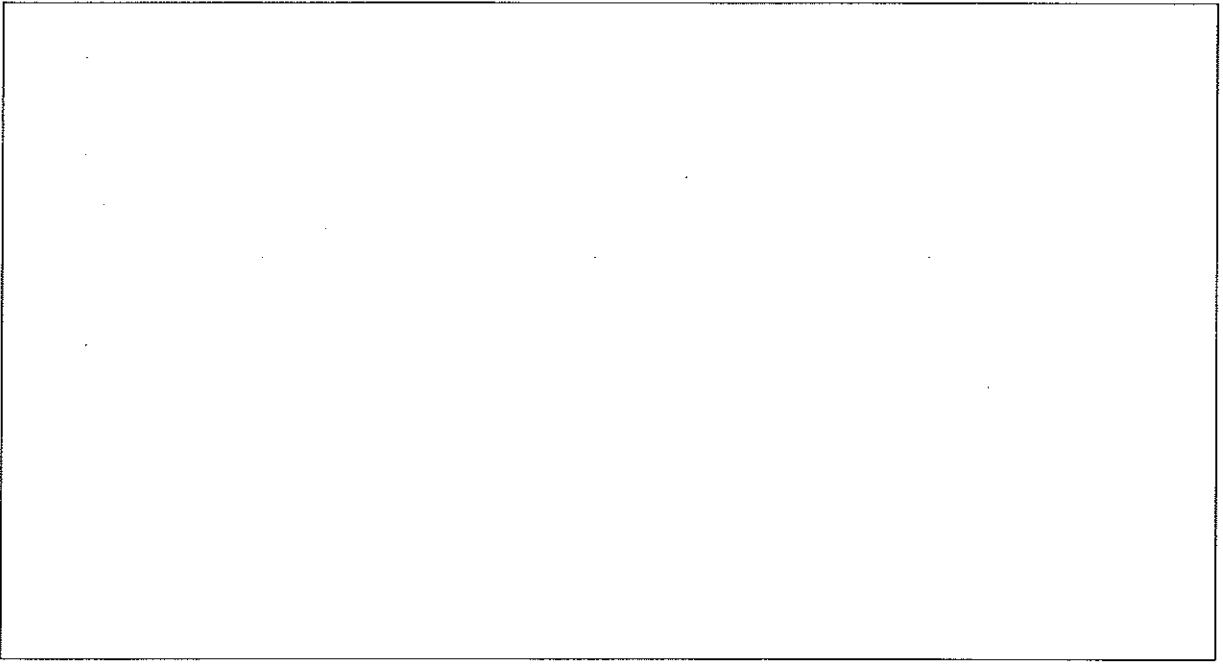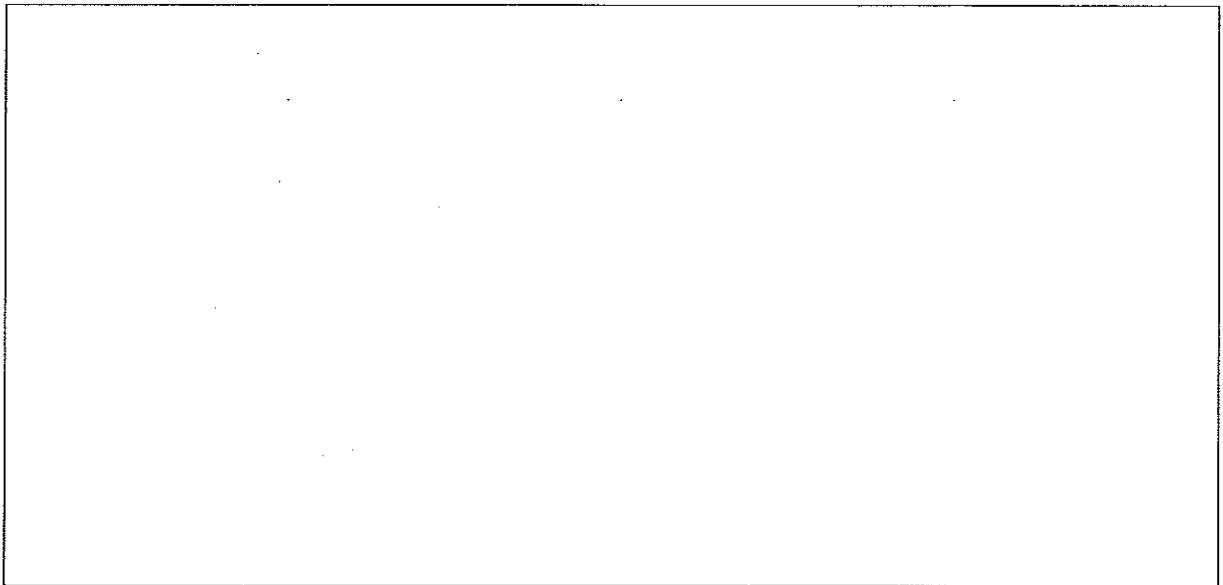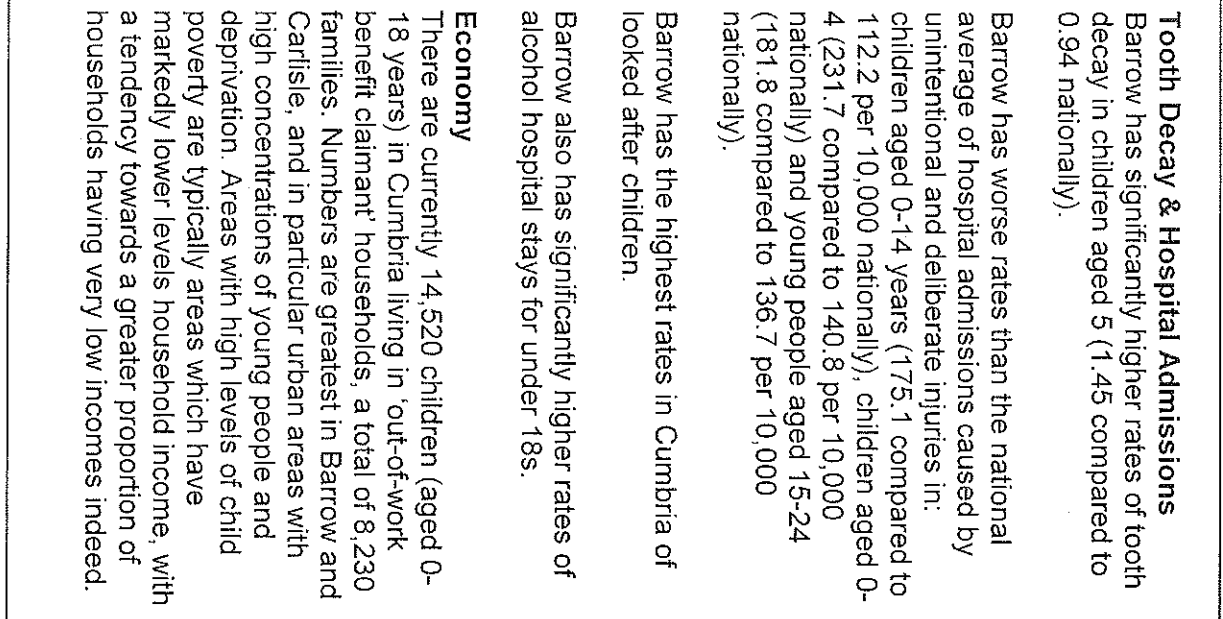
Barrow has worse rates than the national average of hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in: children aged 0-14 years (175.1 compared to 112.2 per 10,000 nationally), children aged 0-4 (231.7 compared to 140.8 per 10,000 nationally) and young people aged 15-24 (181.8 compared to 136.7 per 10,000 nationally).

Barrow also has significantly higher rates of alcohol hospital stays for under 18s.

Barrow has the highest rates in Cumbria of looked after children.

Economy

There are currently 14,520 children (aged 0-18 years) in Cumbria living in 'out-of-work benefit claimant' households, a total of 8,230 families. Numbers are greatest in Barrow and Carlisle, and in particular urban areas with high concentrations of young people and deprivation. Areas with high levels of child poverty are typically areas which have markedly lower levels household income, with a tendency towards a greater proportion of households having very low incomes indeed.

PRIORITY 4 – PROVIDING A GREATER CHOICE OF GOOD QUALITY HOUSING AND REGENERATING THE OLDEST AND POOREST QUALITY HOUSING IN THE BOROUGH

Current Situation	Issues	Objectives
Unlike national trends the population of the Borough fell between 2001 and 2011 particularly in the 20-34 age group.	Local Authority housing stock and Housing Association stock all meet the decency standard.	**H1** Support improvements to the poorest quality housing in the Borough through completion of the central comprehensive housing renewal programme.
House prices in the Borough are relatively low.	There are significant issues of unfitness in the owner occupied private stock particularly, pre 1919 Victorian terraces.	D – private sector housing renewal programmes I – Government to make resources available for future comprehensive renewal programmes
The Borough population has fallen by 4%.	Good levels of interest from developers for edge of town and large sites but little interest in the town centre.	**H2** Effective management of Council owned stock. D – Housing Services
Government have imposed a compound annual reduction of 1% pa for the next 3 years in public rented sector rents	Finance to support comprehensive housing renewal programme in the town centre has been withdrawn and this will prevent future programmes as they will be unaffordable by the Council or the private sector.	**H3** Development of a medium term strategy to achieve a Housing Revenue Account which is sustainable in the longer term. D – Housing Services
	HRA needs to be placed on sustainable financial footing for the medium and long term.	**H4** Support the development of a supported special needs housing unit within the Borough P – Cumbria County Council, social rented sector providers
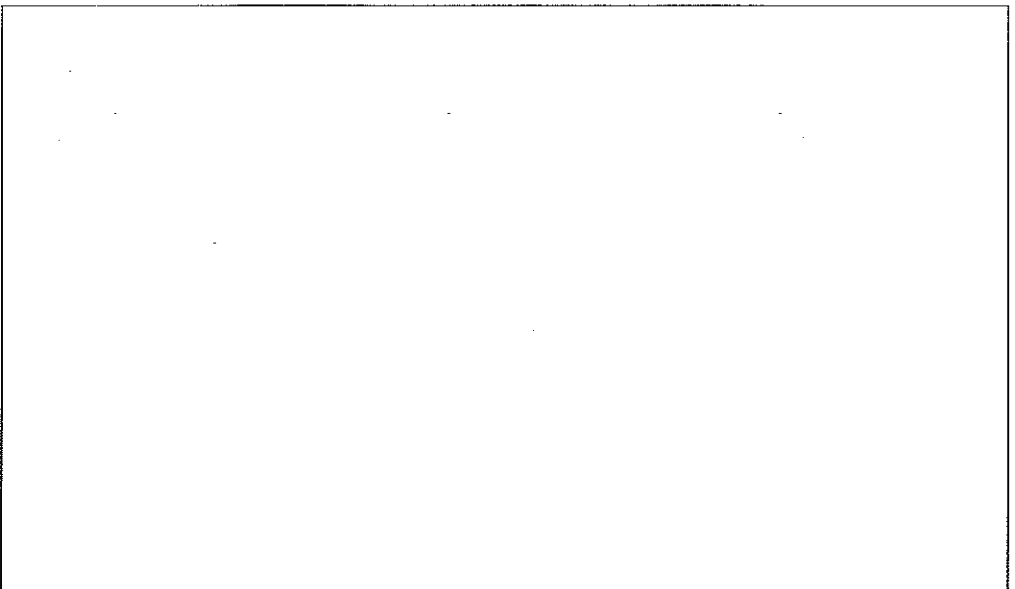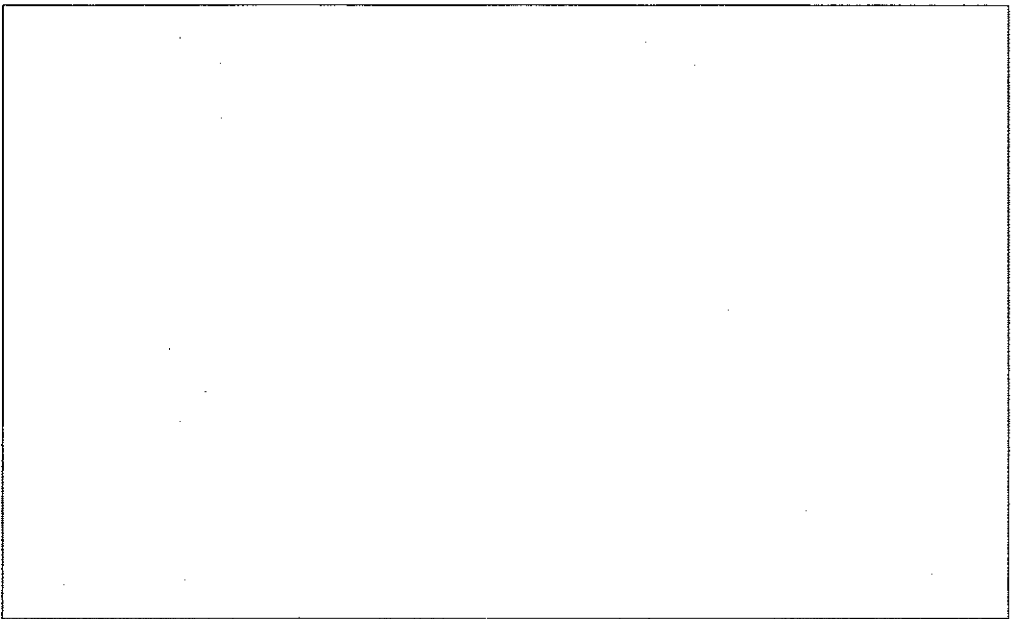
I – developers

H5

Provide a range of housing sites on a broad range of locations through the Borough Local Plan and support their development

D – Local planning, development control, Estates
P – Developers
I – Developers

H6

Explore development of schemes to support older and disabled residents to remain in their homes

D – Disabled Facilities Grants
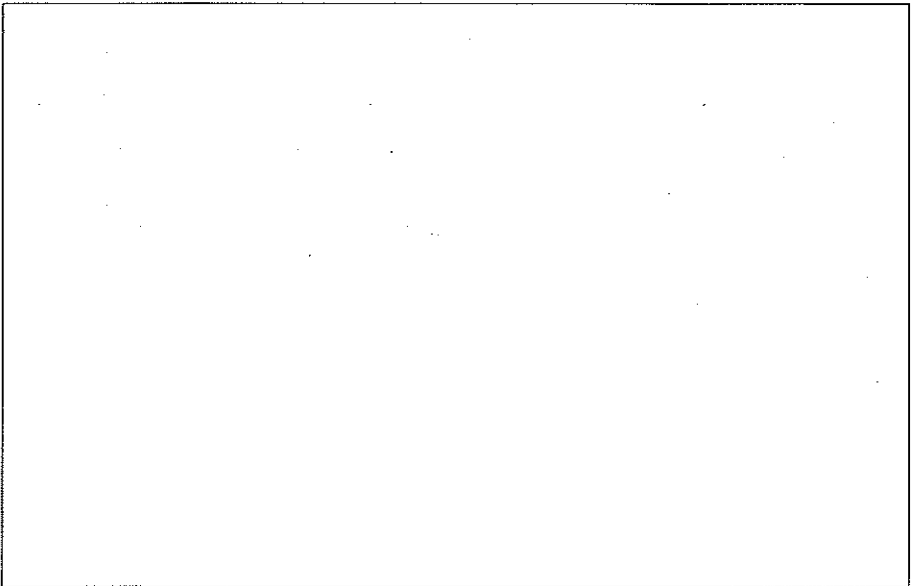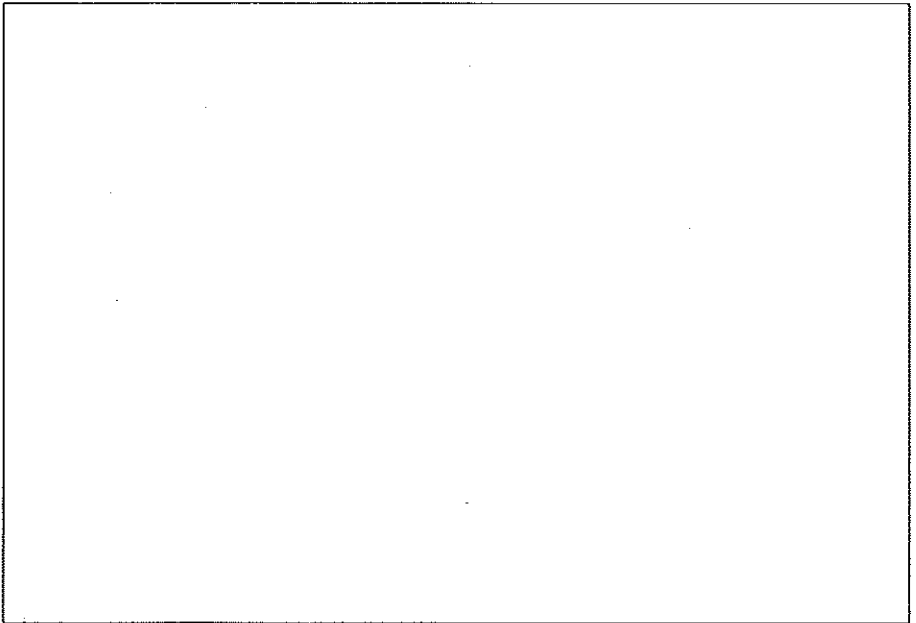P – Cumbria County Council, Morecambe Bay Channel Commissioning Group

H7

Encourage and where necessary enforce good standards in the private rented sector

D – Private sector housing regulation
I – Private landlords

Current Situation	Issues	Objectives
Reducing Government Funding and Revenue Support Grant ending in 2020. Medium/long term financial resilience is required.	For General Fund, projections identify a £2.7m deficit by 2019-2020 without preventative action. The Budget Strategy identified £2.3m of savings and reductions.	**ES1** Implement the General Fund 2016-2020 Budget Strategy to eliminate the deficit. Maintain and review the Council's financial reserves. D – Executive Director & Director of Resources
Customer satisfaction is not consistently gauged or measured. Some services do collect customer feedback, but that is not consistently reported. The Council has the technology to offer services online, but the demand for this is currently unknown.	The Council's approach to customer engagement requires review. Better use of the website should improve the customer's experience.	
Procurement processes are under review and frameworks have achieved savings where they have been used or continue to be used.	The Budget Strategy plans for all other costs, such as supplies and services, to remain within the same cost envelope; purchasing frameworks are believed to be key to delivering this.	**ES2** Review the collection of customer satisfaction or feedback across the Council if possible. The website offers the opportunity for comments, but it could be more obvious. The website may be more attractive if the news and features were updated more regularly. D – Director of Resources & Service Managers
The Workforce Strategy supports the Council Plan and should reflect the aims and objectives of the current Council Plan; a refresh is required.	The Workforce Strategy runs alongside the Budget Strategy.	
Income generation produces the same result as reducing expenditure and opportunities should be reviewed by service managers.	Charging for services, including recovering the costs of services, is Council policy and should be a key consideration for service managers.	**ES3** The Council's procurement policy approach needs reviewing as it does not reflect the availability of frameworks as much as it could. The Council's spend should be reviewed to analyse the savings from amalgamating supplies into contracts or frameworks. D – Corporate Support P - Frameworks
Service development and the continual review of process and service delivery should be an embedded management tool.	The transformation fund remains open to bids. The sharing of best practice between departments has begun to be facilitated by the Managers Forum but could perhaps be more effective or more formalised.	

ES4

The Workforce Strategy should be refreshed and implemented.

D – Executive Director & Director of Resources

ES5

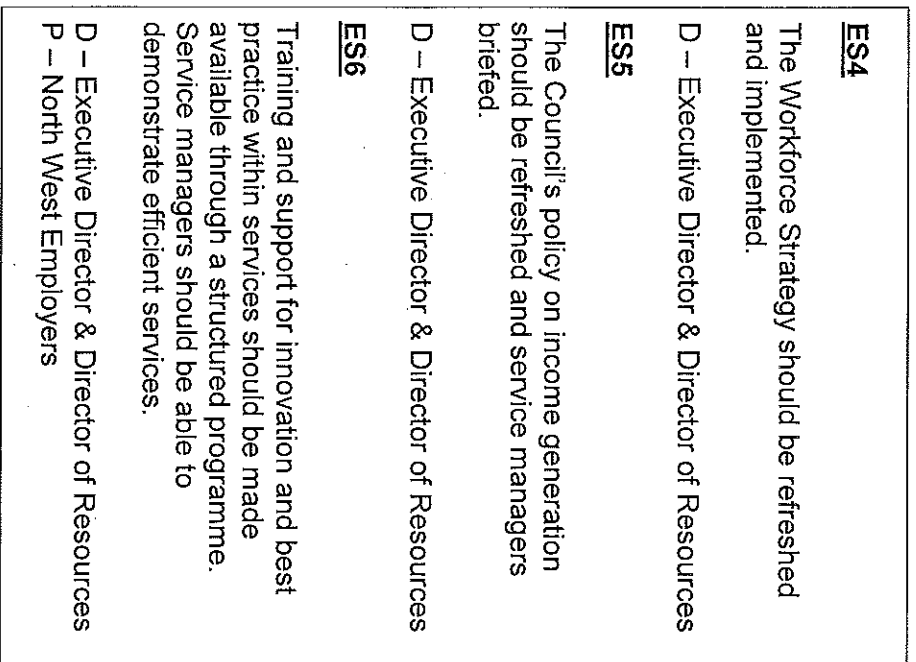The Council's policy on income generation should be refreshed and service managers briefed.

D – Executive Director & Director of Resources

ES6

Training and support for innovation and best practice within services should be made available through a structured programme. Service managers should be able to demonstrate efficient services.

D – Executive Director & Director of Resources

P – North West Employers

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	**(R)**
Date of Meeting: 29th November, 2017	**Agenda Item**
Reporting Officer: Executive Director	**14**

Title: Neighbourhood Planning Protocol

Summary and Conclusions:

A Neighbourhood Planning Protocol and Guidance documents have been prepared to allow the Council to respond to its planning duties and the opportunities for local communities arising from the Localism Act 2011 and Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (and 2015 amendment).

The protocol and guide set out the roles and responsibilities for the Council and those preparing Neighbourhood Plans.

Recommendations:

1.   To note the content and approach set out within the report on Neighbourhood Planning; and

2.   To agree that the Neighbourhood Planning Guidance and Protocol documents be adopted as the Council's formal approach to Neighbourhood Planning.

Report

Background

The Localism Act 2011 introduced three "neighbourhood level" planning powers, which came into force in April 2012. These are:

- Neighbourhood Development Plans (commonly known as Neighbourhood Plans);
- Neighbourhood Development Orders; and
- Community Right to Build.

The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (and 2015 amendment) set out the minimum level of requirements in relation to designating Neighbourhood Areas and Neighbourhood Forums.

Neighbourhood Planning is led by local communities rather than the Council, with the aim of allowing communities to shape and influence development locally or encourage more development. Any proposals deriving from Neighbourhood Planning must be in general conformity with national planning policy and the Local Development Plan (i.e. the Saved Barrow Borough Local Plan, Barrow Port Area Action Plan and the Cumbria Minerals & Waste Local Plan).

Neighbourhood Planning Guidance

The work involved in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan can be complicated and lengthy. The draft Neighbourhood Planning Guide (attached as **Appendix 3**) has been prepared to provide local communities with detailed guidance to make informed decisions as to the route they can take to best meet their needs should they wish to undertake Neighbourhood Planning.

Neighbourhood Planning Protocol

To support local communities throughout the process of Neighbourhood Planning, the draft Neighbourhood Planning Protocol (**Appendix 4**) has been developed.

This is specifically aimed to outline the support, advice and assistance the Council will give to the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans in Barrow Borough.

Any support will be in kind, and therefore subject to available resources to meet the demand at any one time. There is (currently) a limited amount of government funding available linked to each individual neighbourhood forum/ plan to support the Council in the delivery of their duty, this is outlined in the section below on resources.

Once adopted, the Protocol will be kept under review to take account of the uptake of Neighbourhood Planning in the Borough. The Council is not obliged to prepare this Protocol which mainly deals with operational issues in relation to the implementation of the Act and Regulations and as such it is not considered necessary to publicly consult on the Protocol.

Neighbourhood Plans in Barrow Borough

There are three parished areas in Barrow Borough, Askam & Ireleth, Dalton with Newton and Lindal & Marton. In a parished area the Parish or Town Council are the Qualifying Body for the production of a Neighbourhood Plan, outside of these areas a Neighbourhood Forum would be formed to act as the qualifying body, this would be made up of 21 individuals who live, work or have an interest in the Neighbourhood Area.

Dalton Town Council has shown an interest in developing a Neighbourhood Plan and has resolved to make an application to the Borough Council to establish a Neighbourhood Planning Area for the whole of their parish to enable the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will support the Town Council in this process, through contact with the Planning Policy Team as outlined in the Protocol.

Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area Approval

Only a qualifying body such as a parish/town council or properly constituted Neighbourhood Forum designated by the Local Planning Authority, has the power to prepare Neighbourhood Plans or Neighbourhood Development Orders for a specified area.

<u>Local Authority Role</u>

The Localism Act and Neighbourhood Planning Regulations introduced new duties on local authorities in relation to neighbourhood planning. A local authority must:

- confirm the geographical area of the proposed "Neighbourhood Area"
- confirm the status of a proposed "Neighbourhood Forum"
- provide expertise and advice on the development of Neighbourhood Plans
- publicise and consult on the Neighbourhood Plan in line with the regulations
- pay for independent examinations
- pay and arrange for referendums
- adopt Neighbourhood Plans where all requirements have been met.

<u>Resource Implications</u>

The Council has a duty to support the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. It has limited capacity to restrict the number and timing of applications for designations of Neighbourhood Forums and/ or Designated Areas submitted to the Council.

Depending on local interest neighbourhood planning could lead to costs for the Council if there is an uptake of it in the Borough. To illustrate the issue, estimated costs are shown below but they will depend upon the complexity of issues to be addressed and the expertise within each area.

Table 1: Estimated summary of costs to the Council for a Neighbourhood Plan

Legal duty	Direct cost to Council per Neighbourhood Plan	Estimated officer time per Neighbourhood Plan (minimum)	Staff and funding
Designation of a Neighbourhood Forum	N/A	5 –10 days	Planning Policy Team
Designation of a Neighbourhood Area	N/A	5 –10 days	Planning Policy & Property Information Teams
Council support for preparation of Neighbourhood Plan	N/A	20- 30 days	Planning Policy Team
Validation of Neighbourhood Plan	N/A	20 days	Planning Policy Team
Examination of Neighbourhood Plan	£10,000	15 days	Planning Policy Team

Referendum of Neighbourhood Plan	£7,000	5 days	Democratic Services
Adoption of Neighbourhood Plan	N/A	5 days	Planning Policy Team

Source: derived from the DCLG Localism Act: Neighbourhood Plans and Community Right to Build – Impact assessment document (January 2011)

The costs for neighbourhood planning activity within 2017/18 and 2018/19 would have to be met from existing service budgets. Subject to the level of interest/demand for Neighbourhood Planning, the Council may have to decide whether additional budgetary provision is required. Currently, local authorities can claim the following from Department for Communities and Local Development (DCLG) after each of the following stages has been completed:

- £5,000 per Neighbourhood Area designated
- £5,000 per Neighbourhood Forum designated
- £5,000 per Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order submitted
- £20,000 per Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order that is successful at independent examination

It is estimated that it will cost community groups approximately £30-40,000 to prepare a full Neighbourhood Plan. DCLG operates a Neighbourhood Planning Grants and Support Programme to help communities develop a Neighbourhood Plan or a Neighbourhood Development Order.

(i)   Legal Implications

The Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (and 2015 amendment) set the legal framework and requirements with regard to procedures and processes in relation to neighbourhood planning.

(ii)   Risk Assessment

Council priorities: There is a risk that Neighbourhood Plans could delay the Council's Local Development Plan programme.

(iii)   Financial Implications

Resources: The uncertainty around the level of demand for Plans means there are staff resource and financial risks.

(iv)   Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no implications.

(v)   <u>Equality and Diversity</u>

The recommendation has no detrimental impact on service users showing any of the protected characteristics under current Equalities legislation. Whilst there is no requirement to carry out an Equalities Impact Assessment for Neighbourhood Plans, the Council suggests that qualifying bodies ensure issues of equality are addressed.

(vi)   <u>Health and Well-being Implications</u>

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

<u>Background Papers</u>

Neighbourhood Planning Protocol
Application Form
Guidance Notes

BOROUGH OF
BARROW IN
FURNESS
www.barrowbc.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Planning Guide

October 2017

Barrow Borough Local Plan

Working together to support sustainable development within the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Place   LABC   RTPI

Contents

1   Purpose of this Guide

This guide is aimed at helping communities decide whether to get involved in Neighbourhood Planning and to help them prepare a Neighbourhood Plan if they do.

Neighbourhood planning presents many opportunities for local communities, but it is important to be aware that the preparation of a neighbourhood plan could be a substantial undertaking, which may take significant time and effort. This guide will therefore provide an overview of both the opportunities and of the challenges.

1.1   Barrow Borough Council Neighbourhood Planning Protocol

In addition to this guide, the Council has also produced a Neighbourhood Planning Protocol, which outlines the services that Barrow Borough Council will offer to Town and Parish Councils (or Neighbourhood Forums where relevant) in Barrow Borough, in order to fulfil the statutory duties and support and guide the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plans. It also sets out what Barrow Borough Council expects from Town or Parish Council's (or Neighbourhood Forums where relevant) in the process. The Council has a statutory duty to:

"give…advice or assistance to…facilitate the making of proposals for Neighbourhood Development Orders [/Plans} in relation to neighbourhood areas within their area." (Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Schedule 4B, Paragraph 3).

The Neighbourhood Planning Protocol is designed to be read alongside this guide.

1.2   Glossary

This guide has been designed to be clear and concise, using as few technical terms and abbreviations as possible.

A useful glossary of Neighbourhood Planning terminology can be found at:
www.mycommunity.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-glossary.

2   Introduction

Barrow Borough Council is committed to engaging local communities in the planning and development of their areas. To enable this, the Council has produced this guide to provide information on Neighbourhood Planning legislation, tools, requirements, finance and a step by step guide to producing a Plan.

Further information is also available in the Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap – www.locality.org.uk/resources/neighbourhood-planning-roadmap-guide.

The Council recommends reading both this Guide and the Barrow Borough Council Neighbourhood Planning Protocol, before starting work on a Neighbourhood Plan.

2.1   Background

The Localism Act 2011 introduced major reforms to the planning system that gives local communities new rights to shape and plan their neighbourhood. The Act introduced a new initiative called the Neighbourhood Plan. The decision to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan is optional and is made by the local community. They can be used to set out policies for the development or use of land but they must be 'pro development'.

2.2   What is Neighbourhood Planning?

Neighbourhood Planning comprises a number of elements:

- **Neighbourhood Planning Areas**

  An area defined by a 'relevant body' (Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum) and agreed by the Council. The area will form a coherent spatial area, taking into consideration local physical characteristics as well as the diversity of the people.

- **Neighbourhood Planning Forums**

  In none parished areas, a group of more than 21 individuals who meet the four conditions must form a Neighbourhood Planning Forum. A Neighbourhood Forum is approved by the Council. Once established, a Forum can prepare a Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order.

- **Neighbourhood Plans**

  A planning policy document developed by a Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Planning Forum for a defined Neighbourhood Planning Area. It can be used to write planning policy specific to the area, thereby helping to shape and guide development. Its content needs to be in general conformity with the Council's Strategic Policies and cannot be used to prevent development.

- **Neighbourhood Development Orders**

  A planning policy tool developed by to be used within its Neighbourhood Planning Area. It can be used to permit different types of development without the need for planning permission.

3 Neighbourhood Plan

A Neighbourhood Plan can be used to decide where new development takes place, what it should look like and other aspects of community interest. Once a Neighbourhood Plan is in place, it will be used to determine planning applications, alongside the Council's Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

A Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to stop development already allocated or permitted, or propose less development than that in the Local Plan. It can however, propose more development than the Local Plan.

3.1 Why prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?

Developing a Neighbourhood Plan can help communities to play a greater role in shaping the future of their area. It will bring together residents, businesses, local groups, landowners and developers to share ideas and build consensuses about what needs to be done in the area. It can also help create lasting partnerships both within and outside the community, for example with public service providers or local businesses.

Although Neighbourhood Plans are primarily about the use of land and other planning matters, they are also an opportunity to establish community priorities, improve service delivery and enhance local regeneration initiatives.

3.2 Timescales

From start to finish it could take about 2 years to get your Neighbourhood Plan to a referendum. The timing will generally depend on the issues and complexity of your plan and if any objections have been made.

Conforming to the Local Plan, the National Planning Framework, ensuring that your plan is responsive to local needs and working with the Council throughout the process will help you reach examination with minimum delay.

3.3 Costs

The cost of preparing a Plan will vary widely depending on the complexity and size of the neighbourhood. As a general rule, the more local communities can do for themselves, the less the Plan will cost.

The type of costs that would be incurred will include hiring of rooms for meetings, publicity, professional fees (perhaps to investigate a technical issue), public consultation events and the preparation of an up to date evidence base, as well as drafting and printing of plans.

Barrow Borough Council is responsible for covering the costs associated with the examination and referendum. All other costs will be the responsibility of the promotors of the Neighbourhood Plan. Some communities may wish to consider sponsorship and fundraising to finance the preparation of the Plan. You can potentially save money by making the best use of the skills that exist within your local community.

3.4   Evidence Base

The use of evidence base to support the guidance contained in the Neighbourhood Plan is fundamental to the successful adoption and implementation of the Plan. Each piece of individual guidance needs to be supported by a proportionate evidence base.

The evidence base may be gathered from the Barrow Borough Local Plan and Local Plan evidence base or developed by the Town/Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum (or on their behalf). Evidence may include pieces of technical research and consultation responses.

3.5   Who can be involved?

Parish or Town Council's will usually initiate and lead on the process in parished areas and in other areas a Neighbourhood Forum will need to be set up. Whether you are a Parish Council, Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum you should seek to involve a wide variety of stakeholders in the preparation of your Plan and it should not be developed in isolation from the rest of the community.

Using a wide variety of stakeholders in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan will help strengthen community support and make its implementation easier. The following is a list of stakeholders that you may wish to consider involving in the process:

- Residents
- Elected representatives
- Community groups
- Businesses
- Landowners
- Developers

It will be necessary to involve a range of statutory consultees including Officers from Barrow Borough Council, and other public sector service providers such as Cumbria County Council, as the Highway Authority and Education Authority. This might be to provide advice, guidance or information or to comment on draft documents.

3.6   Key responsibilities and working together

The Council, local communities and businesses will need to work together if Neighbourhood Planning is to be successful. The following table below outlines the main responsibilities and the type of approach that is needed from all parties.

Figure 1: Responsibilities for preparing a Neighbourhood Plan

Parish / Town Council / Neighbourhood Forum

- Identify the need to prepare plan
- Identify key issues and vision
- Submit application for Neighbourhood Area
- Submit application to be Neighbourhood Forum (if relevant)
- Prepare evidence to support proposals
- Consult and engage
- Prepare documents/plans
- Ensure compliance with EU directives and national policy/Local Plan
- Submit plan for independent examination

Working together

A successful Neighbourhood Plan will involve collaboration between all interested parties, working together for the community.

Barrow Borough Council

- Duty to support
- Designate Neighbourhood Area
- Designate Neighbourhood Forum
- Ensure compliance with statutory and EU requirements
- Determine whether an SEA or HRA are required
- Advise examiner on representations received and other matters
- Fund and organise independent examination
- Consider examiners recommendations
- Fund and organise public referendum
- Adopt the Neighbourhood Plan

3.7 Support from Barrow Borough Council

The Council has produced this guide to help communities undertake Neighbourhood Planning along with a Neighbourhood Planning Protocol, which outlines the Council's statutory duties and additional support it will provide to communities producing a Neighbourhood Plan. The Council will cover the costs of the Council run statutory consultations, independent examination and the referendum.

The Council will work with communities to support them through the neighbourhood planning process by:

- **Quick and transparent decision making** – on the designation of neighbourhood areas, designation of neighbourhood forums;
- **The effective management of Council responsibilities** – for example with appointment of independent examiner and arrangements for a referendum;
- **Implementation** – determining planning applications in accordance with adopted neighbourhood plans.

More specifically, the Council will fulfil its 'Duty to Support' by:

- Enhancing existing working relationships with Town and Parish Councils and build new positive relationships with Neighbourhood Forums;
- Meeting local communities interested in neighbourhood planning at an early stage, setting out the general and area specific level of support that can be provided;
- Assisting local communities to prepare a plan that will include providing advice on which issues are considered to be relevant planning matters and suitable for inclusion in Neighbourhood Plans;
- Attending at briefings and meetings (subject to Officer availability);
- Providing advice and mediation as required;
- Advising on consultation and engagement;
- Maintaining a Neighbourhood Planning page on the Council website;
- Providing a GIS mapping service for Neighbourhood Plans;
- Advising on how Neighbourhood Planning can support regeneration, service delivery and other matters.

The Council will also assist with specific requests for technical assistance. Subject to reasonable requests, the Council will provide the following:

- Up to five printed copies of key maps for use at consultation events and workshops and for inclusion within draft and final plan documents;
- The most up to date available evidence base, including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and other evidence information supporting the Barrow Borough Local Plan;
- Contact details of Statutory Consultees and other relevant groups;
- Information on relevant European and National legislation and policies and adopted and emerging Local Plan policies.
- Advice on whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitats Regulation Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment are required.

3.8 Screening and Strategic Environmental Assessments

As Neighbourhood Plans cannot breach statutory and EU requirements, Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) and Habitat Regulations Assessments (HRA) may be required if a Plan is ambitious and complex with the potential for significant impacts.

Barrow Borough Council will determine whether you should undertake an SEA of the Neighbourhood Plan. If an assessment is required, this should take place from the outset when the first initial work is carried out on a Plan, i.e. when developing the policies, proposals and allocations.

In addition to considering the need for an SEA, although not a legal requirement, it is good practice to consider the social and economic effects of the Neighbourhood Plan. This will help to ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development.

3.9 Funding and Support

Support is available to assist Neighbourhood Planning in the form of funding and advice.

Grant Funding

DCLG have made available grant funding to support the development of Neighbourhood Forums and Neighbourhood Plans. Please visit www.mycommunityrights.org.uk to view current grant availability and eligibility criteria.

Supporting Communities in Neighbourhood Planning programme

In addition to funding, all neighbourhood planning groups are eligible to apply for technical support packages from Locality and their delivery partners AECOM. This free support will be delivered by a consultant working one to one with your group with a clearly defined brief, such as producing a design guide, a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), evidence review or site assessment. You can apply for both grant and technical support on the 'mycommunity' website. There are also detailed toolkits, templates and guidance on the resources section of the 'mycommunity' website.

Locality also offer a free advice line to answer your Neighbourhood Planning questions. This service is available Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 10.00-12.30 by ringing 0300 020 1864.

There are a number of other resources that can be used to inform the development of your Neighbourhood Planning Forum and Neighbourhood Area. These include:

- Neighbourhood Planning Community Knowledge Hub
- RTPI's Planning Aid England's Forum for Neighbourhood Planning
- Planning Practice Guidance from DCLG

What funding does the Council receive?

The Council received a small amount of funding when it determines an Area and a Forum (£5,000 for each designation, for up to five Areas and five Forums); and following a successful examination (£20,000 and an additional £10,000 if it is a Neighbourhood Business Area).

The funding covers the cost of meeting the statutory requirements, such as organising the referendum and statutory adverts, as well as contributing towards the cost of the officer time required to undertake the Council's legislative requirements.

Stage One

4   Neighbourhood Planning Areas

The first stage in the production of a Neighbourhood Plan is for the Parish/Town Council of Neighbourhood Forum to agree the area the Plan will cover and submit an application for approval to the Borough Council.

4.1   What is a Neighbourhood Planning Area?

A Neighbourhood Planning Area defines the area in which the Town/Parish Council or proposed Neighbourhood Forum will guide development. Within a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area, Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders can be developed by the designated Town/Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum.

The boundaries of a Neighbourhood Planning Area should form a coherent spatial area, taking into consideration local physical characteristics, as well as reflecting the broader nature of the population, uses and features of the area.

A Neighbourhood Area can also be determined as a Neighbourhood Planning Business Area. The Council will make this determination, based on an assessment of whether the area is 'wholly or predominantly business in nature', as defined in legislation. Should the applicant wish the Area to be considered as a Neighbourhood Business Area, they should alert the Council to this at the application stage.

4.2   How is a Neighbourhood Planning Area established?

The Neighbourhood Planning Area should be defined in consultation with the community. It is recommended for a Parish/Town Council or prospective Forum to discuss the proposed Area with the Council well in advance of submitting an application. Once agreed, an application can be submitted to the Council for the defined area to be designated as a Neighbourhood Planning Area.

The Council will then make a decision on the designation of the Area.

4.3   What does a Neighbourhood Planning Area look like?

- Can be of any shape or size
- Can cover any area within the Borough of Barrow in Furness
- Should reflect the character of the area – further guidance of this can be found on page 12 of this guidance note
- Cannot overlap with another Neighbourhood Planning Area. In the event of adjacent groups being unable to agree on the position of their area boundaries, the Council will manage discussions and determine the final agreement.

4.4   Defining a Neighbourhood Planning Area

Town/Parish Councils or prospective Forums should demonstrate that they have considered the different elements that make up the character of the Area and that the Area will form a coherent spatial area.

Guidance at the national level:

Paragraph 033 of the Neighbourhood Planning Policy Guidance provides guidance on considerations when deciding the boundaries of areas, including:

- electoral ward boundaries
- village or settlement boundaries
- the catchment area for walking to local services such as shops, primary schools, doctors surgeries, parks or other facilities
- the area where formal or informal networks of community based groups operate
- the physical appearance or characteristics of the neighbourhood, for example buildings may be of a consistent scale or style
- whether the area forms all or part of a coherent estate either for businesses or residents
- whether the area is wholly or predominately a business area
- whether infrastructure or physical features define a natural boundary, for example a major road or railway line or waterway
- the natural setting or features in an area
- the size of the population (living and working) in the area

Guidance at a local level:

Groups should also demonstrate they have considered the Council's existing evidence base and Local Plan documents. If the Council considers the Area may negatively impact on the delivery of strategic polices (these include the Local Plan policies and site allocations), the Council may identify potential amendments to the boundary.

4.5 Applying to Establish a Neighbourhood Planning Area

In order to support the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Planning Area, the Council encourage interested groups to meet and begin discussions with the Planning Policy Team, well in advance of submitting an application. This meeting will provide advice and guidance on key considerations, which will help to ensure that the Area can be designated without delays.

A proposal for designating a neighbourhood area must be submitted to Barrow Borough Council for approval in the early stages of developing the Neighbourhood Plan. When applying for approval please include the following:

1. Application form for Neighbourhood Planning Area (this can be downloaded from the Council's website;
2. A clear map outlining the defined area which the Plan refers to (this can be provided by the Council free of charge, providing the area relates to the whole parish area)

Applications can be submitted to the Council at anytime and will be determined using national legislation and guidance. Please submit applications to the office below:

Planning Policy Team
Barrow Borough Council
Town Hall
Duke Street
Barrow in Furness
Cumbria
LA14 2LD

Email: developmentplans@barrowbc.gov.uk

4.6 Cross Borough Applications

If the proposed Neighbourhood Planning Area also covers other areas within a neighbouring authority, the application should be sent to both planning departments. While applicants will need to follow each Council's application process, we would recommend meeting both Councils, as well as suggesting a joint meeting to agree approaches and timescales.

4.7 Mapping requirements

The Council understands that at this stage, Parish/Town Councils and Forums may not have the specialist software to draw maps at a sufficiently detailed scale and that decisions on boundary lines can be complex. In order to ensure that the boundary submitted, is exactly what is required and follows clear boundaries, without anomalies, the Council will make their GIS software and Officer time available. Please contact the Planning Policy Team to arrange an appointment to map the boundary as per the Parish or Town Council's requirements. Due to the Officer time required, please provide the Council with three weeks' notice. Parish and Town Council's will need to be aware of the Ordnance Survey user agreement prior to this work.

4.8 What will happen next?

Once the Council receives the application, it will be advertised for a period of 6 weeks. An advert will be placed in the local newspaper to let people who live, work and do business in the area know that an application has been made. Consultation will be carried out in line with the national legislation and guidance. Any comments received will be taken into account when deciding whether to approve or decline the neighbourhood area.

4.9 Determining an application for a Neighbourhood Planning Area

The Council will consider the consultation responses and information in the application to make a determination according to its legislative requirements, in particular section 61G, 61H, 61I and 61O of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and with regard to Planning Policy Guidance paragraphs 033 and 035.

What elements will the Council consider:

- Has a clear map of the proposed Neighbourhood Planning Area been provided?
- Has a statement explaining why the boundary of the proposed area is considered to be appropriate been provided and does it take into account:
    - Sections 61G, 61H, 61I and 61O of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) and Planning Policy Guidance paragraphs 033 and 035
    - Elements of character for the area and the diversity of its population
    - National and Regional Guidance
    - The Council's existing evidence base, Local Plan strategic objectives and policies and site allocations
    - Whether the Area boundary would negatively impact on the delivery of strategic policies (in which case the Council may decide to amend the boundary).

Where an application falls entirely within one planning authority area and relates to the whole area of the parish council, it will be determined within an eight week period. Should an application straddle two planning authorities the application will be determined within twenty weeks and thirteen weeks in all other cases. After making a determination on the Neighbourhood Planning Area application, Council Officers will draft a Committee Report containing their recommendations. This report will be taken through the Council's decision making process before being agreed by Executive Committee.

5 Neighbourhood Planning Forums

Once the Council confirms the Neighbourhood Area designation, the next step is to submit an application to designate a Neighbourhood Forum if this is required (although this can also be done in parallel). Parish or town councils will usually take the lead on the process, however a Neighbourhood Forum is required where the area is not parished.

5.1 What is a Neighbourhood Planning Forum?

Neighbourhood Planning Forums are established by local communities. They are comprised of a group of people who have come together to guide development in their Neighbourhood Area. Prospective Forums make an application to the Council to be designated as a Neighbourhood Planning Forum. Successful applications will accord with the four conditions set out in the Regulations.

Forums are able to produce Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders to positively guide development within their designated Neighbourhood Planning Areas. The scope of Neighbourhood Development Orders includes two other tools, the Community Right to Build Orders and Designated Local Green Spaces, both of which enable a Forum to make decisions about land uses in a designated Neighbourhood Planning Area.

These tools can be used to establish policies used in assessing planning applications, establish development principles for sites or identify areas for public realm, green space and local community infrastructure improvements.

It is worth noting that a Neighbourhood Planning Forum ceases to have effect at the end of a period of five years, measured from the day on which it is approved, however Forums can apply to be renewed.

5.2 Things to consider

It is important that Neighbourhood Forums are inclusive and representative of your community. When submitting an application to the Council, it is important to include:

- Evidence of how you have engaged with different sections of the community and included them in the forum where possible;
- Evidence on how you have engaged across the different parts of the area;
- Details of which groups and stakeholders you have engaged with (or have made efforts to engage with;
- Your intentions for engagement as the neighbourhood plan progresses and those who you intend to involve.

5.3 Legal requirements

The Town and Country Planning Act (1990), 61(f) part 5 sets out the following four conditions for establishing a Neighbourhood Planning Forum:

1. It is established to promote or improve the local, economic and environmental well being of the Neighbourhood Planning Area.
2. It has a membership open to everyone who lives in, works in or represents the area as an elected member.

3. Its membership includes a minimum of 21 people, each of who lives in, works in or represents the area as an elected member.
4. It has a written constitution.

Elements to include in the Constitution

- Name of the Neighbourhood Planning Forum
- Purpose of the Neighbourhood Planning Forum
- Working arrangements, including partners and their roles
- Schedule of meetings
- Details of how decisions will be made and recorded
- Details of governance, including official positions (such as chair)
- Arrangements for management and financial management
- Details of how potential conflicts of interest will be recorded and managed
- Membership and procedures for replacement of members
- Duration of the Neighbourhood Planning Forum (5 years from designation)

5.4 Applying to establish a Neighbourhood Planning Forum

To be designated a Neighbourhood Forum there must be a constituted group of 21 people who represent a cross section of the people who live, work and do business in the area. An application will need to be made to Barrow Borough Council and must include the following:

- **Application form for Neighbourhood Planning Forum – this can be downloaded from the Council's website;**
- **A copy of the written constitution of the proposed Neighbourhood Forum;**
- **A clear map of the designated area.**

Applications can be submitted to the Council at anytime and will be determined using national legislation and guidance. Please submit applications to the office below:

Planning Policy Team
Barrow Borough Council
Town Hall
Duke Street
Barrow in Furness
Cumbria
LA14 2LD

Email: developmentplans@barrowbc.gov.uk

5.5   Cross Borough Applications

If the Neighbourhood Planning Area, which the proposed Neighbourhood Planning Forum will manage, also covers areas within a neighbouring authority, the application should be sent to both planning policy departments. Whilst Prospective Forums will need to follow each Council's application process, we would recommend meeting both Council's as well as suggesting a joint meeting to agree approaches and timescales.

5.6   Mapping requirements

The Council understands that at this stage, prospective Forums may not have the specialist software to draw maps at a sufficiently detailed scale and that decisions on boundary lines can be complex. In order to ensure that the boundary submitted, is exactly what the prospective Forum wants, and follows clear boundaries without anomalies, the Council will make their GIS software and officer time available. Please contact the Planning Policy team to arrange an appointment to map the boundary as per the prospective Forum's requirements. Due to the Officer time required, please provide the Council with three weeks' notice. Prospective Forums will need to be aware of the Ordnance Survey user agreement prior to this work.

5.7   What happens next?

Once the Council has received and validated the application, the Council will undertake statutory public consultation for a six week period. Consultation will be carried out in line with the national legislation and guidance.

5.8   Determining an application for a Neighbourhood Planning Forum

Where an application falls entirely within one planning authority area and relates to the whole area of the parish council, it will be determined within an eight week period. Should an application straddle two planning authorities the application will be determined within twenty weeks and thirteen weeks in all other cases. After making a determination, Council Officers will draft a Committee Report containing their recommendations. This report will be taken through the Council's decision making process before being agreed by Executive Committee.

5.9   Monitoring

To ensure the conditions of the Neighbourhood Forum are continually met, the Council will monitor and engage with the Forum. Forums will be required to inform the Council of any change to the original consent and intentions details in its application form. Any changes to the written constitution will require the Forum to immediately notify the Council of these changes, by emailing – developmentplans@barrowbc.gov.uk.

The Council is able to withdraw a Forum's designation, if it considers that the group is no longer meeting the conditions of designation.

Stage Two

6   Preparing the Plan

There is no rule on what a Neighbourhood Plan should look like, but it should contain a plan and clear policy statements and proposals, alongside relevant accompanying maps. Assistance is available from Planning Aid England, who will help with all aspects of the plan preparation, except writing the plan.

Following the designation of a Neighbourhood Area (and Forum if applicable) there are a number of stages to undertake to produce the Local Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan enables the community to allocate land and write policies to influence new development, but should only address issues not already covered by the Local Plan.

6.1   Step 1 – Identifying Issues and Aims

It is important to understand the area that you are planning for and the key issues that will affect your community in the future. To do this you should:

- Gather together relevant information and evidence;
- Identify the key economic, social and environmental issues;
- Identify the areas strengths and weaknesses;
- Identify key NPPF and Local Plan policy objectives;
- Identify the issues to be addressed and draft the aims for the Plan;
- Check for general conformity with the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework;
- Check the issues identified and the proposed aims within the community.

6.2   Step 2 – Develop Policies, Proposals and Site Allocations

A Neighbourhood Plan should include draft policies, proposals and site allocations that:

- Set out the key details of what you want to happen, what development will be supported (or the criteria that will be used to decide if a proposal is likely to be acceptable or not);
- Allocate specific sites for a particular type and scale of development;
- Specify particular requirements relating to each of any of the allocations;
- Specify sites or areas to be protected or enhanced;
- Provide more detailed explanation in the policy's supporting text to justify it and explain what your Neighbourhood Development Plan is really trying to achieve;

It is important to remember:

- To check for general conformity with the Barrow Borough Local Plan and that regard has been given to the NPPF;
- To ensure you have complied with International, European and National designations and European environmental and human rights laws;
- To seek advice from Barrow Borough Council whether a Strategic Environmental Assessment is required
- The Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to block development of homes, businesses and other infrastructure that is set out in the Barrow Borough Local Plan.

6.3   Step 3 – Proposed Neighbourhood Plan

For a minimum of six weeks, the qualifying body, for example the Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum has to:

- Publicise and bring to the attention of the majority of those who live, work or operate business in the area, including:
  - o Proposals that will be included in the Neighbourhood Plan
  - o Details of where and when the proposals may be inspected
  - o Details and dates of how to make representations
- Consult any statutory consultees;
- Send a copy of the proposals to Barrow Borough Council.

6.4   Step 4 – Submission to Barrow Borough Council

The qualifying body has to submit the following to Barrow Borough Council:

- The submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan;
- A map of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan;
- The Consultation Statement;
- A statement explaining how the basic conditions stated within the Localism Act;
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report (if required) or a statement explaining why the SEA is not required;
- Habitat Regulations Assessment (if required);

Once the application has been received by the Council, it will carry out a validation check to see whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets the legislative requirements. The Council will inform the qualifying body whether the draft Neighbourhood Plan is valid and this will be stated in a 'Decision Statement'.

As soon as possible after validating the application, the Council will publish the details of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan on its website for a minimum of 6 weeks. The Council will also publicise details of where the Plan can be inspected and where the public can make representations on the Council's website, alongside the Plan.

6.5   Step 5 – Independent Examination

Once any issues raised through the consultation have been resolved, an examiner will be appointed by Barrow Borough Council (in agreement with the Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum). The examiner will consider whether the proposals meet the regulatory requirements (for example has the consultation been adequate) and whether the basic conditions have been met. A report will then be produced.

6.6   Step 6 – Modifications

In the Inspector's Report it may be suggested that amendments are made to the Plan, this is the opportunity to undertake these amendments.

6.7   Step 7 – Referendum

Barrow Borough Council will publicise the Inspector's Report and decision on its website and hold a referendum that will establish the level of community support for the proposed Neighbourhood

Plan. More than 50% of the representative community that vote will have to be in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan for it to be adopted.

6.8 Step 8 – Adoption of the Plan

If more than 50% of people voting in the referendum support the Neighbourhood Plan, Barrow Borough Council will adopt the Plan and bring it into legal force. As a result of this, Barrow Borough Council will be legally obliged to take the Neighbourhood Plan into account when considering planning applications. Barrow Borough Council will publish the Neighbourhood Plan and notify any interested parties.

7 Neighbourhood Plan Template

A Neighbourhood Plan should include the following:

Front Cover

- Document title, including Neighbourhood Area;
- Who has produced the Plan and when;
- Duration of the Plan, for example 10 years

Introduction

- Introduction to the document;
- Introduction to the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan, including location, short history of the area, character of the area etc;
- Map of the area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan.

Context to the Neighbourhood Plan

- Reasons why a Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared;
- Background evidence including key economic, social and environmental issues, strengths and weaknesses of the area; relevant elements from the Barrow Borough Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework;
- Details of the consultation process, comments and responses.

Vision and Objectives

- Vision – what the Neighbourhood Plan intends to achieve and what the Neighbourhood Area will be like at some point in the future;
- Objectives – what the Neighbourhood Plan intends to achieve in order to reach the Vision.

Policies

- Set out the key details of what you want to happen, what development will be supported or the criteria that will be used to decide if a proposal is likely to be acceptable or not;
- Provide supporting text to the policy to justify it and to explain what it is that your Neighbourhood Plan is really trying to achieve and how it conforms with the Barrow Borough Local Plan;
- Proposals and allocations could include housing, affordable homes, housing for older people, housing density, local services, local employment, transport and communications, landscape and natural environment.
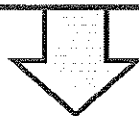
Proposals and Allocations

- Allocate specific sites for a particular type and scale of development and specify any particular requirements for the site;
- Specify sites or areas to be protected or enhanced;
- Provide supporting text to the policy to justify site allocation and any specific requirements and explain how it confirms with the Barrow Borough Local Plan;
- Proposals and allocations could include housing, affordable homes, housing for older people, Green Spaces, Green Infrastructure and Protected Open Space.

Delivery and Implementation

- How the Neighbourhood Plan will be implemented
- How the Neighbourhood Plan will be delivered
- How the delivery and implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored.

8   Further Information and Support

Barrow Borough Council

Planning Policy Team
Telephone: 01229 876398
Email: developmentplans@barrowbc.gov.uk
Website: www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans

Locality

Manages neighbourhood planning funding and support nationally.

Website: www.mycommunityrights.org
Telephone: 0845 345 4564
Mon-Fri 9.30am-12.30pm

Planning Aid England

Provides independent planning advice and support to communities preparing their Neighbourhood Plans.

Website: www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid
Email: advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
Telephone: 0330 123 9244

Planning Advisory Service

A free online resource for planners and communities.

Website: www.pas.gov.uk

Department for Communities and Local Government

A useful resource for neighbourhood planning, policy announcements and regulations/guidance.
Website www.gov.uk

Contact:

Planning Policy Team

Development Services

Barrow Borough Council

Town Hall

Duke Street

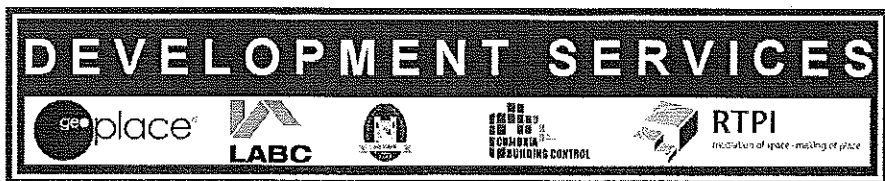**Barrow-in-Furness**

Cumbria

Email: developmentplans@barrowbc.gov.uk

LA14 2LD

Website: www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/planning/

Working together to support sustainable development within the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness

D E V E L O P M E N T   S E R V I C E S

Barrow Borough Council

Neighbourhood Planning Protocol

BOROUGH OF BARROW IN FURNESS
www.barrowbc.gov.uk

Statement of Borough Council Support to Town and Parish Councils

Purpose of this Protocol

Neighbourhood Plans are normally led by the Parish/Town Council or, outside of parished areas, Neighbourhood Forums (Qualifying Bodies).

Under the Localism Act, Barrow Borough Council (BBC) as the Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance to communities choosing to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan.

This protocol outlines the services that BBC will offer to Town and Parish Councils (or Neighbourhood Forums where relevant) in Barrow Borough, in order to fulfil this statutory duty and support and guide the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. It also sets out what BBC expects from Town or Parish Councils (or Neighbourhood Forums where relevant) in the process.

Of particular importance is the need for any community that is considering taking steps toward preparing a Neighbourhood Plan to get in touch with our Planning Policy Team as early as possible so that we can assist in deciding whether this is the right way forward for that community or whether other options might be more appropriate.

General Support

BBC will:

1.1 Maintain a Neighbourhood Planning page on its website that identifies and provides links to key information and guidance about Neighbourhood Planning, including Neighbourhood Development Orders and other provisions of the Localism Act.

1.2 Provide advice and information to help communities understand the Neighbourhood Planning process and the funding, resources and skills that are available to support the process.

1.3 Offer advice on alternative options available to communities, such as Parish or Community Plans, to help local people decide which approach is right for their area. We recommend that communities interested in undertaking Neighbourhood Planning get in touch with BBC's Planning Policy Team at the earliest opportunity and prior to any Neighbourhood Area designation application being made, to discuss the issues and approach being considered.

1.4 Provide advice relating to effective consultation, including on questionnaire design and how to maximise responses from all groups in the community. We will, where resources permit, attend consultation events, if requested.

1.5 Provide a GIS mapping service and the provision of electronic versions and up to five printed copies of key maps for use at consultation events and workshops and for inclusion within draft and final plan documents. Parish Councils will need to be aware of the Ordnance Survey user agreement prior to this work.

1.6 Provide the most up-to-date available evidence base, including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and other evidence information supporting the Barrow Borough Local Plan, by making them available on the Council's website.

1.7 Provide contact details of Statutory Consultees and other relevant groups.

1.8 Seek to foster a positive and ongoing relationship with Town and Parish Councils (or Neighbourhood Forums where relevant) throughout the Neighbourhood Planning process.

Supporting the Designation of Neighbourhood Areas/Business Areas

BBC will:

2.1 Meet local communities who contact us expressing an interest in neighbourhood planning, in order to provide initial advice and information and discuss options. Wherever possible, this should take place in advance of a Neighbourhood Area application being submitted.

2.2 Check and confirm receipt of any Neighbourhood Area application it receives and advise the applying qualifying body of any requirements omitted.

2.3 Map Neighbourhood Area boundaries required for the designation of the Neighbourhood Area or Business Area.

2.4 Publicise, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the application for a Neighbourhood Area or Business Area in a manner considered likely to bring the application to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the area to which the application relates. This includes through BBC's website, local and social media, local libraries and by writing to relevant organisations, businesses and individuals.

2.5 Carry out statutory consultation on the proposed Neighbourhood Area in accordance with the Regulations. This means we will consult for 4 weeks where the relevant body is a parish council and the area to which the application relates is the whole of the area of the parish council, and for 6 weeks in all other cases.

2.6 Consider, in accordance with the Regulations, the boundary of the proposed Neighbourhood Area. Where the boundary is not considered 'coherent, consistent and appropriate in planning terms', as set out in the Regulations, BBC will work with the Town/Parish Council to come to a suitable resolution and a decision will be made at a scheduled meeting of the Council's Executive Committee.

2.7 Determine the application within eight weeks where the application falls entirely within one planning authority area and relates to the whole area of the parish council, twenty weeks where the area straddles two local planning authorities and thirteen weeks in all other cases.

2.8 Publish details of all adopted Neighbourhood Plan Areas or Business Areas on the Council's website and through other appropriate means as soon as practicable following formal designation.

Supporting the Preparation of Neighbourhood Plans

BBC will:

3.1 Provide advice on which issues are considered to be relevant planning matters and suitable for inclusion in Neighbourhood Plans.

3.2 Provide information on relevant European and National legislation and policies, and adopted and emerging Local Plan policies with which any Neighbourhood Plan will need to be in general conformity.

3.3 Share existing information and evidence base work held by the Local Planning Authority as appropriate (subject to any data protection or confidentiality issues) and provide advice on any areas where new evidence may be required or beneficial to support the preparation of the Plan.

3.4 Help communities communicate with local partners and/or organisations where required.

3.5 Provide constructive comments on the emerging plan and other supporting documents prior to formal submission.

3.6 Carry out screening / scoping to identify and provide an opinion and advice on the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal or Habitats Regulations Assessment.

BBC will not:

3.7 Undertake consultation exercises, distribute consultation questionnaires, collect, collate or analyse responses on behalf of communities for consultation arising from requirements placed on qualifying bodies in the Regulations.

3.8 Provide project management services for the production of the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.9 Draft the Neighbourhood Plan or any part or policy therein, although we can identify examples in which similar plans or policies have been prepared and which may be helpful points of reference and can provide advice on wording.

3.10 Undertake the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment or Appropriate Assessment, even if these are required. Communities will be expected to make appropriate arrangements for undertaking these, which may include hiring consultants.

Independent Examination

BBC will:

4.1 Validate a Neighbourhood Plan on receipt, checking that all of the necessary supporting documents have been submitted.

4.2 Review the Plan to ensure that it is in general conformity with the Local Plan and offer comments and suggestions as appropriate.

4.3 Publicise the Neighbourhood Plan on the Council's website for a minimum of six weeks in line with the regulations.

4.4 Appoint and fund the Independent Examiner, who will check that the plan meets the basic conditions. The selection of examiner will be agreed with the relevant Town or Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum.

4.5 Provide an Examination venue, if a venue is required and if no suitable parish venue can be provided.

4.6 Following the recommendations of the Examiner, provide written confirmation of the Council's position. This will cover any amendments that may need to be made to the Neighbourhood Plan before it proceeds to referendum and any extension of the referendum area beyond the designated Neighbourhood Area boundaries.

Referendum

BBC will:

5.1 Fund and organise the public referendum (two referendums will be required for Business Areas – one for residents and one for businesses).

Adoption

BBC will:

6.1 If the Neighbourhood Plan receives support at referendum from more than 50% of those that vote, then BBC will formally 'make' (adopt) the Neighbourhood Plan and publish it on its website in accordance with the Regulations.

6.2 Once made the Plan will form part of Barrow Borough Council's Development Plan. It will be a material consideration in determining the outcome of planning applications relating to the Neighbourhood or Business Area.

Obligations for Town and Parish Councils

In order to receive the support from BBC outlined above, Town and Parish Councils should:

7.1 Ensure that they get in touch with the Planning Policy Team at the earliest opportunity (for instance, as soon as any decision is made that Neighbourhood Planning might be considered for the area) and prior to any Neighbourhood Area application being submitted, to discuss the issues and approach being considered. This will enable BBC to programme and plan their support work and help the qualifying body come to a decision on whether Neighbourhood Planning is for them or whether another option might be more effective and appropriate.

7.2 Establish a steering group to develop the Neighbourhood Plan with a clear link to the Parish Council (or Neighbourhood Forum) by way of an agreed Terms of Reference.

7.3 Arrange an initial meeting of the parish council and/or steering group and invite relevant BBC officers to attend.

7.4 Prepare a project plan for the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, including an indicative timetable.

7.5 Provide BBC with regular progress updates, especially at any key stages and when any decisions are made that will influence the content, aims and objectives of the plan.

7.6 Seek to foster a positive and ongoing relationship with BBC throughout the Neighbourhood Planning Process, including discussions at key stages such as preparation of the draft plan.

7.7 Provide BBC with the Final Plan in electronic and paper format.

7.8 Provide BBC with the results of any primary research and evidence gathered that would be beneficial to them.

7.9 Seek to accord fully at all times with the requirements in the relevant regulations and guidance for Neighbourhood Planning.

Please note: The content of this statement is subject to change as a result of experience, new information, changes in regulations and other process requirements and the availability of resources.
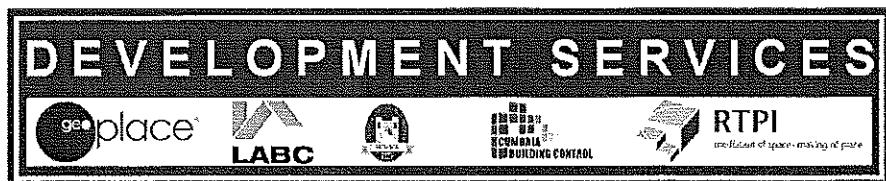
Contact:

Planning Policy Team
Development Services
Barrow Borough Council
Town Hall
Duke Street
Barrow-in-Furness
Cumbria
LA14 2LD

Email: developmentplans@barrowbc.gov.uk

Website: www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/planning/planning-policy/

Working together to support sustainable development within the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	(D) Agenda Item 15
Date of Meeting: 29th November, 2017	
Reporting Officer: Executive Director	

Title: Local Plan Update

Summary and Conclusions:

That the report on the updated Objectively Assessed Housing Need be noted, that the Plan be amended to reflect this updated evidence along with two modifications to the Proposals Map, and to undertake a final six week consultation prior to the Plan being submitted to the Secretary of State.

Recommendations:

1. To agree that the Draft Local Plan be amended to reflect the updated Objectively Assessed Need figure and modifications to the Proposals Map and public consultation be undertaken in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012; and

2. Following consultation to proceed with submitting the Draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State for independent examination in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, to request that an Inspector be appointed to examine the Draft Plan, and to agree any minor amendments as necessary to make the Plan sound.

Report

Objectively Assessed Housing Need Update

In 2017, the Council commissioned Arc4 to update their assessment of housing need in the Borough. Their findings were included in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Addendum 2017 which identified a need for 133 dwellings each year over the 2014-2031 plan period.

A number of issues have arisen since then which have required a re-assessment of housing need:

1. The Inspectors decision at the Dalton Lane/Breast Mill Beck Road Inquiry (application no B07/2015/0707) which raised concern about the methodology used for identifying need in the SHMA.
2. The production of more recent population estimates which show continued population decline occurred in 2016, however less of a decline than predicted under the 2014 population projections.

3. The production of more recent, post-Brexit, employment projections.
4. The consultation on the Government's standard methodology for identifying housing need which, based on past demographic trends and affordability only, suggests that there is a need for no additional housing in the Borough. Council officers have responded to the consultation and have objected to the proposed methodology.

In light of the above, Edge Analytics have assessed housing need over a revised Plan period of 2016 to 2031. The methodology used is based on current government guidance rather than the proposed standard housing methodology.

Findings

In their analysis, Edge consider a number of different scenarios which result in a range of housing need between -75 and 119 dwellings per year. The chart below shows how the different scenarios compare with each other, with the DCLG standard methodology figure and with past delivery since 2003 (average net completions).

Figure 1: Average Annual Dwelling Growth per year
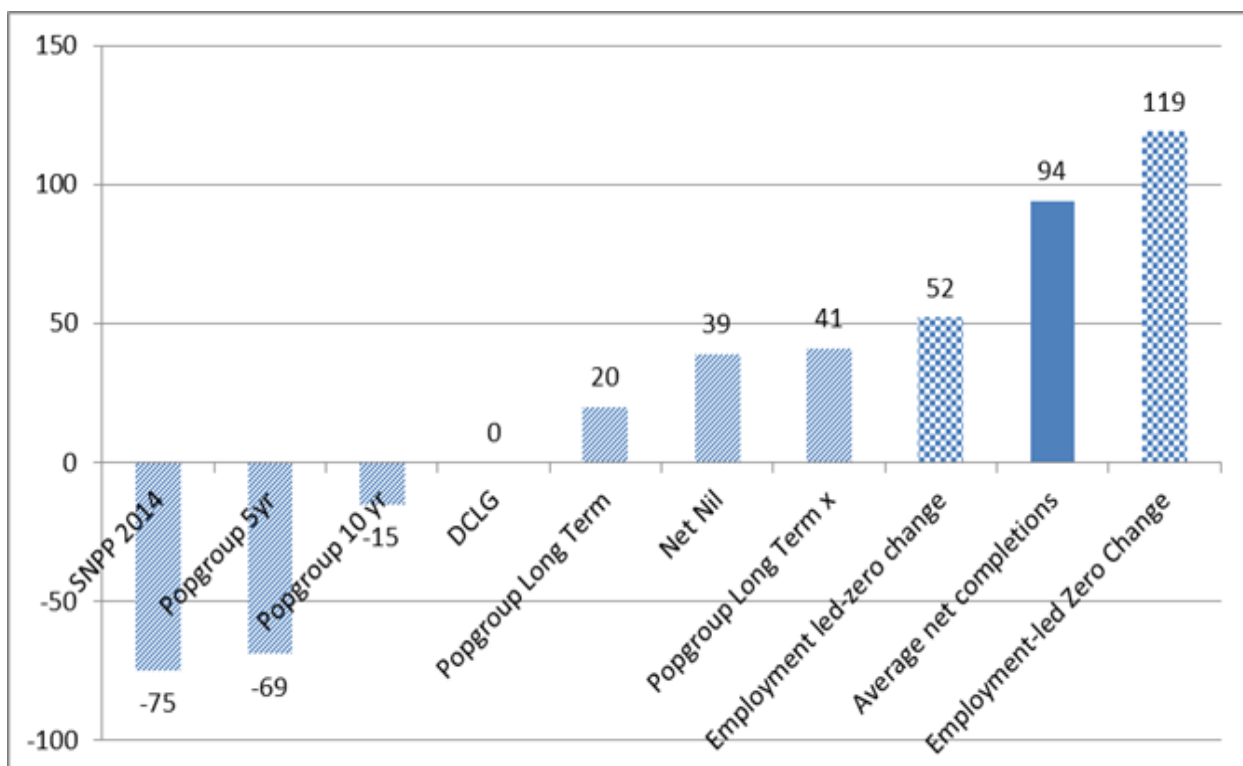
Six of the scenarios are demographic scenarios (shaded with stripes). These estimate continued decline in the Borough's population over the plan period driven by the combined impact of annual net out-migration flow and an ageing population. These scenarios are considered to be unrealistic as they do not take into account housing need which arises from employment growth. They are also not aspirational as annual housing delivery has exceeded these figures consistently since 2003.

Two of the scenarios are employment-led (shaded with squares) and estimate population growth over the plan period. The first is based upon employment

projections produced by Cumbria Observatory taking into account growth at BAE Systems. This estimates population growth over the plan period of 0.2%. The second scenario, which results in the highest need figure, estimates that the number of jobs will be the same at the end of the plan period than at the start which results in population growth of 3.6%.

<u>Summary</u>

Taking into account past delivery trends, past employment trends, future aspirations and the assumptions behind each of the scenarios the highest of the need figures is the most realistic. Therefore a requirement for 119 dwellings per year over the plan period 2016-2031 should be taken forward as the Council's housing requirement through the Local Plan. The Plan will therefore be amended to reflect this updated evidence, however no amendments to site allocations will be required.

<u>Proposals Map</u>

In addition to the above update two modifications are required to the Local Plan Proposals Map as a result of consultation on the Pre –Submission Draft.

1. Policy EC7 – Energy Uses Opportunity Area

The boundary of the Energy Uses Opportunity Area is amended to include the decommissioned South Morecambe Bay Gas Terminal and the now closed Roosecote Power Station, in order to acknowledge the potential of the sites for future exploration, production, generation and transmission of energy and related activities.

Figure 2: Plan showing existing and proposed (hatched) amendment to Energy Uses Opportunity Area.
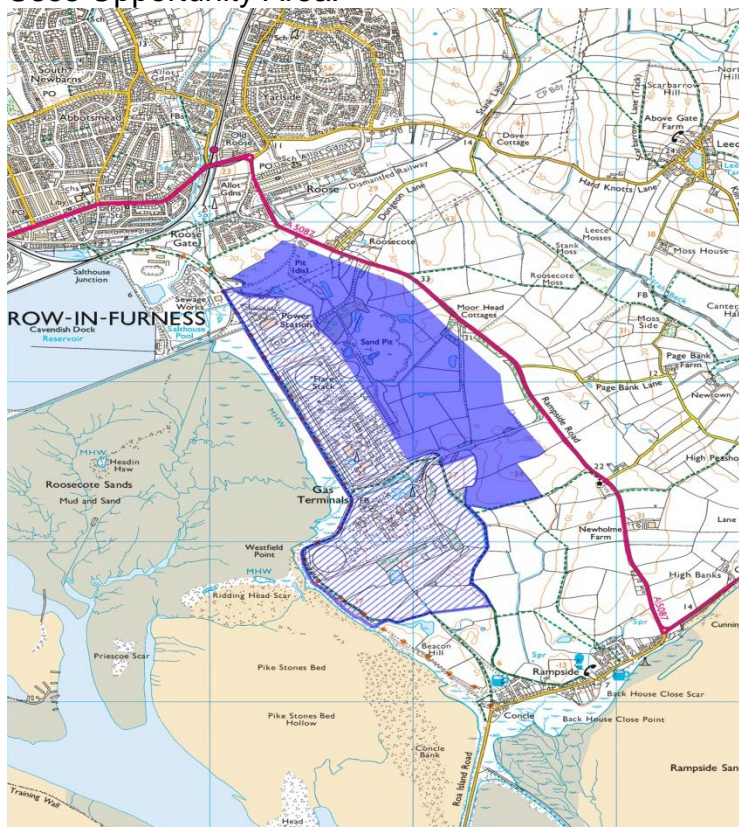
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2. Policy GI4 – Green Spaces

An additional area of open land is designated as a green space at Walker Street/James Street, Askam in Furness, as consultation with the local community identified the value of this open greenspace to the local residents.

Figure 3: Land at Walker Street/James Street, Askam in Furness
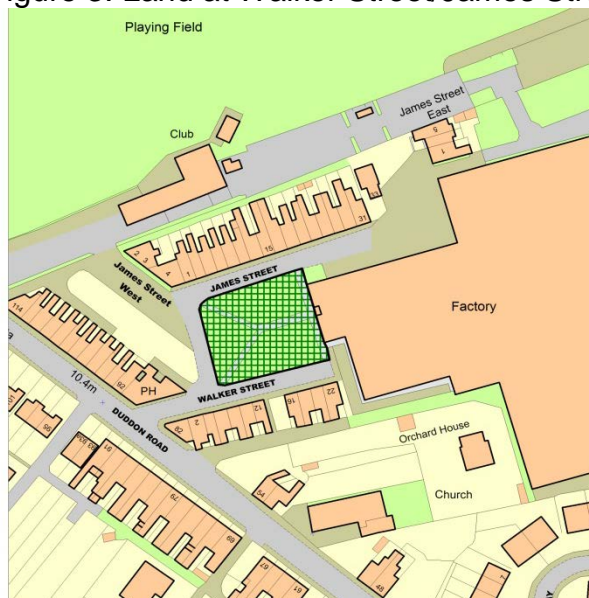
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Next Steps

It will be necessary to undertake a final 6 week consultation on these amendments prior to the Plan being submitted to the Secretary of State. Upon agreement, the Submission Draft Local Plan will be available for consultation for a minimum 6 week period during December 2017/January 2018. During this time we will invite comments from Statutory bodies, organisations, individuals, groups, developers/landowners and other interested parties on the modifications made since the Pre Submission Draft consultation in summer 2017.

In line with the resolution at Executive Committee in May 2017 a number of minor editorial and technical amendments have been made to the Plan which will be prepared in a schedule and made publicly available during the public consultation.

The Draft Local Plan will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in accordance with Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, an Inspector will be appointed and a public examination will be held, it is hoped that the Plan will be examined in Spring 2018 and then adopted.

(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.

(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

Edge Analytics Report – Demographic Analysis November 2017 held by the Executive Director, copies the Local Plan and other supporting documents are available to view in the Members Room.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	(D) Agenda Item 16
Date of Meeting: **29th November, 2017**	
Reporting Officer: **Executive Director**	

Title: **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**

Summary and Conclusions:

Brexit will impact the delivery of EU structural funds which have supported the regeneration of older industrial areas for over 30 years. The Alliance are lobbying for an adequate allocation of funds to the Government's UK Shared Property Fund and for targeting on areas where need is greatest. They have proposed a motion which they are asking all member local authorities to consider.

Recommendations:

Members instructions are requested.

Report

The Council is a member of Industrial Communities Alliance which supports economic, social and environmental renewal of Britain's older industrial areas. It was formed in 2007 and represents the interests of 60 local authorities.

The Alliance recently published a report on Regional Policy post-Brexit, which notes that for over 30 years the European Union, primarily through the European Regional Development Fund and The European Social Fund has supported regional development across the UK. Within Cumbria the current round of structural funds will offer €91m between 2014-2020 to support regional development.

Whilst the situation is unclear it is a good assumption that post-Brexit contribution from ERDF and ESF will cease. The Government have already agreed to creation of a 'UK Shared Property Fund' utilising the Structural Fund monies that will come back to Britain following Brexit. The Alliance are supporting this provided the funds are made available to the full value of the returned money. The Alliance are, therefore, lobbying for at least £1.5 billion per annum to be made available with greater simplicity and effectiveness for fund regulations. Their full proposals can be accessed at http://www.industrialcommunitiesalliance.org/uploads/2/6/2/0/2620193/post-brexit_regional_policy__updated_.pdf

Alliance members have been requested to consider a motion on post-Brexit regional policy which is attached at **Appendix 5.**

Since its deregulation as an Objective 2 area in 1992 the Borough has benefited very significantly from the availability of EU structural funds and the motion proposed by the Alliance is both relevant and timely.

(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 implication

(iv)   Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no implications.

(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

Post-Brexit Regional Policy

Since Britain joined the European Union, Structural Funds have co-financed a vast range of initiatives to promote economic growth, particularly in older industrial areas. With Brexit, that source of funding will disappear. This Council therefore welcomes the UK Government's commitment to establishing a *UK Shared Prosperity Fund* as a potential source of new funding.

However, several issues are unresolved that could play a pivotal role in delivering growth and jobs in the places that need this the most. The Industrial Communities Alliance has proposed that:

- The Shared Prosperity Fund's budget should be set at a level that not only compensates for the loss of EU funding (£1.5bn a year) but also provides additional resources to match the scale of the challenge to deliver growth and prosperity across Britain.

- The Fund should focus on narrowing local and regional differences in economic well-being.

- Local authorities should have a strong hand in the management of the new Fund. Local authorities are most closely attuned to local needs and should take the key decisions about spending priorities.

This Council agrees to write to the Chancellor, and Secretaries of State for Business and Communities, with copies to local MPs, calling on the UK Government to incorporate these proposals into the structure of the *UK Shared Prosperity Fund.*

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	**(D)** **Agenda** **Item** **17**
Date of Meeting: **29th November, 2017**	
Reporting Officer: **Electoral Registration Officer**	

Title: **The 2018 Boundary Review – Revised Proposals for new Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries**

Summary and Conclusions:

To consider the revised proposals for new parliamentary constituency boundaries.

Recommendations:

The Committee's instructions will be requested.

Report

The Boundary Commission for England are consulting on revised proposals for a period of eight weeks from 17th October to 11th December 2017.

In Cumbria the Boundary Commission for England have proposed five constituencies contained entirely within the county, making one change to their initial proposals, affecting the Barrow and Furness, and Workington and Whitehaven constituencies, the latter of which are recommending an alternative name.

The Commission proposed that the existing Barrow and Furness constituency, which needed to gain electors in order to be within the permitted range, should extend northwards rather than eastwards, due to poor transport links across Cartmel Sands.

An issue with the initial proposals did arise on whether Bootle ward on the west coast, which was suggested should be included in the Barrow and Furness constituency, might more appropriately be included in the Workington and Whitehaven constituency.

The assistant commissioners carefully considered the evidence that had been received, and were persuaded by the arguments put forward by residents of the Bootle ward that it does indeed look north for its services and community links. They recommended that the initial proposals for Cumbria should be amended to accommodate the transfer of the Bootle ward from the Barrow and Furness constituency into the Workington and Whitehaven constituency.

A copy of the proposal is attached at **Appendix 6**.

The Committee are therefore asked to consider the revised proposals for the new Parliamentary Constituency boundaries in order that the Borough's submission can be made to The Boundary Commission for England.

At its meeting on 18th October 2016 this Committee considered initial proposals of new Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries. The Committee agreed at that meeting that no comments on the initial proposals be made by this Committee and be left to each Political Party if they so wish.

(i)   Legal Implications

Not Applicable.

(ii)   Risk Assessment

Not Applicable.

(iii)   Financial Implications

Cost of Parliamentary Elections reclaimed from the Government.

(iv)   Health and Safety Implications

Not Applicable.

(v)   Equality and Diversity

Not Applicable.

(vi)   Health and Well-being Implications

Not Applicable.

Background Papers

Nil

Boundary Commission for England - North West Region
Revised Proposal
Barrow and Furness County Constituency - Electorate 74,264
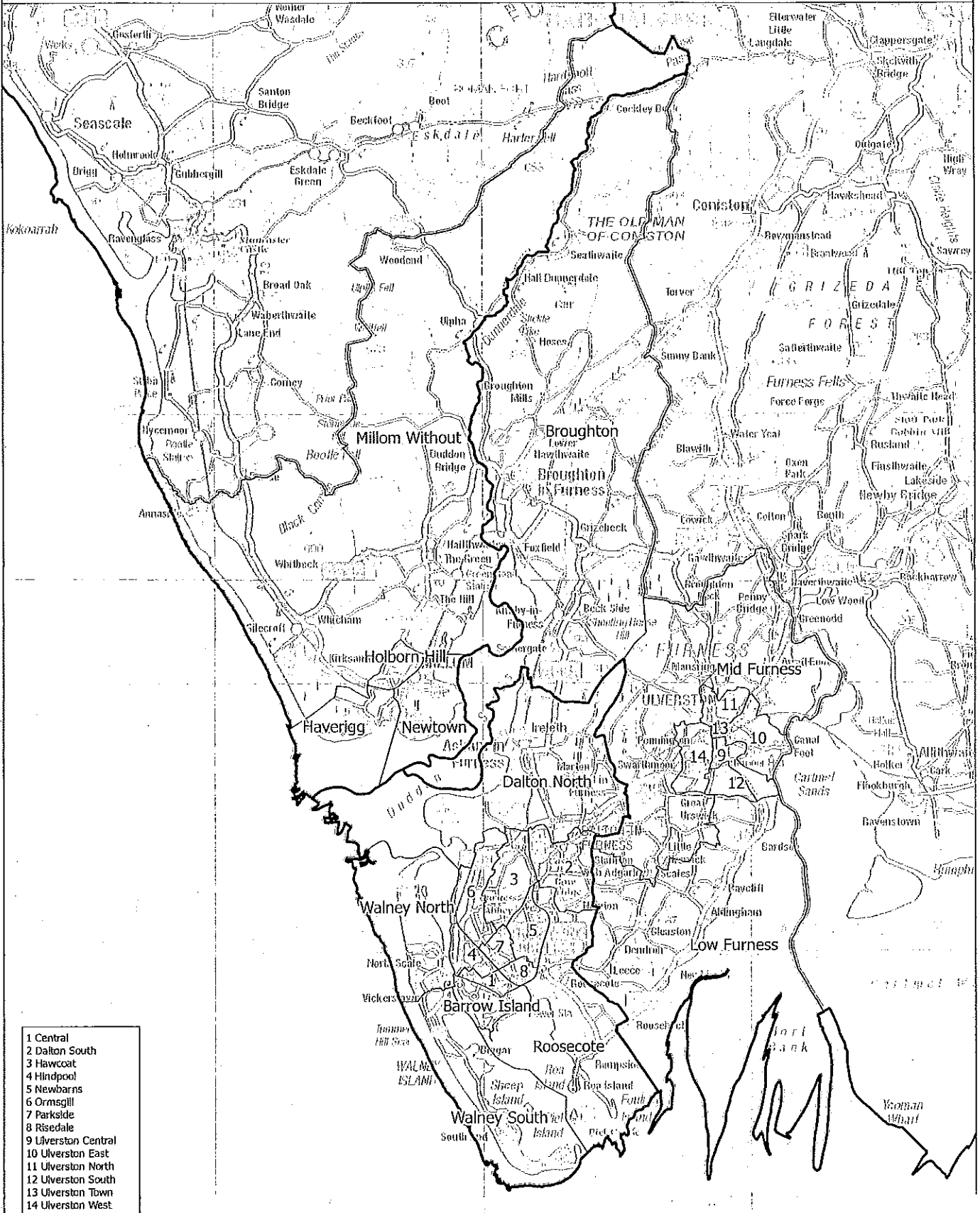
1 Central
2 Dalton South
3 Hawcoat
4 Hindpool
5 Newbarns
6 Ormsgill
7 Parkside
8 Risedale
9 Ulverston Central
10 Ulverston East
11 Ulverston North
12 Ulverston South
13 Ulverston Town
14 Ulverston West

Constituency ⸻ Local authorities ⸻ Wards

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	**(R)** Agenda Item 18
Date of Meeting: 29th November, 2017	
Reporting Officer: Parking and Admin. Manager	

Title: Off Street Parking Places - New Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for Council Owned Car Parks and Land

Purpose of the Report:

To revise The Council of the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2013 ("TRO 2013") to include the Town Hall Courtyard, Grange and Cartmel Crescent and McClean Close residents' parking, also to remove Hindpool Road Contract Car Park, and make a new order, The Council of the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2018 ("TRO 2018").

Recommendations:

To agree to revise the current TRO 2013 in accordance with the requirements of the Local Authorities Traffic Regulation Order (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and delegate authority to the Executive Director to make a new Order to take effect from 1st April, 2018.

Report

Background

Local authorities are empowered to make Orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Traffic Regulation Orders allow the Council to enforce parking restrictions on Council owned land, including designated off street car parks.

The TRO 2013 took effect on 2nd December 2013 and has recently been reviewed. The review highlighted that there is a requirement to now include the Town Hall Courtyard and the designated parking area at McClean Close and Grange and Cartmel Crescent.

Appendix 7 details the proposed restrictions for these areas.

Maps identifying the areas referred to in the report are attached at **Appendix 8.**

Currently there are no enforceable restrictions in place for these areas; the Council is therefore unable to control "unauthorised" parking.

The rear Town hall Courtyard is frequently being used by "unauthorised" persons.

Complaints have been received by the Housing Department from the residents of McClean Close who are unable to make use of their residents' parking spaces due to parking by non-residents. Grange and Cartmel Crescent was previously included as part of the On Street order as it is essentially a residents parking scheme, however, as it is Barrow Borough Council land it now requires inclusion on the Off Street Order to enable the restrictions to be enforced.

Also, Hindpool Road Contract Car Park needs to be removed from the TRO 2018 because that area was included in the sale of 1-5 Lawson Street.

A list of the car parks contained in the TRO 2013 is attached at **Appendix 9.**

In addition, after a review of car park contract charges, it has been agreed that the following discount scheme be introduced for bulk space purchases applied only where a single customer was paying upfront at the start of the year; the discounts being as follows:-

10% for 10-19 spaces
20% for 20-29 spaces
30% for more than 30 spaces

Consultation

In making a new Order the Council is required to publish a notice of proposal in the local newspaper, consult with the local Highway Authority and serve notice on all statutory consultees. A minimum of 21days is required for consultation responses.

Any objections received must be given due consideration and modifications made if necessary prior to the Order being made and brought into force.

(i)   Legal Implications

The Statutory Authority for Traffic Regulation Orders is contained within the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Orders are progressed in accordance with the Local Authority's Traffic Regulation Order (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

(ii)   Financial Implications

The Council is unable to control and enforce "unauthorised" parking unless covered by a TRO.

Costs of signage, line marking for the Courtyard and McClean Close.

(iii)   Health and Safety Implications

Not Applicable.

(iv)   Key Priorities or Corporate Aims

Service Delivery – TRO enables the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers to perform their duties effectively thus provide an excellent service to the public.

(v)   Risk Assessment

Not Applicable.

(vi)   Equal Opportunities

The Council will be able to control and enforce "unauthorised parking," for example parking in a designated disabled space without displaying a valid disabled badge correctly.

The Council is satisfied that there is sufficient parking provision for those with disabilities.

Background Papers

The Council of the Borough of Barrow-in-Furness (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2013.

Traffic Regulation Amendments/Additions

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Grange and Cartmel Crescent (Contract only) (Residents only)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	No charge
McClean Close	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	No charge
Town Hall Courtyard (Authorised vehicles only)	Permit holders only or otherwise indicated as only available for permit holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	No charge

Grange / Cartmel Crescent

APPENDIX No. 8

Scale : 1:1250
Grid : None

BOROUGH OF
BARROW IN
FURNESS
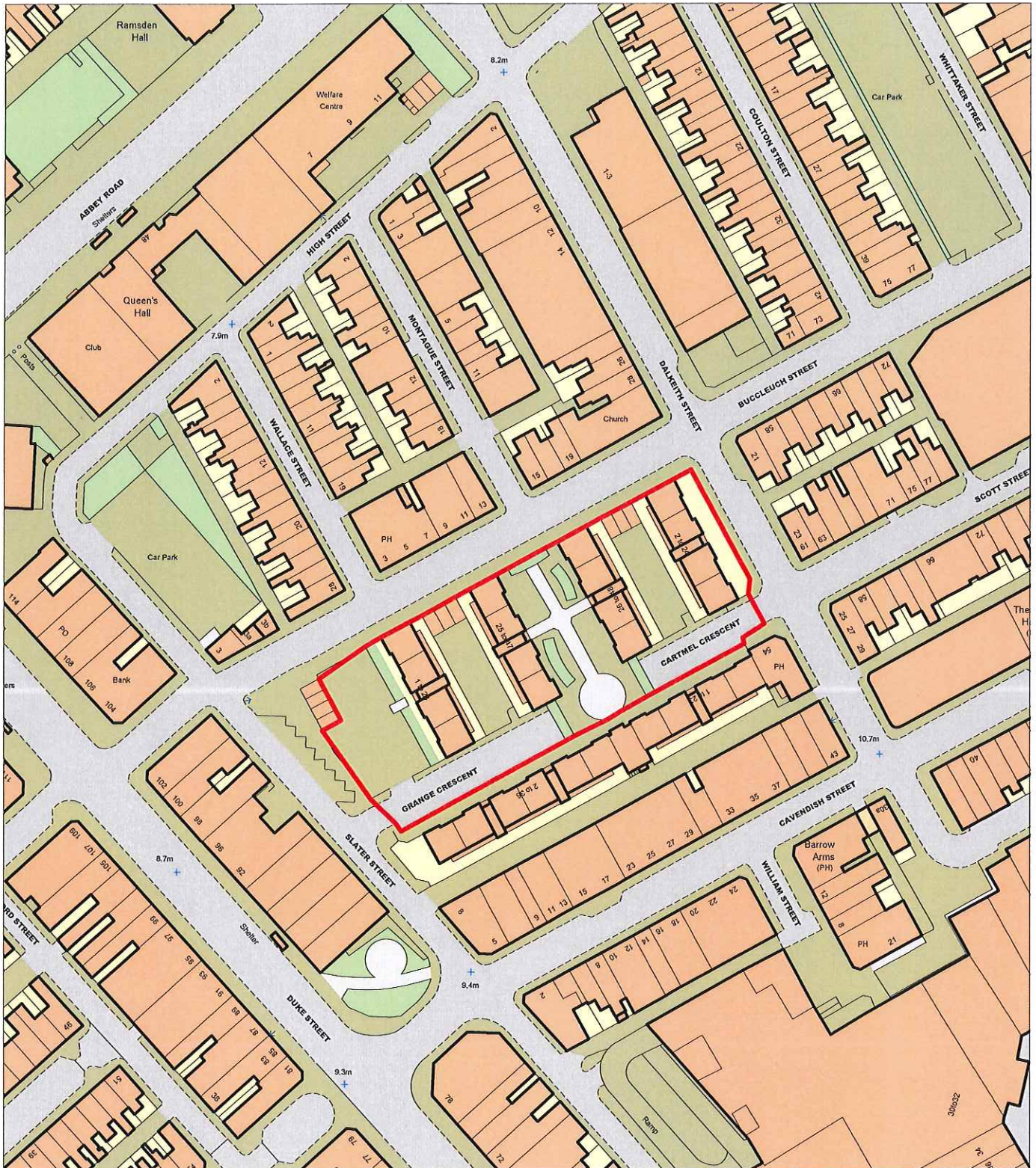
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McClean Close

Ramsden
Infant
School

GRADWELL COURT

Ramsey
Park

Silloman Walk

McLEAN
CLOSE

152 to 174

1 to 11

96a, 96b

7.6m

8.4m

CAVENDISH STREET

8.6m

Peacock
Inn
(PH)

249

239

223 to 229

221 219 217

Works

Church

67 to 77

HALL STREET

The Blue
Lamp
(PH)

CRELLIN STREET

ARNSIDE STREET

SILVERDALE STREET

LINDAL STREET

ROBERT STREET

9.0m

Scale : 1:1250
Grid : None

BOROUGH OF
BARROW IN
FURNESS

Produced on : 21/11/2017

Town Hall Courtyard

El Sub Sta

House

PH

PH

PH

PH

10.6m

11.3m
Shelters

Shelters
LBs

SIDNEY STREET

Factory

CORNWALLIS STREET

TCB

Imperial Hotel

Car Pk

Car Park

Town Hall

ED & Ward Bdy

Def

Civic Hall

Roof Car Park

Market

Statue

Shelter

MARKET STREET

WESLEY PLACE

Council Offices

Hotel Majestic

Shelter

Schneider Statue

TCB

13.2m

The Mall

Furness House

Government Offices

Shelter

HINDPO

Health Centre

Craven House

Burlington House

BURLINGTON STREET

Albion Hotel (PH)

Shelter

Scale : 1:1250
Grid : None

Produced on : 21/11/2017

BOROUGH OF
BARROW IN
FURNESS
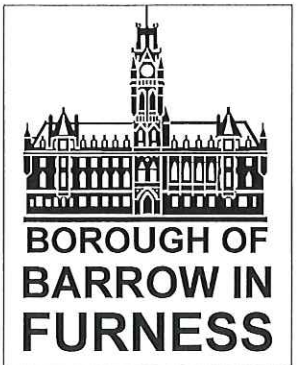
PARKING PLACES AND CHARGES

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Channelside Haven Car Park (Free Parking)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place.	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm Maximum stay 3 hours. No return within 3 hours.	No charge
Church Street (Contract Only)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	£600 + VAT = £720

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Craven House (Contract Only)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	£600 + VAT = £720
Dock Museum Visitor Car Park (Free Parking)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place.	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm Maximum stay 3 hours. No return within 3 hours.	No charge

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Emlyn Street (Long Stay)	Wholly within a parking bay. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders. Disabled parking - displaying a disabled person's badge and clock set to the time of arrival.	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm Maximum stay 10 hours or 3 hours in a designated disabled person's parking bay as indicated by a sign or surface markings. No return within 2 hours.	Up to 1 hour - £1.30 Up to 2 hours - £2.30 Up to 4 hours - £3.00 Up to 10 hours - £6.00

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Fell Street (Short Stay)	Wholly within a parking bay. Disabled parking - displaying a disabled person's badge and clock set to the time of arrival.	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm Maximum stay 3 hours or 3 hours in a designated disabled person's parking bay as indicated by a sign or surface markings. No return within 2 hours.	Up to 1 hour - £1.30 Up to 2 hours - £2.30 Up to 3 hours - £3.00 Motor Cycle – no charge

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Hall Street (Short Stay)	Wholly within a parking bay. Disabled parking - displaying a disabled person's badge and clock set to the time of arrival. Motor Cycles – wholly within the dedicated parking bay as indicated by a sign or surface markings	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm Maximum stay 3 hours or 3 hours in a designated disabled person's parking bay as indicated by a sign or surface markings. No return within 2 hours.	Up to 1 hour - £1.30 Up to 2 hours - £2.30 Up to 3 hours - £3.00 Motor Cycle – no charge
High Street (Contract Only)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	£600 + VAT = £720

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Hindpool Road (Contract Only)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	£600 + VAT = £720
Holker Street (Contract Only)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	£600 + VAT = £720

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Holker Street North (Contract Only)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	No charge to contract holders

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Market Street (Long Stay)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders Disabled parking – displaying a disabled person's badge and clock set to the time of arrival.	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm Maximum stay 10 hours or 3 hours in a designated disabled person's parking bay as indicated by a sign or surface markings. No return within 2 hours.	Up to 1 hour - £1.30 Up to 2 hours - £2.30 Up to 4 hours - £3.00 Up to 10 hours - £6.00 Motor Cycle – no charge

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Oldham Street A (Short Stay)	Wholly within a parking bay. Disabled parking – displaying a disabled person's badge and clock set to the time of arrival.	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm Maximum stay 3 hours or 3 hours in a designated disabled person's parking bay as indicated by a sign or surface markings. No return within 2 hours.	Up to 1 hour - £1.30 Up to 2 hours - £2.30 Up to 3 hours - £3.00 Motor Cycle – no charge

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Oldham Street B (Disabled Parking)	Wholly within a parking bay – disabled persons as marked displaying a disabled persons badge and clock set to the time of arrival	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm 3 hours in a designated disabled person's parking bay as indicated by a sign or surface markings. No return within 2 hours.	No charge
Portland Walk Level A & B (Short Stay)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Disabled parking – displaying a disabled person's badge and clock set to the time of arrival.	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm Maximum stay 4 hours	Up to 2 hour - £2.30 Up to 3 hours - £3.00 Up to 4 hours - £4.00 Motor Cycle – no charge

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Portland Walk Level C (Long Stay)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Disabled parking - displaying a disabled person's badge and clock set to the time of arrival.	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm Maximum stay 10 hours	Up to 2 hour - £2.30 Up to 3 hours - £3.00 Up to 4 hours - £4.00 Up to 10 hours - £6.00 Motor Cycle – no charge
Ramsden Hall (Contract Only)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	£600 + VAT = £720

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Slater Street 1, 2 & 3 (Contract Only)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	£600 + VAT = £720
Strand 1 & 2 (Contract Only)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place. Contract holders in spaces marked with a letter "C" or otherwise indicated as only available for contract holders	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm	£600 + VAT = £720

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Town Hall Courtyard (Disabled Parking)	Wholly within a parking bay - displaying a disabled persons badge and clock set to the time of arrival	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm 3 hours in a designated disabled person's parking bay as indicated by a sign or surface markings. No return within 2 hours.	No charge
Tudor Square, Dalton (Free Parking)	Any Vehicle to be wholly within a bay marked on the parking place.	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm Maximum stay 2 hours. No return within 3 hours.	No charge

(1) Name of Parking Place (parking designation)	(2) Position in which vehicle may be parked	(3) Class of vehicles	(4) Days and times of operation & maximum period a vehicle may stay	(5) Scale of charges
Whittaker Street (Short Stay)	Wholly within a parking bay. Disabled parking - displaying a disabled person's badge and clock set to the time of arrival.	Motor Car Motor Cycle No non-motorised vehicles, HGV's or coaches	Monday to Saturday (Excluding Bank Holidays) 8.00am to 6.00pm Maximum stay 3 hours or 3 hours in a designated disabled person's parking bay as indicated by a sign or surface markings. No return within 2 hours.	Up to 1 hour - £1.30 Up to 2 hours - £2.30 Up to 3 hours - £3.00 Motor Cycle – no charge

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	(R) Agenda Item 19
Date of Meeting: **29th November, 2017**	
Reporting Officer: **Corporate Support Manager**	

Title: **The Council's IT Strategic Plan**

Summary and Conclusions:

To provide Members with the Council's IT Strategic Plan.

Recommendations:

To recommend the Council to approve the IT Strategic Plan.

Report

The IT Strategic Plan for 2017-2020 is attached at **Appendix 10.** We consider a reliable infrastructure and compliance with Public Sector Networks requirements and are critical to supporting the needs of the business and that is the business of the four main objectives of the strategic plan:-

- Providing a robust and reliable IT infrastructure.

- Developing the services offered by the IT Department to meet the needs of the business and support the Council's services.

- Provide a secure IT environment to allow the Council to carry out its business and comply with PSN requirements.

- Providing resilience by having effective business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements in place.

Understanding and supporting the future needs of the business will be achieved by regular meetings with Service Heads to agree future IT requirements and by robust evaluation of future IT projects to ensure that they are a priority for service delivery and that we have appropriate skills and resource are available to deliver them.

(i)   Legal Implications

The recommendation has no legal implications.

(ii)   Risk Assessment

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(iii)   Financial Implications

The recommendation has no financial implications.

(iv)   Health and Safety Implications

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(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

IT Strategic Plan 2017-2020

Context

The Council's corporate strategy framework is consolidated in the Council Plan and is supported by four high level strategies:

- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Workforce Strategy
- IT Services Strategic Plan
- Asset Management Strategy

This document sets out the Council's strategy for Information Communication and Technology (ICT) over the period 2017 to 2020. The role of ICT is essential to the delivery of all of the Council's services and is fundamental to most business transformation programmes across the Council.

The IT Strategic Plan supports the Council's vision and priorities. Our vision for the Borough is a healthy population, with high aspirations, living in good quality housing with decent jobs in a diverse economy and five priorities have been identified to deliver the vision:

- Developing the local economy to secure a long term economic future for all our community.
- A strong and vibrant town centre community.
- Closing the gap on health inequalities.
- Providing a greater choice of good quality housing and regenerating the oldest and poorest housing in the Borough.
- Good quality efficient and effective services.

The Council's priorities will be achieved by setting strategic objectives these will be articulated in the Council Plan. The Council Plan describes the priorities and within each priority it describes a number of strategic objectives. The IT Strategic Plan feeds into the Council's Objectives and thereby supports the delivery of the Council's Priorities by providing a reliable and safe IT environment.

Public Sector Network and the Code of Connection

The Public Services Network (PSN) substantially reduces the cost of communication services across the UK Government and enables new, joined-up and shared public services for the benefit of citizens. PSN is creating one logical network, based on industry standards, and a more open and competitive ICT marketplace at the heart of the UK public sector.

IT Strategic Plan 2017-2020

PSN is at the heart of one objective of the Government's ICT Strategy. PSN provides an assured network over which Government can safely share services, including many G-Cloud (Government Cloud) services, to collaborate in new ways, more effectively and efficiently than ever before.

PSN Compliance is a "Zero Tolerance" approach to the PSN Code of Connection.

The infrastructure is essential in reducing the overall cost of IT across Government and in delivering the capability for more citizen centric services to be handled at Council level. However, a greater ability to share requires more accountability to be placed on connected organisations and a much greater focus on Compliance.

This strategy will support Compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Network.

The Council's PSN service replacement has been procured through the Crown Commercial Services Framework delivering cost savings without compromising the integrity of the Council's systems.

Introduction

The IT (Information Technology) Service supports the Council by providing systems which improve the way the organisation works and enabling staff and Members to use those systems.

Staff rely on access to IT equipment, systems and online information to carry out their day to day jobs and to inform the public. The Council continues to invest in its IT infrastructure to provide reliability, resilience and automated processing.

As the business develops there will a requirement for new IT solutions to support greater accessibility, flexibility and information provision. The IT Department needs to understand the requirements of the business and be able to support existing systems whilst playing a key role in the introduction of new systems. The IT Manager will also have regular meetings with service managers to determine future IT provision to support their business needs.

The IT Department has a number of effective processes to support Council services including the IT Help Desk for day to day requirements and project approval through the IT Steering Group for larger or more complex requirements.

The IT Department has to maintain a high standard of information security, protect the Council's data and ensure that downtime is minimised. The IT Department will continue to review protection of operating systems and software to help provide a

IT Strategic Plan 2017-2020

secure environment. The IT Department will also provide prescriptive and supportive security policies and regular training opportunities to ensure staff have a good understanding of how to protect their equipment and data.

The continuing reliance on IT systems to deliver our services means that we have to put robust and resilient safeguards in place to ensure on-going availability of our systems. To ensure we can deliver priority service if there is a serious incident which has an adverse impact on our ability to provide the IT Department have developed disaster recovery and business continuity capability.

Purpose of the IT Strategic Plan

This Plan shows broad strategic objectives for improving IT service delivery and includes the benefits and outcomes that will be achieved.

Four objectives for the IT Department are:

- Providing a robust and reliable IT infrastructure.

- Developing the services offered by the IT Department to meet the needs of the business and support the Council's services.

- Provide a secure IT environment to allow the Council to carry out its business and comply with PSN requirements.

- Providing resilience by having effective business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements in place.

The four objectives set out above are aligned to the Council's priorities and will support the Council delivering its objectives. How the IT Department will deliver these objectives and contribute to delivering an improved IT Service is detailed below.

Providing a robust IT infrastructure

Staff need to have confidence that access to IT systems is available to allow them to meet the needs of the business.

Virtual Desktop infrastructure
The Council has invested in a Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI, also known as Citrix) to facilitate central management of updates and patches thereby reducing IT support costs. Another significant advantage of VDI is it allows us to management

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desktop security, update and backup centrally there by protection the integrity of our applications and safeguarding data.

The IT Department acknowledge there may be issues with VDI including impact of server issues on multiple users, issues with specialised software and management of software licences. We will aim to periodically update the VDI to support the needs of the business. Where appropriate we will provide PCs for some staff.

For our VDI we manage routine maintenance in-house and currently access external support from an external provider to deal with the more complex issues.

The upgrading and replacement of hardware and software, robustness has been built into the Citrix virtual desktop environment.

Externally supported software systems

A number of Council functions require the use of specialised systems. For these systems our approach is to procure both the system and on-going support.

The IT Department adopt a flexible approach to changing system providers but developing systems in-house requires significant resource in terms of planning, implementation and on-going support so any proposed changes need to be supported by a detailed business plan and agreed by the IT Steering Group.

Maintaining a robust IT infrastructure which underpins all IT activities involves periodic upgrading and replacement. The IT Department will identify areas of risk and develop a programme to ensure systems are fit for purpose.

The delivery of secure servers and network platforms for the implementation of the Civica CX Housing Management System has facilitated the implementation of the new system. The Housing Management System data integration requirements have been provided with key council services.

The provisioning of secure server and network platform and implementation support has assisted with the installation of the Frontier HR/Payroll System.

There has been a seamless migration of the Council's email archiving system.

Storage Area Network (SAN)

We provide a high speed network to connect individual devices to servers. This is critical to allow multiple users to access files and applications in a timely manner. It also facilitates our disaster recovery systems. We will continue to invest in the SAN to ensure it is fully supported and meets the needs of the business.

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Maintenance and Management of the IT Infrastructure

The IT Department will keep software up to date and ensure support and patches are available to minimise the security risk.

The Council wouldn't be able to achieve its PSN compliance with unsupported software in place, which means other statutory services would not be able to function.

Maintenance of systems may result in operational issues which may lead to downtime and require significant hours of IT Support Officer time which may impact on other aspects of our services. This will include periodic updating of the Citrix image which may cause unplanned downtime of the Citrix server and the loss of some functionality for particular users.

We have developed a hardware replacement programme which includes standardising hardware to facilitate easier maintenance and also life expectancy forecasting to help to inform the replacement programme.

IT standards

The IT standards document is on the intranet and sets out the industry best practices with which the Council will align its IT infrastructure and operations activities. We should consult this standard for guidance in determining and procuring new equipment.

Visible system monitoring

The IT Department have invested in visible system monitoring which can review approximately 100 servers, switches and sensors at any time and provide advanced warning of issues before any impact on users. We will develop a checklist, troubleshooting guide and training so that all IT Department staff can initiate a response if there are issues.

Meeting the needs of the business and supporting Council Services

The Council's IT Department will provide a service management approach to supporting Council services; this is highlighted below and articulated in the IT Service Definition.

Incident management

The IT Department will proactively monitor infrastructure systems including; servers, switches and sensors to facilitate early detection of potential systems failures and incidents.

IT Strategic Plan 2017-2020

The IT Manager and Operations and Infrastructure Lead will activate external support and internal resource to resolves incident in a timely manner.

Incident Logging - Incidents reported to the IT Help Desk will be prioritised based on their severity:

1. Is preventing multiple users from working. For example, complete failure of the network log on service, or failure of a network switch supporting a large number of users, loss of internet service connectivity.

2. Is completely preventing a user from working. For example, a major hardware failure to a users PC, or a locked network account.

3. Is causing the user an inconvenience or limiting their ability to work e.g. printer or individual software package issues.

4. No significant impact (nice to have).

As a first response, all incidents logged to the IT Help Desk are given a call reference number. Those that are not dealt with immediately will be confirmed via an email to the affected user. This unique reference number will be required when updating and tracking a call. Each user can track and update their open calls via the Self Service Portal:

- Response Time – the IT Department aim to acknowledge all calls within 1 hour from the time the incident is logged during hours of operation. Calls will be prioritised in line with the defined category of impact identified for the system. If the category of impact is Level 1 all attempts to resolve the issue will be immediate. All other categories of faults will be scheduled and allocated dependant on the available resource. When faults cannot be fixed straight away, temporary measures will be put in place, where possible.

- Incident escalation - The IT Help Desk target is to resolve incidents without the need for technical escalation. However, when an incident cannot be dealt with at the first point of contact, it is escalated to an appropriate member of the IT Department.

    Depending on the incident, the IT officer may escalate to an external support company where appropriate.

- Incident resolution – When an incident is thought to be resolved, the IT Department will contact the affected user either by phone or email to ask for confirmation that the incident has indeed been resolved or a suitable workaround been put in place. If a workaround has been put in place the call will be deemed as resolved and a solution will be sought to the root cause of the problem. If the user does not respond within 10 working days the call will be closed by the IT Department.

IT Help Desk

Online - The IT Department offer remedial support through the IT Service Portal. Access is provided through the IT Help Desk Portal on the Intranet.

Telephone - extension 6399, this should used for urgent issues all other requests should be logged via the portal, a colleague may log a request and telephone requests should be later logged as a request for completeness.

Requests are categorised as follows:

- Advice/password changes; these will typically be "low level quick fix" requests and will be dealt with on a "just do it" basis.

- I need something fixing; these will typically be "low - medium level" requests and the projected response times will be dependant on the severity of the situation. Approximate response times are detailed in the incident management section above.

- New requirements are typically requests such as a network account for a new employee, specialist software, employee's requiring access to sensitive information, secure email or non-default internet access to areas such as social media. Service manager approval is required before the request is actioned. These requests require advanced notification so that they can be programmed into the workflow to ensure they actioned in a timely manner.

Alignment to the business needs

To achieve strategic alignment good communication and a good working relationship is essential. The IT Manager will meet with service managers on a regular basis to ensure that any investment in IT solutions is able to support the planned development of the business.

Ensuring that all IT projects are prioritised and resource is managed effectively to support the requirements of the business. It is critical that the delivery of key

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business projects is not compromised so effective management of resource is essential.

Additional systems and significant changes to existing systems require resource in terms of planning, implementation and on-going support so these changes must be supported by a detailed business plan. The business plan which defines the likely impact on the business, including benefits in terms of service improvement and costs should be submitted to the IT Steering Group for consideration. The IT Steering Group will apply rigorous checks to ensure that requests for new ICT systems are necessary and consider the resource and skills required to implement the new system and how it will impact on current and future projects. The IT Steering Group will provide a report which will be presented to Management Board together with the Business Plan as part of the funding approval process.

Efficiency bids handled by the Business Improvement Team (BIT) may identify information technology needs and opportunities. These will be referred to the IT Steering Group to be assessed in the same way as any other projects that the IT Steering Group considers. This will be linked to the transformation bid process which requires a business case, including a cost benefit analysis.

Recent improvements include: Secure wireless connectivity in selective offices and public areas has been introduced.
Effective Mobile device management has been implemented using the appropriate infrastructure and tools.
Mobile devices have been introduced for the implementation of Paperless Committees.

Future IT requirements will be detailed in the IT road map which will be presented to Management Board on a regular basis to make them aware the level of investment that may be required.

IT workflow
IT workflow is a system for managing requests involving a significant amount of IT resource to deliver. These will be assessed by the IT Manager and Operations and Infrastructure Lead and will be prioritised based on the corporate needs of the business and the availability of resource and skills. The IT Manager will agree the scope and timeframe of each project with the project sponsor. The IT Manager will adopt a realistic approach to what can be achieved and on occasions the IT Department may not be able to support some projects and this will be made clear to the project sponsor.

The level of support that the IT Department will provide is detailed in the IT Service Definition document.

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A critical part of workflow management will be clearly defining the scope of the projects and routine operational tasks. This will require understanding and agreeing what the expected outcome should be, user testing and sign off by the customer.

Performance of the IT service will be gauged internally through widening Engagement is a key priority area within the IT strategic plan, to facilitate this it is the intention to form an end-user led consultative group,
Through this group, we will develop a coherent technology architecture and roadmap for the for the future business needs of the Council in order to inform of strategic activities and future system renewals.

Providing a Secure IT Environment

Information Security Policies
The information that the Council holds is one of its most valuable assets and, as such, it needs to be protected.

IT is directly responsible for managing a number of assets, such as hardware and software. There is an IT Asset Register that describes these asset types and where the information is held about them.

Information security involves the protection of information for:

- confidentiality – keeping sensitive information out of the wrong hands;
- integrity – making sure that information is accurate and complete; and
- availability – ensuring information is available to users when required.

The IT policies are needed to ensure that the information that the Council holds is kept safe.
The Information Security Policies include:

- Responsibilities (IT, Users and Managers)
- Risk Management
- Malicious Software Protection
- E-mail and Internet Access Security
- Council Web Service Security
- User Access Management
- Password Policy
- Compliance Checking
- Network Access Control
- Firewall and Router Configurations

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- Identification of Third Party Access Risks
- Third Party Agreements
- Operating System Access Control
- Application Access Control
- Monitoring System Access and Use
- Incident Management Procedures
- Fault Logging
- Documented Operating Procedures
- Business Continuity Management
- Capacity Planning
- Backup and Recovery
- Information Classification & Handling
- Authorisation of New Information Processing Facilities
- Information Technology Inventories
- Software Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights
- Equipment Maintenance
- Secure Equipment Reuse and Disposal
- Equipment Protection
- Power Supplies
- System Information Security Requirements
- Change Control Procedures
- System Acceptance
- Technical Compliance
- Control of Operational Software

In addition to policies and a procedural approach to IT security the Council also invests in malware solutions including:

- Firewall with proactive filter which automatically updates when new threats are identified.
- Web protection filtering to prevent access to inappropriate sites.
- Antivirus to provide endpoint security.
- E-mail and SPAM filtering.

Information Management
The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) will become law in May 2018. The Council is developing a work programme to manage the requirements most of which

IT Strategic Plan 2017-2020

will be carried out by the Corporate Support Department. However, there may by an IT requirement to support the deletion of historic data on legacy and current systems.

The loss of personal data could be detrimental to the Council in terms of financial penalties and loss of reputation. Having appropriate arrangements in place to comply with GDPR will mitigating the risks associated with holding and processing personal data.

A Security user awareness training programme has improved information security awareness across the council. Training has been provided which covers the management of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and Data Protection training and e-learning modules for IT security through an online tool.

Providing resilience by having effective business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements in place

The Council's Business Continuity Plan describes the course of action to be taken if a significant disruptive event prevents us from carrying out our normal business in our normal place of work.

It identifies who is responsible for which tasks. One of the most important aspects for staff, in particular service managers, is the prioritised list of functions. This gives an estimated maximum recovery time for each function.

The Business Continuity Plan includes disaster recovery arrangements which are our procedures to enable the recovery of the IT infrastructure and systems following a disruptive event. Disaster recovery is a subset of business continuity which is the recovery of IT systems whether we able to operate from our normal place of work or not.

The Council operates virtual machines. There are many benefits to this, but from the point of view of recovery, the main benefit is the ability to push the virtual desktops to new or other Citrix devices; there is no re-build required just additional kit.

As part of the Business Continuity arrangements the Council has an off-site backup of all virtual servers. These servers can be accessed from the Park Leisure Centre if the servers in the Town Hall are inaccessible due to either system faults or if there is no access to the building.

The disaster recovery arrangements will be tested at least annually although data is recovered at any time, as required.

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Governance

The IT Manager is responsible for governance of the Council's IT systems, this includes:

Risk management

The ICT related projects that the Council implements are often expensive and delivered over a number of months so it is important that sound risk management is in place both in managing projects and the day to day operation. We employ project management methodology to identify significant risks and build in mitigating action to minimise the impact. Projects will be monitored by the Infrastructure and Operations Lead and progress and issues will be reported through the IT Departmental meetings.

Performance management

Effective IT management requires a monitoring process to provide systematic and timely reporting of compliance and performance to enable prompt decision making.

The IT Department prepare and publish the following reports to fulfil this function.

Help Desk Support Report – Quarterly

The IT Help Desk Performance Report is provided to enable IT and Management Board to review the service delivery of IT for the authority, against the service delivery standard detailed in the IT Service Definition.

Projects Progress Report – Quarterly

The IT Projects Progress Report is provided to enable IT and Management Board to review the ongoing projects against pre-agreed project milestones.

Operational Performance Report – Quarterly

The IT Operations Report is provided to monitor the smooth functioning of the infrastructure and operational environments that support application deployment. It is inclusive of the network infrastructure, servers and application management.

ICT Infrastructure Usage Report – Quarterly

The IT Infrastructure Report is provided to enable IT and Management Board to review and discuss Infrastructure usage and enable visibility of the life cycle of major assets. Secondly, to assist with ascertaining what the roadmap will be for the Council's hardware requirements.

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Information Security Report – Quarterly
The Information Security Report provides officers (including Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)) within Barrow Borough Council with relevant information that supports the Council's Information Security Policy.

Problem Management Report – Quarterly
In line with ITIL Service Management processes, this report provides the evidence that supports Problem Management. Problem Management seeks to proactively minimise incidents by identifying and recording problems and known errors within the IT infrastructure. Errors within IT infrastructure can cause repeated incidents, which have an adverse effect on the business. Identifying and removing errors can reduce the number of incidents over time.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Report – Annual
Customers are canvassed annually via survey. All responses are analysed and reported back via this report for review, then actions undertaken against areas for improvement.

Delivering value
The Council has a number of contracts with providers of ICT systems, which are procured by either the IT Department or by the individual services.

During the final year of these contracts the business requirements and functionality of these systems should be assessed to ensure they are fit for purpose and continue to meet the Council's requirements. We will adopt a flexible approach to changing system providers where better technology is available. When contracts are renewed we will use procurement frameworks to ensure we deliver value. This will require accurate specifications of the requirements being prepared to ensure new providers will offer a like for like service.

Web Strategy
The Web Content Management System (CMS) was replaced in 2014-2015 and a new website design has been implemented using the new software.

The Council aims to deliver as many services online as is practicable. Online service delivery shall always be a primary consideration where the offering can be robust and efficient as well as user friendly (self-serve) and free from technical terms.

It is not Council policy to be on-line by default, it is this Council's policy to encourage online access to services whilst retaining contact by telephone and face-to-face for some services and customers.

IT Strategic Plan 2017-2020

Registration and favourite tags will be enabled as part of the new design and the website is also built as a responsive design; the pages scale between a monitor, tablet and smart phone seamlessly.

Service Management
The IT Department has had a number of processes in place for some time, such as those involving the IT Help Desk. These processes allow tasks to be assigned, tracking of fault resolution and monitoring of performance.

The Council is developing more formal IT processes, by adopting ITIL (the Information Technology Infrastructure Library).

ITIL is the most widely accepted approach to IT service management in the world. It provides a cohesive set of best practice, supported by a comprehensive qualifications scheme. It is owned by HM Cabinet Office but it is practised widely in the private sector as well as the public sector.

One of the key things that ITIL recognises is that it is 'crucial for an organisation to be able to learn from experience in order to implement continuous quality improvement'.

ITIL is to service management as PRINCE2 is to project management. The Council will develop an approach to ITIL; one of the key components is a tighter approach to Change Management, which should lead to fewer surprises and less downtime.

Business Development
The IT Department will consider all business development requests and will assess the resource requirements in terms of staff and data growth. This will be carried out by the IT Manager and the Infrastructure and Operations Lead initially and for larger requirements via the IT Steering Group.

The Council doesn't currently have a cloud computing strategy but will consider cloud technology on a case by case basis.

Procurement Policy
All hardware and software must be purchased and installed through the IT Department. This is set out in the Purchasing Procedure and in the Council's Financial Regulations.

For service managers, compliance requires that whenever considering any form of IT purchase the IT Manager must be contacted first. The IT Manager will advise of any

required steps to take. This also applies if any IT equipment is broken or is surplus to requirements.

The IT Department will engage the support of the Procurement Officer to test the market and ensure value for money. This will be done by creating robust product specifications to ensure like for like comparisons.

IT equipment disposal

It is important that users have good quality equipment to work with in line with current regulations. Apart from staff satisfaction, the support burden is reduced when equipment is retired and replaced, rather than patched and repaired to extend its life.

End of life PCs are taken away by a salvage company, which cleans all data from the machine, removes toxic components for safe disposal and recycles the rest. Data cleansing and recycling are certified.

Recharging arrangements

Service users are charged for the IT Department services and supplies based on their direct attribution where applicable (service specific software), or a charge based on the number of PCs, or any service specific project time.

Project Management approach

The PRINCE2 methodology has been taken up by many Councils. This is a rigorous and potentially onerous methodology and the Council is looking to introduce a slimmed down version and have this adopted as the standard for all major projects within the Council.

Mobile Device Policy

Mobility is clearly an increasing element in the future of computing. Smartphones and tablets are becoming more powerful and also more widely used which may raise significant security issues. Smartphones pose special risks due to their size and portability. They are also vulnerable to cyber attacks. The IT Department will centrally control mobile device management.

Any development or projects relating to mobile devices must be submitted to the IT Steering Group.

Legislation

There is a significant amount of legislation relating to data and the uses to which it is put. This legislation includes:

IT Strategic Plan 2017-2020

- The Data Protection Act;

- The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act;

- The Computer Misuse Act;

- The Copyright Act;

- The Freedom of Information Act;

- The Equality Act;

- The Human Rights Act.

Review of the IT Strategic Plan

This Plan sets out the direction for the Council's IT provision and how this will fit with the Council's requirements balanced against the internal and external resources available. The world of technology is constantly changing, whether that is software, hardware or the virtual world. This Plan will be viewed as a live document, returning for formal approval if there is a major change of direction or upon renewal.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	**(D)** **Agenda** **Item** **20**
Date of Meeting: **29th November, 2017**	
Reporting Officer: Assistant Director (Regeneration and Built Environment)	

Title: **Land in Church Street, Barrow-in-Furness**

Summary and Conclusions:

The report details the proposed sale of land in Church Street, Barrow-in-Furness.

Recommendations:

To authorise the Assistant Director of Regeneration and the Built Environment to proceed with the sale of land in Church Street, Barrow-in-Furness on the terms reported.

Report

The Council own two small areas of land in Church Street, adjacent the Kings Arms Public House, as shown hatched at **Appendix 11.**

The land is currently unused and unmaintained and is surplus to operational requirements.

The Commercial Estate Manager has been approached by Amber Taverns, the owners of the Kings Arms Public House, who are seeking to purchase the land and incorporate it into their holding. They require the land simply to improve its appearance and perhaps extend their 'garden area' to the rear of the property.

Amber Taverns have offered £11,500 for the freehold.

The asset is valued on the Councils Asset Register at £10,000.

Approval is sought for the Assistant Director of Regeneration and the Built Environment to agree the sale and dispose of the land for £11,500 plus legal fees.

(i)   Legal Implications

The recommendation will result in a freehold disposal of land

(ii)   <u>Risk Assessment</u>

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(iii)   <u>Financial Implications</u>

A capital receipt to the Council of £11,500.

(iv)   <u>Health and Safety Implications</u>

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(v)   <u>Equality and Diversity</u>

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

(vi)   <u>Health and Well-being Implications</u>

The recommendation has no adverse effect on the Health and Wellbeing of users of this service.
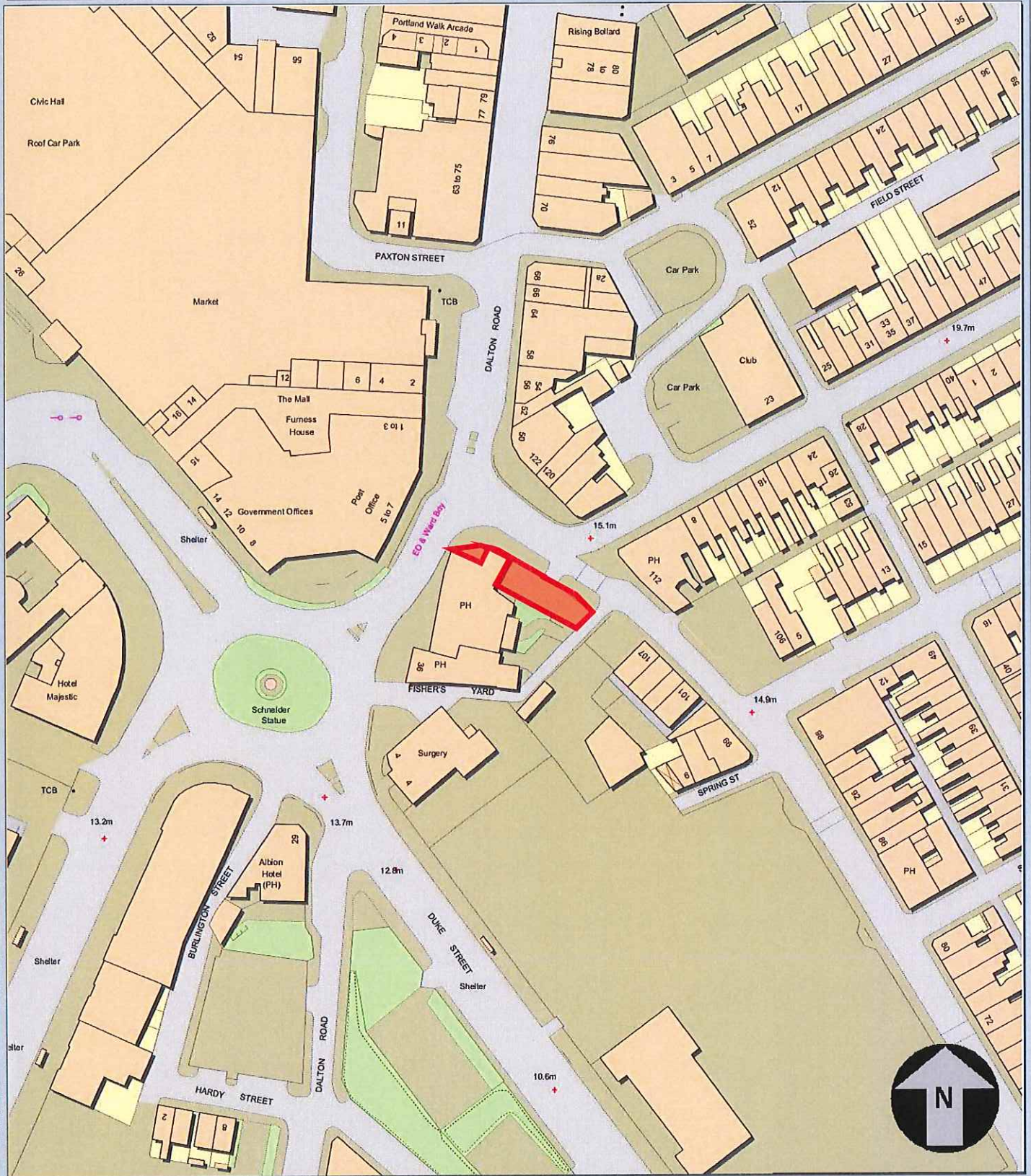
<u>Background Papers</u>

Nil

Sale of Land

Church Street, Barrow-in-Furness
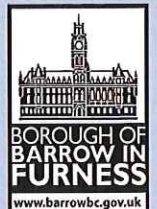
APPENDIX No. 1

Civic Hall

Roof Car Park

Portland Walk Arcade

Rising Bollard

FIELD STREET

PAXTON STREET

DALTON ROAD

TCB

Market

Car Park

Car Park

Club

19.7m

The Mall

Furness House

Government Offices

Post Office

ED & Ward Bdy

PH

15.1m

Shelter

PH 112

PH

FISHER'S YARD

Hotel Majestic

Schneider Statue

Surgery

14.9m

TCB

13.2m

13.7m

SPRING ST

Albion Hotel (PH)

12.8m

BURLINGTON STREET

DUKE STREET

PH

Shelter

Shelter

HARDY STREET

DALTON ROAD

10.6m

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BOROUGH OF BARROW IN FURNESS

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	Part One
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	**(R)**
	Agenda
Date of Meeting: 29th November, 2017	**Item**
	21
Reporting Officer: Director of Resources	

Title: Employment Matters

Summary and Conclusions:

The report requests a permanent part-time post within the Human Resources Department.

Recommendations:

To recommend the Council to approve a permanent part-time HR Officer, 22.5 hours a week on Scale SO1/2, from 1st April, 2018.

Report

The Council has a workforce of over 270 individuals, including casual workers. The Human Resources (HR) Department has a current permanent headcount of four equating to a full time equivalent 3.2 employees.

Current permanent structure:

```
              ┌─────────────────┐
              │   HR Manager    │
              │    Full time    │
              └────────┬────────┘
        ┌──────────────┼──────────────┐
┌───────────────┐ ┌───────────────┐ ┌───────────────┐
│ HR Administrator│ │   HR Officer  │ │  HR Assistant │
│ 24 hours a week │ │   Full time   │ │ 20 hours a week│
└───────────────┘ └───────────────┘ └───────────────┘
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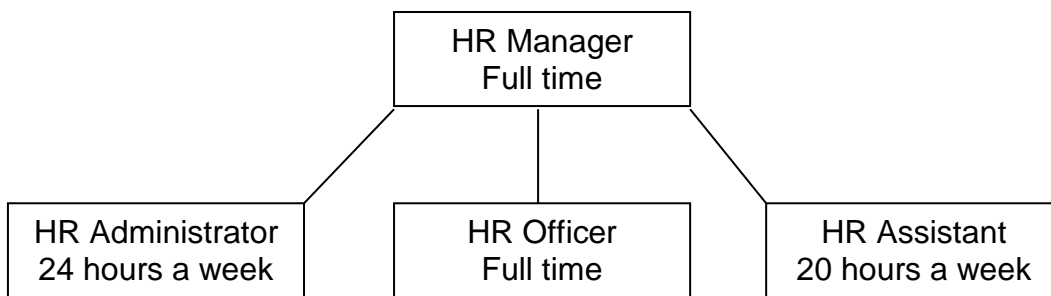
Background

A good and well-functioning HR Department is crucial to any organisation.   The department is viewed as a specialist in people management, including recruitment; ensures HR policies are relevant, up to date and are being carried out consistently throughout the organisation; and provides a consultancy role to manage specific employee issues.   The department must therefore provide an experienced and skilled service which can be reactive to the needs of managers whether for recruitment, discipline and grievance cases or absence management.

In addition to operational functions, the department has a strategic role in supporting the Council's goals through the Workforce Strategy, and carrying out a proactive role in supporting managers and developing employees.

Current Situation

The HR Department currently has a temporary part-time HR Officer working 22.5 hours a week; 3 full days. It has been necessary to add this resource as there are a number of additional areas of work within the department which have dramatically increased the workload beyond the scope of the current resources. There are also concerns about resilience and service availability given the increased demands. The key areas impacting the resourcing of the HR Department are set out briefly below:

- New HR system, including payroll – the core system has been built, implemented and is live, additional resource is required for system administration and updating the system with establishment and employee information; there is more of the system to build and rollout such as online recruitment and self-service for managers and employees; operating and supporting the system is a permanent change for the department.
- Increased recruitment activity - 2015-2016 33 vacancies, 2016-2017 70 vacancies and 2017-2018 is ahead of that profile with 44 vacancies at the start of September; new posts have been approved, there has been an increase in casual workers as well as turnover; there are additional checks to perform ahead of job offers such as the Disclosing and Barring Service checks, Right to Work in the UK checks and medicals, along with the usual reference and qualification checks.
- Sickness absence and referrals to occupational health – rates have worsened in the last few years and stress remains the main reason for absence, both home and work related. When these absences occur or recur, HR become involved informally with advice and prompts for the managers but also formally where triggers prompt formal actions by managers including referral to occupational health (2015-2016 12, 2016-2017 19, and 13 at the end of August this year). HR are currently developing an action plan to enable managers to be more self-sufficient when handling these absences, but the role for HR will remain with perhaps a more supportive and educational role.
- Compulsory appraisals were introduced in 2015 with an earlier window for completing appraisals this year and earlier again for next year. This necessitates a focused resource for the period in order to monitor completed appraisals.
- The Leisure Contract will have TUPE implications that will impact on the HR Department resources. We anticipate that external advice is likely to be needed, but that will only support and perhaps mitigate some of the work required of HR, not remove it. The TUPE consultation process and support to those staff generally involves the department. Any other TUPE matters will also draw on HR resources.
- Other work areas that are either new or have increased (or will increase) are: further developments of the new HR system equality and diversity requirements; training, development and the apprenticeship levy; gender pay gap reporting; delivering the objectives of the Workforce Plan.

<u>Conclusion</u>

There are permanent increases in the workload and demand for the HR Department which can be met by a new permanent part-time HR Officer, 22.5 hours a week, scale SO1/2, cost for 2018-2019 £20,730.

There is also a temporary increase in administration resources recently put in place; the main duties include recruitment support and data transfer/cleanse from the legacy system to the new HR system.

Members are asked to recommend that Council approve a permanent part-time HR Officer, 22.5 hours a week on Scale SO1/2, from 1st April, 2018.

(i)   <u>Legal Implications</u>

There are no legal implications.

(ii)   <u>Risk Assessment</u>

Without increasing the HR resources, the Council's ability to deal with its employees may become limited.

(iii)   <u>Financial Implications</u>

The financial implications are set out in the report.

(iv)   <u>Health and Safety Implications</u>

The recommendation has no significant implications.

(v)   <u>Equality and Diversity</u>

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

(vi)   <u>Health and Well-being Implications</u>

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

<u>Background Papers</u>

Nil