



Cabinet

Date:	Monday, 20 February 2017
Time:	10.00 am
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Cabinet are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary and/or any other relevant interest, in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting have been printed and published. Any matters called in will be reported at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the minutes be approved and adopted.

LEADER'S UPDATE

3. REVENUE MONITORING 2016/17 QUARTER 3 (Pages 1 - 12)

4. CAPITAL MONITORING 2016/17 QUARTER 3 (Pages 13 - 28)

5. 2017/18 BUDGET PROPOSALS SCRUTINY REPORT
(Pages 29 - 72)

6. COUNCIL BUDGET

A. Revenue Budget and Council Tax Levels (to follow)

B. Capital Programme and Financing (to follow)

C. Medium Term Financial Strategy (to follow)

D. Schools Budget (Pages 73 – 90)

7. NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEF
(Pages 91 - 98)

8. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR
(PART 1)

To consider any other business that the Chair accepts as being urgent.

9. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The following items contain exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraphs of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

10. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS APPROVED BY THE CHAIR
(PART 2)

To consider any other business that the Chair accepts as being urgent.



COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES

CABINET

20 FEBRUARY 2017

REVENUE MONITORING 2016/17

QUARTER 3 (TO 31 DECEMBER 2016)

Councillor Phil Davies (Leader of the Council) said:

“Funding for health and social care remains a major issue across the country, with demand for services continuing to far outstrip the supply of resources. While we must continue to call for additional support, it is clear we must take immediate action in order to ensure our most vulnerable residents are able to receive the services they need.

We have therefore taken positive, proactive action to ensure the funding allocated to social care services is available to cope with the increasing demand for services. We remain committed to ensuring our financial resources are targeted to achieve best value, and achieve our 20 Pledges.”

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the projected revenue position for 2016/17 as at the end of quarter 3 (31 December 2016). This is the first quarter that the projections are also shown on the New Operating Model and the Wirral Plan Themes structures. This replaces the previous format based on Directorate structures.

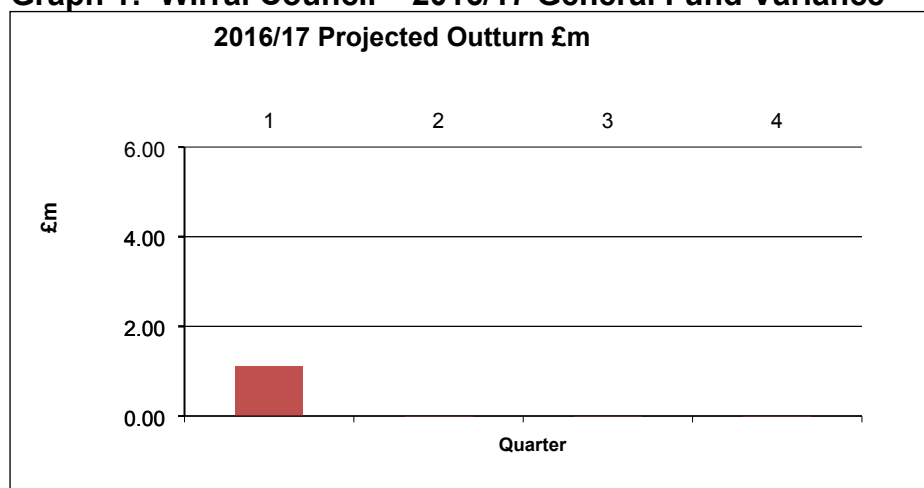
The latest forecast is an underspend of £0.4 million for 2016/17 being an improvement of £0.2 million on the quarter 2 forecast (£0.2 million underspent).

On a Wirral Plan themes basis there are large overspends within the People theme. This relates to Childrens Services £5.3 million and Adult Services £3.4 million. These have been compensated with by savings within Environment and a significant £8.7 million contribution from Treasury Management within Business which relates to benefits gained from a revised Minimum Revenue Provision policies and interest savings.

On an Operating Model basis there are overspends in the Strategic Hub and Children's Services Functions. The Treasury Management adoption of the annuity method for calculating Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) in respect of capital financing has contributed a significant one-off saving in 2016/17 and compensates for the overspends elsewhere in the 2016/17 budget.

The headline position is shown in the graph.

Graph 1: Wirral Council – 2016/17 General Fund Variance



This is a key decision which affects all Wards within the Borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 The Quarter 3 forecast year end underspend of £0.4 million, which contains a number of significant variances, be noted.
- 2 Officers identify actions and take measures to assist to reduce the impact of the projected overspends.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 The Council, having set a Budget at the start of the financial year, needs to ensure the delivery of this Budget is achieved. Consequently there is a requirement to regularly monitor progress so corrective action can be taken when required which is enhanced with the regular reporting of the financial position.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 This is a monitoring report but any options to improve the monitoring and budget accuracy will be considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 CHANGES TO THE AGREED BUDGET

3.1.1 The 2016/17 Budget was agreed by Council on 3 March 2016. Any increase in the Budget has to be agreed by full Council. In Tables 1 and 2 below are the budgets since the application of the new structures and any changes in the quarter since then.

Table 1: 2016/17 Original & Revised Net Budget by Wirral Plan Themes

	Original Net Budget	Approved Budget Changes Prior Qtrs	Approved Budget Changes Qtr 3	Revised Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000
People	152,155	1,500	2,637	156,292
Environment	58,578	100	4,666	63,344
Business	53,862	-	7,303	46,559
Net Cost of Services	264,595	1,600	-	266,195

Table 2: 2016/17 Original & Revised Net Budget by New Operating Model

	Original Net Budget	Approved Budget Changes Prior Qtrs	Approved Budget Changes Qtr 3	Revised Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executives Unit	265	-	-	265
Children Services	44,197	-	-617	43,580
Transformation	655	-	-	655
Strategic Hub	123,768	1,500	2,628	127,896
Business Services	23,799	-	2,784	21,015
Delivery	74,596	100	2,199	76,895
Corporate Growth and Savings	-2,685	-	1,426	-4,111
Net Cost of Services	264,595	1,600	-	266,195

- 3.1.2 The prior period budget change includes the £1.6 million call on General Fund Balances approved by Council on 17 October 2016. The changes also reflect the allocation of £11.1 million of the Revenue Budget Contingency agreed by Cabinet 18 July 2016. This saw £3.9 million to Adult Social Services, £5 million to Children's Services, £0.5 million for Transformation and Resources and £1.7 million in respect of corporate budgets.
- 3.1.3 Table 1 shows the budget separated by Wirral Plan Themes which links with monitoring by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The movements in quarter 3 are adjustments within the Themes to show refinements to where services are placed. There is no change to the bottom line budget from this.
- 3.1.4 A New Operating Model for the Council was agreed by Employment & Appointments Committee on 25 July 2016. Indicative budgets were reported within the 8 December 2016 monitoring report. A number of refinements have been made to reflect the outcome of consultation and further developments. The New Operating Model budget in Table 2 shows the original budget re-allocations on a full year basis with a column showing adjustments for quarter 3. The movements in quarter 3 show refinements to where services are placed and report within the model. There is no change to the bottom line budget from this. The Model commenced from 1 November 2016.

3.2 PROJECTIONS AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.2.1 The projected outturn position as at the end of December 2016, key issues emerging and New Operating Model and Wirral Plan: 2020 Vision Themes updates are detailed in the following sections.

Table 3: 2016/17 Projected Budget variations by Wirral Plan Themes

Directorates	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	(Under) Overspend Quarter 3	RAGBY Class	Change from prev
People	156,292	165,140	8,848	R	n/a
Environment	63,344	62,677	-667	Y	n/a
Business	46,559	37,994	-8,565	Y	n/a
TOTAL	266,195	265,811	-384		0

Table 4: 2016/17 Projected Budget variations by NOM

Directorates	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	(Under) Overspend Quarter 3	RAGBY Class	Change from prev
Chief Executives Unit	265	265	0	G	n/a
Children Services	43,580	48,166	4,586	R	n/a
Transformation	655	655	0	G	n/a
Strategic Hub	127,896	131,343	3,447	R	n/a
Business Services	21,015	12,795	-8,220	Y	n/a
Delivery	76,895	77,698	803	R	n/a
Corporate Growth and Savings	-4,111	-5,111	-1,000	Y	n/a
TOTAL	266,195	265,811	-384		0

The report classifies the forecast under/overspends for the above areas using a colour RAGBY rating. The ratings are defined as follows:

- Overspends Red (over +£301k), Underspend Yellow (over -£301k).
- Amber (+£141k to +£300k), Green (range from +£140k to -£140k); Blue (-£141k to -£300k).

3.3 WIRRAL PLAN THEMES UPDATES

3.3.1 People

- The forecast overspend of £8.8 million in this theme are due to a number of issues in the adults and children's activity areas.
- Adult Social Care Budgets across the country are under pressure with local authorities, public sector agencies and private providers all highlighting concerns to government.
- Adults financial issues are predominately around Community Care and increased demand for services and unachieved savings in 2016/17 within Adult Social Care are the causes of the projected overspend of £3.4 million.
- In Children's Services increased agency expenditure of £2.1 million and care packages of £3.1 million in Children's Care are the major cause of the overspend of £5.3 million. Integrated transport is also forecasting a £0.5 million overspend.
- The adequacy of funding for Children's Social Care is a national issue with over 75% of local authorities reporting projected overspends in the current financial year. Wirral invested a further £2 million into this area from the Transformation Fund during 2016/17. Actions being undertaken in response to Wirral's OFSTED inspection of Childrens Social Care also require additional expenditure to be incurred and resourcing identified.

3.3.2 Environment

- The main elements of the projected underspend are:-
- The early delivery of contract efficiencies expected in 2017/18 through the reconfiguration and negotiation with providers within supported housing £0.5 million.
- Additional income of £0.6 million from increased numbers of people subscribing to the Garden Waste Collection service and litter enforcement action, in particular greater than expected amounts received from court action.
- Leisure Services are projecting an overspend of £0.45 million from a combination in shortfall of increased income and agreed savings targets. This is an improvement of £50,000 on the previous quarter's reported position.

3.3.3 Business

- This underspend is largely due to one-off savings from Treasury Management activities totalling £8.7 million and in particular the Minimum Revenue Provision adjustment and interest savings as reported in quarter two.

- Additional savings are also being made from vacant posts and supplies and services budgets.
- There are some adverse variances in respect of Asset Management costs £0.5 million in respect of savings implementation and a further £0.5 million within legal services in respect of external legal fees and coroner budgets.

3.4 **NEW OPERATING MODEL UPDATES**

3.4.1 **Children Services**

- The forecast overspend of £4.6 million. It should be noted that this figure is different to the higher Childrens figure above in the People theme as Integrated Transport and Disability Services do not report under Childrens Services in the New Operating Model structure.
- The overspend is mostly within Children’s Social Work Services and Looked after Children commissioned services. The Looked After Children budget now supports 1,266 packages of care which is an increase of 96 from the beginning of this financial year. This is leading to an estimated £3.1 million overspend at year end.
- Projected overspend in Children’s Social Work Services of £2.1 million is due to the increased employee costs relating to agency social workers.

3.4.2 **Strategic Hub**

- Forecast overspends in this area is due to increased demand for services and unachieved savings in 2016/17 within Health & Care.
- Adult Social Care package costs are reported within this area of the budget and are reporting an overspend of £3.4 million. The staffing and operational costs of providing care services falling either within Business Services and/or the Delivery functions.

3.4.3 **Business Services**

- An underspend of £8.2 million is forecast within this area. This relates to two underspending areas in Finance and Commissioning Support. This underspend is reduced by overspends in Law & Governance and Assets.
- Within Finance this is largely due to the one-off Minimum Revenue Provision adjustment in treasury management approved and investment savings of £8.7 million as reported in quarter two.
- Commissioning Support is forecasting an underspend from a combination of areas. Additional income from increased numbers of people subscribing to the Garden Waste Collection service and from litter enforcement action is likely to provide £0.6 million of additional income.
- Within Law & Governance there is a forecast overspend mainly due to external legal fees relating to Children’s Services.

3.4.4 Delivery

- The forecast overspend is £0.8 million and is a combination of an overspend in Community Services and an underspend within Environmental Services.
- In Community Service there is a projected £1.3 million projected overspend. This comprises £0.45 million in Sport & Recreation from shortfalls in the achievement of previous savings and golf income due to delays in the golf staffing restructure, an overspend in Integrated Transport of approximately £0.5 million from unachieved savings and other variances including £150,000 for the Floral Pavilion.
- In Environmental Services the main element of this projected underspend is £0.5 million in respect of the early delivery of contract efficiencies expected in 2017/18 through the reconfiguration and negotiation with providers within supported housing.

3.4.5 Corporate Growth and Savings

- A further £1 million of savings has been identified in respect of contractual savings. This has been placed against corporate savings and will be transferred and reflected in Directorate budgets for future reports.

3.5 IMPLEMENTATION OF SAVINGS

3.5.1 Savings of £31 million were agreed when setting the 2016/17 Budget. A further £10 million of savings relating to previous years savings had not been implemented which followed Cabinet in July 2015 agreeing to re-profile £9.6 million of the 2015/16 savings to 2016/17, whilst a further £0.6 million was unachieved by March 2016. An analysis of the position of the £41 million of savings has been undertaken and is summarised in the table.

Table 5: Budget Implementation Plan 2016/17 (£000's)

RAG	Total identified Shortfall from 2015/16 and prior	Pre-Agreed 16/17	Agreed in 2016/17	Total
Red	5,500	560	3,265	9,325
Amber	1,392	1,200	1,376	3,968
Green	3,300	990	-973	3,317
Blue	-	370	24,755	25,125
TOTAL	10,192	3,120	28,423	41,735

3.5.2 The savings tracker contains an assessment of the 2016/17 savings.

- **Blue:** Represents £25.1 million of savings (60%) of total) which have already been realised.
- **Green:** Savings on track to deliver

- **Amber:** Some concerns regarding delivery and includes savings within Adults, Children and Asset Management.
- **Red:** Concerns largely covered by Revenue Budget Contingency as allocated in quarter 1 comprised of Children's (£5 million), Adults (£3.9 million), Transformation (£0.5 million) and Corporate (£1.7 million).

3.6 INCOME AND DEBT

3.6.1 Revenue and Income falls into four broad areas for reporting purposes. Amounts raised and collected in the year are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Amount to be Collected in 2016/17

	2016/17	2016/17	2016/17
	Collectable	Collected	Collected
	£000	£000	%
Council Tax	146,535	119,708	81.7
Business Rates	76,291	61,514	80.6
Fees & charges: Adults & Children	42,225	25,235	59.8
Fees & charges: All other services	46,736	35,707	76.4

COUNCIL TAX

3.6.2 Compared with December 2015 the collection performance is higher in both percentage terms and cash received. An additional £5.5 million has been collected. The table compares the amount collected in the period 1 April 2016 to 31 December 2016 with the same period in 2015/16:

Table 7 : Council Tax Comparatives

	Actual	Actual
	2016/17	2015/16
	£000	£000
Cash to Collect	146,535	140,136
Cash Collected	119,708	114,253
% Collected	81.7%	81.5%

3.6.3 The major change this year relates to a 3.99% increase in the amount collectable of which 2% is for Adult Social Care. Overall Council Tax levels are £6.3 million more than this time last year. There has been a reduction in numbers eligible for Council Tax Support over the last 12 months.

BUSINESS RATES

3.6.4 Cash received to 31 December 2016 is up by £3.1 million on the equivalent period a year ago. The percentage collected to date is slightly lower. Business Rate levels collectable are £5 million higher than last year reflecting an increased number of properties on the valuation list.

3.6.5 The table compares the amount collected for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 December 2016 with the amount collected for the same period in 2015/16:

Table 8: National Non-Domestic Rates Comparatives

	Actual	Actual
	2016/17	2015/16
	£000	£000
Cash to Collect	76,291	71,349
Cash Collected	61,514	58,385
% Collected	80.6%	81.8%

3.6.6 Wirral is part of the Liverpool City Region Business Rates Retention pilot scheme. It is expected that next year we will retain 100% of Business Rates collected; the figure is currently 49%. Any increase in income will however be offset by reduction/cancelling of Government Grants and the transfer to Wirral of additional responsibilities. The Government have stated that pilot authorities will suffer 'no detriment' by being part of the pilot. Wirral currently receives more in the centrally allocated NNDR 'top-up' grant than its proportion of collectable NNDR.

3.6.7 New Rateable Values (RV) will be effective nationally from 1 April 2017. The new RVs combined with the reduced multiplier used to determine bills and 'no detriment' guarantee from participation in the pilot scheme makes a significant change to the Council's financial position unlikely at this stage.

DEBTORS

3.6.8 At the end of December 2016 the arrears stood at £22.7 million. The table provides an analysis across the former service areas and the amount of debt at each recovery stage:

Table 9: Accounts Receivable Outstanding Arrears Analysis

Directorate Description	Less than 10 days	1st reminder	2nd reminder	3rd reminder	Total at 31.12.16
	£	£	£	£	£
Chief Executive	122,792	26,070	19,170	970,019	1,138,051
Neighbourhood	34,948	3,406	449	8,709	47,512
Transformation & Resources	3,105,980	726,633	56,147	1,160,764	5,049,524
Families & Wellbeing	4,388,711	1,024,576	143,451	10,281,753	15,838,491
Regeneration & Environment	594,023	101,294	132,372	320,807	1,148,496
Totals	8,246,454	1,881,979	351,589	12,742,052	23,222,074

3.6.9 The figures are for invoices in respect of the period up to the end of December 2016. Payments as well as amendments such as write-offs and debt cancellations continue to be made after this date on all these accounts. There is a further deduction of £500,295 to be made for unallocated payments leaving a balance of **£22,721,779** compared to £23,573,391 last year.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The estimated General Fund Balance position is calculated in the table below

Table 10: Summary of the Projected General Fund Balances

Details	£m
Balance 31 March 2016 when setting the Budget 2016/17	+11.5
Add; Additional Returned New Homes Bonus Grant	0.2
Add: Increase following closure of 2015/16 accounts	1.3
Less: Allocation for care fees	-1.5
Less: Reversal of passport for life budget option	-0.1
Projected Balance Excluding Current Year Projection	11.4
Less: Potential underspend at December 2016	0.4
Projected Balance 31 March 2017	11.8

4.2 The projected General Fund balance of £11.8 million at 31 March 2016 is in line with the minimum level required as agreed as part of the Budget 2016/17.

4.3 As part of the Budget 2017/18 preparation there is to be a review of the Earmarked Reserves. The Reserves excluding School balances totalled £58.8 million at 1 April 2016. These include reserves relating to the cost of transformation, mitigation of future financial risks and specific project support.

4.4 There are no IT, staffing or asset implications arising directly out of this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The entire report concerns the duty of the Council to avoid a budget shortfall. The Chief Finance Officer has a personal duty under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 Section 114A to make a report to the executive if it appears to them that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources available to it to meet that expenditure.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS; ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The possible failure to deliver the Revenue Budget is being mitigated by:
- Senior Leadership Team / Directorate Teams reviewing the financial position.
 - Tracking system of savings options to monitor progress.
 - Use of temporary additional support to assist with revenues collection.
 - Use of earmarked reserves and General Fund Balance savings risk contingency.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 No consultation has been carried out in relation to this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report is essentially a monitoring report which reports on financial performance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 General Fund Revenue Budget 2016/17

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Budget Council	3 March 2016
Cabinet – Revenue Monitoring 2016/17 Quarter 1	18 July 2016
Cabinet – Revenue Monitoring 2016/17 Quarter 2	8 December 2016
Council	19 December 2016

APPENDIX 1

GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17

REVISED NOM BUDGET AGREED BY COUNCIL ON 19 DECEMBER 2016

Department	Agreed Budget	Changes Agreed	Budget Changes Q3	Revised Budget
Expenditure	£000	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executives (including Children's)	44,462	-	-617	43,845
Transformation	655	-	-	655
Strategic Hub	123,768	1,500	2,628	127,896
Business Services	23,799	-	-2,784	21,015
Delivery	74,596	100	2,199	76,895
Net Cost of Services	267,280	1,600	1,426	270,306
Corporate Savings/Growth	371	-	-1,426	-1,055
Education Services Grant	-3,156	-	-	-3,156
Revenue Budget Contingency	100	-	-	100
Budget Requirement	264,595	1,600	-	266,195
Income				
Revenue Support Grant	50,710	-	-	50,710
Top Up	41,630	-	-	41,630
New Homes Bonus	3,178	-	-	3,178
Business Rates Baseline	34,828	-	-	34,828
Business Rates Section 31 Grants	2,193	-	-	2,193
Council Tax Requirement	120,274	-	-	120,274
Contribution from Balances & Reserves	11,782	1,600	-	13,382
Total Income	264,595	-	-	266,195
Statement of Balances				
As at 1 April	11,500	-	-	11,500
Contributions to Balances		1,500	-	-
Contributions from Balances		-1,600	-	-
Potential underspend at Dec 2016		400	-	-
BALANCES	11,500	-	-	11,800

Notes:

1. Contribution to Balances relate to closure of accounts 2015/16 (£1.3 million) and returned New Homes Bonus grant (£0.2 million)
2. Contributions from Balances relate to Care Fees contribution (£1.5 million) and reversal of passport for life saving (£0.1 million)



COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES

CABINET

20 FEBRUARY 2017

CAPITAL MONITORING 2016/17

QUARTER 3 (TO 31 DECEMBER 2016)

Councillor Phil Davies (Leader of the Council) said:

'The Capital Programme demonstrates the major investments we are making in Wirral: improving local infrastructure through investing in schools, housing, roads and public buildings. We are also looking to make use of the opportunities available to use capital funding to deliver transformational change to public services, supporting the delivery of our 20 Pledges.'

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides Cabinet with an update on progress towards delivering the Capital Programme 2016/17 at the end of December 2016.

The report recommends Cabinet approves the 2016/17 Capital Programme of £30.7 million which takes into account re-profiling identified during both the 2015/16 final accounts process, latest reviews of the current year and additional grant funding notified to the Council. The expenditure to date is £16.4 million.

This matter is a key decision which affects all Wards within the Borough.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Note the spend at Quarter 3 of £16.4 million, with 75% of the financial year having elapsed;
2. Agree and refer to Council the revised Capital Programme of £30.7 million (Table 1).

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the Capital Programme enables decisions to be taken more efficiently and effectively, which may produce revenue benefits and will improve the financial control of the Programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

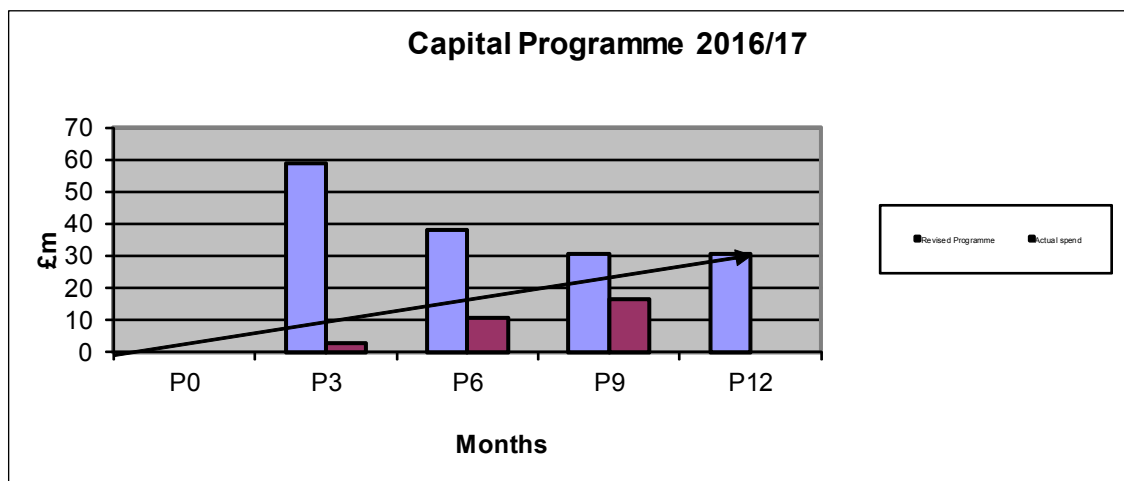
2.1 No other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

OVERALL POSITION AT END OF DECEMBER 2016

3.1 The actual spend against the Capital Programme is summarised in Table 1.

Chart 1: Capital Programme spend below line of best fit



ORIGINAL AND PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR 2016/17

3.2 The Programme for 2016/17 is subject to change. Presently it reflects;

	£000
Programme agreed by Cabinet on 22 February 2016	48,107
Year end re-profiling from 2015/16	6,364
Additional grant funding	1,750
Variations identified to September 2016	-18,134
Variations identified since September 2016 (see Table 2)	-7,353
Revised 2016/17 Programme	30,734

Table 1: Capital Programme 2016/17 at 31 December 2016

	Capital Strategy	Revisions Since Budget	Revised Capital Programme	Actual Spend Dec 2016
Themes	£000	£000	£000	£000
Business	15,093	-2,562	12,531	7,118
Environment	13,574	-6,293	7,281	3,855
People	19,440	-8,518	10,922	5,415
Total expenditure	48,107	-17,373	30,734	16,388

3.3 PROGRESS TO DATE

3.3.1 Business

The investment in I.T. is focussed on migrating all servers and applications to the core domain and, where possible, upgrading applications to the latest version; upgrading all Windows Server operating systems to a supported operating system and reducing the server footprint by virtualising all servers where possible.

Works to increase building occupancy have mainly focused on Wallasey Town Hall, Moreton Municipal, and Solar Campus. Works are underway at Bebington Civic Centre where a new gas main has been installed in preparation for new efficient boilers to replace the oil fired system.

Works have commenced at Leasowe Millennium Centre to construct a new 70 space car park which will be complete by the end of March. Internal works will then commence to alter and improve the layout of the building which should significantly increase the occupancy of the building.

With the technical approval procedures completed the start on site for the Dock Bridges scheme is now March 2017. The large value equipment orders (i.e. hydraulic cylinders for moving the bridges) are being placed in February 2017. The grant funding received in 2016/17 will be fully utilised in Month 1 of 2017/18. The grant funding scheduled for 2017/18 remains sufficient and the overall scheme completion is still within the original timescales.

A number of sites have been identified for road safety improvements and detailed design work is proceeding. Schemes at Thornton Common Road roundabout and Liscard Road will be completed before April 2017. Further off-road cycleway schemes will be issued for construction along the A41 in Eastham and Bromborough and a new cycle path will be provided along the River Birkett in Moreton, for construction by April 2017.

The Council is working closely with Peel Holdings to design sustainable transport improvements within the Wirral Waters investment site that were scheduled for 2016/17. The schemes will shortly be issued with completion during 2017. A new cycleway/footbridge and cycle path network is being designed in Bromborough to link the Wirral International Business Park to Port Sunlight, across the River Park. Works are due to start on site in February 2017

3.3.2 Environment

New fit for purpose staff accommodation and welfare facilities have been completed at Ashton Park, the work also provides improved pedestrian access and vehicle parking provision. Similarly at Warren Farm full refurbishment of the main building is nearing completion. This provides the opportunity to increase occupancy on the site. Further works at Cleveland Street and Ivy Farm are on hold pending the outcome of the Leisure and Cultural Services Transformation Programme report.

The refurbishment contract for the Oval is in two phases being the new fitness suite and the new aerobics studio. The contract is due to be completed mid February 2017. Customer satisfaction is high since the facility reopened just before Christmas, with 362 new members signing up in the first 15 days.

£1.2 million of grant aid has been provided for essential aids and adaptations giving disabled people better freedom of movement in, and around, their homes.

All resources are committed to secure the completion of the remaining clearance schemes. Some re-profiling has been required which includes completion of the solid wall insulation programme.

The Home Improvement project, on which £0.4 million has been spent, provides a continuation of both financial assistance and intervention to remedy poor housing conditions in the private sector, including serious disrepair/hazards, poor or no heating provision, low market demand and bringing long term empty properties back into productive use.

10 schemes have been committed under the New House Building programme. Two have been completed and two are near completion. 125 units will be delivered, exceeding the original target of 100.

The West Kirby Flood alleviation works involves grant funding and a re-profiled business case has been submitted to the Environment Agency (EA). A number of technical issues were raised during the Project Assurance Review. These are being resolved and a decision expected soon from the EA. Funding has been re-profiled to 2017/18.

3.3.3 People

The provision of extra care / specialised housing remains the subject of on-going consultation and negotiation and therefore the funding has been further re-profiled.

Works have commenced on site at Pensby Wood Day Centre to replace existing boilers and the heating system and is due for completion by the end of March. The main scheme to refurbish the building and provide a new hydro-therapy pool will commence in April and is due for completion in September 2017.

St Georges Primary School is one of our largest schools and was in need of a new pupil entrance to provide improved security and more efficient space, additional pupil toilets and accessibility work. The scheme was successfully completed in 2016. The design of the new entrance retained parts of the original facade and enhanced the look by incorporating a full glazed entrance.

Devonshire Park Primary School has taken additional pupils since September 2015 and the pupil toilets needed full re-modelling. Developed 'In-house' the two toilet blocks on two floors are individual toilets that allow girls and boys to use the facilities on each floor. This model had been used recently in Gayton Primary School and has been a success.

The existing layout to parts of Greanleas Primary School was quite poor and a re-modelling of classrooms and resource areas was required to enhance teaching space and make use of resource space for small group work. The scheme included enlarging existing classrooms which will allow additional pupils, improved resource areas, two new toilet blocks and meeting/support rooms and state of the art storage. This has been a success and the school have seen a dramatic improvement in pupil behaviour.

The Observatory School receives pupils who have social, emotional and mental health problems. Parts of the school require a minor re-modelling to provide better use of existing classrooms and resource/one to one space. Of the two mobile classrooms one was removed and the other refurbished and the playground extended. Internal re-modelling took place to provide a further internal teaching space and resource/group room including new changing facilities for activities. The main hall was very poor acoustically, and new acoustic panelling was installed to remove reverberation when in use, this has dramatically improved noise reduction in the hall. The school have used the new space created in the re-modelling and are satisfied with the outcome.

The Hive, Wirral's soon to be opened Youth Zone, is still progressing according to schedule with the completion date expected mid-February 2017.

Table 2: Cash variations to the 2016/17 Programme

Scheme	£000
Business - re-profiling	
Building refurbishment to increase occupancy	-1,070
Fund to assist land assembly and resale	-470
Cleveland Street Transport Depot	-492
Bebington Town Hall demolition	-316
Former Rock Ferry High School demolition	-213
Leasowe Millennium Centre remodelling	-365
Treasury Building	-360
Transport for Growth	-565
Highway Maintenance	79
Coast Protection	-230
East Float access	-295
Dock Bridges replacement	-500
Total	-4,797
Environment - re-profiling	
Park Depot rationalisation	-350
Transport Museum	-190
Flaybrick Cemetery	-100
Clearance	-360
Home Improvements	-50
New House Building	-175
Oval Sports Centre redevelopment	-50
Environment - additional grant approval	
Flaybrick Cemetery	150
Total	-1,125
People - re-profiling	
Family support schemes – re-profiled	-54
School remodelling	-410
Somerville Mobile replacement	-33
Stanley Special School additional classrooms	-132
Condition/modernisation	125
Basic Needs	-295
Pensby Wood Centre	-632
Total	-1,431
Overall variation since September	-7,353

- 3.4 Schemes remain subject to ongoing review to ensure that a deliverable Programme is in place, that they are compatible with the Wirral Plan and to try and identify any savings.

FINANCING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 3.5 Table 3 summarises the financing sources for the Capital Strategy (original programme) and Revised Programme.

Table 3: Revised Capital Programme Financing

Capital Programme Financing	Capital Strategy	Revised Programme
	£000	£000
Unsupported Borrowing	16,852	7,239
Capital Receipts	13,339	6,564
Revenue and Reserves	1,004	117
Grants	16,912	16,814
Total Financing	48,107	30,734

- 3.6 Any re-profiling which reduces borrowing delivers one-off revenue savings. A permanent saving only occurs if schemes cease, otherwise the full budget will be required in 2017/18 when the re-profiled expenditure is incurred.

PROJECTED LONGER TERM CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 3.7 Funding for the forecast 2016/17 to 2018/19 Programme reflects the 2016/19 Capital Programme agreed by Cabinet on 22 February 2016 with subsequent amendments for reprofiling and revised grant notifications.

Table 4: Capital Programme Financing 2016/17 to 2018/19

Capital Programme Financing	2016/17 Revised Programme	2017/18 Revised Programme	2018/19 Revised Programme	Total Programme
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Unsupported Borrowing	7,239	17,006	3,770	28,015
Capital Receipts	6,564	1,937	0	8,501
Revenue / Reserves	117	150	0	267
Grants	16,814	18,879	3,000	38,693
Total Financing	30,734	37,972	6,770	75,476

SUPPORTED AND UNSUPPORTED BORROWING AND THE REVENUE CONSEQUENCES OF UNSUPPORTED BORROWING

- 3.8 Based on the current cost, £1 million of Prudential Borrowing would result in additional revenue financing costs of approximately £75,000 per annum in the following year. As part of the Capital Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 the Council has included an element of prudential borrowing. Presently there is £28 million new Unsupported Borrowing included over the three years, which will result in approximately £2.1 million of additional revenue costs.

Table 5: Unsupported Borrowing Forecasts & Revenue Costs

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£000	£000	£000	£000
New Unsupported Borrowing	7,239	19,006	1,770	0
Cumulative	7,239	26,245	28,015	28,015
Annual Revenue repayment costs				
Cumulative	127	875	2,000	2,100

CAPITAL RECEIPTS

- 3.9 The Capital Programme uses capital receipts to finance schemes. Available receipts at 1 April 2016 were £8.047 million. The table assumes the proposed spend, set out at Table 1 is agreed. Receipts and funding assumptions are based upon the latest estimates.
- 3.10 Additional flexibilities regarding the use of receipts were confirmed following the Chancellor's Autumn Statement 2015. Receipts generated between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2019, excluding Right-To-Buy receipts, can be used to fund Transformation provided the Council has agreed a Transformation Programme setting out the projects, costs and deliverable benefits / savings.
- 3.11 A fundamental review of the Council's asset portfolio is currently being undertaken. It is intended that this will highlight assets Members may wish to consider for disposal. Table 6 includes assets subject to either a known disposal or one that is likely to occur and are prior to the outcome of the review so represents the likely minimum value for receipts.

Table 6: Projected Capital Receipts position

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000	£000
Capital Receipts Reserve	8,047	1,983	446
In - Receipts Assumption	1,000	7,500	6,100
Out - Funding (Capital)	-6,564	-1,937	0
Out - Funding (Transformation)	-500	-7,100	-5,700
Closing Balance	1,983	446	846

3.12 In respect of the major receipts. For Manor Drive the Council should receive £2.2 million during 2016/17 with a similar amount in 2017/18. The sale of Acre Lane is now likely to occur in the summer of 2017 when the first £3.5 million will be received with similar amounts for 2018/19 and 2019/20. No account has been taken as yet for any potential receipt in connection with the former Rock Ferry High School.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The revised 2016/17 Capital Programme is £30.7 million with anticipated capital receipts remaining at the year-end of £1.9 million. This assumes the £0.5 million generated to fund the Transformation Programme have been committed.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The possibility of failure to deliver the Capital Programme is mitigated by a monthly review by a senior group of officers.

7.2 The generation of capital receipts may be influenced by factors outside the authority's control e.g. ecological issues. Lambert, Smith, Hampton continue to provide external support.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 There has been no specific consultation with regards to this report.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Capital Programme and Funding 2016/17.
Appendix 2 – Capital Receipts 2016/17.

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Capital monitoring reports presented to Cabinet Capital Programme – Council Capital Programme – Council	Quarterly 22 February 2016 3 March 2016

Capital Programme and Funding 2016/17

APPENDIX 1

	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
Business						
Building refurbishment to increase occupancy	847	745	847	-	-	847
Fund to assist land assembly and resale Cleveland Street. Transport Depot	423	349	423	-	-	423
Demolish Bebington Town Hall	8	8	8	-	-	8
Demolish former Rock Ferry High School	62	13	62	-	-	62
Demolish former Rock Ferry High School Stanley Special School / renovation	267	217	267	-	-	267
Demolish former Foxfield School	18	1	18	-	-	18
I.T. Development	30	6	30	-	-	30
Millennium Centre re-modelling	1,423	1,418	1,423	-	-	1,423
Treasury Building	158	28	158	-	-	158
Road Safety	140	61	140	-	-	140
Active Travel	26	20	26	-	-	26
Bridges	8	8	8	-	-	8
Street lighting	862	223	292	-	570	862
Transport for Growth/Integrated Transport	60	-	-	-	60	60
Highway Maintenance	1,499	259	536	-	963	1,499
Pothole Action Fund	3,321	2,681	575	-	2,746	3,321
Coast Protection	206	196	-	-	206	206
East Float access Tower Road	12	2	3	9	-	12
East Float access Duke Street	200	2	-	-	200	200
	100	41	-	-	100	100

Business (continued)	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
International Business Park Port Sunlight	195	-	-	-	195	195
Dock Bridges Replacement	2,096	660	66	-	2,030	2,096
Energy schemes (LED Street Lighting)	32	94	32	-	-	32
Business Investment Grants	238	86	238	-	-	238
Growth Fund	300	-	300	-	-	300
	12,531	7,118	5,452	9	7,070	12,531

People

Pensby Wood Centre	268	18	268	-	-	268
School Place Planning	990	424	296	-	694	990
Somerville Mobile Replacement	68	18	68	-	-	68
Stanley Special School	485	456	485	-	-	485
Private Finance Initiative	85	-	-	85	-	85
Condition/Modernisation	3,325	2,153	-	-	3,325	3,325
Basic Need allocation	1,205	855	-	-	1,205	1,205
Children's Centres	-	2	-	-	-	-
Universal Free School Meals	-	36	-	-	-	-
Wirral Youth Zone – the Hive	1,900	1,200	1,900	-	-	1,900
Family Support Scheme	47	47	47	-	-	47
Community Intermediate Care Services	100	-	100	-	-	100
Citizen and Provider Portal/Integrated I.T	1,078	105	461	-	617	1,078
Transformation of Day Service	156	101	-	-	156	156

	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
People (continued)						
Extra Care housing	600	-	-	-	600	600
Assistive Technology	615	-	230	-	385	615
	10,922	5,415	3,855	85	6,982	10,922
Environment						
Park depots rationalisation	652	502	652	-	-	652
Transport Museum	71	4	71	-	-	71
Flaybrick Cemetery	225	191	75	-	150	225
CCTV Cameras and other equipment	100	-	100	-	-	100
West Kirby Marine Lake – Integrated accommodation and service delivery	250	188	100	-	150	250
Wirral Tennis Centre re-roofing	300	271	300	-	-	300
Wirral Tennis Centre – Pitch / Fence	48	12	48	-	-	48
West Kirby/Guinea Gap	82	78	82	-	-	82
Oval Sports Centre re-development	1,030	545	1,030	-	-	1,030
West Kirby Flood Alleviation	103	5	100	3	-	103
Gorsefield Avenue flood relief	100	-	-	20	80	100
Cemetery Extensions and Improvements	273	7	273	-	-	273
Start Active, Play Active, Stay active	14	23	14	-	-	14
Wirral Way - widening / safety improvements	4	2	4	-	-	4
Allotments	121	117	121	-	-	121

	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
Environment (continued)						
Parks vehicles replacement	117	12	117	-	-	117
Aids, Adaptations and Disabled Facility Grants	2,000	1,169	-	-	2,000	2,000
Clearance	200	8	100	-	100	200
Home Improvement	600	394	600	-	-	600
Restore Empty Homes	278	-	-	-	278	278
New House Building Programme	709	318	709	-	-	709
The Priory	4	9	-	-	4	4
	7,281	3,855	4,496	23	2,762	7,281

Note : The Programme in Appendix 1 assumes that the changes in Table 2 of the report are agreed.

APPENDIX 2

CAPITAL RECEIPTS RECEIVED DURING 2016/17

Cash Received	£000
Ex-HRA Magenta Housing Right to Buy	389
North Star, 294 Laird Street	15
One O'Clock Gun site	10
Hind Street /Thomas Street land	195
Empty Homes (various)	55
Caretakers house Mount Pleasant Road	137
Manor Drive deposit	100
Total	901

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COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES

CABINET

Monday 20 February 2017

2017/18 BUDGET PROPOSALS

SCRUTINY REPORT

Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council - Strategic Economic Development, Finance and Devolution, said:

“As austerity policies continue, the Council’s budget position does not get any easier. We are in fact facing our biggest ever financial challenge, with a requirement to reduce our spending – or raise income – by £45 million just next year, as part of a programme of reductions of more than £130 million by 2021.

“This inevitably requires difficult proposals be put on the table for investigation, review and debate. This Administration has consistently developed budgets in a consultative, collaborative manner – inviting all Elected Members and other stakeholders to provide their views and make their voice heard.

“I am grateful to the Members of our Overview and Scrutiny committees who have once again provided invaluable insight and opinion on the budget proposals this year.”

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the feedback from the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees in relation to the Budget Proposals for 2017/18. This follows a series of budget scrutiny workshops held during January. There is a separate report from each of the committees which are included as appendices to this report. These capture the issues raised and general feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members at these sessions.

As the report addresses the proposals for the 2017/18 budget, it relates to all Wirral Plan pledges and all wards in the borough.

The report is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Cabinet is requested to consider the content of these reports as part of its deliberations in developing any budget recommendation for Council.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 For Cabinet to consider the feedback of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees in developing any budget recommendation to Council.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The approach taken by the scrutiny function in reviewing the budget proposals is consistent with previous years. No other options were considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The approach to scrutinising the 2017/18 budget proposals is consistent with that adopted in previous years. Each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees prioritised which proposals they wanted to examine in more detail and convened a dedicated session for this purpose.
- 3.2 The sessions, held in January, were attended by relevant Council officers for Committee Members to ask questions about the proposals. Issues raised and comments made were captured in a report following each session. These were presented to the regular January meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees where they were referred on to Cabinet. The three reports are included as Appendix 1, 2 and 3 to this report.
- 3.3 The draft minute extracts from the January Overview and Scrutiny committee meetings are also included as Appendix 4, 5 and 6 to this report.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising as a result of this report.

5.0 LEGAL

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising as a result of this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no resource implications arising as a result of this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There are no risk implications arising as a result of this report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION

8.1 This report sets out the engagement of scrutiny in reviewing the Council's 2017/18 budget proposals. Separate consultation activities will be delivered where there is a requirement to do so.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The report is for information and there are no equality implications arising directly from this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – 2017/18 Budget Scrutiny – Business O&S Committee

Appendix 2 – 2017/18 Budget Scrutiny – Environment O&S Committee

Appendix 3 – 2017/18 Budget Scrutiny – People O&S Committee

Appendix 4 – Draft Minute Business O&S Committee

Appendix 5 – Draft Minute Environment O&S Committee

Appendix 6 – Draft Minute People O&S Committee

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee	24 January 2017
Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee	31 January 2017
People Overview and Scrutiny Committee	01 February 2017



2017/18 Budget Proposals

Scrutiny Report of the Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee

January 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

A dedicated 2017/18 budget proposals workshop for Members of the Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held on Monday 9th January 2017. This provided the committee with the opportunity to examine in greater detail a number of budget proposals affecting services that fall under the remit of the committee. The budget proposals selected for further examination were identified by the Chair and Party Spokespersons.

A brief presentation was made to Members at the workshop which outlined the Council's Financial Strategy. Although there were a number of questions / comments from Members on the presentation, this report only summarises the proposals scrutinised and the comments and suggestions of Members attending the workshop.

2. CAR PARKING

Summary of Proposal

A Increasing Car Parking Tariffs

The proposal is to increase charges at all Council operated car parks. All tariffs will be increased by £0.50 (fifty pence) at all car parks which would increase parking income by approximately £400,000. There is the risk that there may be a reduction in parking visits following the introduction of increased charges.

B Introducing Car Parking Charges in New Brighton and Other Shopping Centre Areas

The proposal is to introduce parking charges at on & off street parking locations in New Brighton (Fort Perch Rock car park and Marine Promenade). Based on the parking charges for Birkenhead the proposal is expected to generate increased income totalling £130,000.

Introducing car parking charges on-street and in currently free car parks in other Town Centre locations such as West Kirby, Hoylake, Heswall, Liscard, Bromborough, Bebington, Irby, Upton and Moreton is expected to generate further increased income of £370,000.

This would raise £250,000 in 2017/18 and a further £250,000 in 2018/19 and assumes an estimated 20% reduction in visitor numbers.

The proposal will require traffic regulation order consultation.

C Introducing Car Parking Charges in Country Parks

The proposal is to introduce parking charges consistent with those charged by other authorities for similar facilities, at the Parks and Countryside car parks at Arrowe Country Park, Eastham Country Park, Wirral Country Park, Royden Country Park with Birkenhead Park to be considered for implementation in April 2018. A flat rate tariff of £4.00 for an all-day ticket is suggested, with projected increased income of £400,000 (£200,000 in 2017/18 and a further £200,000 in 2018/19).

Surveys have identified that the parks and open spaces are a determining factor in choosing Wirral as a destination for visitors. The proposal may result in reduced visitor numbers to the Country Parks affecting the economy of the visitor centres and cafes. The projected income is based on an estimated 30% reduction in visitor numbers and is therefore a risk to the projected income.

The proposal will require traffic regulation order consultation.

Committee Members' Comments

- Clarification was sought regarding the proposals presented. Members were informed that there were three options. If all were implemented, the increased income would be £850,000 in 2017/18.
- There was concern among members that a rise in car parking charges in areas such as Liscard could discourage people from visiting the area. This may have a negative impact on other policies and initiatives designed to regenerate town centre areas. It was felt that any introduction or increase in car parking charges could harm the vitality of some of the borough's more fragile town centre and high street locations. The tension between parking charges and town centre / high street regeneration was acknowledged by officers.
- This view was echoed by Members referring to proposals to introduce parking charges in New Brighton. Members were concerned that after significant resources had been invested

into New Brighton to revitalise the area, the introduction of car parking charges may reverse this as people would not want to pay parking fees to use the leisure and shopping facilities.

- Members questioned the rationale behind the town centre locations chosen and queried whether research had been conducted into removing town centre car parking charges altogether in order to stimulate town centre economies as an alternative proposal. It was suggested that case studies may be obtained from other councils who have adopted this as an alternative approach.
- Members were concerned about the impact of a flat rate £4 parking charge at Wirral's country parks. It was felt that this would be unpopular with residents and would have an adverse impact on people who use the parks for a short time, such as dog walkers and on families with a limited income. It was also felt that this proposal was in opposition to Wirral Plan objectives to improve the health and well-being of Wirral residents, as the £4 charge may present a barrier to people accessing these facilities.
- Members welcomed plans to replace car park payment machines and introduce technology such as contactless and cashless payment options, mobile apps and card readers. The use of new machines and technology to provide more options for residents to pay parking charges potentially alleviating common frustrations associated with not having the correct change was welcomed.
- A question was asked around the planned public consultation. Members believed that in order for them to be able to discuss residents' concerns and respond to questions, a clear communication strategy was required on this issue. Members were informed that a statutory consultation would be conducted prior to the implementation of these proposals.
- Members questioned whether impact assessments had been carried out to measure the knock-on effect of parking charges on town centres or promenade areas, such as Hoylake and West Kirby. Increased congestion and parking pressure in near-by residential streets and the requirement for more resident parking schemes were potential consequences. Officers acknowledged that proposals were in early stages and these issues not yet been fully explored in detail.
- In response to Members concerns over these proposals, officers acknowledged that the introduction or increase in car parking tariffs may be unpopular with residents. The Council was faced with having to close a budget gap of £45 million in 2017/18 and that all proposals would not be popular. Member comments and potential mitigations were welcomed in this context. Members were informed that a number of other local authorities have introduced or raised parking tariffs recently.
- There was a request for more detailed information to be presented to Members around the car parking proposals. It was felt that data used by officers to produce the proposals should be made available to Members in order for effective scrutiny to be achieved. Officers agreed to provide further information to Members in the form of a presentation to the Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting on 24th January 2017.
- It was suggested that the public's views should be sought regarding what would be acceptable in terms of car parking tariffs. Such public consultation would strengthen any decisions made on this subject.

3. CAR PARKING MAINTENANCE

Summary of Proposal

The car parks maintenance budget of £100k is to be withdrawn in 2017/18 and then restored in 2018/19. This will result in no budget available for any maintenance of car parks during 2017/18.

Committee Members' Comments

- Although there will be no budget for maintaining car parks, Members were assured that any emergency works would be covered.
- An issue was raised that one of the reasons in applying charges for car parks should be about retaining them to a reasonable standard. It was commented that car park users will see charges increase, yet may see a potential deterioration in the condition of car parks.
- A Member suggested that capital financing should be considered instead of using revenue budget for car park maintenance. Officers clarified that capital could only be used for wholesale renewal works, such as drainage and new surfacing, and not for general day to day maintenance.
- A concern was raised in relation to the introduction of the new pound coin and the need to replace pay and display machine components to accommodate this. Members were informed that the machines have coin validation units and a supplier has been engaged to modify these at a reduced cost to Wirral's pay and display contractor.

4. ESTATES AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Summary of Proposal

The target saving for 2017/18 is £700,000. This was based upon two areas being:-

- Fewer buildings, more sharing of work space, co-location and remote working
- More efficient use of existing buildings including carbon reduction

Vacating and rationalising buildings delivers direct cash savings in services costs, staffing costs and repair and maintenance costs but there are challenges associated with delivering this saving including:-

- Asset rationalisation and disposals take time.
- Assets linked to bigger projects which will have a bigger 'long term' prize.
- Dependant on wider reviews e.g. Leisure, Culture, Libraries.
- Working with our partners can be complicated.
- Market led for income charges.
- Tenancy changes can have significant budget impact.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members welcomed plans to co-locate and occupy fewer buildings, although concern was raised regarding the progress made since the issue was previously considered a number of years ago. Officers accepted this point and responded that the process had now started and was progressing well.
- On the proposal to reduce the desks to employees ratio to 6 desks per 10 employees, Members felt that this was ambitious and would require major cultural change. This was acknowledged and Officers stated that a number of good examples of agile working practices existed across the Council.

- A Member asked if there were any proposals to sell Brackenwood Golf Course as part of these proposals. Officers clarified that there were no plans to do this. The review of Wirral's leisure services was in progress and will report back with recommendations early in 2017.
- Members suggested that vacant Council property could be offered to voluntary and third sector organisations at reduced rates in order to receive some income. It was commented that Liverpool City Council currently does this. It was noted that the Council gifts commercial units to a number of charities and an option to negotiate some payment from these organisations in the future could be considered. Similarly, harder to let units could be offered at reduced rates.
- Zoning of land and the use of brownfield sites for development was discussed. This was linked to the Local Plan which would be the subject of further discussions in Spring 2017.

5. BUSINESS RATES

Summary of Proposal

This proposal represents increased Business Rates income of £900,000 in 2017/18. It was based on variations to the Rating List agreed by the Valuation Office before 31 March 2016 and followed consideration of applications for re-assessment.

During the year the Valuation Office concluded the periodic review of the Valuation List which becomes effective from April 2017. Businesses can currently appeal against the Valuations on the current Rating List and the new Rating List.

Wirral is part of the Liverpool City Region Business Rates Retention Pilot. Wirral presently receives a 'top-up' payment to the Business Rates collected locally and the Government is to announce the level of funding as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement.

The Business Rates Return recently issued by the Government is required to be submitted by 31 January 2017. At this stage the increased income for 2017/18 is likely to be in excess of £1.6 million (compared with the £900,000 previously projected because of the impact of the above).

Committee Members' Comments

- Members were supportive of this option and Officers provided responses to a range of questions relating to the operation of Business Rates and the implications of the move to 100% Retention of Business Rates.

6. BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEF

Summary of Proposal

This option was to deliver savings of £300,000 through amending the Council Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.

The Council presently awards Relief totalling £690,000 to over 300 organisations who have been advised for a number of years that the Policy, which is agreed annually, is to be reviewed.

The Government has announced changes which increases the threshold for Business Rates exemption to a Rateable Value of £12,000 (increased from the previous £6,000). This means that a number of organisations no longer pay Rates, the Government compensating the Council for the loss of income and reducing the Relief payments by around £50,000. With a contribution from the Schools Budget of £100,000 in respect of Business Rates, a reduction in the Relief Budget of £150,000 is achievable.

The balance of £150,000 would come from a review of Charities and Sports Clubs which currently benefit from discretionary relief. This has clear links to the Wirral Plan and the supporting strategies including growth and leisure with implications in respect of youth and vulnerable groups. Given the issues the timing was such that this further sum was not deliverable from 2017/18.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members discussed the implications of the proposals and were generally of the view that any discretionary relief granted was in line with the aims of the Wirral Plan and that support provided from all partners should be taken 'in the round'. It was acknowledged that the Policy has to be agreed by the Council on an annual basis and the links to the Wirral Plan needed to be explored further before the Policy was amended.
- A potential role for Constituency Committees was suggested to provide support to charities, groups and sports clubs at the local level. Officers clarified that there was a statutory requirement to have a Discretionary Rate Relief Policy, although there may be an option for Constituency Committees to provide other support.

7. FEES & CHARGES - GENERAL

Summary of Proposal

A target of £1 million has been set for additional income from Fees and Charges which excludes the increased income options in respect of leisure and car parking.

All charges were being reviewed in order to reflect inflationary changes, full cost recovery and maximise income. At this stage £0.6 million has been identified from Registrars (income in excess of current budget by £0.1 million), advertising (additional £0.1 million from posters, internet, etc.), cemeteries and crematorium (additional £0.1 million) and recovering court cost fees (estimated at £0.3 million).

Work was on-going to identify other areas which included Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Environmental Services as well as any emerging opportunities from the Council operating on a more commercial basis.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members queried whether the Floral Pavilion was included in this proposal. Officers clarified that the Floral Pavilion was within the Leisure and Culture review which was currently in progress.
- Officers clarified that opportunities to increase income in Adult Social Services were related to care. The potential for increasing charges was being explored.

8. RANGE OF EFFICIENCIES

Summary of Proposal

This proposal involves achieving savings of £0.6 million across two main areas; Winter Road Treatment and Energy Efficiency. Investments into improved monitoring systems will allow winter road treatments to be more targeted than presently with a consequential reduction in salt usage. The Council has a target of 10% energy reduction in the coming year and a number of works have been identified to increase the energy efficiency in Council buildings.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members welcomed the savings initiatives and queried whether the Council could be more ambitious and invest in renewable energy with the aim of becoming energy independent in the future. Officers welcomed the suggestion and advised that longer term options were being explored alongside these shorter term energy reduction proposals.

Appendix 1 – Workshop Attendance

Members of the Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Mike Sullivan (Chair)
Christine Spriggs
Steve Williams
Dave Mitchell
Ron Abbey
Tracey Pilgrim
Warren Ward
Anita Leech
Jean Stapleton
Chris Blakeley
Gerry Ellis
Jerry Williams
Denise Realey

Councillors also in attendance:

Phil Gilchrist
Jeff Green

Officers

David Armstrong	Director for Business Services / Assistant Chief Executive
Tom Sault	Assistant Director : Finance / Section 151 Officer
Rob Clifford	Senior Manager – Commissioning
Steve Atkins	Parking Manager
Jeanette Royle	Senior Manager – Asset Management
Mike Lester	Scrutiny Officer
Patrick Torpey	Scrutiny Officer



2017/18 Budget Proposals

Scrutiny Report of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

January 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

A dedicated 2017/18 budget proposals workshop for Members of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held on Wednesday 18th January 2017. This provided the committee with the opportunity to examine in greater detail a number of budget proposals affecting services that fall under the remit of the committee. The budget proposals selected for further examination were identified by the Chair and Party Spokespersons as those deemed to be of greatest significance in terms of value and the public interest. This report summarises the proposals scrutinised and the comments and suggestions of Members attending the workshop.

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2. LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Summary of Proposal

This proposal is based on additional income being generated following a number of projects to enhance Wirral's leisure facilities including investments into the Oval fitness suite, an astro-turf pitch at Leasowe and the introduction of Footgolf. The projected additional income generated by these facilities will collectively amount to £400k. A review of operating arrangements at Woodchurch leisure centre is also proposed.

In Parks and Countryside it is proposed that a number of fees and charges will be increased alongside plans to generate income from commercial use of Wirral's parks and open spaces. This is expected to generate an additional income of £200k.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members queried the extent of engagement with staff regarding the Woodchurch proposals. It was clarified that staff and unions would be consulted as part of the review process.
- Members responded positively to proposals to increase the allotment charge from £55 to £57.75, commenting that this still represents good value.
- Members requested more detail around the proposed parks fees and charges increases. Officers agreed to provide further details of the charges including the proposed changes for 2017/18. This information has been included as Appendix 2 and 3.

3. LEISURE CENTRES

Summary of Proposal

Following a review of the Council's leisure centre charges, a series of increased charges are proposed which will deliver £500k of additional income in 2017/18. Proposals include increasing the Standard and Corporate level Invigor8 monthly membership fees, reducing the Plus membership and making no change to the Junior, Families and Inclusive monthly memberships. A number of other increases are proposed including swimming, indoor court hire and equipment hire charges. The proposed charges have been benchmarked against other local authorities and local private gym providers to ensure that they remain competitive.

Committee Members' Comments

- Clarification was provided to Members regarding access to Wirral's municipal golf courses via the Inclusive Invigor8 membership package. It was confirmed by officers that the Inclusive package at £34.00 a month allows unlimited use of municipal golf courses. As part of the proposal this can be purchased annually on a 12 months for the price of 10 offer, which will equate to £28.34 per month.
- Members requested more details around the proposed leisure centre charge increases. Officers agreed to provide a full schedule of current leisure centre charges including the proposed changes for 2017/18. This information has been included as Appendix 4.

4. HOUSING GROWTH

Summary of Proposal

This proposal relates to an increase in income for 2017/18 of approximately £1.1m coming from an increase in the Council Tax base as a result of housing growth. It was confirmed that this income target has already been achieved – see the Council Tax 2017/18 report to Cabinet on 8 December 2016.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members were satisfied with the officer description of this proposal and no further comments were made.

5. SUPPORTED HOUSING CONTRACT EFFICIENCIES

Summary of Proposal

A proposed saving of £750k is expected to be delivered through re-negotiating a number of supported housing contracts. £500k of this has already been negotiated and the remaining £250k is expected to be achieved through re-tendering of supported housing and outreach service contracts. The focus will be on savings which have the least impact on service users.

Committee Members' Comments

- In response to a query over the deliverability of these savings, officers were confident that the savings could be achieved as similar contract efficiencies had been delivered in previous years.
- Members were concerned about the risk of a drop in service standards as a result of providers being placed under increased pressure by requirements to deliver the same service for less money. Members wanted to know what monitoring systems were in place to ensure that standards did not drop as a result of re-negotiated contracts. Officers confirmed that performance of contracts would continue to be closely monitored.

6. NEW HOMES BONUS (PHASING OUT)

Summary of Proposal

The New Homes Bonus is a Government scheme providing additional revenue to local authorities as an incentive to build new homes. Reforms to the scheme will result in a reduced payment to Wirral of £200k for 2017/18 and a further £700k in 2018/19. Further changes were announced as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement in December 2016. This will see Wirral's payment reduce by £900k in 2017/18. The Government intends to divert this money into extra funding for adult social care. Wirral is expected to receive an additional £1.8m in adult social care funding as a result of these changes so this represents a net gain for the Council.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members were satisfied with the officer description of this proposal and no further comments were made.

7. LITTER AND DOG FOULING FINES

Summary of Proposal

The proposal relates to income from litter and dog fouling fines being incorporated into the Council's budget for the first time. The contract with an external provider has been in place for 18 months and the contractor is now able to make income projections for 2017/18 of £200k based on performance so far. There are no operational changes as a result of this proposal.

Committee Members' Comments

- In response to a Member concern that enforcement may concentrate on 'easy target' offenders such as those who drop cigarette ends over those who do not clean up after their dogs, officers confirmed that Wirral Council has issued 111 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for dog fouling this year and is on track to meet the target of 200 FPNs by the end of the financial year. In comparison, Barnsley Council is the top issuing council of FPNs for dog fouling and it has issued 355 this year to date, representing 8% of the total issued in the UK.
- Members asked if it was possible to increase fines for dog fouling. Officers confirmed that it would be possible to increase the FPN from £50 to £80 in areas covered by Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO). The Council is considering introducing a PSPO.
- Members queried if current enforcement measures would successfully deter offenders and achieve behaviour change over time. If so, it could be assumed that income from litter and dog fouling fines would gradually reduce. Officers explained that the contractor has anticipated this and projects that although there would be no change in the level of fines collected in the coming year, income from fines is expected to reduce as behaviour changes in subsequent years.
- A Member sought clarification on the Council's policy towards dog fouling in more rural areas, suggesting that a 'stick and flick' method of disposing of dog foul was accepted by the National Trust and the Forestry Commission as an acceptable method of disposal. Officers clarified that the Council policy of requiring owners to bag and remove dog mess was in place across the borough and suggested there is evidence (from a case study on Hampstead Heath) that 'stick and flick' causes harm to the rural environment.

8. GARDEN WASTE COLLECTION

Summary of Proposal

The proposal to increase annual income by £400k from Garden Waste Collection (GWC) subscriptions in 2017/18 will be met by increasing the subscription charge by £5 to £45 and removing the £5 discount offered for online subscriptions.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members queried if consideration had been given to reducing the charge on the basis that a lower charge may encourage more residents to subscribe. Officers explained that this option was not being considered, adding that in the four years that the GWC has been in operation subscriptions have gradually increased to the current level of 40,000 subscribers.
- Members expressed concern that the removal of the online discount may discourage people from subscribing. Officers responded that the discount was introduced to encourage online subscriptions and it can be argued that this objective has been met with 92% of subscribers paying online.
- Members suggested an alternative proposal, that properties with larger gardens requiring multiple bins could be charged more for additional bins. Officers acknowledged this point and explained that the charge for additional bins has not been increased in the four years that the GWC service has been in operation. Members proposed that the charge for additional bins should be increased.

9. CHANGES IN WASTE CONTRACT

Summary of Proposal

The proposal aims to achieve a £500k saving each year by re-negotiating the terms of the waste contract with the Council's provider. It would be expected that the contractor delivers efficiency savings in its back office functions, with no adverse effect on services to the public.

Committee Members' Comments

- A question was raised about the level of confidence officers have that the contractor would be able to deliver the efficiencies. Officers responded that the contract is of significant length and value to the partner and gives them long term security of business. Therefore there was optimism that the partner would be able to achieve the savings requested.
- Members were concerned that the saving may lead to a reduced or lesser quality service. Whilst this concern was noted, officers assured Members that there is a robust contract management process in place and the Council would continue to monitor the performance on this contract using the range of performance indicators in place.

10. CONSTITUENCY COMMITTEES

Summary of Proposal

The budget proposal relates to removing the £50,000 core budget for neighbourhood working allocated to each of Wirral's four Constituency Committees (£200,000 total) for 2017/18 whilst the Council reviews the area. This is one-off saving and the proposal is for this funding to be reinstated for 2018/19.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members sought clarification on the treatment of any unspent money from the Constituency Committees' budget allocation. Members were assured that all funds which have not been allocated by Constituency Committees would be carried forward into 2017/18. Members were further assured that there is no intention to redistribute the total of all unspent funding equally across the four Constituency Committees as they all have their own spending plans and local priorities.
- Members highlighted some of the commissioning work that has been carried out by Constituency Committees and that this budget proposal may result in some of the decisions taken no longer being able to be implemented.
- Concerns were raised by some Members that removing this budget allocation could adversely impact those partnerships developed by the Constituency Committees and other community groups which require year-on-year funding. Additionally, a Member queried whether an impact analysis exercise on removing the budget had been carried out as there could be a risk that it may cost the Council more in the long run to combat issues that Constituency Committees have targeted, such as social isolation. Members were informed that clarification would be sought as to what impact analysis had been carried out.
- Members were informed that any capital funding Constituency Committees currently have could not be converted to revenue to help reduce the impact of the budget proposal.
- Members and officers acknowledged that in the coming year the role of staff working for Constituency Committees may have an increased focus on identifying funding from other sources and supporting voluntary groups to identify and access funding from elsewhere.
- Members suggested that other partner organisations could be approached to contribute to the Constituency Committees to mitigate the loss of funding in 2017/18.

Appendix 1 – Workshop Attendance

Members of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Phillip Brightmore (Chair)
Chris Carubia
Steve Foulkes
Tony Jones
Bruce Berry
Tom Usher
Julie McManus
Tom Anderson
Les Rowlands
Joe Walsh
Christina Muspratt
Irene Williams
Anita Leech

Councillors also in attendance:

Chris Blakeley
Phil Gilchrist

Officers

David Armstrong	Director for Business Services / Assistant Chief Executive
Tom Sault	Head of Financial Services
Mark Smith	Strategic Commissioner - Environment
David Ball	Assistant Director – Environmental Services
Mike Cockburn	Lead Commissioner - Environment
Damian Walsh	Senior Manager – Leisure Services
Mary Worrall	Senior Manager – Parks & Countryside
Simon Bellamy	Leisure Operations Manager
Mike Lester	Scrutiny Officer
Patrick Torpey	Scrutiny Officer

Appendix 2

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Proposed 2017/18
PARKS ALLOTMENTS AND OPEN SPACES Fees and Charges				
GREEN AND PITCH HIRE				
Arrowe Park Pavilion full day	£0.00	£144.00	£151.00	159
Arrowe park Pavilion half day	£0.00	£72.00	£76.00	80
Forest or Beach School taster session for up to 15 children 3 hours	£0.00	£200.00	£210.00	221
Forest or Beach Schools for over 15 children for each 2 hour session	£0.00	£165.00	£173.00	182
Forest or Beach Schools for up to 15 children for each 2 hour session	£0.00	£156.00	£164.00	172
Forest or Beach taster session 3 hour session for up to 30 children	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	50
Summer School session for up to 15 children 3 hours	£0.00	£200.00	£210.00	221
BOWLING GREENS Afternoon session - Half Share (VAT Exempt) Adult	£627.00	£752.00	£790.00	830
BOWLING GREENS Afternoon session - Half Share (VAT Exempt) EP/Junior Clubs	£377.00	£452.00	£475.00	499
BOWLING GREENS Afternoon session - Full Share (VAT Exempt) Adult	£1,198.00	£1,438.00	£1,510.00	1586
BOWLING GREENS Afternoon session - Full Share (VAT Exempt) EP/Junior Clubs	£719.00	£863.00	£906.00	951
BOWLING GREENS Evening session - Half Share (VAT Exempt) Adult	£627.30	£753.00	£790.00	830
BOWLING GREENS Evening session - Half Share (VAT Exempt) EP/Junior Clubs	£377.40	£453.00	£475.00	499
BOWLING GREENS Evening session - Full Share (VAT Exempt) Adult	£1,188.00	£1,426.00	£1,510.00	1586
BOWLING GREENS Evening session - Full Share (VAT Exempt) EP/Junior Clubs	£714.00	£857.00	£906.00	951
BOWLING GREENS Casual Booking per match Adult	£46.00	£55.00	£58.00	61
BOWLING GREENS Casual Booking per match EP/Junior Clubs	£31.00	£37.00	£39.00	41
BOWLING GREENS Hire of Bowls for use on greens at King's Parade Adult	£2.14	£0.00	£0.00	0
BOWLING GREENS Hire of Bowls for use on greens at King's Parade EP/Juniors	£1.12	£0.00	£0.00	0
Cricket Green Lane - Full Share Weekend (Vat Exempt)	£596.00	£656.00	£689.00	723
Cricket Thornton Hough - Casual Booking - Adult	£76.00	£84.00	£88.00	92
Cricket Thornton Hough - Casual Booking - Child/EP	£46.00	£51.00	£54.00	57
Football Pitches Adult Charge - per season alternate weekly use Class A - modern changing accommodation with hot and cold showers	£499.00	£549.00	£576.00	605
Football Pitches Adult Charge - per season alternate weekly use Class B - adequate or older changing accommodation with hot and cold showers	£402.00	£442.00	£464.00	487
Football Pitches Adult Charge - per season alternate weekly use Class C - adequate changing accommodation with no showers	£316.00	£348.00	£365.00	383
Football Pitches Occasional Hire (per match) Class A	£66.00	£73.00	£77.00	81
Football Pitches Occasional Hire (per match) Class B	£56.00	£62.00	£65.00	68
Football Pitches Occasional Hire (per match) Class C	£51.00	£56.00	£59.00	62
Football Pitches Junior Charge - per season alternate weekly use (VAT Exempt) Class A	£265.00	£292.00	£307.00	322
Football Pitches Junior Charge - per season alternate weekly use (VAT Exempt) Class B	£200.00	£220.00	£231.00	243
Football Pitches Junior Charge - per season alternate weekly use (VAT Exempt) Class C	£155.00	£171.00	£180.00	189
Football Pitches Junior Charge - per season alternate weekly use (VAT Exempt) Mini Soccer (per pitch)	£95.00	£105.00	£110.00	116
Football Pitches Junior Charge - Occasional Hire (per match) Class A	£41.00	£45.00	£47.00	49
Football Pitches Junior Charge - Occasional Hire (per match) Class B	£36.00	£40.00	£42.00	44
Football Pitches Junior Charge - Occasional Hire (per match) Class C	£31.00	£34.00	£36.00	38
Rugby Pitches (UML Sports Ground) Charge per season, alternate weekly use Charge per season	£469.00	£516.00	£542.00	569
Wirral Country Park Charge for ranger activity for schools from outside Wirral (per child)	£1.93	£2.00	£5.00	7
Wirral Country Park Hire of theatre - morning or afternoon	£41.00	£42.00	£50.00	53
Wirral Country Park Hire of theatre - whole day	£69.36	£70.00	£90.00	95
Birkenhead Park Hire of Visitor Centre Function Room (Full Day)	£104.00	£106.00	£120.00	126
Birkenhead Park Hire of Visitor Centre Function Room (Full Day) - with preparation room	£0.00	£0.00	£150.00	158
Birkenhead Park Hire of Visitor Centre Function Room (Half day)	£66.00	£67.00	£75.00	79
Birkenhead Park Hire of Visitor Centre Function Room (Half day) - with preparation room	£0.00	£0.00	£100.00	105
Birkenhead Park Commercial use per head	£2.04	£2.10	£5.00	7
Birkenhead Park Hire of Gallery	£0.00	£106.00	£120.00	126
Birkenhead Park Hire of Gallery / Exhibitions and Displays	£0.00	£106.00	£120.00	126
EVENTS ON PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SITES Administration fee for booking events (Small events: under 250 participants)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	25
EVENTS ON PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SITES Administration fee for booking events (Medium size events: under 251 – 4999 participants)	£25.00	£25.00	£30.00	30
EVENTS ON PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SITES Administration fee for booking events (Large events: 5000+ participants)	£35.00	£35.00	£40.00	40
EVENTS ON PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SITES Dog shows	£0.00	£175.00	£184.00	193
TRAINING IN PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SITES Annual Group Fitness Training Licence	£392.00	£397.00	£400.00	420
TRAINING IN PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SITES Annual Professional Dog Training Licence	£150.00	£152.00	£200.00	210
TRAINING IN PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SITES Annual Professional Dog Walking Licence	£150.00	£152.00	£250.00	263
PARKS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES				
Allotments				
Allotments Per Plot	£35.70	£52.00	£55.00	57.75
Allotments Per Plot EP	£17.85	£26.00	£27.50	£28.90

Appendix 3

Wirral Parks & Countryside – Events Fees & Charges 2017/2018

Event Category	Event Size	Daily Site Fee	Admin Fee	Site Bond
Wirral Community Events	Small	none	£25	none
	Medium		£25	
	Large		£25	£1000
	Very Large		£25	£1000
	Major		£25	P.O.A.
Charity Events & Private Events (Except Weddings)	Small	£75	£25	£1000
	Medium	£150	£25	£1000
	Large	£400	£25	£1000
	Very Large	£1000	£25	£1000
	Major	P.O.A.	£25	P.O.A.
Commercial Events (excluding Circuses)				
Heritage Park (eg Birkenhead Park)	Small	£300	£25	£1000
	Medium	£600	£25	£1000
	Large	£1750	£25	£1000
	Very Large	£3500	£25	£1000
	Major	P.O.A.	£25	P.O.A.
Green Flag Park or Designated Bathing Beach	Small	£225	£25	£1000
	Medium	£450	£25	£1000
	Large	£1200	£25	£1000
	Very Large	£2400	£25	£1000
	Major	P.O.A.	£25	P.O.A.
All other parks and beaches	Small	£150	£25	£1000
	Medium	£300	£25	£1000
	Large	£900	£25	£1000
	Very Large	£1800	£25	£1000
	Major	P.O.A.	£25	P.O.A.
Circuses	All	£500 + £50 licence	£25	P.O.A.

Weddings	£500 minimum
Transit events (which pass through a park, e.g. Marathon)	£500 if commercial , £200 if charity

Other Charges		Daily Site Fee	Licence	
Filming	1 – 9 crew	Less than 4 hours	£300	none
		4 hours and over	£600	none
	10 + crew	Less than 4 hours	£600	none
		4 hours and over	£1000	none
Fairground (Max 5 children's rides as part of another event)		-	£50	

Additional Costs for Very Large or Major Charity Events, Commercial Events, Circuses & Filming	Daily Rate
Disturbance of parking for regular users	£200
Use of park/open space land as car parking for other venue's events	Price on application
Additional Storage (e.g. in buildings or depots)	£200
Events where alcohol will be available	+50% of site fee
Ticket sales from Visitor Centre	20% of ticket price
Build up/Take down days – Park not significantly disrupted	+25% of site fee
Build up/take down days, park significantly disrupted	+50% of site fee

Notes:

Small event	= 1 – 499	attendees
Medium event	= 500 – 999	attendees
Large event	= 1000 – 1999	attendees
Very Large event	= 2000 – 4999	attendees
Major event	= 5000 +	attendees

Cancellation Fee = 50% of site fee if within one calendar month of event
Any event requiring park staff will be charged costs

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Appendix 4

2016/17	2017/18
Current	Proposed

LEISURE CENTRES:

Athletic Meets

Oval Floodlights per meeting	£64.00	£65.00
Regional and National Meets Oval Weekday	£240.00	£260.00
Regional and National Meets Oval Weekend	£300.00	£320.00
Regional and National Meets Oval Bank Holiday	£375.00	n/a
Athletic Training/ Football Training/ Jogging etc		
Hourly rate per club	£37.50	£37.50
Adult session	£2.50	£3.50
Junior session	£2.50	£2.50

Badminton

4 people - 60 minutes Adult	£12.00	£13.20
4 people - 60 minutes Child/EP	£7.20	£7.90
4 people - 60 minutes Wirral Passport A	£9.00	£9.90

Cricket

Cricket Adult per match	£60.00	£65.00
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Equipment Hire

Hire of Equipment (per item) Adult	£1.75	£1.95
Hire of Equipment (per item) Child/EP	£1.10	£1.20
Hire of Equipment (per item) Wirral Passport A	£1.30	£1.40
Hire of Equipment (per item) Deposit	£4.05	£5.00
Tennis balls (box of 6) Adult	£2.00	£2.20
Tennis balls (box of 6) Child/EP	£1.25	£1.40
Tennis balls (box of 6) Deposit	£4.05	£5.00
Hire of Cricket Set Adult	£13.30	£14.63
Hire of Cricket Set Deposit	£13.30	£14.63

Europa Pools

Europa Pools Function Room Hire per hour	£29.00	£29.00
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Europa Pools Health Suite/ Steam Room

Adult	£3.20	£3.50
Child/EP	£1.90	£2.10
Wirral Passport A	£2.40	£2.70

Football

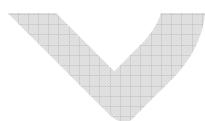
5-a-side indoor court hire Adult	£36.00	£39.60
5-a-side indoor court hire Child/EP	£21.60	£23.80
5-a-side indoor court hire Wirral Passport A	£0.00	£0.00
Artificial Turf Pitch (Peak) Third Pitch per hour Adult	£38.00	£38.00
Artificial Turf Pitch (Peak) Third Pitch per hour Child/EP	£23.00	£23.00
Artificial Turf Pitch (Peak) Full Pitch per hour Adult	£114.00	£114.00
Artificial Turf Pitch (Peak) Full Pitch per hour Child/EP	£69.00	£69.00
Short Sided Soccer Pitches Adult (Adult Peak (Mon - Fri 6pm-9pm))	£32.50	£34.00
Short Sided Soccer Pitches Junior Peak (Mon - Fri 6pm-9pm)	£19.50	£20.40
Short Sided Soccer Pitches Adult Off Peak	£24.50	£25.70
Short Sided Soccer Pitches Junior Off Peak	£14.70	£15.50
Full pitch, match (1.5 hrs) Adult	£139.50	£139.50
Full pitch, match (1.5 hrs) Child/EP	£83.00	£83.00
Artificial Turf Pitch (Off Peak) Third Pitch per hour Adult	£26.00	£26.00
Artificial Turf Pitch (Off Peak) Third Pitch per hour Child/EP	£16.00	£16.00
Artificial Turf Full Pitch per hour Adult	£78.00	£78.00
Artificial Turf Full Pitch per hour Child/EP	£48.00	£48.00
Artificial Turf Full pitch, match (1.5 hrs) Adult	£93.00	£93.00
Artificial Turf Full pitch, match (1.5 hrs) Child/EP	£56.00	£56.00
Floodlights Full pitch (60 minutes)	£23.00	£23.00
Floodlights Half pitch (60 minutes)	£11.50	£11.50

Guinea Gap Baths & Recreation Centre

Sauna Adult	£7.70	£8.50
Sauna Child/EP	£4.60	£5.10
Sauna Wirral Passport A	£5.80	£6.40
Revolutions Adult	£5.45	£6.00
Child/EP	£3.25	£3.60
Revolutions Wirral Passport A	£4.10	£4.50

	2016/17	2017/18
	Current	Proposed
Exercise classes wet/dry Adult	£4.65	£5.10
Exercise classes wet/dry Child/EP	£2.80	£3.10
Exercise classes wet/dry Wirral Passport A	£3.50	£3.80
Fitness Suite (Per session) Adult	£6.00	£6.60
Fitness Suite (Per session) Child/EP	£3.60	£4.00
Fitness Suite (Per session) Wirral Passport A	£4.50	£5.00
Invigor8		
Families - monthly charge	£60.00	£60.00
Inclusive - monthly charge	£34.00	£34.00
Plus - monthly charge	£29.50	£27.50
Corporate - monthly charge	£23.50	£25.00
Standard - monthly charge	£15.00	£18.50
Teen/Junior - monthly charge	£15.00	£15.00
Families - annual charge	£720.00	£600.00
Inclusive - annual charge	£408.00	£340.00
Plus - annual charge	£354.00	£275.00
Corporate - annual charge	£282.00	£250.00
Standard - annual charge	£180.00	£220.00
Teen/Junior - annual charge	£180.00	£170.00
Class Card (Off Peak)	£0.00	£22.00
Class Card (Peak)	£0.00	£17.00
Armed Forces	£16.90	£17.00
Pool Parties		
Childrens Birthday Party- per child	£7.50	£8.30
Splash parties (whole pool, flumes)	£250.00	£275.00
Splash parties (whole pool, no flumes)	£165.00	£181.00
Splash parties (whole pool, no flumes) Excess per hour above 1.5 hours	£100.00	£110.00
Splash parties (whole pool, flumes) Excess per hour above 1.5 hours	£150.00	£165.00
Ski Slope- The Oval		
Use of slope per hourAdult	£4.15	£4.15
Use of slope per hourChild/ EP	£2.45	£2.45
Equipment hire per hour Adult	£4.15	£4.15
Equipment hire per hour Child/EP	£2.45	£2.45
Social Club Hire		
Saturday/ Sunday (per hour VAT exempt)	£139.00	£139.00
Weekdays (per hour VAT exempt)	£128.00	£128.00
Spectators		
Spectator Adult	£0.65	£0.70
Spectator Junior	£0.45	£0.40
Spectator Wirral Passport A	£0.50	£0.50
Wirral Passport Means Tested – A	£6.00	£6.60
Squash		
45 minutes Adult	£7.00	£7.70
45 minutes Child/EP	£4.20	£4.60
45 minutes Wirral Passport A	£5.25	£5.80
Swimming		
Europa Pools (off peak) Swimming Adult	£4.00	£4.50
Europa Pools (off peak) Swimming Junior/EP	£2.40	£2.70
Europa Pools (off peak) Swimming Wirral Passport A	£3.00	£3.40
Europa Pools (peak) SwimmingAdult	£5.55	£6.00
Europa Pools (peak) Swimming Junior/EP	£3.40	£3.60
Europa Pools (peak) Swimming Wirral Passport A	£4.15	£4.50
Pools (Excluding Europa) Adult	£4.00	£4.50
Pools (Excluding Europa) Child/EP	£2.40	£2.70
Pools (Excluding Europa) Wirral Passport A	£3.00	£3.40
Aqua Classes Adult	£4.65	£5.10
Aqua ClassesChild/EP	£2.80	£3.10
Aqua Classes Wirral Passport A	£3.50	£3.90
Pools (Excluding Europa) Family Swim Ticket	£9.60	£10.00
Swimming Instruction (All Centres) Adult	£7.75	£8.30
Swimming Instruction (All Centres) Child/EP	£4.75	£5.00

	2016/17	2017/18
	Current	Proposed
Swimming Instruction (All Centres) Wirral Passport A	£3.85	£6.20
Direct Debit Swimming Instruction (All Centres) Child/EP	£16.60	£18.30
Direct Debit Swimming Instruction (All Centres) Wirral Passport A	£16.60	£18.30
Swimming		
Galas/ Water Polo Leasowe/ Europa Pools Weekdays (3 hours)	£235.20	£235.20
Galas/ Water Polo Leasowe/ Europa Pools Excess Per hour	£78.75	£78.75
Galas/ Water Polo Leasowe/ Europa Pools Saturday/Sunday (3 hours)	£383.25	£383.25
Galas/ Water Polo Leasowe/ Europa Pools Saturday/Sunday Excess per hour	£130.20	£130.20
Galas/ Water Polo Other Pools Weekdays (3 hours)	£192.73	£192.73
Galas/ Water Polo Other Pools Excess Per hour	£65.20	£65.20
Galas/ Water Polo Other Pools Saturday/Sunday (3 hours)	£274.60	£274.60
Galas/ Water Polo Other Pools Sat/ Sunday Excess per hour	£91.40	£91.40
Swimming Club Hire		
The Oval/ Leasowe Recreation Centre All pool area: Weekdays (per hour VAT exempt)	£56.00	£56.00
The Oval/ Leasowe Recreation Centre All pool area: Saturday/ Sunday (per hour VAT exempt)	£60.00	£60.00
Woodchurch/ West Kirby/ Guinea Gap All pool area:Weekdays (per hour VAT exempt)	£51.00	£51.00
Woodchurch/ West Kirby/ Guinea Gap All pool area:Saturday/ Sunday (per hour VAT exempt)	£56.00	£56.00
Table Tennis		
60 minutes Adult	£3.70	£4.10
60 minutes Child/EP	£2.20	£2.50
60 minutes Wirral Passport A	£2.80	£3.10
Tennis		
Outdoor Court Adult	£9.00	£10.00
Outdoor Court Child/EP	£5.40	£6.00
Outdoor Court WPA	£3.40	£3.70
Indoor Court (Peak) Adult	£22.00	£24.20
Indoor Court (Peak) Child/EP	£13.50	£14.50
Indoor Court (Peak) Wirral Passport A	£16.50	£18.10
Indoor Court (Off Peak) Adult	£15.00	£16.50
Indoor Court (Off Peak) Child/EP	£9.00	£9.90
Indoor Court (Off Peak) Wirral Passport A	£11.25	£12.40
Outdoor Court Wirral Passport A	£3.40	£3.70
Indoor Guest Fee (when playing with an Invigor8 member) Adult	£2.50	£2.50
Indoor Guest Fee (when playing with an Invigor8 member) Child/EP	£2.70	£1.50
Indoor Guest Fee (when playing with an Invigor8 member) Wirral Passport A	£2.00	£2.00





2017/18 Budget Proposals

Scrutiny Report of People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

January 2017

DRAFT

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1. INTRODUCTION

A dedicated 2017/18 budget proposals workshop for Members of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee was held on the Tuesday 10th January 2017. This provided the committee members with the opportunity to examine in greater detail a number of budget proposals affecting services that fall under the remit of the committee. All of the budget proposals within the remit of the Committee were selected for further examination by the Chair and Party Spokespersons. This report summarises the proposals scrutinised and the comments and suggestions of Members attending the workshop.

2. SPECIALIST TRANSPORT

Summary of Proposal

The annual combined transport budget for the Integrated Transport Unit in 2016/17 is £6.8m, of which the children's transport budget is £5.4m and adults of £1.4m. The aim is to reduce demand for specialist transport and related costs for the Council and to improve the quality of life and outcomes for residents by encouraging increased levels of independent travel. This will enable a planned budget saving of £500k in 2017/18. This proposal relates to Wirral Council provision only; not Liverpool City Region (LCR).

The detail of the project is currently being developed although the scope of the work will include:

- In and out of borough SEN / LAC to special and mainstream schools;
- Adult transport services;
- Travel training;
- Mainstream school transport;
- Post 16 to 19 transport.

Commissioning / Contracts: SAVING	17/18 £m	18/19 £m	19/20 £m	20/21 £m	TOTAL £m
Specialist Transport	0.50	-	-	-	0.50

Source: Wirral Borough Council, Cabinet report, 8th December 2016

Committee Members' Comments

- The principle of independent travel training is supported. However members expressed concern about the potential for this to contribute to the savings target given the reluctance by some parents / carers to participate in the scheme. Members were reassured that the travel training service has worked very well enabling greater independence for service users and providing a number of excellent case studies.
- It is appreciated by Members that this service review is likely to lead to concern from service users and carers. It is important that the views of service users and carers are incorporated into the review and there is evidence of user involvement in the review.
- There is a risk in agreeing that the service review will produce a saving of £500k without having sufficient detail available to confirm that the saving is achievable.
- Given the amount of work that will be required in the project, Members queried whether the full saving of £500k would be achievable in the first year (that is, 2017/18).

- Although some of the proposals were described as “quick wins”, greater detail regarding the impact of those specific proposals would be beneficial.
- Members were reassured that a full impact assessment will be undertaken before any proposals are implemented.
- An assessment needs to take place to split the potential savings between contractual value and care packages as savings relating to packages of care will be accounted for elsewhere (within the Adult social care budget). There is, therefore, a danger of double-counting an element of the saving.
- Members expressed concern regarding the likely impact of the proposals on staff and urged the involvement of the trade unions at the earliest appropriate opportunity.

3. PUBLIC HEALTH (RENEGOTIATED CONTRACTS)

Summary of Proposal

The public health grant is allocated to local authorities to support the delivery of public health outcomes. The grant is ring-fenced and cannot be used to make savings. However, it can be used to invest in public health activity which might release savings elsewhere within the Council. The funding identified under this budget proposal falls into that category and decisions will need to be made as to where the £3m should be invested. The investment will be aligned against those pledges which have a public health outcome component.

A significant element of the reduction in spend contained in this budget proposal comes from commissioning new models of delivery of public health interventions during the past two years.

Commissioning / Contracts: SAVING	17/18 £m	18/19 £m	19/20 £m	20/21 £m	TOTAL £m
Public Health (Renegotiated Contracts)	3.0	-	-	-	3.0

Source: Wirral Borough Council, Cabinet report, 8th December 2016

Committee Members' Comments

- A member commented about the positive impact of the Get Into Reading programme. It was explained that the programme is now delivered in a different way with an increased role for volunteers. A retained investment of £25k will support the future delivery of the programme.
- A member commented that, as the value of some contracts are reduced (for example, the 3% savings per annum agreed as part of the drug and alcohol tender), there is a risk that either the same level of service is not achievable or additional funding is requested by providers to uphold service levels.
- Members were informed that there was an absolute cut in the public health grant for 2016/17 and there will be an additional reduction for 2017/18. It is prudent in the current climate to expect further reductions in future years.
- It was noted that the £50k contribution from the public health budget for the School Hub project had ceased in 2016/17. Members were informed that this had previously been short-term pump priming funding. Members welcomed that alternative funding, albeit at a lower level, had been made found from within the Children's Services budget.

4. DELIVERY OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Summary of Proposal

There are budgetary pressures within the Adult Social Services budget for 2017/18 relating to:

Inflation	£1.8m
Fees-related	£2.5m
Demographic – older people	£1.8m
Demographic – learning disabilities	£0.7m
Total	£6.8m

This is partly offset by additional income:

Adult Social Care Precept 2% per year	£2.5m
Improved Better Care Fund	£1.4m
Total	£3.9m

Net saving required £2.9m

Delivering Differently: SAVING	17/18 £m	18/19 £m	19/20 £m	20/21 £m	TOTAL £m
Adult Social Care Integration (Saving)	2.90	4.00	3.50	4.00	14.40

Source: Wirral Borough Council, Cabinet report, 8th December 2016

Members were further informed, that subsequent to the Cabinet report (8th December), the Government had announced that local authorities will have the option to re-profile the Adult Social Care Precept. In addition to the original option of implementing a 2% increase in Council Tax for each of three years (as agreed by Cabinet on 8th December 2016), there is now an alternative approach of a 3% increase for the first two years. Using the second option would result in the £2.9m spending gap for 2017/18 being further reduced. This is now subject to a further Cabinet decision. An additional transformation project to review provision of learning disabilities and mental health services is also due to be launched.

Committee Members' Comments

- Members were reassured that the anticipated £700k saving on commissioning which was part of the Social Care Integration project have been largely achieved in 2016/17.
- Members welcome the relative increase in social care funding compared to recent years although recognise that this is likely to be offset by increased demand for services.
- Members acknowledge that there is uncertainty in the proposal to review the learning disabilities and mental health services. Once the project has been developed, members look forward to receiving further detail in due course. The review will focus on the elements of services provided by health and by social care; and who pays for what. The emergence of new services such as mobile nights will also be incorporated.
- Members acknowledge that pay levels are a significant issue in the care sector. Members welcome the proposed increase in wage for staff, particularly in domiciliary care.

5. LCR INTEGRATION OF ADULT SAFEGUARDING

Summary of Proposal

Four local authorities from within the LCR (Sefton, Knowsley, Liverpool and Wirral) have agreed, in principle, to create a single Adult Safeguarding Board. This will enable the development of one set of criteria and standards. An Executive Board will remain within each local authority to review local performance and, in particular, to link with local partners. The new Safeguarding Board will be serviced by staff from Wirral. Therefore, a re-charging process (with the other three boroughs) delivers a saving for Wirral.

Commissioning / Contracts: SAVING	17/18 £m	18/19 £m	19/20 £m	20/21 £m	TOTAL £m
LCR Integration of Adult Safeguarding	0.20	-	-	-	0.20

Source: Wirral Borough Council, Cabinet report, 8th December 2016

Committee Members' Comments

- Members were reassured that there is no risk relating to the monitoring of safeguarding in the borough. Expertise and knowledge will be shared with the neighbouring authorities.

6. CHILDREN'S SERVICES – MANAGING DEMAND

Summary of Proposal

The Medium Term Financial Plan identifies Children's Services savings, to be achieved through managing demand for services and providing a total saving of £10m over four years. The initial saving is £1.4m in 2017/18.

These savings do not take money out of the budget; instead they contain increased pressure from:

- Inflation (fostering and other allowances)
- Increases in the number of children supported / allowances paid (for example, Special Guardianship Orders)
- Temporary support from contingency

Given the current budget position and the forecast overspend of £5.3m in the current year this is a challenging target.

The current pressures highlighted to Members included:

- Increasing numbers of children looked after, currently 749 (compared to 705 on 4th July 2015);
- Increasing numbers of children with a child protection plan, currently 447 (compared to 393 on 4th July 2015);
- Increasing overall numbers of children in need, currently 2909 (compared to 2712 on 4th July 2015);
- and increasing numbers of children who are supported financially.

The response to the Children's Services Ofsted report to transform children's services is being finalised. This will underpin the Improvement Plan which was submitted to Ofsted and the Department for Education on 23rd December 2016. This will improve services through focusing on:

- Prevention, earlier intervention and early help;
- Children's plans, placements and permanence;
- A strong, qualified and experienced, stable workforce.

The Improvement Plan will require significant investment from the Transformation Fund and capital receipts. The investment is made on the basis that it will secure lasting improvement and reductions in the cost of services.

Delivering Differently: SAVING	17/18 £m	18/19 £m	19/20 £m	20/21 £m	TOTAL £m
Children's Services – Managing Demand	1.40	3.70	3.70	1.20	10.00

Source: Wirral Borough Council, Cabinet report, 8th December 2016

Committee Members' Comments

- Members concluded that the ability to deliver the savings were fundamentally dependent on the Council being able to effectively implement the Improvement Plan for Children's Services. It is critical that the demand for services in children's social care is reduced
- A Member commented that Children's Services is, and will continue to, undergo considerable cultural change. There is a concern regarding the level of change that can be achieved quickly.
- A Member raised the tension between having to bid for money from the Transformation Fund in order to enable change, yet some reduction in the demand for services is also required in the short-term.

Appendix 1 – Workshop Attendance

Members of People Overview & Scrutiny Committee:

Moira McLaughlin (Chair)
Bruce Berry
Alan Brighthouse
Wendy Clements
Angela Davies
Treena Johnson
Chris Meaden
Tony Norbury
Walter Smith
Tom Usher
Warren Ward

Councillors also in attendance:

Phil Gilchrist
Tony Smith
Janette Williamson

Officers:

Clare Fish	Executive Director of Strategy
Fiona Johnstone	Director of Health & Wellbeing (DPH)
Graham Hodgkinson	Director for Care and Health
Julia Hassall	Director of Children's Services
Andrew Roberts	Senior Manager, Finance
Julie Barnes	Lead Commissioner – Transport and Technology
Patrick Torpey	Scrutiny Officer
Alan Veitch	Scrutiny Officer

Apologies:

Councillor Cherry Povall

APPENDIX 4 – DRAFT MINUTE EXTRACT

BUSINESS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 24 JANUARY 2017

50 BUDGET PROPOSALS WORKSHOP

In view of the presence of a large number of public, the Chair agreed to vary the order of business and take this item next.

A report from the Chair presented the work of Business Overview & Scrutiny Committee in relation to scrutinising the 2017/18 budget proposals. A workshop had been held on 9 January for Members to explore in more detail the various budget proposals being put forward that fell under the remit of this committee. A report on the workshop was included as an appendix to the report. The Committee was requested to acknowledge this report as its response to the 2017/18 budget proposals to be referred on to Cabinet as part of its considerations in developing any budget recommendation to Council.

The Chair reiterated for the benefit of the public present that this Committee would only be discussing these proposals put forward by officers and no decisions were being taken.

Rob Clifford, Senior Manager – Commissioning, gave a presentation to the Committee on the details of the budget savings proposals for car parking charges. This included the proposals:

- To increase parking charges by 50p on all existing tariffs.
- To introduce a flat rate daily tariff of £4 for parking at Country Parks – Arrowe Country Park, Eastham Country Park, Royden Country Park, Wirral Country Park with charges at Birkenhead Park being introduced in 2018/19.
- To introduce charging at locations where parking was currently free including some locations in New Brighton, West Kirby, Hoylake, Heswall, Liscard, Bromborough, Bebington, Irby, Upton and Moreton.

The total savings generated by these proposals would amount to £1.3m over 2017/18 and 2018/19.

The Chair then opened the matter up for debate by the Committee.

Councillor Blakeley expressed his disappointment that Members didn't have the details on the proposals until last Wednesday, whereas it was made available to the press on the Friday before that. He suggested that officers had been secretive with the information. He remarked that the presentation had referred to the factoring in of drops in usage of car parks but had any assessment been made of the impact on side streets if parking charges were introduced in shopping areas and commented that it would do nothing to enhance the shopping experience.

The Chair stated that what was happening now was pre-decision scrutiny and it was ludicrous to suggest any secretiveness on the part of officers. No decisions had been made whatsoever and the proposals were out for public consultation.

The Assistant Chief Executive informed the meeting that the proposals formed part of a £33m package of measures put forward to go towards savings of £42m which were needed for 2017/18. He elaborated on the issue of information appearing in the press and stated that two entirely separate processes had been followed, one in which at the closed workshop Members had asked for a presentation to this Committee and secondly an enquiry made to the press office which the press officer was able to answer using information from the Statutory Notice which was being prepared for publication in the local press.

Responding to comments, Rob Clifford stated that an estimate had been made of a 30 per cent reduction in the use of the country parks' car parks if the proposals were introduced but no detailed assessment had been made with regard to side streets around shopping centres. The proposals were purely about addressing the budget gap.

Councillor Ellis commented that Cabinet had made a serious error and that there would be very serious repercussions for shopping centres within the borough with many smaller shops having to close down.

The Chair stated that the Council was losing a further £42m from its 2017/18 budget and because of Government cuts the Council would cease to exist as it was known now by 2020. The Council had been forced into a corner since 2010.

Councillor Mitchell as well as raising the issue of Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the issue of local authorities raising revenue through car parking, also referred to the impact on surrounding areas to where parking charges could be introduced and the fact that two country parks, Eastham and Wirral, had two of the longest cul-de-sacs on Wirral.

In response Rob Clifford stated that there were two streams of parking income, one from off-street parking (Section 32 and 33) which could be used for any traffic related budgetary purposes and the other from on street parking (Section 55) in which the income was restricted to the costs incurred by the Council in policing or the provision or maintenance of off-street parking.

Councillor Abbey reminded the Committee that officers were the authors of this document and that they were proposals with no decisions having yet been taken. There was a need for more evidence as to the impacts these proposals could have.

Responding to further comments from Members, Rob Clifford stated that there was no other consultation proposed other than through the Traffic Regulation Order notices in the press and the consultation with this Committee. The proposals had been copied to the four Constituency Managers who would have greater awareness of groups within their respective areas to consult with. All parking revenue data was published each year and enforcement of parking charges was not used as a revenue raising tool.

The Chair commented that no pay and display machines had been procured but that officers had been given authority to find out the costs if it was needed. He agreed that the matter should be looked at by the Committee from a public health point of view.

Councillor Ward referred to the huge cuts in funding from the Government which had led to officers having to put forward unpalatable proposals such as this. The report, however, was seriously lacking in vital information to enable the Committee to scrutinise the positive and negative impacts of the proposals.

Responding to further comments the Assistant Chief Executive commented that procurement processes had commenced and officers did carry out preliminary discussions as they had to plan as if the proposals were adopted to ensure a full year's income from the proposals. Rob Clifford confirmed that the Cabinet Member had signed off the commencement of a procurement process and the Chair stated that this was due process.

The Chair, in response to a suggestion from Councillor Blakeley, stated that he would not allow any members of the public to speak.

It was then moved by Councillor Ward, and seconded by Councillor Abbey –

“That this Committee requests officers to develop a full report which considers the impact on small businesses, traffic and the wider community to enable Councillors to fully scrutinise all aspects of the affects which may occur in an increase or implementation of parking charges.”

It was then moved as an amendment by Councillor Blakeley and seconded by Councillor Steve Williams, that –

- “1. Committee notes the numerous petitions of objection, totalling over 15,000 signatures to date.
2. Committee notes the level of public anger and opposition to these proposals.
3. Committee recognises the potential damage the introduction of car parking charges will do to the already struggling town centre shopping areas.
4. Committee also recognises that charging for parking in Country Parks, with an estimated drop in usage of 30% of users will have a detrimental effect on public health.”

It was then moved as a further amendment by Councillor Mitchell and seconded by Councillor Blakeley, that –

“The option not be taken up by Cabinet.”

The amendment moved by Councillor Mitchell was put and lost (6:9).

The amendment moved by Councillor Blakeley was put and lost (6:9)

The motion was then put and carried (10:5).

Resolved (10:5) - That this Committee requests officers to develop a full report which considers the impact on small businesses, traffic and the wider community to enable Councillors to fully scrutinise all aspects of the affects which may occur in an increase or implementation of parking charges.

APPENDIX 6 – DRAFT MINUTE EXTRACT

PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 FEBRUARY 2017

43 BUDGET 2017/18 SCRUTINY

A report from the Chair presented the work of People Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to pre-scrutiny the 2017/18 budget proposals. A workshop had been held on 10 January 2017 for Members to explore in more detail the various budget proposals being put forward that fell under the remit of this committee. A report on the workshop was included as an appendix to the report. The Committee was requested to acknowledge this report as its response to the 2017/18 budget proposals to be referred on to Cabinet as part of its considerations in developing any budget recommendation to Council.

Members noted the report content that covered the 5 key service areas falling under the Committee's remit namely:

- Specialist Transport;
- Public Health (Renegotiated Contracts);
- Delivery of Social Care;
- LCR Integration of Adult Safeguarding; and
- Children's Services Managing Demand.

The report appendix provided a summary of the budget proposals scrutinised and listed comments and suggestions of Members who had attended the workshop.

The Chair informed that Members could make suggestions for budget saving at any point in the process, and these would be fed into the consultation.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) That the report and the Committee's response to the 2017/18 budget proposals be noted; and**
- (2) the report be referred to Cabinet as part of its considerations in developing any budget recommendation to Council.**

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APPENDIX 5 – DRAFT MINUTE EXTRACT

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 31 JANUARY 2017

42. 2017/18 BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT

A report from the Chair presented the work of Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee in relation to scrutinising the 2017/18 budget proposals. A workshop had been held on 18 January for Members to explore in more detail the various budget proposals being put forward that fell under the remit of this committee. A report on the workshop was included as an appendix to the report. The Committee was requested to acknowledge this report as its response to the 2017/18 budget proposals to be referred on to Cabinet as part of its considerations in developing any budget recommendation to Council.

The Chair then opened the matter up for debate by the Committee.

Councillor Walsh indicated that in relation to the comments captured on the proposal for garden waste collection he reiterated that his comments were that the Council should look into increasing the charge for additional garden waste bins.

The Chair indicated that at any point Members could make suggestions for budget saving and these would be fed into the consultation.

Cllr Muspratt asked for the targeting of the dog fouling patrol to concentrate on areas where it could best enforce Council policy, as she believed the Council to be unable to fine individuals in certain green spaces that were currently patrolled.

Councillor Carubia suggested that the Council should consider ceasing the Wirral View as this was a cost to the Council. In response Councillor Sullivan reported that the publication was delivered at no extra cost, therefore the suggestion that the publication relied on additional investment was inaccurate.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) That the report and the Committee's response to the 2017/18 budget proposals be noted; and**
- (2) the report be referred to Cabinet as part of its considerations in developing any budget recommendation to Council.**

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COUNCILLOR TONY SMITH

CABINET
20 FEBRUARY 2017
SCHOOLS BUDGET AND
FORMULA FUNDING CHANGES 2017/18

Councillor Tony Smith, Cabinet Member - Children and Family Services, said:

“The performance of Wirral schools continues to go from strength to strength. We committed in our Wirral Plan to do all we could to continue to support our schools and ensure that every child in the borough has the opportunity of a good education, and good career.

Ensuring our schools have the resources in place to continue to improve and provide our young people with an excellent education is vital to the future of our borough.”

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the Schools Budget for 2017/18 having previously been considered by the Schools Forum at their meeting on 18 January 2017

The Schools Budget covers education provision for all Wirral Pupils aged up to 16 in Early Years, Primary, Secondary and academy schools and for some pupils up to the age of 25 in Special Schools and High Needs providers.

Most budgets are delegated to schools with some central provision for support services including school admissions, PFI and High Needs.

The report proposes a number of changes to the funding formula for Early Years to take account of national changes and increased resources. There are also changes proposed to High Needs places and funding.

The Schools Budget provides resources to support all children and young people pledges.

The budget affects all Wards and is a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet recommends the Schools Budget of £252,127,600 to Budget Council having taken account of the views and formula proposals from the Schools Forum that:

- i) That the delegation of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) costs to schools are approved, subject to finalising amended schools agreements and confirmation from the Education Funding Agency (EFA).
- ii) That the in continuing Contributions to Combined Budgets should be £875,600
- iii) Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserves totalling £568,900 should be used to set the Schools Budget.
- iv) There is a contribution to the cost of Education Services Grant (ESG) retained duties of £730,000.
- v) The funding for Education Services Grant (ESG) General Duties and School Improvement is agreed.
- vi) There is a transfer of £106,000 from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block following the transfer of central budgets to schools
- vii) The amendments to High Needs places and to the High Needs Formula are implemented from September 2017.
- viii) The Schools Forum review budgets and demands for High Needs alongside plans to undertake a review of High Needs provision following receipt of a national grant allocation of £132,000 for that purpose.
- ix) The changes to the Early Years Funding formula resulting from the receipt of additional funding are agreed with effect from the 1 April.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council has a legal requirement to set a schools budget for the following financial year.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Forum considered a number of options when considering the Schools Budget with regard to the continuation of funding for services previously funded by the Education Services Grant and proposals for School Improvement, Early Years and High Needs funding. These are described in more detail in the report

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Schools Forum were asked for their views on and approval of the Schools Budget for 2017/18 on 18 January 2017. The budget of £252,127,600 is for early years, maintained schools, academies, colleges and providers and is based on Dedicated Schools Grant allocations issued by the Department for Education on 20 December 2016, DSG reserves and a Council contribution to PFI costs of £763,500.

- 3.2 The format of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is changing following lengthy discussion and more recent consultation. In 2017/18 there will be a new national formula for Early Years, whilst changes for the Schools and High Needs have been deferred for 12 months, therefore allocations are broadly similar to previous years.

In summary the main changes to DSG in 2017/18 are:

- A new Early Years block increasing hourly rates paid to providers (by £1.4 million).
- Additional grant to cover the 15 hour extension of Early Years for working parents from September 2017 (£2.4 million).
- The transfer of funding for Education Services Grant Retained Duties of £730,000.
- The transfer of High Needs funding for post 16 FE places of £780,000.
- Additional High Needs funding (growth) of £550,000.

- 3.2.1 Within DSG the 3 unringfenced spending blocks indicate the level of expenditure anticipated in each budget area. At present local spending decisions can reallocate resources according to needs and priorities eg from Schools areas to High Needs or vice versa. Locally a small movement has been made to take account of the distribution of budgets to special schools that were previously held centrally (School Improvement, CLC's etc). This has resulted in a transfer of £106,000. Taking account of the National Funding Formula some of this adjustment may only be possible for 1 year.

3.2.2 The allocations for the Schools funding block have been updated for changes in pupil numbers and include academies. Pupil numbers are from the October 2016 census.

3.2.3 Early Years funding is based on a combination of the census in January 2017 and January 2018. The dates for the Early Years Census mean that the exact DSG will not be finalised until June 2018. The grant used for the budget is based on current indicative figures (using the January 2016 census) and any known or anticipated changes after this date eg for the 15 hour extension in September 2017.

3.2.4 The High Needs Block provides resources to fund high needs students aged 0 – 24, including the Hospital School. Funding has been transferred for baseline place numbers at Wirral Met College (72) and Birkenhead 6th Form College (60) and additional funding has been provided to meet growing needs across all authorities. For Wirral an additional £550,000 has been included for this. Growth can be used flexibly to make adjustments locally to high needs places as well as to the top ups provided and a number of changes are described in this report.

3.2.5 The Blocks in their current format can be summarised as follows:

	Block	Pupil Numbers	Funding Per Pupil £	Allocation £
1.	Schools Block	43,024	4,552.86	195,882,200
2.	Early Years Block	3,116	4,094.50	12,757,600
	Early Years Extension(7/12)	1,014	4,094.50	2,423,600
	2 Year Old funding	782	4,959.00	3,877,900
	Nursery Protection			517,900
	Disability Access Fund			100,000
	Early Years Pupil Premium			180,000
3.	High Needs Block			<u>35,056,000</u>
			Total	<u>250,795,200</u>

3.2.6 Schools Block £196 million

This funding covers the delegated budgets to mainstream schools and academies. In addition the block funds a number of budgets that are managed centrally on behalf of schools:

- Admissions.
- Schools Forum.
- Capital Expenditure from Revenue (PPM and PFI costs).
- Contributions to combined budgets.
- Schools budget retirement costs (school closure).
- School Licences.

The treatment of these budgets is in accordance with national guidance. The changes to a number of areas are considered later in this report.

3.2.7 Early Years Block £20 million

This Block funds the costs of Early Years Education for 2, 3 and 4 year old children in schools, nurseries and private voluntary and independent providers for both the universal and targeted entitlement. Most of this funding is directed through the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF).

There are small elements covering SEN costs and some central Early Years support costs. Amounts held centrally are within the new nationally defined limits.

3.2.8 High Needs Block £35 million

The make up of this block is complex. It is based on the “place plus” funding system introduced by the DfE in April 2013 and includes:

- Special schools (pre and post 16), school bases and non-maintained special schools. All receive a base level funding of £10,000 per place.
- Alternative Provision Bases and Emslie Morgan Academy funding of £10,000 per place.
- Place funding in Wirral’s FE provision at Wirral Met College and Birkenhead 6th Form College of £6,000 per place.
- Additional funding over and above that provided for places in the form of “top ups” provided on a per pupil basis. The top up, or “plus” element of funding, takes account of the agreed assessed needs of pupils and is paid by the “commissioner” responsible; this may be Wirral Children’s Services, a school or another Local Authority. Wirral’s top up system uses 5 bands to allocate funding across special schools, resourced bases and alternative provision. Non-maintained Special Schools also receive a top up.
- The costs of Top Ups for all education and training for post 16 specialist provision for Learners with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LLDD) in colleges and private providers.
- The Hospital Schools budget.
- The cost of placements in Independent Special Schools.
- The costs of Education, Health and Care Plans / Statements.
- The provision centrally of SEN support.

3.3 Academies

Currently there are 16 secondary academies, 2 primary academies and 1 Alternative Provision Academy – Emslie Morgan. Academies are independent from the local authority and are funded directly from the EFA, however Regulations still require Wirral to calculate their budgets in order to determine the total grant reduction; for Wirral this is estimated to be £76 million in 2017/18.

3.4 2017/18 Schools Budget savings

There are no specific budget savings proposed within the Schools Budget report.

3.5 2017-18 School Budget Changes

3.5.1 Primary, Secondary and Academy Budgets £195 million

The significant changes within this area are:

- The net increase in school rolls, resulting in an overall budget increase of £2 million. There are 508 more pupils on roll in October 2016 compared to October 2015. The estimated secondary numbers for pupils aged 11-15 have risen from 17,031 to 17,183 an increase of 132 (1%). Primary numbers have also increased from 25,486 to 25,842 (a 1.4% increase)
- An increase in rates payable of £44,800. There is an overall increase reflecting inflation, rates revaluation and transitional relief.
- A number of budgets that were previously held at the centre totalling £4 million have now been delegated to schools. These changes take account of the proposals for services supported by ESG and the EFA's updated guidance on Historic Commitments and Combined Budgets.
- Delegation includes:
Remaining CLC budgets (excluding PFI), Wellbeing and Staff Surveys of £206,000.
School Improvement £27,000 and School Intervention £485,000.
PPlanned Programmed Maintenance £224,000.
The PFI Affordability Gap of £3,036,500, which has been increased by the estimated cost of inflation - £150,000.
- There is a small amount of Headroom within the budget. This arises from a difference between the pupil funding received in DSG for rising primary rolls and the primary funding allocated within the ISB. Allowing for a small increase in Business Rates, there is a balance remaining of £272,400. This headroom, together with part of the remaining City Learning Centre budget provides the additional funding for PFI schools of £400,000.
- School budgets continue to be supported by reserves; £380,000 will be used in 2016/17. These are one-off balances and are not likely to continue beyond 2017/18 or be included with the new National Funding Formula.

3.5.2 6th Form Funding

The Schools Budget includes funding for High Needs students in 6th Forms. All other post 16 funding is through the National Formula.

3.5.3 High Needs Places £16.0 million

From 2017/18 the place funding for students in Further Education (Wirral Met College and Birkenhead 6th Form) has been transferred into this budget and all future changes to provision will be made from the within this budget and the overall resources available.

Places in specialist provision within Local Authority areas continue to be determined by each LA in consultation with schools and providers. There is flexibility to make adjustments so that places broadly reflected take up by pupils and a number of place changes have been proposed by Wirral. These have been reported to the EFA where necessary and have been reflected in the Schools Budget as follows:

FYE of changes made in 2016/17

Elleray Park increase by 11 places to 110
Stanley increase by 21 places to 120
Lyndale closure and reduction of 40 places
Claremount increase by 10 to 204
Bebington ERP reduce by 5 to 20
Birkenhead Park ERP reduce by 10 to 10
Kingsway Academy ERP reduce by 10 to 20
Birkenhead 6th Form reduce by 5 to 60
Wirral Met College increase by 12 to 72

Changes from September 2017

Claremount increase by 12 to 216
Townfield ERP increase by 1 from 11 to 12
Hilbre ERP increase by 15 to 30
Kingsway Academy ERP closure and reduce by 20
Birkenhead Park closure and reduce by 10
Emslie Morgan AP increase by 20 to 100
Birkenhead 6th Form increase by 5 to 65
Wirral Met College increase by 45 to 117
There are no changes proposed to the Hospital School

The place value changes have an additional cost of £165,600 in 2017/18 and a further £199,000 (FYE) in 2018/19..

3.5.4 Early Years £18.9 million

The provision for 3 and 4 year olds is based on 5,193 children (3,116 FTE) and will roll over at its current level. The EFA have estimated that 1,690 (1/3rd) will take up the extended offer in September 2017 and provision for this has been included within the budget.

The budget reflects the changes to the Early Years Funding Formula which is reported elsewhere on the agenda. The average hourly rate (including supplements) has increased from £3.68 to £4.00, a 9% increase.

Take up of the 2 year old offer has increased during the year and is currently at 80% of those children where eligibility is indicated (1,303 children = 782 FTE). The overall funding has also increased and in 2017/18 it is planned that the hourly rate should increase from £4.85 to £5.12, a 6% increase.

The estimated value of the Early Years Pupil Premium is £180,000, reflecting a take up of about 11%.

3.5.5 SEN Top Ups £17.8 million

The proposed budget for SEN Top Ups is £17.8 million. There is an increase / growth within the High Needs DSG Block of £550,000. Some further information is needed from the EFA to confirm the final adjustments that will be made.

Growth has been allocated to increased places in maintained and Independent Special Schools and to increased top ups as follows.

SEN Top Ups 2017/18

	2016/17	2017/18
	£	£
Statements (£4,174,800)		
Early Years	292,200	450,000
Primary	1,460,000	1,585,000
Secondary (including 6th Forms)	1,827,000	1,920,000
Personal Budgets	108,500	108,500
Other	111,300	111,300
Top Ups (£13,608,500)		
Special Schools (and 6th Forms)	6,406,300	6,527,400
SEN units - resourced and alternative provision	602,000	704,000
EMAP	243,800	367,000
Further Education, 6th Form College and providers	728,000	946,000
Exceptional Need	645,000	504,100
Nursing support	127,100	127,100
Contingency	434,000	314,000
Independent Non Maintained Special Schools	3,689,000	3,770,000
Home Teaching	308,900	348,900
Total	16,983,100	17,783,300

Changes which have been identified as part of the budget review are:

Special Schools. The top up budgets have been increased by £121,100, reflecting additional numbers and also the delegation of central budgets for School Improvement etc.

Statements. A net increase of £375,800, increasing provision within Early Years by 50% and a greater number / cost of IPFA's / EHCP's.

Independent Special Schools. An increase of £81,000. There are currently 89 places, over half of which are at West Kirby Residential School. The proposed budget takes account of these numbers and makes provision for 19 leavers at the end of the summer term and 7 new placements.

Further Education and 6th Form College. An increase of £218,000, mainly in respect of the additional numbers identified in FE college provision.

Exceptional Need a reduction of £141,000. This budget was increased temporarily in 2016-17 to fund the increasing numbers and cost of support of complex and challenging children with high needs. Some pressures have been contained during the year, further work is needed and will be the subject of ongoing reviews.

Contingency. The contingency of £314,000 covers the potential costs of:

- The 90% guarantee to maintained schools to limit the demands on low cost high incidence SEN budgets used to support statements.
- Any unforeseen consequences arising from top ups, exceptional cases or the review of High Needs.
- Any mismatch between provider places and places taken up.
- Inflationary pressures within Non Maintained Special Schools.

The remaining budget is thought to be sufficient at this time taking account of the known commitments in the current year. However there is now little flexibility, meaning budgets will need to be closely monitored.

This is a brief description of the changes that have been put in place with an increased cost overall of £1.2 million. Locally and nationally there are significant budget pressures for High Needs. These have been eased by growth within the High Needs Block Grant allocation and funding from Early Years. However this growth alone does not address all needs. The use of reserves and contingencies give only temporary funding; a more permanent budget framework will need to be established alongside the new national High Needs Formula from 2018/19.

3.6 **Use of Reserves**

DSG reserves held total £2.5 million and were agreed as part of the year end accounts for 2015/16. The Schools Budget for 2016/17 is likely to use £0.9 million of these.

In the 2017/18 budget £0.6 million of reserves will also be used (£380,000 within Schools and £189,000 in High Needs).

This leaves reserves of £1 million which are assigned mainly to costs of pay harmonisation.

3.7 **Other Grant Funding**

The meal rate for Universal Infant Free School meals will stay at £2.30 per meal for the academic year 2017/18.

The SEND Implementation Grant will continue (with funding increased to £217,000 from £196,000) to support the implementation of SEND reforms. In addition a grant is provided to all LA's to support a strategic review of High Needs provision, Wirral has received £132,000.

The funding for Primary PE and Sport and Extended Rights for Home to School Transport are still to be confirmed but are likely to continue.

There is an Education Services Transitional Grant of £943,000. This provides funding for the period April to August 2017 to provide Education Services to maintained schools associated with School Improvement, Education Social Workers, Premature Retirement Costs and other statutory duties. From September however funding is withdrawn. Following guidance from the EFA which says “We recognise the LA’s will need to use other sources of funding for Education Services once the General Funding Rate has been removed”, maintained schools with the agreement of Schools Forum will contribute £291,600. Proposals for ESG are considered later in this report.

3.8 INFLATION

No direct provision is included within the budget for pay awards. At this stage a 1% award for teaching and support staff is anticipated alongside an Apprenticeship Levy of 0.5%. The additional costs arising from these changes in schools together with the full year effect of changes in 2016/17 will need to be met from existing school budgets.

There is no general provision for price inflation, although costs for school rates and PFI continue to reflect RPI increases.

3.9 CENTRALLY HELD SCHOOL BUDGETS

The budgets held for Contingency, Special Staff (maternity and trade union duties), the School Library Service, Insurance (Governors Aided), Behaviour Support, the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service and FSM Eligibility have been delegated to schools. Schools Forum have de-delegated these areas so they can be held centrally (with the exception of Secondary Insurance).

In addition and new for this year are decisions for the de-delegation of costs associated with School Improvement and General Duties as they relate to the former Education Services Grant.

The centrally held budgets for 2017/18 cover:

- the continuing premature retirement costs of teachers and staff that have arisen from closing schools (£60,000 a reduction of £26,000).
- the cost of licences for copyright and music in all schools and academies resulting from a national agreement (£226,100 an increase of £2,300).
- School Admissions (£341,800).
- Contributions to combined budgets (£875,600).
- Schools Forum £10,600.
- Early Years £518,700.
- The Council funded element of the PFI Affordability Gap £763,500 (including an inflationary increase of £150,000).
- Retained duties re the former Education Services Grant of £730,000.

3.10 Contributions to Combined Budgets

School Funding Regulations continue to allow contributions to support services that would otherwise fall outside the Schools Budget. These budgets combine with other council resources for the educational benefit of children.

There must be no new commitments or increases in expenditure from that agreed in 2012/13 (as confirmed by the EFA in their publication "2017 to 2018 schools funding : historic commitments supplementary guidance for LA's").

The budgets are shown below:-

Discretionary Rate Relief £106,600

This budget funds continuing costs for Discretionary Rate Relief in Voluntary Aided schools.

School Improvement £330,000 (previously £359,900)

This budget supports the continuing funding for existing staff with permanent contracts (3 + admin support).

Local Safeguarding Children's Board £30,000

The LSCB provides governance of child protection arrangements, undertakes serious case reviews, training and employs a Designated Officer for Allegations. The Board is funded from partner organisations including Social Care, Schools, Police, Health and Probation. The £30,000 contribution from the Central Schools Budget matches the amount received from Health. There is also a £10,000 contribution from the High Needs Budget.

School Intervention £136,000 (previously £674,500)

This budget supports the continuing funding for 2 existing staff. The remaining intervention budgets have been delegated to schools.

PFI - City Learning Centres £68,500 (previously £304,700)

The 3 City Learning Centres closed in summer 2016 after which budgets were delegated to schools. There is an ongoing requirement to fund PFI costs for 2 of the 3 buildings. Provision has been made within the council for some costs (£115,700) and also the Home Tuition Service (£40,000). This residual budget is required until a more lasting solution is found.

PFI Support £61,800

A small team within Asset Management manages the PFI contract on behalf of the Council and provides support / advice to PFI schools. This budget provides part of the funding needed to support the ongoing contract management.

LACES £140,500

The service reviews the educational progress of Looked After Children, provides training to staff and some direct support to pupils.

Combined Budget Summary		£
Discretionary Rate Relief top ups		106,600
School Improvement		330,000
LSCB Contribution		30,000
School Intervention		136,000
PFI – CLC's		68,500
LACES		140,500
PFI Support Team		61,800
Governors Forum		2,200
Total		875,600

3.11 Education Services Grant £730,000

In the 2015 Spending review the DfE announced a saving of £600m by removing the ESG General Funding rate for schools from 2017/18. The ESG General rate represents spend on statutory support to maintained schools (not academies), which in future will cover functions such as Internal Audit, aspects of LMS / Finance, Children's Services support, school redundancies and some costs of asset management.

At the same time the EFA have transferred an amount in respect of ESG Retained Duties for all schools and academies into DSG. These duties also cover some of the above and in addition the work of the Education Social Work service. The transferred amount of £730,000 is based on an amount of £15 per pupil.

The Schools Forum agreed to transfer this amount to the Council budget as a contribution to ESG retained services.

In addition £291,600 was agreed (and de-delegated) on behalf of Maintained Primary, Secondary and Special schools towards the part year costs of ESG General Duties from September 2017 (full year cost £500,000).

The position is summarised in the table.

ESG Services

(Estimated costs per 2016/17 Section 251 Budget return)

	Retained Duty	General Duty	School Improvement	Total
Estimated cost	£	£	£	£
Education Social Workers	387,600	-	-	387,600
School Improvement	-	-	302,900	302,900
Asset Mment	80,000	80,000	-	160,000
Strategy / Regulation	532,500	532,500	-	1,065,000
Premature retirement	-	128,300	-	128,300
Health Therapies	-	18,500	-	18,500
	1,000,100	759,300	302,900	2,062,300

	Retained Duty	General Duty	School Improvement	Total
Funding				
Schools Budget / de- delegation	730,000	291,600		
Transition Funding	270,100	467,700		
	1,000,100	759,300		

The Council Budget for 2017/18 includes the remaining plans to manage the overall ESG reduction of £3.4 million next year and specifically the amount in excess of the MTFP of £0.9 million.

Further work will be needed to provide a sustainable level of services over the medium term once the transitional grant is removed.

3.12 School Improvement Budget and Funding 2017/18

Separate funding will be put in place for School Improvement. The initial proposals for 2017/18 are summarised as:

School Improvement

	2017/18	Full Year
Estimated Cost		
April to September - Staff and support Intervention	211,000 167,000	
Sept. to March - 3 staff, admin and support Intervention + Consultant HT	280,000 204,000	480,000 350,000
	862,000	830,000
Funding		
ESG Transition	205,200	
Combined Budget	466,000	
De-delegation / buyback	190,800	
	862,000	

3.13 CHANGES TO THE HIGH NEEDS FUNDING FORMULA

Following a consultation with schools the Forum considered minor amendments to the High Needs Funding Formula at the same time as agreeing the changes in High Needs places.

Changes to amend the Notional SEN budget, the unit value of support and processes to agree Exceptional Needs were not recommended or approved. Members did however agree a change in respect of top up payments for pupils with additional needs. From September 2017 these additional top up payments should only be paid where pupil numbers exceed the available places.

The Forum will continue to review the Formula taking into account the strategic review of provision, cost pressures and the proposed National Funding Formula.

3.14 CHANGES TO THE EARLY YEARS FUNDING FORMULA

The additional Early Years funding Wirral receives in 2017-18 of £1.5m pa is based on an hourly rate which increases from £3.79 to £4.31 per hour. In order to distribute this funding to providers a number of formula changes have been proposed and consulted on. These changes would:

Increase the hourly rate for 3 and 4 year old providers to £4.00 per hour (on average)

Increase provision for additional needs and central support costs.

Increase hourly funding for 2 year olds from £4.85 per hour to £5.12 per hour.

Provide resources to help maintain stability of existing funding for maintained nursery schools (to 2020). Whilst this will fully allocate the “protection” funding received most nursery schools are unhappy with this position and have indicated they will struggle to set a balanced budget

Cap formula supplements paid to 10% of allocated budgets, (Wirral’s current percentage is 12%). The new formula proposes that the value of all supplements for deprivation, quality and flexibility are scaled back.

A national Disability Access Fund of £615 will be introduced for children in receipt of Disability Living Allowances.

The rates proposed will be effective from 1 April and will be applied to the Extended 30 Hour Offer from September 2017.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The budget for 2017/18 is compiled from the base budget for 2016/17 approved by Council on 3 March 2016 and updated for any issues identified in this report.

4.2 The projected budget (DSG, reserves and council contribution) is £252,127,600 and is shown in Appendix 1.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council is required to agree a Budget for 2017/18 and to inform Primary and Secondary Schools of their individual budget allocations by 28 February (Special Schools and Early Years providers by 31 March)

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 The Schools Budget makes some limited provision for staff providing support to schools, mainly within budgets for Special Education Needs and Disabilities. Most staff however are employed directly by schools where these decisions are made by governing bodies.

6.2 Schools continue to receive some funding for assets and ICT through Formula Capital Grant Allocations. Most asset funding is directed through the Council’s Capital Programme and includes school schemes funded by capital grant allocations for Condition and Basic Need.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There are increasing cost pressures in schools arising from “flat cash” budgets. The additional costs arising from pay awards, the apprentice levy and inflation will not be met from increased budget allocations, instead they will need to be found from efficiency savings. With the exception of Pupil Premium the funding available for schools has not increased since 2011. These cost pressures are causing significant difficulties for schools across the country and Wirral is no exception.
- 7.2 Reports to the Schools Forum have indicated that a significant number of schools are facing deficit budgets. Action is being taken to address the position and to agree a course of action with those schools and governing bodies concerned

8.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The Budget has been considered by the Schools Forum and changes to Schools, Early Years and High Needs funding formulae have been subject to consultation. The implications for individual schools have been discussed with governors and headteachers.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The budget and proposals contained in this report are supported by an Equality Impact Assessment.

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APPENDICES Appendix 1 Schools Budget variations
Appendix 2 Schools Budget summary

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Schools Forum - Schools Budget Report 2017/18	18 January 2017
Cabinet Schools - Budget 2016/17	22 February 2016
Schools Forum - Schools Budget Report 2016/17	13 January 2016
Cabinet Schools Budget 2015/16	10 February 2015
Schools Forum - Schools Budget 2015/16	14 January 2015

APPENDIX 1 SCHOOLS BUDGET VARIATIONS

Schools Budget 2017/18

	£000
Dedicated Schools Grant	250,795
Use of DSG and other reserves	569
Total Grant Funding	251,364

Schools Adj Budget Base	173,215
Add back 2016/17 Academy and High Needs	69,744
	242,959

Change in ISB costs

Net rising rolls	2,343
Rates and rents	46
Transfer from central budgets	842
Transfer PFI Affordability Gap	3,037
Additional funding in for PFI - FM (Headroom and CLC's)	400
Transfer FE places (from EFA)	784
High Needs Places	65
Early Years increase in hourly rates	1,389
Early Years increase 15hr Extension	2,424
Early Years Disabled Access Fund	100
Early Years Pupil Premium	115
	11,545

Changes in SEN / High Needs Costs

Increase in Top Ups	665
Transfer from Central budgets	58
Reduce contingency budgets	(180)
Transfer re Home Tuition PFI	40
Early Years – additional needs	158
	741

Other Changes in Central Costs

Increase (inflation) re PFI contracts	150
Reduce Combined budgets	(823)
Reduce Central Budgets	(3,314)
Contribution re ex ESG	730
Early Years Central costs	140
	(3,117)

Total Schools Expenditure	252,128
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Net Schools Budget	764
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APPENDIX 2 SCHOOLS BUDGET SUMMARY

	Adj Estimate 2016/17	Base Estimate 2017/18
	£	£
Individual Schools Budget		
Primary Schools	93,463,700	100,308,700
Secondary Schools	27,081,100	94,366,800
Special Schools	8,861,700	10,040,000
SEN Bases	1,701,500	2,398,300
EMAP	-	926,700
Wirral Hospital Schools	1,356,300	1,359,100
6 th Form / FE		1,264,000
Early Years	14,673,000	18,888,200
Individual Schools Budget Total	147,137,300	229,551,800
Central School Costs		
Early Years	378,700	518,700
Admissions	341,800	341,800
School closure / retirement costs	86,000	60,000
Licences and subscriptions	223,800	226,100
Schools Forum	10,600	10,600
Contribution to Combined Budgets	1,698,800	875,600
PPM	249,000	-
PFI Affordability Gap	2,886,500	-
Retained Duties – ex ESG		730,000
Costs delegated to / de-delegated from schools		
Library Service	191,700	-
Insurances	32,300	-
Minority Ethnic Achievement Service	104,100	-
School Specific Contingencies	104,300	-
Special Staff Costs	699,700	-
School Meals	21,200	-
Behaviour Support	92,300	-
School Improvement	-	-
High Needs Pupils		
Statements	3,799,000	4,174,800
SEN Top Ups	8,752,200	9,175,600
High Needs Contingency	434,000	314,000
Independent Special Schools	3,689,000	3,770,000
Home Tuition	308,900	348,900
Support for SEN	2,031,500	1,971,500
Special School Transport	58,200	58,200
Non delegated School Costs Total	26,193,600	22,575,800
Total School and Central Costs	173,330,900	252,127,600
Dedicated Schools Grant Total	(172,175,500)	(250,795,200)
Use of Reserves	(568,900)	(568,900)
Grand Total	586,500	763,500

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COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES

CABINET
20 FEBRUARY 2017
NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES
DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF
SCHEME 2017/18

Councillor Phil Davies, Leader of the Council, said:

“The Council is required to have a Scheme in place which details the support available to businesses and charities in the form of Discretionary Rate Relief. This report provides this Scheme to Cabinet.”

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval of the Council’s National Non Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme to be effective from 1 April 2017.

This is a key decision and affects all wards within the borough.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme (Appendix 1) to this report be approved as the Council Policy for 2017/18 onwards.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Council must have in place an agreed National Non Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme prior to the start of the 2017/18 financial year.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Whilst the Council must have a Scheme there are a range of options as regards the level of assistance and the range of organisations to which support is offered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 National Non Domestic Rates or Business Rates is charged on all non-domestic properties and as a national scheme has been in place since 1990. Alongside the billing of properties there are a number of reliefs and exemptions available to help meet liability. These may be part of the national scheme or via local discretion which each local authority decides upon.
- 3.2 One area of relief is reducing rates liability (potentially up to full charge) of properties occupied by charities, voluntary organisations or sports and social clubs. This is split into two types Mandatory and Discretionary Relief. The Council supports clubs and organisations by reducing their rates liability and this is funded in part by Central Government and part by the local authority.
- 3.3 Mandatory Rate Relief is paid to charities and registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC's) at the rate of 80%. The costs of all reliefs under the 100% retention will overwhelmingly fall on the Council although some compensation will be provided from a separate 'top-up' grant. Not for profit organisations, including Community Interest Companies (CIC) that are not registered as charities can apply for Discretionary Rate Relief.
- 3.4 Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Council to maintain a Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme. The Council must have a Policy but the scale is discretionary and can be limited by appropriate factors as to what the Council wishes to support.
- 3.5 The legislation states the discretionary relief qualifying conditions must be one or more of the following:
- (a) the ratepayer is a charity or trustees for a charity and the property is wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes, whether that or other charities;

- (b) the property is not an excepted property and all or part of it is occupied for the purposes of one or more institutions or organisations, none of which is established or conducted for profit and each of whose main objects are charitable or are otherwise philanthropic or religious or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts;
- (c) the property is not an excepted property, it is wholly or mainly used for the purposes of recreation and all or part of it is occupied for the purposes of a club, society or other organisation not established or conducted for profit.

An excepted property is a property occupied by the Charging or Precepting authority as relief cannot be awarded in effect to itself. An exception to this is Council owned Public Toilets, with effect from 1 April 2017.

- 3.6 The Council retains the discretion to award any amount up to 100%, less any Mandatory Relief granted. The Scheme proposed in Appendix 1 looks to acknowledge the valuable role that voluntary organisations play in the life of Wirral residents.
- 3.7 In order to ensure the effective administration the current Discretionary Scheme has general principles agreed on eligibility and thereafter each case is decided on its own merits by the Revenues Senior Manager apart from cases that within the Policy are due to be decided by Members.
- 3.8 Government has announced national changes to the thresholds for payment of Business Rates applicable from 1 April 2017 which will remove the rating liability from a number of organisations currently receiving relief. Compensation will be paid to local authorities for lost income via Government Section 31 Grant. Work will be required to ensure properties meet the eligibility for the threshold exemption but it is estimated the threshold change will see numbers will drop by approximately 90 properties. As a result 365 properties will be supported with 77 properties receiving 80% Mandatory Relief only, 279 receiving 80% Mandatory and 20% Discretionary Relief and 9 receive 100% Discretionary Rate Relief.
- 3.9 All organisations were advised that current Scheme ends on 31 March 2017 and that the criteria will be reviewed. Since then the Government have announced further changes to Business Rates and proceeded with the national revaluation of business properties on the ratings list which will become effective from 1 April 2017. There are also changes arising from the 100% retention of Business Rates by 2020. Whilst the Wirral Plan has been agreed by the Council and local partners further work is being undertaken in relation to the Growth and Leisure Strategies which link into the Transformation Programme. It is therefore beneficial to postpone any fundamental review of the Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme until these pieces of work have been completed.

3.10 The Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Budget 2017/18 report to Cabinet on 8 December 2016 contained a proposal to reduce the Discretionary Rate Relief Budget by £300,000. The recent increase in the small businesses rateable relief thresholds to £12,000 rateable value announced by the Government mean that a number of businesses will no longer be required to pay Business Rates and will not require Relief. The Government will compensate local authorities for this change which equate to £50,000 per annum. A contribution of £100,000 towards the Relief awarded to schools has been made in past years and this contribution can be continued for another year providing another element of funding. Therefore £150,000 of the proposed saving can be delivered in 2017/18. Proposals for any sums above this figure will now follow the completion of the reviews referred to in Section 3.9.

3.11 For 2017/18 it is therefore recommended that the 2016/17 scheme, with minor amendments to accommodate legislative changes as shown in Appendix 1 be retained.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

4.1 There are none as the minor amendments will not make anyone financially worse off and the proposal is to retain the current scheme for 2017/18.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 With the changes to Business Rates introduced by the Government the costs of Discretionary Rate Relief are met through the Collection Fund. From April 2017 99% of the costs will fall on the Council and 1% on Merseyside Fire and rescue Service. Whilst subject to confirmation of the impact of the Rateable Value change and the 2017 Revaluation the forecast net spend in 2017/18 is £550,000.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Council to maintain a Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme. The required notice was supplied to recipients cancelling the existing Scheme and advising a replacement was being considered. The new Scheme needs to be in place prior to 28 February 2017 to allow for successful billing for 2017/18.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

7.1 There are no ICT, staffing or asset implications arising from this report.

8.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 8.1 If a decision is not made to adopt this Scheme the Council would not have a Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme in place from 1 April 2017 and all previous recipients would not be awarded any Discretionary Rate Relief.

9.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The required notice was supplied to recipients cancelling the existing Scheme and advising a replacement was being considered.

10.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Equality Impact Assessment link for National Non Domestic Rates Relief is shown;
<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversitycohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/finance>

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme 2017/18

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Local Government Finance Act 1988
NNDR (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989
NNDR (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1992

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Policy & Resources	24 January 1999
Cabinet (minute 165)	13 March 2014
Cabinet (minute 197)	19 June 2014
Council (minute 112)	24 February 2015
Cabinet (minute 16)	29 June 2015
Cabinet (minute 100)	22 February 2016

NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES

DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF SCHEME 2017/18

1. AWARD

- 1.1 Whereby Mandatory Relief, at 80%, is payable to an organisation the Council may top-up that award with Discretionary Relief of 20% after careful consideration of below.
- 1.2. Where the organisation qualifies for Discretionary Relief utilising the following criteria the maximum (full relief) award under this policy will be 100% of the Business Rates payable after careful consideration of below.

2. ACCESS

- 2.1 Is membership open to all sections of the community? There may be legitimate restrictions placed on membership which relate for example to ability in a sport or the achievement of a standard in the field covered by the organisation or where the capacity of the facility is limited. Clubs or organisations should not be considered if they have membership rates set at such a high level as to exclude the general community. In general, the club or organisation must be prepared to show that the criteria by which it considers applications for membership are consistent with the principle of open access.
- 2.2 Does the organisation actively encourage membership from particular groups in the community e.g. young people, women, older age groups, persons with disability, ethnic minorities, etc.? An organisation which encouraged such membership might expect more sympathetic consideration than one which made no effort to attract members from groups which the Authority considered to be particularly deserving of support.
- 2.3 Are the facilities made available to people other than members, e.g. schools, casual public sessions etc.? The wider use of facilities should be encouraged and rate relief might be one form of recognition that an organisation was promoting its facilities more widely.

3. PROVISION OF FACILITIES

- 3.1 Does the organisation provide training or education for its members? Are there schemes for particular groups to develop their skills e.g. young people, the disabled, retired people? An organisation providing such facilities might deserve more support than one which did not.
- 3.2 Have the facilities available been provided by self-help or grant aid? The fact that a club uses or has used self-help for construction or maintenance or had facilities funded by grant aid might be an indicator.

3.3 Does the organisation run a bar? The mere existence of a bar should not in itself be a reason for not granting relief. The Authority should look at the main purpose of the organisation. In sports clubs for example the balance between playing and non-playing members might provide a useful guide as to whether the main purpose of the club is sporting or social activities. A social club whose main aim is to bring together people with similar interests should not be excluded from relief just because of the existence of a licensed bar.

3.4 Does the organisation provide facilities which indirectly relieve the Authority of the need to do so, or enhance and supplement those which it does provide? Authorities should not refuse relief on the grounds that an organisation is in competition with the Authority itself, but should look at the broader context of needs of the community as a whole. A new need, not being provided by the Authority itself but identified as a priority for action, might be particularly deserving of support.

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 Is the organisation affiliated to local or national organisations e.g. local sports or arts councils, national representative bodies, i.e. are they actively involved in local/national development of their interests?

4.2 If the organisation is a sporting club and its main activities are a recognised eligible sport the club will be encouraged to register with the Inland Revenue as a Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC).

4.3 Is the membership drawn from people mainly resident in the charging authority's area? Although authorities will have in mind that 25% of the cost of any relief given will be borne by the Council Taxpayers in their area, particular difficulties may arise with hereditaments which straddle local authorities boundaries and which under Regulation 6 of the Non-Domestic Rating (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 1989 (S.I. 1989 No. 1060) will now fall to be shown in one list. In these cases and in those where hereditaments are situated close to an authority's boundary, a proportion of the membership may come from another charging authority area. Also for geographical reasons, or because of the nature of the terrain, particular facilities may be the only ones available for a wide area. In such cases the joint use of facilities by one or more similar organisations is not uncommon. In most cases there will be a measure of reciprocity between the memberships of organisations from different areas.

4.4 Authorities may wish to add further criteria or substitute relevant alternative criteria, which are appropriate to the furthering of their policies and the needs of the community such as development programmes. They should also bear in mind the need to encourage new activities in the wide range of organisations for which relief from rates is available.

- 4.5 The manner in which charities or organisations are funded should also be considered. In cases of full or substantial funding from central government; either directly or through an agency, council or similar body, which is funded or established by central government, consideration should be given to the merit of awarding relief.
- 4.6 Are members paid to participate? The Authority may wish to consider whether to award relief where payments or other significant benefits are provided to players. Exceptions may be the reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses or reasonable provision and maintenance of club owned equipment. The Authority may look favourably on clubs whose paid players contribute more to the club than just playing e.g. by coaching younger members.
- 4.7 The Authority may wish to consider the extent to which the organisation's activities contribute to local community strategies or authority objectives for developing neighbourhood identity, community building or social inclusion.
- 4.8 Housing Associations, universities, further education colleges and independent schools are specifically excluded from receiving discretionary rate relief as per Cabinet decision dated 10 January 2008.
- 4.9 All future discretionary rate relief applications in respect of properties with a rateable value of less than £12,000 are accompanied by a Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR) application to encourage SBRR take up, which is 100% up to RV £12,000 and to continue to reduce the reliance on the Discretionary Rate Relief budget. This will continue until this relief is ended by Central Government.
- 4.10 With effect from 1 April 2014, Community Interest Companies and social welfare organisations that occupy properties with rateable values under £7,000 be entitled to maximum level of discretionary rate relief and those occupying properties of £7,000 or more be considered by Members, on a case by case basis.