



**COUNCILLOR PHIL DAVIES**

**CABINET  
22 FEBRUARY 2016**

**REVENUE MONITORING 2015/16  
QUARTER 3 (TO DECEMBER 2015)**

**Councillor Phil Davies (Leader of the Council) said:**

“Robust and transparent management of the Council’s finance is a fundamental role; and one which in which we are demonstrating continuous improvement. This quarter three projection shows we have made major progress in delivering a stable budget through effective and rapid management.”

**REPORT SUMMARY**

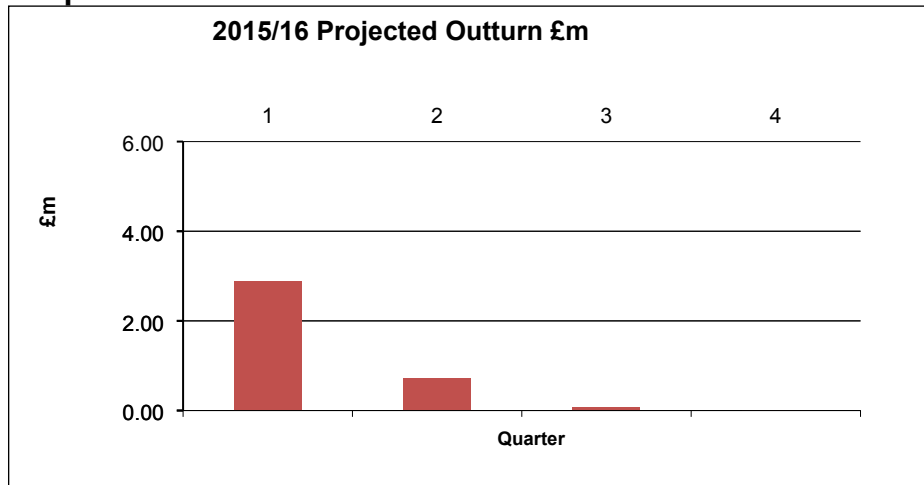
This report sets out the projected revenue position for 2015/16 as at the close of quarter 3 (31 December 2015). The projected outturn shows an improvement of £0.65 million on the quarter 2 position.

The latest position forecasts an £80,000 year end overspend (previous period £0.73 million). There has been further improvement in the quarter within both Regeneration & Environment and Transformation & Resources predicted underspends. The most significant positive variance in the quarter relates to Regeneration & Environment with an improvement of £1.08 million due to a combination of early achievement of 2016/17 savings and the release of budget set aside to match fund future grant delivery programmes not required this financial year.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

The headline position is shown in the graph.

**Graph 1: Wirral Council – 2015/16 General Fund Variance**



The decisions in this report are key decisions.

### **Recommendations**

1. That the improvement of £0.65 million in the 2015/16 Revenue Budget position during quarter 3 be noted.
2. That Officers continue to identify actions and to take measures to reduce the projected overspend of £80,000 and to mitigate against any in-year funding reductions for Public Health and to replenish General Fund balances.

## 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 that the delivery of this Budget is achieved. Consequently there is a requirement to regularly monitor progress so that 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 2015/16 Budget was agreed by Council on 24 February 2015 and is detailed in Annex 1; any increase in the Budget has to be agreed by full Council. Changes to the Budget since it was set are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: 2015/16 Original & Revised Net Budget by Directorate £000's**

	Original Net Budget	Approved Budget Changes Prior Qtrs	Approved Budget Changes Qtr 3	Revised Net Budget
FWB - Adult Social Care	68,305	2,934	-173	71,066
FWB – Children & Young People,	67,964	4,816	-322	72,458
FWB - Further Areas: Safeguarding, Schools, Leisure, Public Health	7,956	831	619	9,406
Regeneration & Environment	90,287	-795	-31	89,461
Transformation & Resources	31,947	-797	-110	31,040
Corporate Growth, Savings & Grant	-7,267	2,611	17	-4,639
Net Cost of Services	259,192	9,600	0	268,792

Note: £9.6 million Quarter 1 change was ratified by Council on 12 October 2015

3.1.2 The main budget movements in quarter three relate to the transfer of Adult Social Care Safeguarding to FWB Further Areas for reporting purposes and an adjustment within the support services budget. Both of these adjustments have no effect on the net cost of services.

### 3.2 PROJECTIONS AND KEY ISSUES

3.2.1 The projected outturn position as at the end of December 2015, key issues emerging and Directorate updates are detailed in the following sections.

**Table 2: 2015/16 Projected Budget variations by Directorate £000's**

Directorates	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	(Under) Overspend	RAGBY Class	Change from prev
			Quarter 3		
FWB - Adult Social Care	71,066	73,478	2,412	R	2
FWB – Children & Young People	72,458	75,143	2,685	R	885
FWB - Further Areas: Safeguarding, Schools, Leisure, Public Health	9,406	9,791	385	R	135
Regeneration & Environment	89,461	87,651	-1,810	Y	-1,080
Transformation & Resources	31,040	27,590	-3,450	Y	-450
Corporate Growth, Savings & Grant	-4,656	-4,796	-140	G	-140
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>268,775</b>	<b>268,857</b>	<b>82</b>		<b>-648</b>

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

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

### 3.3 DIRECTORATE UPDATES

#### Families and Wellbeing: Adult Social Care

3.3.1 The forecast has been contained at a £2.4 million overspend which is mainly due to demand pressures within Community Care. A number of projects are being supported by the Improvement and Transformation Team and saving plans and profiles are continuously under review. Actions include:

- A programme of targeted reviews of care packages is being undertaken, including joint reviews with NHS colleagues.
- A new 'asset based' assessment framework has been implemented to determine need.
- The Liquid Logic case management system has been implemented and the support structure consultation agreed. This is streamlining working processes and increasing efficiency.

3.3.2 The transformation of day services has progressed. The Local Authority Day Services Company commenced on 1 December 2015.

#### Families and Wellbeing: Children and Young People

3.3.3 The forecast overspend has increased by £0.8 million to £2.69 million. This reduces to a net £2.55 million once £0.14 million additional Educational Services grant confirmed in November (shown within the Corporate Savings, growth and grant line) is factored in. The overspend position is mainly due to an increase within residential placements and increased costs following the re-profiling of agency staff.

#### 3.3.4 Actions being taken to reduce the overspend include:-

- A detailed review of all residential care and independent fostering placements
- A weekly Access to Resources panel to consider and approve all new care packages for children.
- Assessments are being undertaken to determine entitlement to Primary and Secondary transport with notification of any changes to parents by half term
- A rolling programme of recruitment to Social Work positions. The Social Worker Progression Framework has been implemented. Agency numbers reviewed on a monthly basis.
- Implementation of new Children's Centres structures

3.3.5 The Youth Justice Board has confirmed that its grant has been reduced by £70,000 in year which has been mitigated through the non-filling of vacant posts. In the longer term a review of structures and where possible further integration across the wider youth provision will be utilised to match the resources available.

#### **Families and Wellbeing: Other**

3.3.6 Leisure Services: The forecast overspend is currently £305,000. This figure reflects slippage in budget savings. Savings plans are under review to identify mitigating action. There are ongoing discussions and plans with regard to savings in 2016/17.

3.3.7 Public Health: The Chancellor's proposals to reduce in year the Public Health Budget have been confirmed and there has been a grant reduction of £1.9m. This had been anticipated in commissioning decisions earlier in the year and has been managed from savings within retendered contracts.

3.3.8 Safeguarding: An overspend of £80,000 is forecast within this area relating to agency costs.

#### **Regeneration and Environment**

3.3.9 There has been a further underspend of £1.08 million this quarter. Within Waste & Environment there is a forecast underspend of £0.2 million. The annual inflation rate applied to the Biffa contract was less than originally budgeted for resulting in a small underspend. There is also some additional income from litter enforcement fines and which is reflected within the above underspend position.

3.3.10 Due to EDRF funding for the salaries within Business Support being extended until November 2015, there will be an underspend of approximately £0.1 million on employee budgets. There are also further potential underspends of £0.3 million from budgets set aside to match funding future grant delivery programmes. As yet these monies have not been committed.

3.3.11 In Housing there is also additional income from DFG fees and underspends from employee vacancies during the year. A further £0.26 million has been added to this underspend by removing a budget allocated as a 'revenue contribution to capital' and using in its place other available capital programme resources.

### Transformation & Resources

3.3.12 The projected saving has increased by £0.45 million in quarter 3 to £3.45 million. The increase is mainly due to increased vacancies within the directorate. The major element of the existing underspend (£2.5 million of the overall total) is within Treasury Management. This is from the continued use of internal cash flow to delay external borrowing and projected slippage within the Capital Programme (which delivers one-off in year savings). Other savings have arisen from continued vacancies during the year across a number of service areas.

3.3.13 In respect of Treasury Management, external borrowing to fund capital investment has been delayed through temporarily funding the 'borrowing' using cash flows derived from reserves and other balances. This policy whilst 'losing' investment interest receivable (average 0.5%), saves an average 3.5% on borrowing costs plus delays any principal repayment. External borrowing will need to take place eventually to fund past programmes either at the point when reserves/cash flow is utilised and/or to lock into lower rates before interest rates rise. Economic data and Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee announcements now make interest rate increases in 2015/16 unlikely. Therefore the timing of borrowing has been delayed to produce increased in year and one-off Treasury Management savings.

### 3.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF SAVINGS

3.4.1 The delivery of the agreed savings is key to the Council's financial health and is tracked at both Council and Directorate level. The Budget for 2015/16 originally included £38 million of efficiency measures and it was recognised that the delivery of the savings, particularly within Adults and Children's Services was challenging being more of a transformational / change nature. Cabinet in July agreed the reprofiling of £9.6 million of savings funded from earmarked reserves (£5.4 million) and General Fund Balances (£4.2 million) which was confirmed by Council 12 October.

**Table 3: Budget Implementation Plan 2015/16 (£000's)**

BRAG	Number of Options	Approved Budget Reduction	Amount Delivered at Dec 15	To be Delivered
B - delivered	24	14,258	14,258	0
G – on track	19	3,756	2,671	1,085
A - concerns	18	11,249	4,196	7,053
R - high risk/ not achieved	1	10	0	10
<b>Total at Dec 2015-16</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>29,273</b>	<b>21,125</b>	<b>8,148</b>

3.4.2 The savings tracker contains an assessment of the 2015/16 savings. The

tracker reflects the reprofiling referred to above.

### **3.5 GROWTH**

3.5.1 An allowance for the impact of demographic changes, inflation and other risks has been incorporated into the 2015/16 budget. Details of these allowances are contained within the Budget Book and Forecasts 2015-18 approved by Budget Council on 24 February 2015.

3.5.2 In response to the projected overspend reported at Quarter 1 a review was undertaken of the growth allocated for 2015/16. As this primarily covered the impact of the social worker pay review, which had been implemented, and contractual inflation, which had been paid, there was limited opportunity for any reductions to be identified.

### **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 below.

**Table 4: Amount to be collected in 2015/16**

	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	
	<b>Collectable</b>	<b>Collected</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	
Council Tax	140,136	114,253	81.5%
Business Rates	71,349	58,385	81.8%
Fees and charges – Adults & Children	40,735	25,181	61.8%
Fees and charges – all other services	43,939	32,551	74.1%

#### **COUNCIL TAX**

3.6.2 Compared with December 2014 the collection performance is down by 0.9% and recovery action is well under way. Nationally collection is also down.

3.6.3 The major change this year relates to the full removal of the local Pensioner Discount for 2015/16. This affected 11,482 Band A-D, 70+ households who previously received a 5% discount. In 2014/15 the discount from Band E-H households was removed with a reduction in the discount from 7.76% to 5%.

#### **BUSINESS RATES**

3.6.4 Compared with December 2014 the collection performance is slightly down by 0.6%.

3.6.5 The Government has undertaken a fundamental review of Business Rates including consultation with interested parties. It indicated that any changes would need to raise the same amount as Business Rates does now, some £26 billion and the preference was for a property based tax. The outcome of the review is expected to feature in the Government Budget 2016.

3.6.6 The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement announced in December 2015 confirmed that Revenue Support Grant will be phased out but from 2020 Councils will keep all the Business Rates they collect. Further detail is awaited and the CLG Committee has called for submission of evidence as to how proposals will impact on local authorities. Under the existing arrangements Wirral currently receives a 'top-up grant' from Government and receives more than is currently collected in Business Rates.

## DEBTORS

3.6.7 At the end of December 2015 the arrears stood at £23.6 million which compares to £19.4 million at December 2014. A large element of this increase (£1.7m) relates to a small number of large Merseyside Pension Fund invoices raised to Pension Fund employers at the end of the period and therefore showing as outstanding when the quarter closed. There has also been an increase in debt outstanding relating to Families and Wellbeing – however £1.1 million of this increase was debt which of less than 10 days old at the reporting date. Recovery action continues to be undertaken to minimise arrears and additional temporary staff will support this work.

## 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 On 10 February 2015 Cabinet agreed to the level of General Fund balance for 2015/16 being based upon a risk calculation and a minimum of £17.4 million. The level is kept under review during the year to reflect changing circumstances and in-year developments.

4.2 As reported to Cabinet on 13 July 2015 the 2014/15 financial year saw an underspend of £0.5 million on the revenue budget whilst the release of £0.9 million of Insurance Fund Reserves added a total £1.4 million to balances at 31 March 2015.

4.3 As referred to in this report the delivery of the large savings programme contained significant risks of delay (slippage). The opening balance contained £7.2 million specifically against this risk of which £4.2 million is to be used to meet the in-year shortfall set out in Section 4.

**Table 5: Summary of the projected General Fund balances**

Details		£m
Balance 31 March 2015 when setting the Budget 2015/16		+17.4
Add; Increase following closure of 2014/15 Accounts		+1.4
Less Transfer to General Fund		-4.2
Less: Potential overspend at August 2015		-0.1
Projected balance 31 March 2016		+14.5

4.4 The requirement to replenish the General Fund balances to the minimum level will be addressed through Directorates identifying potential underspends in the current financial year together with a mid-year review of the Earmarked Reserves. The Reserves excluding School balances totalled £71.5 million at 1 April 2015. These include reserves relating to the cost of Council remodelling,



mitigation and specific project support and ongoing financial risks.

4.5 Cabinet in July agreed to the use of £5.4 million of earmarked reserves to be used in reprofiling the 2015/16 savings programme. This decision was ratified by Council on 12 October 2015.

4.6 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.
- Benefits Realisation Group monitors the delivery of key change projects.
- 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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## **ANNEXES**

Annex 1      General Fund Revenue Budget 2015/16  
Annex 2      Income and Debt

**SUBJECT HISTORY**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Revenue monitoring reports presented to Cabinet 2015/16 (Quarter 1)	27 July 2015
2015/16 (Quarter 2)	05 November 2015
Budget Council	24 February 2015

## GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2015/16

## ORIGINAL BUDGET AGREED BY COUNCIL ON 24 FEBRUARY 2015

Directorate/Service Area	Original Budget	Changes/ Variances	Revised Budget
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Families and Wellbeing			
Adult Social Services	68,305	2,761	71,066
Children and Young People	67,964	4,494	72,458
Further Areas - Public Health, Schools, Sports and Recreation	7,956	1,450	9,406
Regeneration and Environment	90,287	-826	89,461
Transformation and Resources	31,947	-907	31,040
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>266,459</b>	<b>6,972</b>	<b>273,431</b>
Corporate Savings/Growth	-3,611	2,628	-983
Education Services Grant	-3,656	-	-3,656
<b>Budget Requirement</b>	<b>259,192</b>	<b>9,600</b>	<b>268,792</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Revenue Support Grant	64,281	-	64,281
Business Rates Baseline	33,266	-	32,266
Business Rates Top Up	41,287	-	41,287
Business Rates Section 31 Grants	2,193	-	2,193
Council Tax Requirement	114,210	-	114,210
Council Tax Freeze Grant	1,358	-	1,358
New Homes Bonus	2,597	-	2,597
Contribution from Reserve	-	5,400	5,400
Contribution from Balances	-	4,200	4,200
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>259,192</b>	<b>9,600</b>	<b>268,792</b>
<b>Statement of Balances</b>			
As at 1 April 2015	17,400	1,400	18,800
Contributions to/from Balances Cabinet 27 July and confirmed Council 12 October 2015)	-	-4,200	-4,200
Potential Overspend at Quarter 3		-82	-82
<b>Forecast Balances 31 March 2016</b>	<b>17,400</b>	<b>-2,882</b>	<b>14,518</b>

## Notes:

This table will be updated for agreed variances during the year.

Balances as at 1 April 2015 updated following completion of the Accounts for 2014/15.

Quarter 3 overspend includes impact of £140,000 additional Educational Services Grant.

## INCOME AND DEBT

The following shows the collection progress for Council Tax, Business Rates, Accounts Receivable and Benefits.

### COUNCIL TAX

The following statement compares the amount collected for **Council Tax** in the period 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015 with the amount collected in the same period in 2014/15:

	<b>Actual 2015/16 £000s</b>	Actual 2014/15 £000s
Cash to Collect	<b>140,136</b>	137,344
Cash Collected	<b>114,253</b>	113,164
% Collected	<b>81.5%</b>	82.4%

Staff have been recruited to vacant posts which will help to begin to address recovery work with intention of recovering this drop in collection.

### Council Tax Support Scheme

The Council Tax Support scheme was introduced from 1 April 2013. £26.2 million is currently in payment and the numbers of awards as at 31 December 2015 are as follows:

Number of pensioners	<b>14,744</b>
Number of vulnerable (working age)	<b>9,364</b>
Number of working age	<b><u>10,898</u></b>
Number of <b>Council Tax Support</b> recipients	<b><u>35,006</u></b>

Council Tax Support claimants have dropped from 36,231 to 35,006 (1,225) since the beginning of the financial year. There are a number of reasons for this, which include the impact of charges in respect of non-dependants in the household removing entitlement to CTS and people moving into low paid employment, claims from people of pensionable age ending.

### Council Tax Discretionary Policy as at 30 December 2015

Period 1 April 2015 – 30 December 2015  
2 awards (£902.19p), 47 refusals in this period.

## BUSINESS RATES

The following statement compares the amount collected for **National Non-Domestic Rates** for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015 with the amount collected for the same period in 2014/15:

	<b>Actual 2015/16 £000</b>	Actual 2014/15 £000
Cash to Collect	<b>71,349</b>	70,633
Cash Collected	<b>58,385</b>	58,225
% Collected	<b>81.8%</b>	82.4%

## ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

The table below shows the directorates and amount of debt at each recovery stage:

Directorate Description	Less than 10 days	1st reminder	2nd reminder	3rd reminder	Total at 31.12.15
Chief Executive	<b>£94,697</b>	<b>£4,777</b>	<b>£29,444</b>	<b>£876,950</b>	<b>£1,005,868</b>
Neighbourhood	<b>£14,507</b>	<b>£7,066</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£13,865</b>	<b>£35,438</b>
Transformation & Resources	<b>£2,352,010</b>	<b>£845,351</b>	<b>£228,400</b>	<b>£1,935,954</b>	<b>£5,361,715</b>
Families & Wellbeing	<b>£4,975,211</b>	<b>£652,650</b>	<b>£456,622</b>	<b>£9,829,635</b>	<b>£15,914,118</b>
Regeneration & Environment	<b>£343,751</b>	<b>£67,288</b>	<b>£123,284</b>	<b>£796,056</b>	<b>£1,330,379</b>
Policy & Performance	<b>£100,000</b>	<b>£15,000</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£153,756</b>	<b>£268,756</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£7,880,176</b>	<b>£1,592,132</b>	<b>£837,750</b>	<b>£13,606,216</b>	<b>£23,916,274</b>

The above figures are for invoices in respect of the period up to the end of December 2015. 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 £342,882 to be made for unallocated payments at month end leaving a balance of **£23,573,392**

## BENEFITS

The following statement details the number of claimants in respect of benefit and the expenditure for Tenants (Housing Benefit) and those in receipt of Council Tax Support up to 31 December 2015:

	<b>2015/16</b>	2014/15
Number of <b>Private Tenant</b> recipients	29,565	31,731
Total rent allowance expenditure	<b>£105,179,580</b>	
<i>Number under the Local Housing Allowance Scheme (included in the above)</i>	<i>11,200</i>	<i>11,980</i>
	<b>£41,127,454</b>	

Number of <b>Council Tax Support</b> recipients	<b>35,006</b>	36,954
Total Council Tax Support expenditure	<b>£26,312,030</b>	
Total expenditure on benefit to date	<b>£131,491,610</b>	

The following statement provides information concerning the breakdown according to client type as at 31 December 2015 and gives the early year numbers to show the shift in sector by benefit claimants during the year.

	<b>31.12.15</b>	31.3.15
Claimants in the Private Rented Sector	<b>13,137</b>	13,723
Claimants in the Social Rented Sector	<b>16,428</b>	16,271
Owner Occupiers	<b>10,181</b>	10,112
Total claimants by age group		
- under 25 years old	<b>2,018</b>	2,238
- 25 – 60 years old	<b>21,019</b>	20,921
- over 60 years old	<b>16,709</b>	16,947

There are 39,746 benefit recipients in Wirral as at 31 December 2015.

### **Under Occupancy regulations**

From 1 April 2013 property size criteria was introduced to working age tenants of social landlords (Registered Providers). Where a claimant is deemed to be occupying accommodation larger than they reasonably require Housing Benefit is restricted:-

- By 14% in 2394 cases
- By 25% in 609 cases

The number of claims affected does fluctuate. The numbers above are a snapshot at 31 December 2015

### **Housing Benefit Fraud and Enquiries – 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015**

New Cases referred to Fraud team in period	1199
Successful Prosecution/Administration penalty/caution	39

With effect from 1 November 2015 the investigation of Housing Benefit fraud transferred to the DWP's Single Fraud Investigation Service. Fraud Investigation Officers in scope to transfer will do so at this time. New roles have now been recruited to and a newly formed Fraud Investigation team is in place, ensuring ongoing capacity to address other areas at risk of fraud and error within service/systems, including Council Tax Support, Council Tax, Personal Finance and Discretionary areas.

### **Discretionary Housing Payments**

The table below profiles the position of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) administration and associated spend. DHP is not a payment of Housing Benefit and is

funded separately from the main scheme. The impacts of the ongoing Welfare Reforms continue to be a primary reason for the need of this additional support with Housing costs.

The Government contribution for 2015/16 is £736,570 with an overall limit of £1,841,425 which the Authority must not exceed. The difference must come from the Authority's own Expenditure.

It was agreed to supplement the Government contribution by a Local Authority contribution of £300,000, giving a total budget in respect of 2015/2016 of £1,036,570.

The backlog of Discretionary Housing Payment applications previously reported is now clear. At the present time the strain on the available budget is less evident although Officers expect to see an influx in applications during Quarter 4 as awards due to end are sought again. Small awards continue to be made for shorter periods, essentially to allow the service to support more people through the use of this fund.

The present position is that we expect to spend 100% of the Government Grant by year end although that may not be the case with the local authority contribution, any residual amount of this top-up remaining can be carried forward, whereas unspent Government grant is lost.

date	Number of awards	current awards	committed awards up to 31/03/2016	% spent (committed)
08/04/2015		£4,687.23	£40,158.74	4%
05/05/2015	864	£40,421.27	£70,031.94	7%
01/06/2015	934	£47,148.86	£94,694.10	9%
02/07/2015	1041	£103,253.24	£208,173.93	20%
05/08/2015	1272	£158,082.51	£296,029.82	29%
01/09/2015	1387	£218,434.45	£366,839.57	35%
05/10/2015	1495	£294,417.37	£450,614.50	43%
02/11/2015	1614	£378,052.74	£529,915.74	56%
30/11/2015	1737	£455,259.79	£606,617.41	59%
04/01/2016	1845	£528,144.93	£654,367.64	63%

### **Local Welfare Assistance**

The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme was up until March 2015 directly funded by central government grant which has now been withdrawn with the recommendation that local authorities should consider funding future schemes from their General Fund.

On 10 February 2015, Cabinet agreed as part of its budget resolutions that £900,000 would be held in a reserve for this fund following the Government's decision to withdraw direct funding from 1 April 2015. The original scheme ran until 31 July 2015 and a Task & Finish Scrutiny Review Panel reviewed the position and Cabinet approved a continuing scheme from 1 August 2015 whereby the Council continues to administer and maintain a Local Welfare Assistance Scheme with the remaining budget available with a number of small amendments to the scheme now in place. Primarily awards

made are in respect of immediate need, such as for food, utilities etc.

Officers provided an update to Transformation and resources Policy and Performance Committee of 1 February 2016 regarding progress of the scheme during 2015/16. Members acknowledged the progress made during 2015/2016 and agreed to recommend to Cabinet that actions are continued and that Wirral's Local Welfare Assistance Support Scheme is therefore maintained, albeit on a moderated basis during 2016/2017 utilising the projected residual funding of £414,820.

No. of Awards - 2015/16		Total Awarded	Cumulative expenditure
April	673	£38,896.60	£38,896.60
May	564	£26,315.11	£65,211.71
June	754	£42,240.12	£107,451.83
July	734	£43,553.30	£151,005.13
Aug	649	£34,923.09	£185,928.22
Sep	741	£40,435.51	£226,363.73
Oct	668	£35,241.04	£261,604.77
Nov	653	£31,939.49	£293,544.26
Dec	532	£25,713.19	£319,257.45