



Finance and Resources Committee

Agenda

Part One

Town Hall, Brentwood

Monday 30 June 2014 at 7.00pm

Membership (Quorum: 2)

Councillors

Cllrs Aspinell (Chair), Lloyd (Vice-Chair), Clark, Faragher, Hirst, Kendall, Le-Surf, Mrs McKinlay and Parker.

Committee Co-ordinator:

Mrs Leanna McPherson (01277 312739)

Additional Information:

Substitutes

The names of substitutes shall be announced at the start of the meeting by the Chair and the substitution shall cease at the end of the meeting.

Rights to attend and speak

Any Member may attend any body to which these Procedure Rules apply.

A Member who is not a member of the committee may speak at the meeting if they have given prior notification by no later than one working day before the meeting to the Chair and advised them of the substance of their proposed contribution.

The member may speak at the Chair's discretion, it being the expectation that a member will be allowed to speak on a ward matter.

Point of Order/Personal explanation/Point of Information

For clarity, relevant sections of Rule 8 of the Council's Procedure Rules (Part 4.1 of the Constitution) are set out for Members' information below:

8.3.14 Point of order

A member may raise a point of order at any time. The Mayor will hear them immediately. A point of order may only relate to an alleged breach of these Procedure Rules or the law. The Member must indicate the rule or law and the way in which they consider it has been broken. The ruling of the Mayor on the point of order will be final.

8.3.15 Personal explanation

A member may make a personal explanation at any time. A personal explanation must relate to some material part of an earlier speech by the member which may appear to have been misunderstood in the present debate, or outside of the meeting. The ruling of the Mayor on the admissibility of a personal explanation will be final.

8.3.16 Point of Information or clarification

A point of information or clarification must relate to the matter being debated. If a Member wishes to raise a point of information, he/she must first seek the permission of the Mayor. The Member must specify the nature of the information he/she wishes to provide and its importance to the current debate, If the Mayor gives his/her permission, the Member will give the additional information succinctly. Points of Information or clarification should be used in exceptional circumstances and should not be used to interrupt other speakers or to make a further speech when he/she has already spoken during the debate. The ruling of the Mayor on the admissibility of a point of information or clarification will be final.

Information for Members of the Public

Access to Information and Meetings

You have the right to attend all meetings of the Council and its Boards and Committees. You also have the right to see the agenda, which will be published no later than 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published. Dates of the meetings are available at www.brentwood.gov.uk or from Democratic Services (01277 312739).

Webcasts

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If you are seated in the public area of the Council Chamber, it is likely that your image will be captured by the recording cameras and this will result in your image becoming part of the broadcast. This may infringe your Human Rights and if you wish to avoid this, you can sit in the upper public gallery of the Council Chamber.

Private Sessions

Occasionally meetings will need to discuss some of its business in private. This can only happen on a limited range of issues, which are set by law. When a Board or Committee does so, you will be asked to leave the meeting.

Guidelines on filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings

The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities.

Where members of the public use a laptop, tablet device, smart phone or similar devices to make recordings these devices must be set to 'silent' mode to avoid interrupting proceedings of the council or committee.

If you wish to record the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment then please contact the Communications Team before the meeting.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting may be allowed provided it has been discussed prior to the meeting and agreement reached to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings.

The Chair of the meeting may terminate or suspend filming, photography, recording and use of social media if any of these activities, in their opinion, are disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

Access

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Evacuation Procedures

Evacuate the building using the nearest available exit and congregate at the assembly point in the North Front Car Park.

Part I

(During consideration of these items the meeting is likely to be open to the press and public)

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An item of business may only be considered where the Chair is of the opinion that, by reason of special circumstances, which shall be specified in the Minutes, the item should be considered as a matter of urgency.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MJE.', located in the upper left quadrant of the page.

Managing Director

Town Hall
Brentwood, Essex
20 June 2014

Minutes

Performance and Resources Committee Wednesday 12 March 2014

Membership/Attendance

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| * Cllr Kerlake (Chair) | * Cllr McCheyne |
| * Cllr Mrs Murphy (Vice-Chair) | * Cllr Parker |
| * Cllr Aspinell | * Cllr Quirk |
| Cllr Clark | * Cllr Russell |
| * Cllr Hirst | * Cllr Sapwell |
| * Cllr Keeble | * Cllr Sleep |
| Cllr Lloyd | |

*present

Substitute Present

Cllr Mrs Davies (for Cllr Clark)

Also Present

Cllr Mrs Pound
Cllr Tee

Officers Present

Jo-Anne Ireland – Director of Strategy and Corporate Services
Daren Mills – Interim Strategic Procurement Officer
Adrian Tidbury – Estates & Valuation Surveyor – Portfolio Development
Leanna McPherson – Governance and Member Support Officer

403. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Clark and Cllr Lloyd.

404. Minutes of meeting held 15 January 2014

The minutes of the meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

405. Procurement Strategy

A new Procurement Strategy had been drafted which set out the Council's procurement objectives and provided an Action Plan on how these were going to be delivered.

A motion was MOVED by Cllr Hirst and SECONDED by Cllr Sleep to move the recommendation as set out in the report.

RESOLVED to approve the Procurement Strategy as a working document to be posted on the intranet and external website of the Council.

406. Brent Hall – Relocation of Access

The Council had been approached by Alliance Planning acting on behalf of the owners of Brent Hall to relocate the existing access to the Hall from the disused access from Warley Gap to a point 150 meters further north due to current nuisances that render the existing access difficult to use.

The report considered the implications of the proposal to provide a new access to Brent Hall on the Little Warley Common and of the application process under the Commons Act 2006.

A motion was MOVED by Cllr Mrs Murphy and SECONDED by Cllr McCheyne to approve the recommendations as set out in the report.

During the debate, a Member requested that it be recorded in the minutes that the process was very slow, taking approximately 2-3 years to reach Committee. It was considered that a review of the process be considered.

An amendment to recommendation 2.3 was MOVED by Cllr Quirk and SECONDED by Cllr Sapwell as follows,

- 2.3 To enter into negotiation with the applicant on the successful conclusion of the consultation process for a 50% share in the uplift to the value of the property, and that the valuation in question be derived at applicant cost by obtaining valuations from three RICS surveyors.

The amendment was ACCEPTED.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

1. To agree the commencement of the consultation process leading to the relocation of the existing access to the new location as shown in the Appendix 2 of the report.
2. That all costs including legal and associated consultation costs are funded by the applicant.

3. To enter into negotiation with the applicant on the successful conclusion of the consultation process for a 50% share in the uplift to the value of the property, and that the valuation in question be derived at applicant cost by obtaining valuations from three RICS surveyors.

(Cllr Parker declared a disclosable pecuniary interest under the Councils Code of Conduct by virtue of the applicant being a business acquaintance who he had also undertaken work for, and therefore left the Chamber taken no further part in the discussion or vote).

Minutes

Strategy and Policy Board 19 March 2014

Membership/Attendance

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| * Cllr Mrs McKinlay (Chair) | * Cllr Paker |
| * Cllr Hirst (Vice-Chair) | * Cllr Mrs Pound |
| * Cllr Clark | * Cllr Quirk |
| * Cllr Ms Golding | * Cllr Russell |
| * Cllr Kendall | * Cllr Sapwell |
| * Cllr Kerlake | |
| * Cllr Le-Surf | |
| * Cllr Mrs Murphy | |

*present

Substitute Present

None

Also Present

Cllr Aspinell
Cllr Mynott
Cllr Tee

Officers Present

Alison Crowe – Managing Director
Jo-Anne Ireland – Director of Strategy and Corporate Services (Section 151 Officer)
David Lawson – Monitoring Officer
Tony Pierce – Acting Head of Planning
Roy Ormsby – Head of Street Scene
Paul Knight – Head of Transformation
Phil Ruck – Programme & Project Manager
Brett Regan – Project Manager
Leanna McPherson – Governance and Member Support Officer

407. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

408. Minutes of the Strategy and Policy Board (Budget) meeting held on 12 February 2014 and Strategy and Policy Board (Budget) meeting held on 5 March 2014

The minutes of the meetings were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

409. Community Infrastructure Levy

This report updated Members on progress preparing the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the first stage of consultation, the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule.

The need to prepare a CIL was approved by Members at Policy and Resources Board on 13 December 2012. Since then viability appraisals had been carried out in relation to residential and commercial development to inform suggested charging rates. Members were requested to agree these rates and areas as the basis for consultation on a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule.

Cllr Ms Golding MOVED and Cllr Hirst SECONDED the recommendation as set out in the report.

Following a full debate and a show of hands it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY to agree the charging rates detailed in paragraphs 5.5, 5.8 and 5.9 as the basis for the production of the Council's Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule for public consultation.

410. Entrepreneurial Activity

Further to the report of the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) exploring potential entrepreneurial opportunities, the Business Transformation Service had reviewed and quality assured the data within the report and conducted research into the delivery of a new commercial arm of the Council.

In addition to this activity, the service had developed a series of business cases based on an ongoing data collection exercise, an analysis of the existing delivery models (and charging structure where appropriate) and a preliminary options exercise outlining a number of possible commercial models. The results of this exercise were summarised in the report before Members.

Cllr McKinlay MOVED and Cllr Murphy SECONDED the recommendation as set out in the report.

A full debate took place and a Member requested that voting on each recommendation be taken separately.

In line with the options appraisal and recommendations within the detailed business cases, the Committee approved the development of formal commercial business models for the following options:

RESOLVED that:

- a) Careline – having established a baseline model for the existing service the Council agree in principle to expand the operation to create a commercial, end-to-end service. This will include installation, monitoring, response and a proposed wrap-around care package for clients dealing with referrals and other safety, security and care offerings for clients who wish to remain in their own homes.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

- b) CCTV – whilst preserving the position of existing clients, The Council agree in principle to the proposed full commercialisation of the existing service as well as controlled expansion to create new revenue streams through a wider security offering. This should include alarm monitoring, security consultancy and first response in an one-stop-shop for clients which The Council would sell as a new (chargeable) package to existing and new client. The Council will also seek partnership and sponsorship with other security providers and major retailers who may have an interest in supporting the safety of the Community.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that:

- c) Building Control – (subject to a robust business model) The Council agree in principle to a staged commercialisation of this service (including work to integrate, on the basis of specialist and geographical partnerships, with other providers and full commercialisation of the service).

RESOLVED that:

- d) Trade Waste and Other Depot Services – The Council agree in principle to the full commercialisation of trade waste, street cleansing and grounds maintenance and expansion into other profit making areas. This should include a package of measures aimed at creating greater visibility and improved promotion in the market place.

RESOLVED that:

- e) The Committee agrees to cease any further exploration into the commercialisation of the Council's printing function as the Business Transformation Service has concluded this is not financially viable.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that the Committee agrees that officers begin the process of setting up a suitable mutualisation vehicle and that reports are brought back to Strategy and Policy Committee as key decisions are required.

411. Webcasting Facility for Part 1 and Part 2 Council Meetings

At the Ordinary Council meeting (11th December 2013) the following was resolved:

"That this Council resolves to implement continual coverage of the Webcast facility for Part 2 Agenda Items. It is the Council's responsibility to make sure that Part 2 items would not be transmitted for public consumption but stored for record keeping and reference archive material.

Also, that all Part 1 and Part 2 Webcast recordings are stored for historical and reference purposes in perpetuity"

The purpose of the paper before Members was to update the Strategy and Policy Board on the costs and benefits of the options reviewed. Mr Ruck clarified how the Chair of a meeting could control requests to speak when pressing the "red" button at the base of the microphone stand.

Cllr Kerslake MOVED and Cllr Parker SECONDED the recommendation as set out in the report.

Following a full debate, a vote was taken by show of hands and it was RESOLVED that the Committee agrees to implement the full automation of Webcasting as described in Option 3 in this paper and commit to Webcasting with Public-i for a minimum period of 36 months.

412. Adventure Golf Course – Urgent Item

The Chair advised the meeting that a request that the Adventure Golf Course report be added to the agenda as an item of urgent business had been received. The report was late because another company did show some interest in the site. However, despite Officers contacting them to hold further discussions, the company did not come back, and no formal offer had been received. The late report was to provide the company with ample time to open discussions. Having carefully looked at this request, the Chair decided to allow it as urgent business. In view of the decision sought to be made, the need and benefits of making this decision in a timely manner, and the detriment to the authority and the public if it was delayed until the next meeting on 18 June 2014,

Members were advised that identifying management options for Hartswood golf course initially started in 2007, with an unsuccessful tender process to outsource the management of the course. This was repeated in 2013, and although five organisations expressed an interest there was still no offer that the Council felt would be acceptable.

It was therefore resolved at the Performance & Resources Committee on 9th October 2013 that a Member working group should be established to engage with interested parties to develop a business plan for Brentwood golf course. Bidwells were then

instructed to inform those who made a formal offer of the outcome of the decision by Members not to progress.

During the tender process for the golf course, other facilities in the park were offered for tender, including the cafe and crazy golf. Through this there was one offer of interest for the crazy golf, which would provide the Council with an income of £25,000 per annum over the next 25 years.

The offer was to lease the land which was currently used for crazy golf, and develop an adventure golf course on the site. This would generate over £500,000 of investment, and update the current facility.

Although there had been one other interested party since the tender process in taking on the crazy golf, no formal offer had been received despite requests. Therefore the current offer was felt to be best value for the Council in leasing this site.

Since the tender process the interested party has subsequently applied for planning permission on the site, and minute 196 of the Planning and Development Committee on 15th October 2013 RESOLVED that planning permission be approved, subject to conditions, which have now been agreed with the applicant.

If Members agreed to the recommendation, and negotiations with respect to the lease were successful, work would commence on site in early April 2014.

A motion was MOVED by Cllr Mrs Pound and SECONDED by Cllr Russell to approve the recommendation as set out in the report.

During the debate, a Member requested that the break clause only came into effect once the proposed £500,000 had been spent on the facility. This was agreed.

RESOLVED that Officers commence, and conclude negotiations with P&C Leisure Ltd to enter into a lease for 25 years.

413. Gypsy and Travellers – Enforcement

Members were advised that two planning enforcement notices in 2005 required the stable block and associated foundations to be removed and the use of the land for residential purposes to cease and the mobile home removed and the land restored to a suitable condition for agriculture. The Traveller had occupied the site since 2004.

Planning Permission for the change of use of the land to provide one pitch for a gypsy/traveller family was refused on the 18 September 2013 by the Secretary of State on the grounds of inappropriate development in the Green Belt, disagreeing with a recommendation from the Inspector who recommended the grant of temporary planning permission.

Members were advised that the mother of the family was willing to accept re-housing if no Traveller pitch is available in order to keep her family together. The Council had powers of direct action to carry out the steps required by the enforcement notice and power to recover the costs from the owner. The Council also had a duty to consider the best interest of the children and officers have explored whether a negotiated solution can be recommended.

A motion was MOVED by Cllr Parker and SECONDED by Cllr Russell to move the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED

1. That officers make arrangements to rehouse the family in temporary housing or private sector leasing accommodation allowing the educational needs of the children to be met until a pitch becomes available on the Council site, subject to
 - (i) compliance with the 2005 enforcement notices and
 - (ii) restoration of the site as set out in the report to a use appropriate to Green Belt policy
 2. That as soon as all reasonable endeavours have been taken to support the educational and any care needs of the children, direct action is authorised for the removal of the caravan and associated paraphernalia from the site and steps taken for the recovery of all costs.
-

30 June 2014

Agenda Item: 3

Finance and Resources

Proposals for a Review of Elections

Report of: *Jo-Anne Ireland, Director of Strategy and Corporate Services*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report outlines a proposal for a review of the elections process.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 Members of the Committee are requested to support a review of elections and to receive a report on options at the next meeting.

3. Introduction and Background

3.1 For electoral purposes the Borough of Brentwood is divided into 15 wards, which are further sub-divided into 41 polling districts.

3.2 Local Elections take place each year for local Councillors, either at Borough Council or County Council level. This year's Borough Council's Elections were held on 22 May to coincide with the European Parliamentary elections.

3.3 Electors may also live in an area that has a Parish Council for which elections take place every four years. The next Parish Elections are due to be held in 2015.

3.4 For the purpose of General Elections, Brentwood is in the parliamentary constituency of Brentwood & Ongar. MPs are elected for a period of up to five years but a General Election earlier can be called earlier. The last

General Election was held on 6 May 2010, and the next is scheduled for May 2015.

- 3.5 Essex is part of the Eastern Electoral Region of the UK within the European Parliament. In this region there are seven MEPs, who are elected under a system of proportional representation for a five year fixed term. The European Parliamentary Election was held on 22 May 2014.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 The proposed review would consider (but not be restricted to) the following areas:

- Review of the current Election cycle
- Review of polling day practices, including the locations of polling stations and processes undertaken at polling stations
- Review of the verification and count procedure
- Review of potential marketing campaigns to encourage electoral registration and voting
- Potential impact of Individual Electoral Registration (IER)

- 4.2 The review may identify a number of areas which can be recommended to Finance and Resources. However, it must also be recognised that any significant recommendations such as a change to the Election Cycle would need to be referred to Full Council for approval.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 Councillors are elected to make decisions about the services that the Council provides. Voting at Elections allows the residents to have a say on who represents them, and therefore the decisions they make.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Appropriate consultation will be undertaken on any relevant recommendations arising from the review.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 Elections address the priorities of Localism and a Modern Council.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jo-Anne Ireland, Director of Strategy and Corporate Services

Tel & Email: 01277 312712, jo-anne.ireland@brentwood.gov.uk

8.1 There are no direct financial implications at this stage.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: David Lawson, Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312860, david.lawson@brentwood.gov.uk

8.2 There are no legal implications at this stage.

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Jo-Anne Ireland

Telephone: 01277 312712

E-mail: jo-anne.ireland@brentwood.gov.uk

30 June 2014

Agenda Item: 4

Finance and Resources

Provisional Outturn 2013/14

Report of: *Jo-Anne Ireland, Director of Strategy and Corporate Services*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 As part of the year end process, the Council must report the outturn position for 2013/14 and produce a Statement of Accounts which must be signed off by the External Auditors (Ernst & Young) and published by 30 September 2014.
- 1.2 This report deals with the financial outturn for the following:
 - General Fund - projected surplus of £374,700 (plus a further £487,300 returned to balances from earmarked reserves) for the year.
 - Housing Revenue Account – projected overspend of £158,000 for the year.
 - Capital Programme – projected underspend of £1,497,100 for the year.
- 1.3 The report also considers the reserves and working balance levels.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 **Members are asked to approve the provisional outturn information contained within this report.**
- 2.2. **Members are asked to approve the following reserve transfers:**
 - 2.2.1 **Transfer of £500,000 to the Funding Volatility Reserve in recognition of the need to make good in 2014/15 a deficit on the NNDR Collection Fund in 2013/14.**

Cont'd

2.2.2 Close the ICT Contracts Reserve and transfer the residual balance of £30,000 to the Organisational Transformation Reserve

2.2.3 Reduce the Single Status Reserve to £30,000 and transfer the unused amount of £487,300 to the General Fund Working Balance

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 During 2012/13, the Council agreed its Corporate Plan for 2013 to 2016 which sets out the Council's Vision and Priorities for the Borough and a framework for a modern, efficient, cost effective way of operating. As part of this, the budgets and associated financial reports were all reformatted to ensure that they were aligned with the key priorities.
- 3.2 This process enables focus and assurance that the Council's resources are managed effectively in order to meet its statutory responsibilities and deliver the priorities of the Council over the three year period.
- 3.3 Reports presented to Strategy and Policy Board on 12 February 2014 included the following forecasts for 2013/14:
- General Fund – a balanced budget position with a working balance of £3.6 million.
 - Housing Revenue Account – a projected surplus of £1,730 with a working balance of £1.8 million.
 - Capital Programme – projected spend of £5.9 million.

4. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

General Fund

- 4.1 The MTFP approved in February 2013 included a high level business case outlining a 3 year transformation programme for the Council. The need for transformation and change is not simply driven by the budget; as a customer

driven organisation there is a need to transform our traditional pattern of service delivery and position the Council as:

- An excellent provider of services;
- An organisation that secures savings through a lean back office structure;
- An investor in front line services, and
- Entrepreneurial in its approach to drive up income and achieve efficiencies.

4.2 The transformation programme is based on 4 key strands:

- 1) **Customer Excellence** – a customer transformation project which will promote a channel shift for customer enquiries, supported by a multi-skilled front of house reception team.
- 2) **Efficiency Reviews** – primarily focused on reducing back office costs by streamlining processes and exploring different service delivery models.
- 3) **Management Restructure** – a flexible, interim structure will be required to support the transformation. However, a further reduction in Senior Management posts is anticipated to mirror the new organisational model.
- 4) **Entrepreneurial Activities** – generation of additional income through commercial activities, better use of our assets and improved performance (e.g. recycling rates).

4.3 A Procurement Review has also been undertaken which covered the following areas:

- Analysis of spend and current contracts.
- Review of Procurement Strategy and Contract Standing Orders.
- Providing greater access to contracts valued between £10,000 and £50,000 for local suppliers through the Council's website.
- Review of Contracts Register.

4.4 A summary of the estimated and actual savings achieved during 2013/14 are shown in the table below:

	2013/14 Estimate £	2013/14 Actual £	2013/14 Difference £
New Ways of Working:			
Efficiency Reviews: - Back Office Review	(313,000)	(379,000)	(66,000)
Procurement Review	(200,000)	(205,160)	(5,160)
TOTAL	(513,000)	(584,160)	(71,160)

- 4.5 The estimated forecast for the General Fund (as reported to Strategy and Policy Board on 12 February 2014) was a balanced budget position as at 31 March 2014. This compared favourably to the original anticipated funding gap of £477,600. However, the provisional outturn position is one of a £861,700 surplus. The table below provides a summary of the actual spending and income for the General Fund compared to the budget.

	2013/14 Estimate £	2013/14 Actual £	2013/14 Difference £
Corporate Priorities Expenditure:			
Street Scene and Environment	3,184	2,831	(353)
Localism	1,317	1,266	(51)
A Prosperous Borough	685	719	34
Housing, Health and Wellbeing	463	556	93
A Safe Borough	1,161	1,212	51
A Modern Council	3,150	2,709	(441)
Total Spend on Corporate Priorities	9,960	9,293	(667)
Adjustment and Appropriations	31	481	450
Payment to Parish Councils	282	282	0
TOTAL SPENDING REQUIREMENT	10,273	10,056	(217)
Funding:			
Council Tax	(5,547)	(5,547)	0
Government Grant	(3,628)	(4,246)	(618)
Council Tax Freeze Grant	(57)	(57)	0
Collection Fund Surplus	(243)	(243)	0
New Homes Bonus Grant	(798)	(811)	(13)
DCLG Funding	0	(14)	(14)
TOTAL COUNCIL FUNDING	(10,273)	(10,918)	(645)
Deficit / (Surplus) for the year	0	(862)	(862)

- 4.6 A number of underspends within the service areas have been transferred to earmarked reserves, or are explained by a reallocation of central support service recharges. The table below outlines the other key variances within service areas:

Budget	Difference £	Explanation
Cemeteries – Maintenance	22,600	Additional costs arising from storm damage
Cemeteries - Income	(13,700)	Additional lease renewal income
Vehicle Fleet Management – Running Costs	(101,500)	Repairs covered by warranty
Waste Management – Equipment and Materials	(67,000)	Reactive budget not fully spent
Building Control – Income	28,200	Inspections income lower than anticipated
Land Charges - Income	(29,100)	Income higher than anticipated
Planning - Income	(26,800)	Income higher than anticipated
Homelessness – Repairs and Maintenance	14,800	Increased need for repairs within temporary accommodation
Asset Management – Repairs and Maintenance	49,000	Additional spend which is currently subject to an insurance claim
Corporate Support – Postages	39,600	Higher than anticipated spend
Council Tax & NNDR – Discretionary Rate Relief	(110,000)	Now funded within the Retained Business Rates
Housing Benefit – Subsidy Income	(150,000)	One week of income relating to 2012/13 received and accounted for in 2013/14
Housing Benefit – DWP Grant	(27,000)	Additional funding received in respect of Welfare Reform
TOTAL	(370,900)	

General Fund Earmarked Reserves

- 4.7 As part of the year end procedures the Council must review its Earmarked Reserves. These Reserves are required in order to comply with proper accounting practice, whilst others have been created to earmark resources for known or predicted liabilities.

- 4.8 The Council had previously created a Funding Volatility Reserve to mitigate the risks arising from the changes in respect of Localising Business Rates and Council Tax Support. 2013/14 was the first full year of the new arrangements for Business Rates meaning that for the first time the level of funding received from Business Rates was dependent on the Council collecting Business Rates income in line with the Government's assumed levels. There was a substantial deficit on the new Business Rates Collection Fund last year, mainly because the Council had to make provision for possible successful appeals against rateable values with the consequent loss of income. Under the new arrangements, this deficit will have to be made good in 2014/15 and therefore additional funds have been allocated to this reserve to accommodate this.
- 4.9 A review of the reserves held found an ICT Contracts reserve created in 2012/13 to assist with training and development areas within ICT. Due to the close links between ICT and Transformation, it is considered unnecessary to hold a separate reserve in this context.
- 4.10 In view of the ongoing work associated with the implementation of Single Status, the Council had created a separate reserve to meet any potential costs arising from the project, including any equal pay claims. Single Status has now been completed and implemented from 1 October 2013, therefore the majority of the costs are now either committed or known. In addition to this the costs associated with equal pay claims is now largely known. As a result of this, the Council is able to revise this reserve to a more realistic level.
- 4.11 As a result of the review, the following actions are recommended:
- Transfer £500,000 to the Funding Volatility Reserve in recognition of the need to make good in 2014/15 a deficit on the NNDR Collection Fund in 2013/14.
 - Close the ICT Contracts Reserve and transfer the residual balance of £30,000 to the Organisational Transformation Reserve.
 - Reduce the Single Status Reserve to £30,000 and transfer the unused amount of £487,300 to the General Fund Working Balance.
- 4.12 The total value of General Fund Reserves after these adjustments is £3.3 million. A schedule of the Earmarked Reserves is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

General Fund Working Balance

- 4.13 The impact of the provisional outturn (£374,400) and the closure of the Single Status Reserve means that the estimated working balance as at 31 March 2014 is one of £4.5 million. This compares to the anticipated level of £3.6 million reported in February 2014.
- 4.14 The General Fund balance must continue to be managed so that it provides the flexibility to manage unexpected demands and pressures without destabilising the Council's overall financial position. The level of the Working Balance should provide a reasonable allowance for unquantifiable risks or one off exceptional items of expenditure that are not covered within existing budgets. The Working Balance can also be used to act as a source of pump priming investment and/or to deliver "invest to save" projects. It should not, however, be used to fund on-going spend initiatives.
- 4.15 General guidance and practice amongst other authorities varies. Options include 5% of Gross Operating Costs and 25% of Net Spending Requirement to be maintained as a minimum. For Brentwood, this would equate to a minimum reserve level ranging from £1.8 million to £2.8 million. However, individual risk assessments undertaken at a local level are considered best practice.
- 4.16 As part of the Budget and Council Tax Setting process in February 2013, the Council agreed that the General Fund Working Balance would be maintained at a minimum level of £2.5 million to mitigate against the combination of known risks. A risk assessment for 2014/15 has reaffirmed that this remains a reasonable minimum level for the Council.
- 4.17 Members are reminded that a decision approved by Council on 5 March 2014 earmarked funds from the General Fund Working Balance up to the value of £1.2 million to support a comprehensive procurement exercise in relation to the development of William Hunter Way.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- 4.18 The estimated forecast for the HRA (as reported to Strategy and Policy Board on 12 February 2014) was a potential surplus of £1,730 as at 31 March 2014, compared to an original anticipated funding surplus of £35,100. However, the provisional outturn position is one of a £157,680 deficit (overspend).
- 4.19 The table below provides a summary of the actual spending and income for the Housing Revenue Account compared to the budget.

	2013/14 Estimate £	2013/14 Actual £	2013/14 Difference £
Expenditure:			
Repairs and Maintenance	2,952	3,597	645
Supervision and Management	3,046	3,178	132
Rents, Rates, Taxes and Other Charges	168	169	1
Share of Corporate Costs	460	454	(6)
Depreciation and Impairment	2,030	1,958	(72)
Increase in Bad Debts Provision	85	51	(34)
Interest and Debt Management Expenses	2,287	3,426	1,139
Appropriations	1,678	184	(1,494)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	12,706	13,017	311
Income:			
Dwelling Income	(11,276)	(11,278)	(2)
Non Dwelling Income	(512)	(559)	(47)
Charges for Services and Facilities	(604)	(694)	(90)
Other	(315)	(328)	(13)
TOTAL INCOME	(12,707)	(12,859)	(152)
Deficit / (Surplus) for HRA Services	(1)	158	159

4.20 A number of variances are explained by the reallocation of central support service recharges. The table below outlines the other key variances:

Budget	(Under)/Over Spend £	Explanation
Repairs and Maintenance	631,000	Backlog repairs undertaken in preparation for the new Repairs and Maintenance Contract (offset by reduced contribution to the Council Dwelling Investment Fund)
Supervision and Management – Severance Payments	48,000	Costs arising from the Repairs and Maintenance Contract Review
Supervision and Management – Energy Costs	17,300	Backlog of energy bills previously in dispute have now been paid
Provision for Doubtful Debts	(33,800)	Provision reduced following a reduction in arrears and write offs
Garage and Shops Income	(47,600)	Income higher than anticipated due to improvement in voids
Charges for Services and Facilities	(90,000)	Income higher than anticipated for Service Charges
Provision for Loan Repayment	500,000	Funds set aside for repayment of loans relating to HRA Subsidy Reform
Capital Charges	600,000	Revenue contribution to the financing of capital expenditure
Council Dwelling Funds	(1,640,000)	Revised contribution for 2013/14 to offset the backlog repairs work, capital charges and provision for loan repayment
Equal Pay Reserve	133,000	Additional provision to reflect known claims
TOTAL	117,900	

HRA Working Balance

- 4.21 The impact of the provisional outturn (£157,680) means that the estimated working balance as at 31 March 2014 is one of £1.7 million. This compares to the anticipated level of £1.8 million reported in February 2014.
- 4.22 The HRA working balance must continue to be managed so that it provides the flexibility to manage unexpected demands and pressures without destabilising the Council's overall financial position. The level of the Working Balance should provide a reasonable allowance for unquantifiable risks or one off exceptional items of expenditure that are not covered within existing budgets. The Working Balance can also be used to act as a source of pump priming investment and/or to deliver "invest to save" projects.
- 4.23 General guidance and practice amongst other authorities varies. Options include % of total income, and a set value per Council Dwelling. However, individual risk assessments undertaken at a local level are considered best practice.

HRA Earmarked Reserves

- 4.24 In addition to the Working Balance, the HRA maintains 3 earmarked reserves. The total value of HRA Reserves is £689,000. A schedule of the Earmarked Reserves is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Capital Programme – Projected Outturn 2013/14

- 4.25 The actual spend on the Capital Programme for 2013/14 was £4.4 million, compared to £5.9 million approved in February 2014.
- 4.26 The table below shows details of the actual spend compared to that estimated in February 2014:

	2013/14 Estimate £	2013/14 Actual £	2013/14 Difference £
Details of Expenditure			
Street Scene and Environment	506,730	640,560	133,830
Localism	220,800	99,646	(121,154)
A Prosperous Borough	50,470	7,628	(42,842)
Housing, Health and Wellbeing	3,865,770	2,951,407	(914,363)
A Safe Borough	150,712	176,377	25,665
A Modern Council	1,146,549	568,313	(578,236)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON CORPORATE PRIORITIES	5,941,031	4,443,931	(1,497,100)
Funded by:			
Capital Receipts	(2,026,161)	(1,521,851)	504,310
Government Grants	(158,600)	(242,692)	(84,092)
Other Grants and Contributions	(30,576)	(17,690)	12,886
Housing Revenue Account Business Plan	(3,535,770)	(2,569,280)	966,490
Contributions from Revenue	(189,924)	(92,418)	97,506
TOTAL FUNDING	(5,941,031)	(4,443,931)	1,497,100

4.27 The table below outlines the key variances:

Budget	(Under)/Over Spend £	Explanation
Vehicle Replacement Programme	117,200	Purchases planned for 2014/15 were completed early (these will be funded from the 2014/15 budget)
Disabled Facilities Grants	36,600	Demand led
Home Repairs Assistance Grants	(42,200)	Demand led
Reprofiled expenditure	(1,614,000)	See table below
TOTAL	1,502,400	

4.28 The table below lists each of the schemes which require funding to be carried forward to 2014/15:

Scheme	Amount to be carried forward £	Explanation
Irrigation to Golf Course	6,000	Project delayed
Renaissance Group	36,900	Projects on-going
HRA – Property Investment	908,800	On-going – some projects were on hold due to the backlog of repairs work
Hutton Community Centre	121,100	Awaiting final invoices for this project
Asset Management Strategy	254,100	Projects on-going
ICT Projects	177,300	Projects on-going
Town Hall Remodelling	109,800	Project on-going
TOTAL	1,614,000	

4.29 The Capital Programme for 2013/14 has been fully funded without the need for any additional borrowing to be undertaken.

5 Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The Council is required to ensure effective arrangements for financial management are in place.

6 References to Corporate Plan

- 6.1 Good financial management underpins all priorities within the Corporate Plan.

7 Implications

Financial Implications

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- 7.1 The financial implications are set out in the report.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: David Lawson, Monitoring Officer

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- 7.2 The Council is obliged by Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make proper arrangements for the management of its financial affairs

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 12 February 2014 Strategy and Policy Board – Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 – 2016/17
- 8.2 5 March 2014 Council – Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 – 2016/17

9 Appendices to this report

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Earmarked Reserves

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Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2014

	Balance at 31 March 2013 £'000	Transferred Out £'000	Transferred In £'000	Balance at 31 March 2014 £'000
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>				
Asset Management	118	-	-	118
Asset Valuations	-	-	17	17
Brentwood Community Fund	79	30	21	70
Brentwood Community Hospital	-	-	49	49
Building Control	64	16	-	48
CCTV	-	-	4	4
Community Alarms	259	-	18	277
Community Rights	13	-	17	30
Community Safety	-	-	9	9
Duchess of Kent/Nightingale	367	12	-	355
Economic Development	15	-	-	15
Electoral Registration	29	-	14	43
Environmental Change	8	8	-	-
Financial Management System	69	69	-	-
Funding Volatility	750	-	500	1,250
Housing Benefit Subsidy Clawback	200	-	-	200
Housing Development Fund	50	-	50	100
ICT Contracts	30	30	-	-
Neighbourhood Action Team	30	30	-	-
Neighbourhood Plan	21	-	-	21
Organisational Transformation	453	-	30	483
Parking Equipment and Machinery	10	10	-	-
Planning Delivery Grant	48	-	54	102
Preventing Homelessness	-	-	15	15
Preventing Repossession	30	30	-	-
Public Consultation	-	-	10	10
Renaissance Group	18	18	-	-
Single Status and Equal Pay	616	586	-	30
Street Scene Training	2	-	-	2
Taxi Licensing	20	20	-	-
Ward Based Budgets	22	22	21	21
Welfare Reform	29	29	-	-
TOTAL	3,350	910	829	3,269
<u>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</u>				
Carpets for Sheltered Schemes	5	-	8	13
Council Dwellings Investment Fund	500	-	-	500
Equal Pay	-	-	176	176
TOTAL	505	-	184	689

30 June 2014

Agenda Item: 5

Finance and Resources

Annual Treasury Management Report 2013/14

Report of: *Jo-Anne Ireland, Director of Strategy and Corporate Services*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

2. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2013/14. This report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code) and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).
- 1.2 On 12th February 2013 the Council received an annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (2013/14) and this review compares the activity with the strategy.

3. Recommendation(s)

- 3.1 Members of the Committee are requested to asked to note the Treasury Management activity and information for 2013/14.**

4. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Changes in the regulatory environment place a much greater onus on Members for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policy and activities. This report is important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by Members.
- 3.2 The Council confirms that it has complied with the requirement under the Code to give prior scrutiny to the treasury management reports by the Policy,

Performance and Resources Board/Strategy and Policy Board/Finance and Resources Committee before they are reported to Full Council.

- 3.3 The financial year 2013/14 continued the challenging investment environment of previous years, namely low investment returns, although levels of counterparty risk had subsided somewhat. The original expectation for 2013/14 was that Bank Rate would not rise during the year and for it only to start gently rising from quarter 1 2015. This forecast rise has now been pushed back to a start in quarter 3 2015. Economic growth (GDP) in the UK was virtually flat during 2012/13 but surged strongly during the year. Consequently there was no additional quantitative easing during 2013/14 and Bank Rate ended the year unchanged at 0.5% for the fifth successive year. While CPI inflation had remained stubbornly high and substantially above the 2% target during 2012, by January 2014 it had, at last, fallen below the target rate to 1.9% and then fell further to 1.7% in February. It is also expected to remain slightly below the target rate for most of the two years ahead.
- 3.4 Gilt yields were on a sharply rising trend during 2013 but volatility returned in the first quarter of 2014 as various fears sparked a flight to quality. The Funding for Lending Scheme, announced in July 2012, resulted in a flood of cheap credit being made available to banks which then resulted in money market investment rates falling drastically in the second half of that year and continuing into 2013/14. That part of the Scheme which supported the provision of credit for mortgages was terminated in the first quarter of 2014 as concerns rose over resurging house prices.
- 3.5 The UK coalition Government maintained its tight fiscal policy stance but recent strong economic growth has led to a cumulative, (in the Autumn Statement and the March Budget), reduction in the forecasts for total borrowing, of £97bn over the next five years, culminating in a £5bn surplus in 2018-19.
- 3.6 The EU sovereign debt crisis subsided during the year and confidence in the ability of the Eurozone to remain intact increased substantially. Perceptions of counterparty risk improved after the ECB statement in July 2012 that it would do “whatever it takes” to support struggling Eurozone countries; this led to a return of confidence in its banking system which has continued into 2013/14 and led to a move away from only very short term investing. However, this is not to say that the problems of the Eurozone, or its banks, have ended as the zone faces the likelihood of weak growth over the next few years at a time when the total size of government debt for some nations is likely to continue rising. Upcoming stress tests of Eurozone banks could also reveal some areas of concern.

3.7 This report summarises:

- Capital activity during the year;
- Impact of this activity on the Council's underlying indebtedness (the Capital Financing Requirement);
- Reporting of the required prudential and treasury indicators;
- Overall treasury position identifying how the Council has borrowed in relation to this indebtedness, and the impact on investment balances;
- Detailed debt activity; and
- Detailed investment activity.

5. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

The Council's Capital Expenditure and Financing 2013/14

4.1 The Council undertakes capital expenditure on long-term assets. These activities may either be:

- Financed immediately through the application of capital or revenue resources (capital receipts, capital grants, revenue contributions etc.), which has no resultant impact on the Council's borrowing need; or
- If insufficient financing is available, or a decision is taken not to apply resources, the capital expenditure will give rise to a borrowing need.

4.2 The actual capital expenditure forms one of the required prudential indicators. The table below shows the actual capital expenditure and how this was financed.

Capital Expenditure	2012/13 Actual £000	2013/14 Original Estimate £000	2013/14 Mid year Estimate £000	2013/14 Actual £000
Non HRA	1,998	5,001	2,355	1,493
HRA	2,303	3,120	3,586	2,951
Total Expenditure	4,301	8,121	5,941	4,444
Financed by:				
Capital Receipts	105	5,001	2,026	1,522
Grants and Contribution	3,016	0	190	261
Revenue Contribution	0	0	190	92
HRA – Business Plan	0	0	3,535	2,569
Borrowing need	1,180	3,120	0	0

The Council's Overall Borrowing Need

- 4.3 The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital expenditure is termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This figure is a gauge of the Council's debt position. It represents 2013/14 and prior years' capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for by revenue or other resources.
- 4.4 Part of the Council's treasury activities is to address this borrowing need, either through borrowing from external bodies, or utilising temporary cash resources within the Council.
- 4.5 Under treasury management arrangements, actual debt can be borrowed or repaid at any time within the confines of the annual treasury strategy. However, the Council is required to make an annual revenue charge to reduce the General Fund element of the CFR. There is no statutory requirement to reduce the HRA element of the CFR.
- 4.6 This statutory revenue charge is called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The total CFR can also be reduced by:
- The application of additional capital resources (such as unapplied capital receipts); or
 - Charging more than the statutory revenue charge (MRP) each year through an additional Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP) from either the HRA or General Fund.

4.7 In 2013/14, a Voluntary Revenue Provision has been made from the HRA to reduce the HRA element of the CFR based on resources available at 31st March 2013.

4.8 The Council's CFR at the year end is shown below, and represents a key prudential indicator.

Capital Financing Requirement	31 March 2013	31 March 2014	31 March 2014
	Actual £000	Original £000	Actual £000
Opening balance	78,839	70,782	78,353
Add borrowing need	1,180	3,120	0
Less MRP	(1,550)	(55)	(500)
Less finance lease repayments	(116)	(3,120)	(49)
Closing balance	78,353	70,727	77,804

4.9 Borrowing activity is constrained by prudential indicators for gross borrowing and the CFR, and by the authorised limit.

The Council's Treasury Position at the Year End

4.10 The Council's debt and investment position is organised by the treasury management service in order to ensure adequate liquidity for revenue and capital activities, security for investments and to manage risks within all treasury management activities.

4.11 The treasury position at the 31 March 2014 compared with the previous year is shown below;

	31 March 2014		31 March 2013	
	Principal	Average Rate	Principal	Average Rate
Fixed Interest Rate GF Debt	£4.000m	0.350%	£4.000m	2.160%
HRA Subsidy Reform	£64.166m	2.815%	£64.166m	2.815%

	31 March 2014		31 March 2013	
	Principal	Average Rate	Principal	Average Rate
Total Debt	£68.166m	3.986%	£68.166m	4.168%
Capital Financing Requirement (excluding Finance Leases)	£77.804m		£78.353m	
Over/(Under) Borrowing	(£11.590m)		(£10.090m)	
Fixed Interest Investments	£0	N/A	£0	N/A
Variable Interest Investments	£0.545m	0.600%	£2.160m	0.900%
Total Investments	£0.545m	0.600%	£2.160m	0.900%
Net Borrowing Position	£67.621m		£66.006m	

Debt Decisions taken during 2013/14

4.12 **Long Term borrowing** – the table below summarises the long term loans held at 31 March 2014. No additional long term borrowing was taken out during the year.

SCHEDULE OF OUTSTANDING LOANS AS AT 31 MARCH 2014

Repayment Date	Period of Loan (Years)	Type of Loan	Fixed/Variable	Interest Rate	Amount Outstanding £
PWLB LOANS:					
28/03/2017	5	Maturity	Fixed	1.240%	5,000,000
28/03/2022	10	Maturity	Fixed	2.400%	5,000,000
28/03/2027	15	Maturity	Fixed	3.010%	10,000,000
08/01/2028	25	Maturity	Fixed	4.875%	400,000
28/03/2032	20	Maturity	Fixed	3.300%	15,000,000
28/03/2037	25	Maturity	Fixed	3.440%	15,000,000
28/03/2042	30	Maturity	Fixed	3.500%	14,166,000
24/02/2055	60	Maturity	Fixed	8.875%	800,000
30/04/2055	60	Maturity	Fixed	8.875%	800,000
MARKET LOAN:					
01/04/2014	0	Maturity	Fixed	0.350%	2,000,000
TOTAL					68,166,000

4.13 **Short Term borrowing** – the Council had one short term loan outstanding at 31st March 2014 of £2,000,000

4.14 **Rescheduling** – due to changes made by the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) in the way in which it calculates the premiums and discounts on premature loan repayments, it has become more expensive to undertake any debt rescheduling and it is therefore unlikely that there will be any rescheduling opportunities in the short term.

Investment Decisions taken during 2013/14

4.15 **Investment Policy** – the Council’s Investment Policy is governed by guidance and was approved by full Council in February 2013. The investment activity during the year conformed to the approved strategy, and the Council had no liquidity difficulties.

4.16 **Major Transactions** – the Council did not undertake any long term investments during 2013/14.

4.17 **Investments held by the Council** – the table below details the investments held by the Council at 31 March 2014.

SCHEDULE OF OUTSTANDING INVESTMENTS AS AT 31 MARCH 2014

Date Invested	Date to be Repaid	Invested With	Investment Amount £	Interest Rate
Call Account	NA	Royal Bank of Scotland	545,000	0.600%
TOTAL			545,000	

Prudential Indicators and Compliance Issues

4.18 The Council is required by the Prudential Code to report the actual prudential indicators after the year end. These indicators provide either an overview or a limit on treasury activity, and are shown below:

	31 March 2013 Actual £000	31 March 2014 Original £000	31 March 2014 Actual £000
Gross borrowing position (including finance leases)	68,262	70,782	68,262
CFR	78,353	70,727	77,804

4.19 The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) shows the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes and should only increase in relation to capital expenditure that is not met from the Council's own resources, i.e. it is unfinanced. External borrowing should not exceed the CFR except in the short term under exceptional circumstances. Any borrowing in excess of the CFR would be deemed to be for revenue purpose, which is not allowed. This indicator aims to show that gross borrowing does not exceed the CFR. The gross borrowing position is the sum of external debt and finance lease liabilities. The table above demonstrates that the Council has complied with this requirement.

4.20 **The Authorised Limit** - this is the "affordable borrowing limit" required by section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited. The limit is set or revised by the full Council. The table below demonstrates that during 2013/14 the Council has maintained gross borrowing within this limit.

4.21 **The Operational Boundary** – this is the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year. Periods where the actual position is either below or

over the boundary is acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

- 4.22 **Actual financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream** - this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream.

	2013/14
Authorised limit	£87.000m
Maximum gross borrowing position	£68.166m
Operational boundary	£85.000m
Financing costs as a proportion of net revenue stream	13.47%

Regulatory Framework, Risk and Performance

- 4.23 The Council's treasury management activities are regulated by a variety of professional codes, statutes and guidance:
- The Local Government Act 2003 (the Act), which provides the powers to borrow and invest as well as providing controls and limits on this activity;
 - The Act permits the Secretary of State to set limits either on the Council or nationally on all local authorities restricting the amount of borrowing which may be undertaken (although no restrictions were made in 2013/14);
 - Statutory Instrument (SI) 3146 2003, as amended, develops the controls and powers within the Act;
 - The SI requires the Council to undertake any borrowing activity with regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities;
 - The SI also requires the Council to operate the overall treasury function with regard to the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services;
 - Under the Act the Communities for Local Government (CLG) has issued Investment Guidance to structure and regulate the Council's investment activities;
 - Under section 238(2) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 the Secretary of State has taken powers to issue guidance on accounting practices. Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision was issued under this section on 8 November 2007.
- 4.24 The Council has complied with all of the above relevant statutory and regulatory requirements which limit the levels of risk associated with its

treasury management activities. In particular its adoption and implementation of both the Prudential Code and the Code of Practice for Treasury Management means that its capital expenditure is prudent, affordable and sustainable, and its treasury practices demonstrate a low risk approach.

- 4.25 The Council is aware of the risks of passive management of the treasury portfolio (reduced investment income, counterparty risk etc) and, with the support of Capita Asset Services the Council's Treasury Management Advisers, has proactively managed the debt and investments over the year by continually reviewing market conditions, appraising investment and debt rescheduling opportunities and assessing their effects on the Council's balance sheet.
- 4.26 There is little risk of volatility of costs in the current debt portfolio as the interest rates are fixed, utilising long-term loans.
- 4.27 Shorter-term variable rates and likely future movements in these rates predominantly determine the Council's investment return. These returns can therefore be volatile and, whilst the risk of loss of principal is minimised through the annual investment strategy, accurately forecasting future returns can be difficult and will continue to impact on the revenue accounts.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The Council is required by regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 to produce an annual treasury management review of activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2013/14.

6. References to Corporate Plan

- 6.1 Effective financial management underpins all of the Council's activities.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 7.1 The financial implications are outlined within the report.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: David Lawson, Monitoring Officer

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7.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

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30th June 2014

Finance and Resources Committee

Agenda Item: 6

Performance Indicators 2014/15

Report of: *Lee Taylor, Policy and Programme Manager*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report details the Operational Performance Indicators agreed for 2014/15 and gives performance detail for the first quarter up to 16th June 2014.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the Strategic and Operational Performance Indicators for 2014/15.**
- 2.2 That the Committee considers and notes the performance and contextual information against the first quarter key performance indicators up to 16th June 2014.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 During 2013/14 Performance Indicators were reported to Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) on a quarterly basis.
- 3.2 The Corporate Leadership Board (CLB) met with a cross party group of O&S Members in January 2014 to discuss performance management.
- 3.3 As a result of those discussions the following actions were agreed:
 - 3.3.1 Key strategic performance indicators for 2014/15 would be reviewed focusing on monitoring the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan. These indicators will be reviewed by Members quarterly.

Consideration would be given to the most appropriate way to monitor individual indicators including setting targets and/or monitoring trends. The presentation of indicators was also reviewed to promote transparency and understanding.

- 3.3.2 Lead Members would be invited to O&S to present performance information supported by Heads of Service where appropriate.
 - 3.3.3 Key operational performance indicators would be reviewed for 2014/15 focusing on the delivery of service plans. These would be reviewed by CLB on a quarterly basis and reported to Members by exception.
 - 3.3.4 Performance Indicator reports should provide both quantitative and contextual information providing benchmarking where appropriate and available.
 - 3.3.5 Next steps and action plans should be provided in the instance of poor / declining performance.
- 3.4 As part of the programme framework CLB agreed a list of key Strategic and Operational Performance Indicators for 2014/15, taking into consideration the recommendations listed above.
- 3.5 CLB have chosen indicators that will give Members a sense of whether individual services and the Council as a whole are delivering on the commitments and services offered to residents and businesses. Where possible and appropriate benchmarking data will be provided and trends analysed.
- 3.6 The key Strategic indicators will be measured annually and will involve a customer satisfaction survey to gauge how residents and businesses rate the Council's performance.
- 3.7 Operational indicators will be measured either quarterly or monthly (depending on how often valuable and informative data can be gathered) and reported at the Finance and Resources Committee.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

4.1 Performance data for the first quarter of 2014/15, up to 16th June 2014, is available at Appendix 1.

4.2 The first quarter ends at the end of June and due to report deadlines it has not been possible to provide a full quarter's data. Most data supplied has been based on April and May performance. This has also meant that any benchmarking data would not prove useful at the current time.

4.3 As agreed in the recommendations only exception reporting, where indicators are not on target is provided below.

4.4 Street Scene and Environment

4.5 Monitoring of Street Scene indicators begins in earnest approximately six months into the year to allow for the effects of the growing season to be factored in.

4.6 Performance to date is within tolerance levels and the half yearly position will give a better indication of emerging trends.

4.7 Planning

4.8 All indicators are either meeting or above target.

4.9 Health and Wellbeing

4.10 The indicator is above target

4.11 Environmental Health

4.12 The indicator is above target

4.13 Housing

4.14 Housing performance indicators are below target.

4.15 The new Interim Head of Housing has plans in place to work with housing staff to recover the performance and will update verbally at the meeting.

4.16 **Corporate**

4.17 Payment of invoices to local suppliers is slightly down at 93.39% against a target of 95%. Whilst this is within tolerance it is to be noted that ICT/Power failures in May would have had a direct impact on invoice processing.

4.18 The number of working days/shifts lost to short and long term sickness is now recorded as actual days rather than average number per employee. This will provide Members with the actual sickness absence and allow for trends to be analysed and monitored. Sickness absence is managed through the Absence Management Policy.

4.19 Council Tax collections are slightly down on the cumulative target for April and May but are within tolerance and do not give any cause for concern at the moment.

4.20 For many years Council's have only been reporting Business Rate Collections as the percentage of the collectable debit. Whilst this remains a key indicator, officers have recognised that since the funding arrangements for National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) were revised from April 2013, a more appropriate measure would be the actual amount collected and retained by the authority. This is because the Local Authority's main source of funding is the amount it retains from business rates.

4.21 To arrive at the actual amount collected, officers are proposing to report on:

4.21.1 Changes to the Aggregate Rateable Value i.e. the collectable debit

4.21.2 The percentage of the collectable debit

4.21.3 The amount actually collected

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 That the Finance and Resources Committee review the 2014/15 Performance Indicators and the performance for the first quarter up to 16th June 2014 as required by the Terms of Reference.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The Finance and Resources Committee undertakes a quarterly review of performance indicators.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 Performance Indicators should be appropriate to monitoring progress against the Corporate Plan.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jo-Anne Ireland, Director of Strategy and Corporate Services

Tel & Email: 01277 312712, jo-anne.ireland@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: David Lawson, Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312860, david.lawson@brentwood.gov.uk

- 8.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

9. Appendices to this report

- Appendix 1 – Performance Indicator Dashboard to 16th June 2014

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Lee Taylor

Telephone: 01277 312740

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Agenda Item 6, Appendix 1
Performance Indicator Dashboard – First Quarter 2014/15 (up to data available on 16th June)

Strategic Indicators

Ref	Area	Performance Indicator	Performance Measure	Target	Results	Comments
S1	Corporate Plan	Reduction in operating costs	Operating budget - annual	TBC	Annual result	Unavailable
S2	Corporate Plan	Increase in Customer Satisfaction	3 yearly customer satisfaction survey – annual sampling	TBC	Annual result	Unavailable
S3	Corporate Plan	Increase in income and/or entrepreneurial opportunities		TBC	Annual result	Unavailable

Operational Indicators

Ref	Area	Measure	Performance Measure	Target	Results	Comments
O1	Street Scene and Environment	Residual household waste per household	Kilogrammes per household Quarterly	Annual 435kg Cumulative for April & May: 72.5kg	76.17kg	Within Tolerance
O2	Street Scene and Environment	Percentage of household waste arisings which have been sent by the authority for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion	% of total arisings Quarterly	53%	51.52%	Within Tolerance

Agenda Item 6, Appendix 1

Ref	Area	Measure	Performance Measure	Target	Results	Comments
O3	Planning	Number of new homes approved to be built in the Borough	Annual	362	Annual result	Unavailable
O4	Planning	% of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse planning applications	Quarterly	34%	0%	Above Target
O5	Planning	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'Major' application types	Quarterly	50%	50%	On Target
O6	Planning	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'Minor' application types	Quarterly	70%	89%	Above target
O7	Planning	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'Other' application types	Quarterly	80%	91%	Above Target

Agenda Item 6, Appendix 1

Ref	Area	Measure	Performance Measure	Target	Results	Comments
O8	Environmental Health	Food safety/hygiene standards in food premises	% of broadly compliant food premises – quarterly	97%	97.7%	Above Target
O9	Health and Wellbeing	Number of homes assisted to enable independent living	Data from Papworth Trust and Housing on adaptations and other works to assist vulnerable residents	1000 (250 per quarter)	307	Above Target
O10	Housing	Average re-let times for Local Authority Housing	Monthly	Top Quartile	32.67 days	Below Target
O11	Housing	Local Authority rent collection and arrears; rent arrears of current tenants as a proportion of the authority's rent roll	Monthly	Top Quartile	% arrears as a proportion of rent roll: 1.63% Rent collection rate: 98.42%	Below Target
O12	Housing	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	Monthly	29	45	Below Target
O13	Finance	95% of invoices to local suppliers within 20 days	Payment stats Monthly	95%	95.97%	Above Target
O14	Finance	95% of invoices to all suppliers within 30 days	Payment stats Monthly	95%	93.39%	Within Tolerance

Agenda Item 6, Appendix 1

Ref	Area	Measure	Performance Measure	Target	Results	Comments
O15	HR	The number of working days/shifts lost to short term sickness	Short term sickness stats Monthly	No target – trend to be analysed	April 100.5 days May 99 days	Benchmarking data and further investigation required
O16	HR	The number of working days/shifts lost to long term sickness	Long terms sickness stats Monthly	No target – trend to be analysed	April 68.5 days May 42.5 days	Benchmarking data and further investigation required
O17	Council Tax	Council tax collection	Monthly	98% - Annual Cumulative for April & May: 32.30%	31.88%	Within tolerance
O18	NNDR	Business rates collection in line with or exceeding Government Assumptions	Quarterly	TBC	April: 10.58% May: 18.64%	For comparison last year's performance for the same period is provided: April: 10.21% May: 19.46%

30 June 2014

Agenda Item: 7

Finance and Resources

Organisational and People Development Strategy and Staff Survey

Report of: *Jo-Anne Ireland, Director of Strategy and Corporate Services*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 A staff survey was conducted during February 2014 which was requested by Overview and Scrutiny on 18 September 2013.
- 1.2 The results of the survey are attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The staff survey was followed up with a managers' workshop on 04 June 2014 and additional workshops are to be held later in June.
- 1.4 An Organisation and People Development Strategy has been developed in response to the issues raised in the report and feedback contained within the Peer Review outcome letter of February 2014.
- 1.5 The strategy is attached as Appendix 2.
- 1.6 A comprehensive action plan needs to be drawn up by managers and staff to support the delivery of the Organisational and People Development Strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members note the report and attached survey results (Appendix 1) as requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- 2.2 Members endorse the Organisation and People Development Strategy attached as Appendix 2.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 September 2013 requested that a staff survey be conducted and the results reported to a future Performance and Resources Committee. [Minute 167 refers]
- 3.2 A staff survey was subsequently conducted during February 2014 by Martin Reddington Associates (MRA).
- 3.3 The survey was independently constructed, analysed and a report drawn up which is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The response rate was 42% of staff. The average response rate for an authority this size is 44%.
- 3.5 The staff survey was followed up with a managers' workshop in June facilitated by the Head of Business Transformation with more workshops to follow.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 The results from the survey have been independently analysed by MRA.
- 4.2 The survey results and follow up workshops highlight similar issues to the Peer Review outcome letter.
- 4.3 The top 5 positive results were shown for staff's commitment to their work, their teams and the borough:
 - At work, I concentrate for long periods on my job
 - I often 'go the extra mile' to get my job done
 - I am willing to put myself out for my team members when required
 - I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks
 - On the whole, I strive with all my energy to perform my job
- 4.4 The questions below scored the lowest out of all the questions indicating negative perceptions from staff :

- Councillors understand the impact their demands have on the effective running of the Council
- Councillors make a valuable contribution to the effective running of the Council
- Brentwood Borough Council demonstrates a genuine concern for my well-being
- I feel secure in my job
- There has been a clear link between my performance and my rewards

4.5 Management and staff now need to discuss together how to move forward on the issues identified and build on positive messages coming out of the survey whilst addressing the areas staff are concerned about.

4.6 In response to the feedback, an Organisation and People Development Strategy has been developed. The strategy will support the continuous development of the organisation, its staff, and its Members.

4.7 A comprehensive action plan needs to be drawn up by managers and staff to support the delivery of the strategy.

4.8 This action plan will also need to take into account references to staff issues raised in the staff survey and also those contained within the Peer Review outcome letter.

5. **Reasons for Recommendation**

5.1 The Peer Review team noted that the Council has 'a committed and loyal staff'.

5.2 It is therefore vital that the issues identified in the staff survey are progressed positively in order to improve the working lives of our staff.

6. **Consultation**

6.1 Every member of staff was given the opportunity to complete the survey online.

6.2 For members of staff who did not have access to their own PC an iPad was used for them to complete the survey or a kiosk PC set up with the relevant link to the survey.

6.3 All managers were invited to the managers' workshop.

6.4 Another workshop for staff is to be organised.

7. References to Corporate Plan

7.1 Any Corporate Plan can only be delivered by motivated and committed staff, therefore a motivated, trained and loyal workforce is vital to the delivery of all priorities.

7.2 Specifically becoming a Modern Council which is leaner and more agile will require a multi skilled, motivated and flexible workforce.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jo-Anne Ireland, Director of Strategy and Corporate Services

Tel & Email 01277 312712, jo-anne.ireland@brentwood.gov.uk

8.1 The cost of the survey was £2,540.40 and this was met from within existing Corporate Management budgets.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: David Lawson, Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email 01277 312860 david.lawson@brentwood.gov.uk

8.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

9. Appendices to this report

- Appendix 1 – Staff Survey Report
- Appendix 2 – Organisation and People Development Strategy

Report Author Contact Details:

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The Employment Deal



Simplified Feedback Report Draft 1



Examining the expectations and beliefs of the workforce about their employment relationship

About this report

Brentwood Borough Council asked Martin Reddington Associates to conduct a staff survey in February 2014. The survey ran for 3 weeks and 161 people responded, approximately 42% of the total staff.

This feedback report is based on the responses to the staff survey.

The analysis of the survey looks at workforce performance and does so in the following ways:

- How both employer and employee contribute to the overall employment deal
- How an employer and employees talk to each other to find solutions
- What the key drivers are in the organisation, those things that directly impact on how employees contribute

The headline results show some areas that need some further work, especially in the following areas:

The Value of Team Work – Transformative change should recognise the importance of team work.

Workplace Tensions – At the present time the ‘more-with-less’ tension (often linked with organisations going through transformative change)- is actually resulting in higher contributions from employees. However, the situation needs to be monitored – the presence of high, unchecked levels of workplace tensions can have negative consequences in the longer term by affecting health and wellbeing of employees.

Leadership and Support - The Council would benefit from the perception of a more supportive work climate. This incorporates on-going investment in the capability of the workforce and creating a ‘no-blame’ culture. The leadership team can play a greater part in inspiring the workforce to achieve greater performance through articulating a clear vision for the organisation and.

Narrative analysis has also been used for where staff wrote further comments and these are grouped under the themes of ‘Best thing’, ‘Line Manager’ and ‘Biggest tension’ and measured as positive or negative. The more negative responses are around the ‘biggest tension’ with frustration around lack of resources, political pressure, systems and procedures among other things.

Staff were also asked to describe the ‘personality’ of the organisation in one word and these have been grouped and again measured as positive or negative. These show that the organisation has some work to do to demonstrate support, openness and the ability to modernise.

The detailed analysis follows in the rest of the report along with the responses to all the questions.

Overall the results show that there is a lot of work to be done, particularly during a time of transformative change but that staff are generally positive about the contribution that they can offer.

Key Drivers

A statistical technique known as Key Driver Analysis (KDA) has been used to help focus on those attributes of the employment deal that have greatest impact on employee contribution – see below. These attributes are not necessarily the lowest performers. The outcomes of the KDA should be used to guide the action planning process, as taking effective action in the identified areas will contribute positively toward enhanced employee contributions. This information should be used in conjunction with the other forms of analysis set out in this document

Key Drivers of Employee Contribution - Brentwood Vs. 5 councils combined

Brentwood	% SA/A	Five Councils Combined Kent CC, Tandridge DC, Tendring DC, Dudley MBC, Trafford Council	% SA/A
Q4.4 I am often required to do more with less resources	79	Q1.10 I constantly experience excessive pressure in my job	52
Q2.6 My line manager recognises that speaking openly about problems in the workplace provides an opportunity to improve things	73	Q1.11 I feel secure in my job	59
q3.13 I have a clear view about Brentwood Borough Council's obligations to me	52	Q4.4 I am often required to do more with less resources	75
Q4.2 My personal development preferences are often overridden by the needs of the organisation	57	Q1.4 I understand the support available to me to enable me to get my job done	71
q3.6 There is a 'no blame' culture – mistakes are talked about freely so we can learn from them	43	Q4.2 My personal development preferences are often overridden by the organisation	42
q3.3 Brentwood Borough Council invests in building my capabilities through learning and development	48	Q1.5 I feel able to strongly influence my performance goals	58

Note: Qs 1.10, 4.2 & 4.4 are reverse logic.

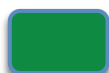
Sustain: Good score to be celebrated

Monitor: Moderate score – Capable of improvement

Improve: Relatively poor score – a clear signal to take steps to improve.

Top and Bottom 5 Items

The status of each item is shown below and is denoted by the following:



Sustain: Good score to be celebrated



Monitor: Moderate score – prevent further decline and capable of improvement



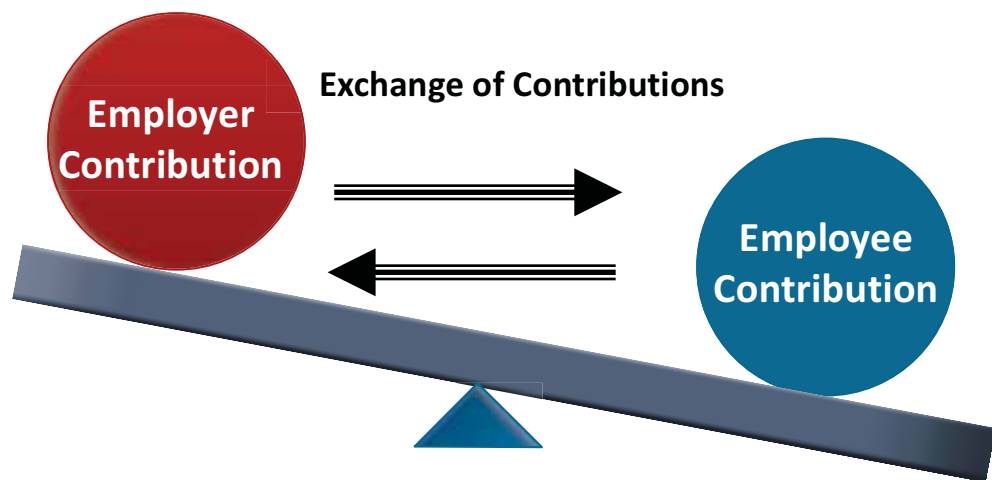
Improve: Relatively poor score – a clear signal to take steps to improve

	5 survey items recording the highest scores of strongly agree/agree	% SA/A	Status
Q1.8	At work, I concentrate for long periods on my job	96	
Q1.6	I often 'go the extra mile' to get my job done	94	
Q2.3	I am willing to put myself out for my team members when required	94	
Q1.1	I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks	94	
Q1.7	On the whole, I strive with all my energy to perform my job	92	
	5 survey items recording the lowest scores of strongly agree/agree		
Q3.19	Councillors understand the impact their demands have on the effective running of the Council	12	
Q3.18	Councillors make a valuable contribution to the effective running of the Council	13	
Q3.5	Brentwood Borough Council demonstrates a genuine concern for my well-being	19	
Q1.11	I feel secure in my job	22	
Q1.2	There has been a clear link between my performance and my rewards	25	

The EVP Model© - Balance of the Deal©

We look at what we call the 'Deal' between employer and employee. We see this as the combination of what the employer contributes and what the employee contributes. In the diagram below we represent it as a see-saw (see figure 1). Ideally the see saw should be balanced, however in all organisations there is usually one side who see themselves as contributing more and this is usually the employees. This translates into a negative score. Between 0 and -10 is a well-balanced deal, which supports sustainable high performance from the workforce. Brentwood's score is -26, which indicates that there are issues to be investigated.

Figure 1 – The Employment Deal



The Balance of the Deal© – Differences by Service Area

The index scores associated with the Balance of the Deal are broken down by service areas below:

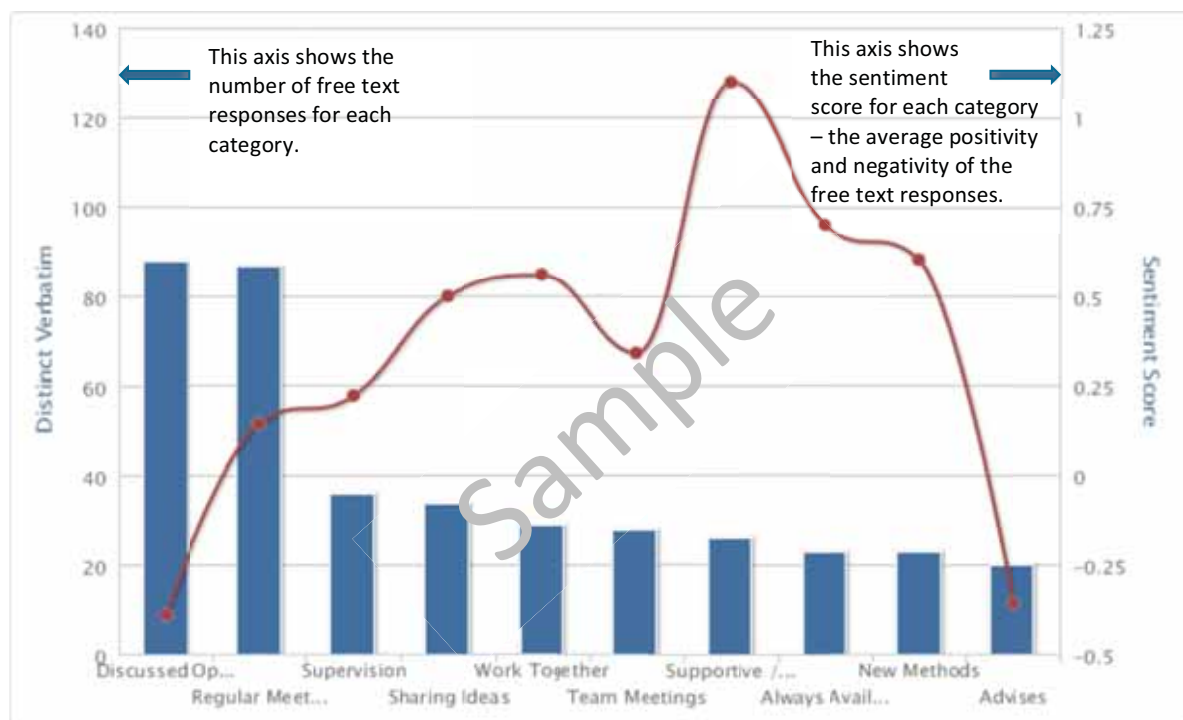
Table 1. The Balance of the Deal compared by Service Area	Employer Contribution	Employee Contribution	Balance of the Deal	Satisfaction	N
ALL	49	75	-26	55	161
Street Scene	42	73	-31	52	16
Borough Health, Safety and Localism	58	80	-22	60	25
Housing	51	74	-23	54	23
Planning	44	71	-27	54	21
Revenue and benefits	43	76	-33	54	20
Corporate Services (including finance, payroll, legal, elections, HR, Corporate & Democratic Services, Assets)	54	75	-21	60	28
Business Transformation	51	76	-25	48	12

The group average of other local authorities who also undertook this survey is shown below. The group is made up of Brentwood Borough Council C, Kent County Council, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, London Borough of Redbridge, Tandridge District Council, Tendring District Council, Trafford Council, West Suffolk Partnership, Wrexham County Borough Council

Employer Contribution	= 52
Employee Contribution	= 76
Balance of the Deal	= -24
Satisfaction	= 59
N	= 5445

Narrative Analysis – How it Works

The survey included some free-text questions. All free text responses were analysed using a technique, which grouped the responses into themes and weight of sentiment (positive, neutral or negative). So in the graph below, the first block shows that a large number of responses were received on that issue but the red line (sentiment) shows they were mainly negative, as it's low.

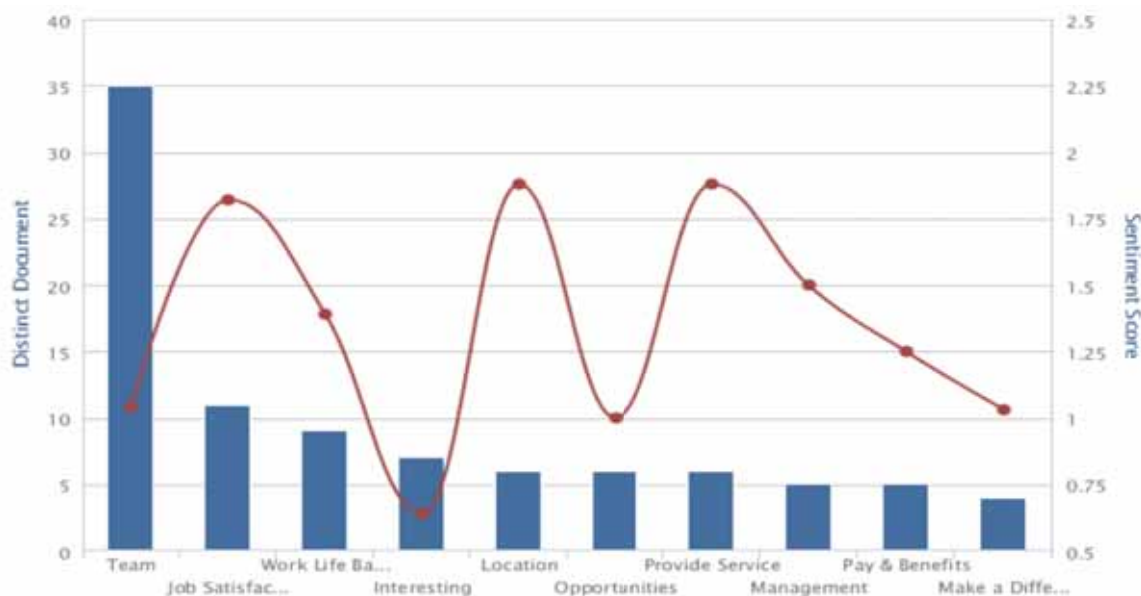


Examples of Positive and Negative Sentiment Comments

Category	Free Text Comments	Sentiment
Supportive/Helps Me	<i>When I am developing new projects/initiatives my line manager is supportive and open to new ideas and innovations, he will support and provide resources to meet objectives, and assist in creating opportunities to follow through on innovative projects</i>	Positive
Work Together	<i>Our small team of three work well together to find the best way of solving problems, as we all have different skills and experiences</i>	Positive
Supervision	<i>I have not had any supervision to speak of for six months and have not received any supervision dates for the coming year</i>	Negative
Discuss Issues	<i>We discuss issues but there is rarely an adequate outcome as most of my issues require management to step in to ensure that staff follow processes correctly and staff are rarely brought to task, because of weak management</i>	Negative

Narrative Analysis – Best Thing

In answer to the question ‘What is the best thing about working for Brentwood Borough Council?’ there were 91 free text responses. The main themes and associated sentiment scores are shown in figure 2.



Examples of Free Text Responses and Sentiment Comments for ‘Best Thing’

Category	Free Text Comments	Sentiment
Team	<p><i>I have had the opportunity to be involved in many projects because of working in a small team, which is often not the case in other authorities with larger teams and resources.</i></p> <p><i>Communication is key and these relationship's make my job easier as we all work together as a team and help each other out.</i></p>	Positive
Pay & Benefits	<p><i>Monthly pay cheques.</i></p> <p><i>...upon recent restructuring, I have also had the recognition about the work effort I put in and have had a very decent pay rise</i></p>	Positive
Management	<p><i>I feel I can make a difference in the areas I work with, my manager is supportive, encouraging and demands the best from you without over implying it.</i></p> <p><i>My manager allows flexibility with working hours and is approachable and assists to resolve any issues that may arise.</i></p>	Positive
Job Satisfaction	<p><i>I enjoy working at Brentwood because of my job and who I work with, not the actual council itself.</i></p>	Mixed

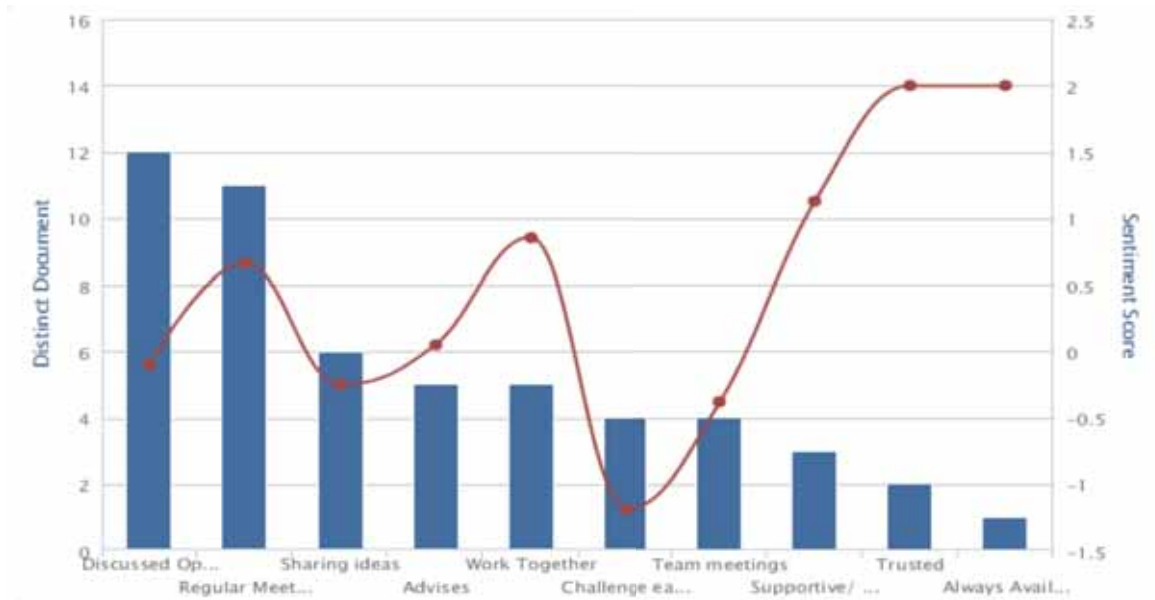
Narrative Analysis – Best Thing

Category	Free Text Comments	Sentiment
Work Life Balance	<i>The flexi system is fantastic.</i> <i>My manager allows flexibility with working hours....</i>	Positive
Interesting	<i>My job is varied and interesting.</i> <i>I am fortunate to have an interesting job that I enjoy doing and I have the support of officers to achieve that.</i>	Positive
Location	<i>The convenient location.</i> <i>It is local to where I live...</i> <i>It is local, easy to travel to....</i>	Positive
Opportunities	<i>The people and having the opportunity to make a difference.</i> <i>The opportunity to learn other skills.</i> <i>...the learning opportunities that have been available to me.</i>	Positive
Provide Service	<i>Feeling of pride in providing a good service for the residents.</i> <i>...helping to provide a good service to the local community I live in.</i>	Positive
Make a difference	<i>Working here makes me feel that I make a difference to the public.</i> <i>I find the work we undertake rewarding as we make a difference to people's lives.</i>	Positive

Narrative Analysis – Line Manager

In answer to the question 'How do you work with your line manager to get something done?' there were 65 free text responses. The main themes and associated sentiment scores are shown in figure 3.

Figure 3 Combined bar graph and sentiment analysis for 'Line Manager'



Examples of Positive and Negative Sentiment comments for 'Line Manager'

Category	Free Text Comments	Sentiment
Discussed Options	<p><i>If a problem has arisen it is normally resolved with a phone call where a discussion takes place then a discussion will be made, problem solved.</i></p> <p><i>My line manager regularly asks about work loads and communicates targets needed to be completed by the team, this approach means that as a team and individually we are always discussing the best ways to get something done.</i></p>	Positive
Regular Meetings	<p><i>The One to Ones are not regular and we are not kept updated with how we are doing in between - I believe that when we do have a One to One, there should be no surprises, as we should have regular feedback in between, but we do not get this.</i></p>	Negative
Advises	<p><i>My line manager is involved with all issues and provides effective advice.</i></p> <p><i>By following {line manager} advice and guidance I am able to achieve high standards in my work and progress my personal knowledge.</i></p>	Positive
Work Together	<p><i>I believe it is important to be able to converse freely about work problems and tasks, and working together in an office is the best way of doing this so team members can bounce ideas around and find solutions.</i></p>	Positive

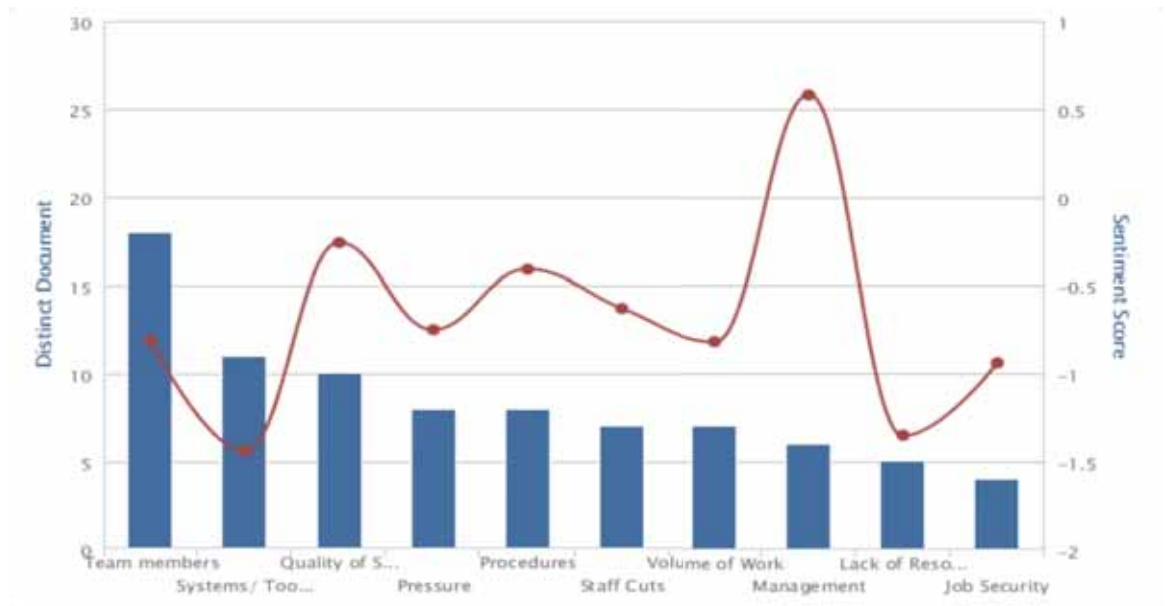
Narrative Analysis – Line Manager

Category	Free Text Comments	Sentiment
Challenge each other	<i>We experience many changes and challenges from external sources in a widely legislative led environment.</i>	Negative
Team meetings	<i>Regular team meetings where all work aspects are discussed, but problems are not always resolved they seem to just go on and on.</i>	Negative
Supportive/ helps me	<i>[Line manager] has been very supportive when I have anxiety issues relating to work.</i> <i>I find [line manager] supportive and reasonable.</i> <i>[Line manager] is very supportive and if I ever have any issues [line manager] is there to help.</i>	Positive
Trusted	<i>I trust my line manager.</i> <i>Feel totally trusted and supported by line manager.</i>	Positive
Always available	<i>My line manager arranges one to one sessions on a regular basis and is very approachable when I have questions outside these meetings.</i>	Positive

Narrative Analysis – Biggest Tension

In answer to the question ‘What is the biggest tension you currently face in the workplace?’ there were 68 free text responses. The main themes and associated sentiment scores are shown in figure 4.

Figure 4 Combined bar graph and sentiment analysis for ‘Biggest Tension’



Examples of Positive and Negative Sentiment ‘Biggest Tension’

Category	Free Text Comments	Sentiment
Lack of Resources	<i>It is difficult as we are waiting for new software etc as what we do have requires many systems to be up on our PC's which can make things confusing - also we are short staffed which is causing a slight strain on people holidays and even lunch breaks.</i>	Negative
Pressure	<i>Lack of understanding from senior managers and constant pressure being applied due to Political tensions</i> <i>The tension between opposition members and staff is creating massive pressure and distraction.</i>	Negative
Management	<i>Between everyone and the MD I think that the new [line manager] has breathed new life into the team and the positive responses are due to management.</i>	Positive
Systems/Tools/ Equipment	<i>I feel I am 100% committed to BBC and give everything possible to deliver the service but am often hindered by the tools I have specifically the inadequate ICT system.</i>	Negative
Team members	<i>Currently the biggest tension is a feeling of being under valued as a member of staff.</i>	Negative

Narrative Analysis – Biggest Tension

Category	Free Text Comments	Sentiment
Quality of Service	<p><i>Lack of resources and commitment to my service area.</i></p> <p><i>The service my customers receive is severely reduced because I have had to take on many additional resources.</i></p>	Negative
Procedures	<p><i>Lack of desire to change our processes.</i></p> <p><i>The councilors do not understand the procedures and processes and believe they are superior to us employees.</i></p>	Negative
Staff cuts	<p><i>Lack of staff has recently been a big problem, too much work for each officer.</i></p>	Negative
Volume of work	<p><i>The workload has increased dramatically with recent events and I feel that my responsibility has grown.</i></p> <p><i>Workload.</i></p>	Negative
Job security	<p><i>Uncertainty and fear</i></p> <p><i>Not knowing where the next axe will fall, the constant outsourcing of services, to many hurdles to jump of an idea rises to improve a service.</i></p>	Negative

Personality of Organisation

The analysis also looks at the organisation as if it were a person and asked respondents to say what kind of personality traits it may have – see table below:

As well as responding to a list of words, employees were also invited to choose their own word.

The 'status' of each personality dimension is denoted by the following:

Sustain: Good score to be celebrated

Monitor: Moderate score – should be monitored to prevent further decline and capable of improvement

Improve: Relatively poor score – a clear signal to take steps to improve.

Service Units	Conversational	Innovative	Capable	Trustworthy	Supportive	Directive	Overall Personality Score
ALL	52	45	55	51	48	62	48
Street Scene	40	30	47	36	35	65	37
Borough Health, Safety and Localism	54	47	58	59	53	64	51
Housing	59	53	65	57	53	62	54
Planning	47	35	50	50	45	64	44
Revenue and benefits	51	45	58	46	47	60	48
Corporate Services (including finance, payroll, legal, elect	58	51	59	54	52	59	53
Business Transformation	47	45	44	43	45	64	43

Note: Score for 'Directive' is reverse logic

Personality of Organisation

Free Text Comments	Sentiment
<i>Unloyal</i> <i>Ruthless</i> <i>Deceptive</i> <i>Uncommitted</i> <i>Untrustworthy</i> <i>Secretive</i>	Negative
<i>Complex</i> <i>Difficult</i>	
<i>Antiquated</i> <i>Dinosaur</i> <i>Apathetic</i> <i>Boring</i> <i>Old-fashioned</i> <i>Out of date</i> <i>Mundane</i> <i>Traditional</i> <i>Slow</i> <i>Uninspiring</i>	
<i>Disappointing</i> <i>Frustrating</i> <i>Depressing</i> <i>Unappreciative</i>	
<i>Challenged</i> <i>Scared</i> <i>Lost</i> <i>Embattled</i>	
<i>Adrift</i> <i>Schizophrenic</i> <i>Confused</i> <i>Dysfunctional</i> <i>Chaotic</i> <i>Inefficient</i> <i>Disorganized</i> <i>Changeable</i> <i>Fragmented</i> <i>Disjointed</i>	
<i>Falling</i> <i>Inanimate</i> <i>Amateurish</i>	
<i>Understaffed</i> <i>Slow</i> <i>Under resourced</i>	

Personality of Organisation

Free text comments	Sentiment
<i>Reliable</i> <i>Optimistic</i> <i>Potential</i> <i>Evolving</i> <i>Professional</i> <i>Performance – driven</i> <i>Interesting</i> <i>Appreciative</i> <i>Progressing</i>	Positive
<i>Business</i> <i>Stretched</i> <i>Corporate</i> <i>Average</i>	Neutral

Appendix – All survey item responses



Sustain: Good score to be celebrated (75% upwards)



Monitor or Maintain: Moderate score – capable of improvement (51-74%)



Improve: Relatively low score – a clear signal to take steps to improve (50% or less)

Note: Tension questions are reverse logic

	Section 1 Items	% SA/A	Org Status
Q1.1	I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks	93.8	
Q1.2	There has been a clear link between my performance and my rewards	24.8	
Q1.3	Even when things are tough, I can perform well in my job	87.6	
Q1.4	I understand the support available to enable me to get my job done	62.1	
Q1.5	I feel able to strongly influence my performance goals	55.9	
Q1.6	I often 'go the extra mile' to get my job done	94.4	
Q1.7	On the whole, I strive with all my energy to perform my job	91.9	
Q1.8	At work, I concentrate for long periods on my job	95.7	
Q1.9	I feel a sense of pride about my job	84.5	
Q1.10	I constantly experience excessive pressure in my job	65.8	
Q1.11	I feel secure in my job	22.4	
Q1.12	I feel my pay and benefits are reasonable for what I do	40.4	
Q1.13	I feel my pay and benefits are reasonable in comparison with other employee groups in the Council	29.2	
Q1.14	I actively take opportunities to exchange views about my work issues with others in my team	75.2	
Q1.15	I am provided with the tools needed to do my job	46.0	
Q1.16	My commitment to the Public Sector motivates me to do as well as I can in my job	70.8	
Q1.17	I actively pursue personal development opportunities offered to me	72.7	
Q1.18	My job challenges me and keeps my interest	80.7	
Q1.19	My job makes the best use of my skills, abilities and experiences	68.3	
Q1.20	My commitment to Brentwood Borough Council motivates me to do as well as I can in my job	60.9	

Appendix – All survey item responses

	Section 2 Items	% SA/A	Org Status
Q2.1	I regularly have conversations with my line manager about factors affecting my performance	56.4	Yellow
Q2.2	There has been a clear link between my OneOne and my team's objectives	47.4	Red
Q2.3	There is a strong desire in my team to find smarter ways of doing things	72.4	Yellow
Q2.4	When things are tough, we work well together as a team	89.1	Green
Q2.5	I am proud of the work my team delivers to our customers	87.8	Green
Q2.6	My line manager recognises that speaking openly about problems in the workplace provides an opportunity to improve things	73.1	Yellow
Q2.7	I am well supported by my line manager most of the time	76.9	Green
Q2.8	I am satisfied with the way my OneOne has been conducted by my line manager	58.3	Yellow
Q2.9	My line manager encourages conversations within my team about creating solutions to work-related problems	65.4	Yellow
Q2.10	I have useful conversations with my line manager to find practical solutions to problems I experience at work	71.2	Yellow
Q2.11	My line manager encourages conversations that enable the team to be more effective in achieving its performance goals	66.0	Yellow
Q2.12	I do not hesitate to challenge the opinions of others if I believe it will enhance the work of my team	80.1	Green
Q2.13	I am willing to put myself out for my team members when required	94.2	Green
Q2.14	I trust my line manager to consider my best interests	65.4	Yellow
Q2.15	My line manager values and encourages my personal and professional development	61.5	Yellow
Q2.16	My line manager regularly shares information and feedback from elsewhere in the Council	63.5	Yellow

Appendix – All survey item responses

	Section 3 Items	% SA/A	Org Status
Q3.1	Brentwood Borough Council gives me opportunities to shape our strategies for change	27.3	
Q3.2	Brentwood Borough Council gives me opportunities to shape procedures for implementing change	36.0	
Q3.3	Brentwood Borough Council invests in building my capabilities through learning and development	34.7	
Q3.4	Brentwood Borough Council values my accomplishments at work	27.3	
Q3.5	Brentwood Borough Council demonstrates a genuine concern for my well-being	19.3	
Q3.6	There is a 'no blame' culture – mistakes are talked about freely so we can learn from them	26.7	
Q3.7	I do not hesitate to challenge the opinion of others if I believe that it will enhance the workings of Brentwood Borough Council	63.3	
Q3.8	I would recommend working for Brentwood Borough Council to a friend	35.3	
Q3.9	I feel a strong sense of loyalty to Brentwood Borough Council	50.0	
Q3.10	I feel that Brentwood Borough Council's values appeal to my personal values	30.7	
Q3.11	Brentwood Borough Council's leadership team have a clear vision for the future of the organisation	28.7	
Q3.12	Brentwood Borough Council's leadership team inspire me to use my own initiative	28.0	
Q3.13	I have a clear view about Brentwood Borough Council's obligations to me	34.7	
Q3.14	I trust Brentwood Borough Council to deliver on its obligations to me	30.0	
Q3.15	Brentwood Borough Council recognises that speaking openly about workplace problems provides an opportunity to improve things	33.3	
Q3.16	Brentwood Borough Council provides me with good prospects for getting a better job	33.3	
Q3.17	Overall, I am satisfied with the employment deal provided by Brentwood Borough Council	46.7	
Q3.18	Councillors make a valuable contribution to the effective running of the Council	12.7	
Q3.19	Councillors understand the impact their demands have on the effective running of the Council	12.0	

Appendix – All survey item responses

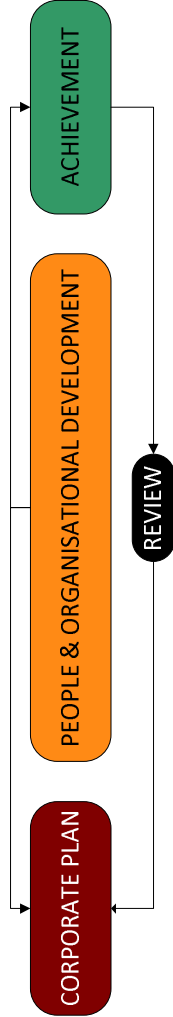
	Section 4 Items	% SA/A	Org Status
Q4.1	Compliance with internal procedures often makes it difficult to be creative	39.9	Green
Q4.2	My personal development preferences are often overridden by the needs of the organisation	38.5	Green
Q4.3	The quality of service delivery to my customers is often compromised by time pressures	56.8	Yellow
Q4.4	I am often required to do more with less resources	79.1	Red
Q4.5	The immediate demands of my job often conflict with achieving longer term goals	58.8	Yellow
Q4.6	New ideas are often resisted through fear of failure	38.5	Green
Q4.7	The Council's focus on detail often hinders progress	38.5	Green
	Section 5 Items		
Q5.1	Open	26.4	Red
Q5.2	Authoritarian	55.4	Yellow
Q5.3	Competent	37.2	Red
Q5.4	Imaginative	20.9	Red
Q5.5	Agreeable	31.8	Red
Q5.6	Socially Responsible	45.9	Red
Q5.7	Confident	41.9	Red
Q5.8	Honest	36.5	Red
Q5.9	Appreciative	25.7	Red
Q5.10	Resilient	39.9	Red
Q5.11	Fair	37.8	Red
Q5.12	Performance-Driven	57.4	Yellow
Q5.13	Good listener	23.6	Red
Q5.14	Respectful	39.2	Red
Q5.15	Inspiring	17.6	Red
Q5.16	Compassionate	31.1	Red
Q5.17	Reliable	35.8	Red
Q5.18	Exciting	16.9	Red
Q5.19	Controlling	43.9	Green
Q5.20	Flexible	45.9	Red
Q5.21	Responsive	39.2	Red
Q5.22	Ethical	46.6	Red

Note: Authoritarian and Controlling are reverse logic

PEOPLE & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

The Organisational Development Strategy provides a framework and action plan to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan 2013-16. This strategy seeks to ensure that staff, managers and Members are supported by a positive environment that values people, learning and effective communication. Therefore the focus of this strategy will be on the **development of our people and organisational practices** in key areas that we believe will make a real difference in the Council.



AIM

We aim to effectively coordinate our resources to have the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles, at the right time to deliver our priorities. We strive to be an organisation that has an enviable reputation and one that our staff are proud to work for and Members are proud to represent.

This will be achieved through inspirational leadership and strong management, backed by a culture of learning, teamwork, performance management and a constant customer focus.

RIGHT PEOPLE with the **RIGHT SKILLS** at the **RIGHT TIME** in the **RIGHT ROLES**

APPROACH

Ownership of the strategy & action plan is key to its success. Members & officers will work together:

- * demonstrating that the Council has a clear and identifiable vision for the future
- * ensuring that training, development, communication and change are manageable, sustainable and introduced consistently across our services
- * aligning capacity, skills, values and behaviours with clear performance and project management processes and organisational structures to deliver the cultural change
- * ensuring that people and organisational development remains a priority
- * to provide opportunities to all staff, managers and Members have the opportunity to contribute to the strategy and action plan
- * to review the strategy and action plan on an annual basis to ensure continued alignment with the Corporate Plan and transformation activity

VISION **LEARNING** **SKILLS** **VALUES** **LISTENING**

OUR JOURNEY

This strategy will be a vehicle to enable the Council to bring about changes in how we do things, rather than just a change in systems, processes and structures. Our journey will focus on the following themes:

A - Leadership, Management & Vision

- * inspirational leadership, strong and consistent management and clear vision.

B - People Matter

- * creating a learning / training environment for employees and Members, offering appropriate career progression and opportunities for personal development, welcoming diversity and new ideas, and providing opportunities for these to be brought forward.

C - Workforce / Capacity Planning

- * recognising the diverse needs of our workforce and planning for staff movement (secondment, retirement, flexible working requests, turnover). Where appropriate, working with a range of partners and key agencies who are central to the improvement and growth of the borough. Influencing decisions that make a difference to our communities.

D - Culture

- * developing and practising the values and behaviours that we need to achieve our vision. Being a role model to communities and enhancing our reputation.

E - Communication

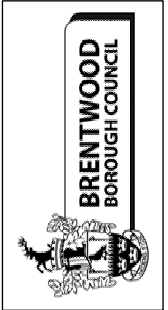
- * keeping good communication at the heart of everything we do, recognising that it is pivotal to our image and reputation both internally (with staff and Members), and externally (with customers, partners, media, stakeholders) and acknowledging that everyone has responsibility in achieving this.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

The action plan will be monitored quarterly by CLB and the Strategy & Policy Board. In addition to this monitoring the strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains dynamic and fit for purpose and that the issues it covers and the priorities it sets are the right ones for the Council, its Members, its managers, its staff and most importantly the communities of Brentwood Borough.

Progress and achievement of the aims of this strategy will be measured through:

- * Quarterly Operational and Strategic Performance Reports
- * Staff and Member Survey
- * Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- * Staff appraisals (including training commitments)
- * External recognition / awards
- * Staff attendance levels
- * Reputation & media reporting
- * OD Action Plan



IMPLEMENTATION	REVIEW	RESPONSIBLE
01 JULY 2014	01 MARCH 2015	Paul Knight – Head of Business Transformation

30 June 2014

Agenda Item: 8

Finance and Resources Committee

Revised Health and Safety Policy

Report of: Ashley Culverwell, Head of Borough Health, Safety & Localism

Wards Affected: None.

This report is: Public

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Health and Safety Policy (Appendix A) has been revised as required under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and, is reflective of current organisational and management structures within the Authority. The health and safety policy has been passed to Corporate Leadership Board and all Health and Safety Committee members for comment and review in accordance with its conditions.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the revised Health and Safety Policy be approved.

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Council as an employer is required under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to have in place a Health and Safety Policy (which is revised regularly) to reflect its commitment and intention to comply with the Act and all relevant legislation made implicit.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 A review and revision of the Council's health and safety policy is required to ensure that it reflects the organisation arrangements, structure and health and safety management system. This timely revision and endorsement enables the

Council to continue its commitment to develop the health and safety culture and management system of the organisation and fulfil its legal duty.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation of the revised health and safety policy has been undertaken with the Corporate Leadership Board and the Health and Safety Committee which met on the 21 May 2014. Comments and observations have been taken into account and the policy reflects this consultation.

6. References to Corporate Plan

6.1 A Modern Council:

The Council is committed to a streamlined, effective non bureaucratic management system. The Health and Safety policy and underlying health and safety controls strongly accords with this priority.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jo-Anne Ireland

Director of Strategy and Corporate Services

Tel & Email 01277 312712 jo-anne.ireland@brentwood.gov.uk

Financial implications include the provision of sufficient financial resources to enable legal compliance with statutory responsibilities. Any such costs will be contained within existing budgets.

7.2 Legal Implications

Name & Title: David Lawson Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email 01277 312860 david.lawson@brentwood.gov.uk

Legal implications include the Council is required to have a current Health and Safety Policy.

8. Appendices to this report

- Appendix 1 - The revised Health and Safety Policy

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: David Wellings

Telephone: 01277 312518

E-mail: David.Wellings@brentwood.gov.uk

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK, ETC. ACT 1974

This document is the corporate health and safety policy for all responsibilities, premises and activities of Brentwood Borough Council. In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 it is divided into:-

- Policy Statement -What we will do
- Organisation and Responsibilities -Who will do it
- Arrangements -How we will do it

Service areas may make their local arrangements in accordance with their own specific responsibilities and activities. All other health and safety Standards and procedures are subsidiary to and should refer to this document.

CONTENTS

SECTION 1. Corporate Policy Statement

SECTION 2. Corporate Organisation and Responsibilities

SECTION 3. Staff Consultation

SECTION 4. Training

SECTION 5. Monitoring and Review

SECTION 6. Safety Advice and Auditing

SECTION 7. Core Standards and Procedures

Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974

Policy Statement

Brentwood Borough Council recognises that people are its most important asset and accepts its responsibility to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its employees.

It also recognises that the successful management of health and safety makes a positive contribution towards the achievement of corporate aims and objectives and effective service delivery to the community in addition to meeting our statutory responsibilities as an employer. By controlling health and safety the Council will also be contributing to the national *'Health & Safety of Great Britain – Be part of the solution'* strategy to reduce work related deaths, injury and ill health. The document states that: - *'To be truly effective, health and safety has to be an every day process, supported by all, as an integral part of workplace culture'*.

In relation to this Policy: -

The Council will ensure that the health and safety management framework: -

- Is integrated into the culture of the Council;
- minimises risks to employees and others;
- ensures that best practice is considered when reviewing and updating management of working practices; and
- measures and monitors Health and Safety performance

The Council will ensure, *so far as is reasonably practicable*: -

- safe plant and systems of work;
- safe handling, storage and transport of chemical and work equipment;
- the provision of all necessary information, instruction, training and supervision;
- safe access and egress to all places of work under the Councils control;
- a safe working environment with appropriate welfare facilities including first aid provision;
- that staff representatives are consulted on health and safety arrangements; and,
- that regular risk assessments are undertaken and are available to employees

Council employees will, as a condition of their employment: -

- take reasonable care for themselves and others;
- cooperate and follow training and instructions;
- not interfere with or misuse anything provided for safety and
- report shortcomings in safety arrangements and immediately report serious danger

This policy will be reviewed annually and amended where appropriate. Consultation with staff will take place through the described process on any changes made and on finalisation these amendments will be brought to the attention of all employees.

All health and safety tools and documents will be made freely available including the Health and Safety Committee meeting minutes on the Council's Intranet Micro Site.

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Signed

Dated

**Alison Crowe Managing Director
2.0 Corporate Organisation and Responsibility**

Group / Individuals	Role/Responsibilities
Elected Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that suitable resources and strategic direction are available to discharge the Council's health and safety responsibilities • Take into account statutory Health and Safety duties and best practices when making decisions as appropriate. • Approve Health and Safety Policy. • Monitor progress against Health and Safety action plans. • To attend awareness training.
Managing Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has ultimate responsibility for health and safety within the Council and is responsible for ensuring, through the Directors and Heads of service, that adequate organisation and arrangements exist for effective implementation of the Council's policy on health and safety and for compliance with Standards. • To attend appropriate training. • Promote high standards across the Council. • Plan, direct, control and monitor all health and safety matters. • Support and encourage H & S initiatives and lead by personal example.
Director	<p>To deputise for the Managing Director in all matters concerning compliance with this Policy</p>
Corporate Leadership Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage health and safety within their service areas. • To allocate sufficient resources to ensure compliance with all applicable health and safety law. • To plan in good health and safety management with business decisions. • Ensure line managers are aware and trained to manage and control all identified risks. • To ensure risk assessments are carried out, implemented and reviewed for all significant risks.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that appropriate records are kept of all staff training, risk assessments and safe systems of work and that these are properly recorded on corporate health and safety systems. • Ensure the implementation of all relevant Health and Safety Policies, Standards and Procedures • To attend appropriate training. • To ensure that health and safety training is provided to all appropriate employees. • To appoint Health and Safety Coordinators to represent each Service Area and their manager to deputise in their absence and ensure they have sufficient time to carry out their function
<p>All Service Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage health and safety on a day to day basis. • Ensure that relevant local safety procedures are produced. • Implement relevant Health and Safety Policies, Standards and Procedures. • Manage and control all identified risks. • Undertake and document risk assessments for all key service areas. • To ensure that appropriate records are kept of all staff inductions, training, risk assessments and safe systems of work and that these are properly recorded on corporate health and safety systems. • Undertake workplace health and safety inspections at appropriate intervals. • Ensure the identification and delivery of Health and Safety training for all relevant employees • To attend appropriate training. • To ensure Health and Safety Coordinators have sufficient time to carry out their function. • To ensure that all new staff receive timely health and safety induction.
<p>Strategic Health and Safety Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a strategic and management framework for health and safety. • Ensure the provision of advice and assistance on Health and Safety throughout the Council. • Ensure the identification, interpretation, and communication of all new

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	<p>legislation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the production of core Corporate Health and Safety Standards and Procedures. • Ensure that Health and Safety matters are communicated effectively to Heads of Service and all relevant employees. • Monitors that all relevant incidents are reported as necessary under RIDDOR
<p>Corporate Health and Safety Adviser</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises assists and monitors management of Health and Safety throughout the Council. • Produce core Corporate Health and Safety Standards and Procedures. • Assists in the Identification of principle Health and Safety training for all employees and ensures delivery. • Assists in the provision of management tools and guidance. • Monitors that all relevant incidents are reported as necessary under RIDDOR • Ensures that Health and Safety matters are communicated effectively to all Heads of Service and CLB via appropriate reports, • Co-ordinates, organises, supports and facilitates the Health and Safety Committee
<p>Staff Health and Safety Committee</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates and monitors Health and Safety management action plan & other key issues. • Development/review and coordination of corporate Health & Safety Policy and strategy. • To attend appropriate training. • Responds to the Staff Consultation Feedback forums. • To support consultation of appropriate documents
<p>Health and Safety Coordinators</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent the interests of all employees within their own service areas on health, safety and / or welfare issues • Act as an advocate for health and safety, and promote the use of all relevant sources of information, advice and guidance currently available on the Intranet Health and Safety Microsite • Attend and support the quarterly Health and Safety Committee meetings and

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	<p>report back to their service areas at Team meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise directly, where appropriate, with the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser for support and guidance on health, safety and / or welfare issues • Receive information from the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser and cascade this on to the group of employees in their Service area • To be consulted on health and safety issues and provide appropriate advice and assistance. • To support the process of health and safety risk assessments, safe systems of work, procedures, inspections and audits throughout the Council, • Highlight potential hazards and dangerous occurrences in the workplace and to direct (where applicable) the measures necessary to prevent recurrence. • Attend appropriate training, as required, to enable them to carry out their health and safety duties and responsibilities in full. • Assist with the H&S induction of new staff.
<p>All Employees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperate in all matters relating to Health & Safety • Are responsible for identification of Health & Safety related risks within the working environment. • To attend appropriate training. • Carry out risk assessments (where appropriate). • Comply with any relevant safety controls in place.

3.0 Staff Consultation

- 3.1. There is a need for effective consultation on Health and Safety matters to positively promote communication and co-operation between management and staff to aid in the development of a health and safety culture. Good communication will also enable effective monitoring measures to ensure health and safety at work.
- 3.2. Health and Safety is not a separate issue but an integral part of the management process. When problems arise in a specific area they are expected to be, and will be resolved within the usual line management procedures. This is the normal way of dealing with management issues and is effective in the vast majority of cases. However, it is

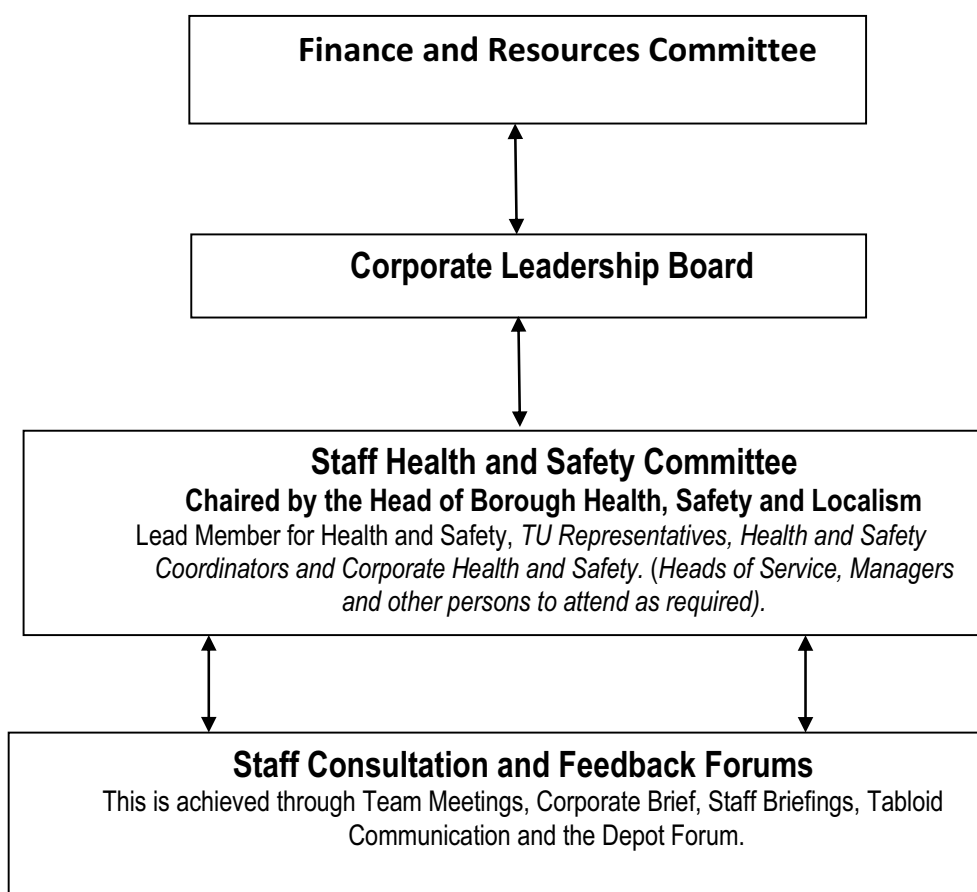
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recognised that for some health and safety issues there also needs to be a more general mechanism for communication and consultation with staff.

- 3.3 The management of health and safety is a line management responsibility but is supported by a framework of committees and specialist corporate health and safety advice.

3.4 **Committee Structure**

The diagram below shows the relationship, so far as health and safety matters are concerned, between the Staff Health and Safety Committee and other Health and Safety meetings. The flow of information can be two way.



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3.5 **Staff Health and Safety Committee**

The Staff Health and Safety Committee will be chaired by the Head of Borough Health, Safety and Localism and will meet on a quarterly basis (more frequently should the need arise). The committee will consist of the Lead Member for Health and Safety, Health and Safety Coordinators, representatives of the trade union and Corporate Health and Safety. Heads of Service, Managers or other persons are invited to attend as required.

Health and safety performance will be reported regularly to Members.

3.6 **Terms of Reference**

The Staff Health and Safety Committee has an overview of the management of health and safety within the Council, and is in a position to consider the Health and Safety issues raised by the Staff Consultation and Feedback.

3.7 **The Staff Health and Safety Committee will adopt the following objectives:-**

- Regularly review the measures taken to ensure that Health, Safety and Welfare is being managed effectively;
- Fulfill the requirements of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977 and the Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996;
- Monitor progress toward meeting safety policy aims;
- Promote co-operation between all Services within the Council on matters of Safety, Health and Welfare at work;
- Consider any health and safety issues brought to its attention by any of the Forums identified below;
- Monitor and review periodically the Corporate Health and Safety policy;
- Consider reports, information, and new legislation from the Health and Safety Executive;
- Compile and submit an annual report on health and safety to the Members Portal.

3.8 **Staff Consultation and Feedback Forums**

All Service Areas and employees will have access and be able to feedback views and opinions from the respective consultation and communication forums. These Forums consist of Team Meetings, Corporate Brief, Staff Briefings, Tabloid Communications and the Depot Forum. Each Service Area will be adequately represented by a manager and/or health and safety coordinator. In order to ensure that issues/initiatives are progressed to conclusion and continuous improvement is achieved; issues that cannot be resolved from these forums should be passed to the Health and Safety Committee for consideration. Where matters are not resolved satisfactorily, they should be passed to the Corporate Leadership B for consideration and appropriate action.

3.9 **Corporate Leadership Board (CLB)**

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Matters should be referred to CLB where there are significant implications for changes in policy or other financial implications

3.10 Other Levels

Health and safety should be discussed at other levels in the organisation, in particular at team meetings so that issues may be resolved at the lowest level possible level and staff may be kept abreast of developments such as the review of risk assessments or other developments affecting their workplace.

Health and Safety Coordinators and Safety Representatives will be a key part of the cascade of safety information and the delivery of safety within the workplace in order to meet the Council's obligations.

4.0 Training

- 4.1. Brentwood Borough Council, in pursuance of the stated objectives of its Health and Safety Policy Statement, recognises that safety training should be a continuous process, integrated with other training, developed through job/task and training needs analysis.
- 4.2. To ensure adequate health and safety competence and capability for all persons employed by Brentwood Borough Council, Health and Safety Induction training will be provided for all employees as soon as practicable but at least within 2 weeks of starting work with the Council. This will also apply to employee's changing role or Service Area, seconded employees, as well as temporary and agency employees, contractors and volunteers. This will be recorded using the Health and Safety Standard number 18 on the Council's Microsite.
- 4.3 All Repair and Maintenance contractors will be given adequate health and safety site information and induction, relevant to the activity being undertaken, using the 5C's Contractors folder.
- 4.4 Promotion and maintenance of a positive culture relies upon:-
 - Training of Members and Senior Managers in their health and safety responsibilities and general health and safety awareness to achieve competency in health and safety management, including the principles of risk assessment, accident prevention and current legislation.
 - Training of managers and other employees to achieve appropriate competencies in hazard identification, risk assessment and control.
 - Training of trainers for competency in safety training and/or the use of appropriate external training organisations or individuals and monitoring and evaluation of training effectiveness.
- 4.5 Copies of any health and safety training records should be placed on the Health and Safety Training Matrix, following the guidance on the health and safety micro site number 13, Health and Safety Training.

5.0 Monitoring and Review

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- 5.1. Monitoring is necessary for two reasons:-
- To assess whether the policy is being effectively pursued and
 - To ascertain the extent to which it is having the desired effect.
- 5.2. Essential areas of interest to monitor are: accident and safety records; incident (near misses, dangerous occurrences and the Cautionary Contacts Register) records; the standards of compliance with legal requirements and Approved Codes of Practice; the extent of compliance in the organisation and the success in following corporate policy arrangements, Standards and procedures.
- 5.3. In addition to identifying what has been achieved, monitoring should identify what is wrong and why it is wrong. It should identify deviations from agreed standards and in the event of failure analyse the events that led to that failure in order that their causes may be better understood and remedial action taken.
- 5.4. Managers and supervisors should constantly monitor the implementation of those sections of the safety policy and safety Standards and procedures for which they have responsibility. They should take appropriate corrective action when it is noted that the policy or safety Standards and procedures are not being effectively implemented. The action taken will depend on the degree of noncompliance, the seriousness of the consequences and the reason for the non-compliance. The action taken may include:-
- Verbally advising the person failing to implement the policy or procedure;
 - Formally advising the person referring those contents of the policy, Standard or procedure not being effectively implemented to the Director/Head of Service for review.
- 5.5. Heads of Service/Service Managers shall review the safety policy, Standards and procedures on a regular basis and when matters are referred for consideration. Any changes to the Health and Safety Policy should only be made after consultation with the relevant Health and Safety Committee.
- 5.6. Any changes to the safety policy and the safety procedures must be brought to the attention of those affected by the changes by giving them a copy of the changes.

6.0 Safety Advice and Auditing

- 6.1. In addition to providing advice the Corporate Health and Safety advisor will also carry out a programme of internal audits of the safety function within the various Service areas.

7.0 Core Standards and procedures

- 7.1 This Corporate Health and Safety Policy is supported with a set of core Standards and procedures which detail specific arrangements for managing health and safety. These will be reviewed on a regular programme and will be available on the Council's Intranet within the health and safety micro site.

30 June 2014

Agenda Item: 9

Finance and Resources Committee

Communications Protocols

Report of: *Jo-Anne Ireland, Director of Strategy and Corporate Services*

Wards Affected: *None*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report comprises of three documents that set out guidelines and procedures for handling Brentwood Borough Council's internal and external communications. The aim is to help the Council communicate effectively with its key audiences by ensuring the quality, accuracy and effectiveness of communications activity and protocols.
- 1.2 Communications Protocols (**Appendix 1**), is mainly for staff use and covers communications of a news, marketing and information type and applies to all formats and channels regarding internal and external communications. It has been revised to acknowledge the new Communications Team at the Council and our increased use of Twitter as a way of engaging with residents.
- 1.3 Communications Strategy 2014/15 (**Appendix 2**) is a new document that provides a framework and action plan for the Communications Team to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan 2013-2016.
- 1.4 Social Media Protocol for Members (**Appendix 3**) is for members and provides guidance on best practice for the use of social media.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 **That the Committee approve the continued use of the Communications Protocols (Appendix 1).**
- 2.2 **That the Committee approve the Communications Strategy for 2014/15 (Appendix 2).**

Cont'd

2.3 That the Committee approve the Social Media Protocol for (Appendix 3).

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 It was agreed at the Performance and Resources Committee on 12 June 2013 that the Communications Protocols (**Appendix 1**) would be reviewed each year.
- 3.2 The Communications Strategy for 2014/15 (**Appendix 2**) is a new document that was proposed in the original Communications Protocols agreed in June 2013.
- 3.3 The Social Media Protocol for Members (**Appendix 3**) are an appendix to the Member Code of Conduct. They were last reviewed at Performance and Resources Committee on 12 June 2013.
- 3.4 The Defamation Act 2013 and the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 ('Openness Regulations') have both recently come into force, so it is timely to revise the Social Media Protocol for Members (**Appendix 3**).

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 The Communications Protocols (**Appendix 1**) draws on good communications practice and the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Government Publicity, issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government.
- 4.2 The Social Media Protocol for Members (**Appendix 3**) relates to the Member Code of Conduct and therefore the Constitution.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The Communications protocols (**Appendix 1**) are needed to reflect changing practice in the use of communications channels and changes.
- 5.2 The Communications Strategy (**Appendix 2**) has been introduced to provide a more structured approach to managing and evaluating communications at the Council.
- 5.3 The Monitoring Officer of the Council has advised that the Social Media Protocols for Members (**Appendix 3**) be revised to take into account

changes in defamation law and Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 ('Openness Regulations').

6. References to Corporate Plan

- 6.1 The Communications Protocols (**Appendix 1**) and Communications Strategy (**Appendix 2**) support the delivery of the Corporate Plan in terms of informing and engaging audiences about the work of the Council and services available.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jo-Anne Ireland, Director of Strategy and Corporate Services

Tel & Email: 01277 312712 jo-anne.ireland@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: David Lawson, Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312860

- 7.2 As set out in body of report

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 None

9. Appendices to this report

- Appendix 1 – Communications Protocols
- Appendix 2 – Communications Strategy 2014/15
- Appendix 3 – Social Media Protocol for Members

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Brentwood Borough Council

Communications Protocols

June 2013 (revised June 2014)

1 Introduction

This document sets out guidelines and procedures for handling Brentwood Borough Council's communications. It covers communications of a news, marketing (promotional/publicity) or information type. It applies to all formats and channels, whether print or digital. It refers to internal and external communications.

It is informed by best practice and by the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Government Publicity, issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

It is reviewed on an annual basis.

2 Role of the Communications Team

The role of the Communications Team is to help the Council communicate effectively with its key audiences by ensuring the quality, accuracy and effectiveness of communications activity and products. These audiences include:

- Local residents
- Local businesses
- Visitors to the Borough
- Central and local government
- Business partners and other stakeholders
- Staff.

Communications should reflect agreed Council priorities, in accordance with Council policy and be supported by the relevant leading member and senior officer.

Public resource/money must not be used to promote the interests of an individual politician or a political party. Equally, the same resources cannot be used in any way to damage the interests of any individual politician or political party. This is very different, and sometimes the dividing line is fine, in promoting and defending the policies and reputation of the Council which is a substantial part of the job of the Communications Team.

Particular care must be taken with publicity in the period leading up to an election ('purdah'). Guidance about this is issued by the Council's Monitoring Officer and advice on implementation given by the Senior Communications Officer. Communications during this period is also covered as part of a wider purdah protocol within the Council's Constitution.

Communications should be relevant and accessible for our different audiences and resources must be used in the most efficient way possible. We cannot consult end-users directly about everything that we do, but we will provide feedback opportunities on our print and digital materials as a means of monitoring their effectiveness and value for money. This will include feedback and rating options on all our web pages. The Council is also considering a regular survey to measure resident views and satisfaction levels and this would include questions about our communications.

3 Communications planning

The Senior Communications Officer has drafted an overall communications strategy for 2014/15 with suggested communications priorities that support the corporate

objectives. This will be underpinned by a forward plan of news stories, events and activity both internal and external that will support the delivery of the strategy. The forward planning calendar element of the strategy is a working document and will be updated/amended throughout the year.

The Communications Team will rely on information from colleagues and members to inform this plan and to keep it as comprehensive and up-to-date as possible.

Most activity will be planned on an annual basis – but if staff and members have ideas for positive publicity that will promote the Council, know of any upcoming threats to the Council's reputation, or are simply seeking advice on internal or external communications, they should contact the Senior Communications Officer at any time.

If decisions are about to be made that have consequences for public relations, the Senior Communications Officer should be involved in discussions. Similarly, the Senior Communications Officer should be involved in discussion of any matters with a potential impact on staff relations.

4 Media relations

The credibility of the Communications Team with journalists relies on the Team being the recognised route to authoritative and accurate information about the Council. Any contact from journalists to officers should be redirected to the Communications Team without any comment or opinion from other staff. Staff should not pro-actively speak to a journalist in connection with their work or the Council's activities but should work through the Communications Team who can help present the news or story to the most appropriate media in the best possible way.

4.1 Pro-active media relations

Information provided to the media will be based on Council activity that promotes corporate objectives and priorities or significant policies. This kind of material will take priority over 'feel-good' material which presents the Council in a good light generally.

The media is not an audience in itself – its readers, listeners or viewers are that audience, whether they are residents or businesses. Press releases are just one way that a story is offered to the media and are just a vehicle for presenting information to a journalist in a way that will attract their attention and interest. The Senior Communications Officer, in conjunction with the Council's Leader, Deputy Leader or relevant Committee Chairs will make a judgement on the news value of particular stories and whether they warrant a press release. Press releases are more likely to be picked up if they relate a policy or service to 'real lives' and if they deploy supporting arguments in terms of expert witnesses, case studies, new evidence, interesting figures or lively comments.

All Council press releases will be issued in a standard format to ensure consistency and awareness of the Council's brand and they will be published on the Council's website.

4.2 Re-active media relations

We also issue reactive statements in response to enquiries from the media, for example when a question is received or a comment on a matter is requested. We also have a duty to co-operate with journalists, and it is in our interests to do so, by

providing information about our own Council that might feed into a larger piece of work about local government or national practice.

The window for a response on these matters is usually very small. The media will not wait for answers and we need to provide prompt and comprehensive responses if we want our view included.

4.3 Selecting spokespeople

Providing a quote or a spokesperson is one way of demonstrating accountability. In pro-active press releases we have the time to decide who this should be. In re-active statements time is often very tight but a real name (whether member or officer) is always preferable to saying 'a spokesperson said...'. There will be occasional exceptions when it will not be appropriate to give an individual officer's name, for example if they have led an investigation or attended court in connection with a fraud case.

The usual divide between officer and member comment is based on whether the story contains 'policy' matters (member comment) or 'operational issues' (officer response). In practice the dividing lines can be blurred and so the Senior Communications Officer will gauge what sort of spokesperson is appropriate.

In cases where a member or officer is to be interviewed for print or broadcast media, the Senior Communications Officer will provide advice and support.

4.3.1 Elected members

Elected members of the Administration should speak on behalf of the Council. As a rule - only the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chairs/Vice Chairs. should act as Council spokespeople – and then being generally confined to speaking on issues within their remit or portfolio. Some flexibility is needed as regards the Leader who may be required to comment more generally on Borough matters. An exception to member comment is during purdah (see 4.3.4 below)

4.3.2 Officers

There are times when it will be appropriate for senior officers or the Managing Director to be quoted. These will include purdah periods and occasions when no suitable member is available and failing to put up a spokesperson would mean losing a valuable media opportunity or damaging the reputation of the Council. In most cases (outside the purdah period) it will be possible to find a member comment - from the relevant Chair, Vice Chair or Leader. In rare cases of a major Borough incident during Purdah, such as a factory explosion or street riots, it would be appropriate for a joint statement from political party leaders to be issued. If this could not be agreed, an officer comment would be provided.

The Communications Team will operate a 'cab rank' principle when dealing with requests to speak to Council representatives. Bids from flagship national TV or radio programmes will first be offered to the Leader, Deputy Leader and then the relevant Committee Chair. Regional or local requests will usually go direct to the Committee Chair. With such regional and local requests, if a Chair/Vice Chair is not available or does not respond swiftly, the request will go to the Leader/Deputy Leader. If a prompt member response cannot be secured, the request will move to the Managing Director or Head of Service. Timeframes for decisions can be as little as half an hour.

4.3.3 Ward members

Ward members will normally not speak on behalf of the Council; however there may be exceptions, for example in an emergency where a member may act as spokesperson if the issue affects their ward. Examples of such occasions would be a local house fire or a local public disorder incident. In this case the ward member need not be a member of the majority party. In all cases where ward members are used they must speak for the Council, reflect Council policy and avoid saying anything that is politically controversial. In cases where there are ward councillors from different political parties in the same ward, a joint statement would be agreed, and if this could not be achieved, an officer comment would be provided if needed.

4.3.4 Approvals processes for press releases and statements

- The Communications Team will be responsible for drafting Council statements and press releases.
- If specialist information is required an appropriate officer will provide a detailed briefing for the Communications Team to enable them to produce an accurate press statement.
- Final clearance must be secured from the relevant Head of Service.
- In normal circumstances clearance should also be gained from the relevant Committee Chair or Vice Chair or designated Spokesperson. If a member is quoted they must clear their quote. Alternatively, clearance can be given by a member or officer to whom the lead member has delegated authority, or by the Leader of the Council.
- In the case of particularly sensitive information clearance should also be secured from the Managing Director and/or Monitoring Officer.

There are occasions where member clearance is not required. These include publicity produced during purdah periods or statements made by senior officers about the Council's processes, for example the conduct of elections. These statements should be cleared by the Managing Director or the Council's Monitoring Officer. The relevant chairs or group leaders will be informed ahead of any significant announcements being made.

5 Marketing

This includes materials in print or digital formats of a marketing or promotional type. These include reports, newsletters, flyers, posters, information booklets, advertisements, articles for external publication and video.

Advice should be sought from the Communications Team on the best marketing approach and format before products or content are generated. There must be a 'value for money' test to show that a proposed activity - such as producing a batch of leaflets or posters - will be effective in supporting the objectives of the project, the service or the Council; and that the topic is significant enough to warrant the expenditure. All materials must adhere to the Council's corporate identity guidelines.

Any materials containing a member quote must go through the same process as for press releases (see 4.3.4 above). Marketing materials, once a format is agreed by the Communications Team, should be produced as follows:

- Where content is not generated by the Communications Team, this must be sent to the Communications Team for approval or editing, before design is commissioned

- Where design is not commissioned by the Communications Team, initial design approaches must be approved by the Communications Team before further development
- Final sign-off of print-ready or digital communications must be given by the Senior Communications Officer.

6 Website content

Electronic content is no different to content for print or any other channel and needs to be produced with care. The Communications Team should approve the home page news items for the home page and ensure the latest press releases are on the website. It is not feasible for the Communications Team to manage or oversee all the content on the website but there should be an effective system of web editors across the organisation who have the ability to keep their own (usually service-specific) areas of the website up to date and who are able to write accurately in Plain English and adhere to communications policies and the corporate identity.

7 Social media

Social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook are just another channel to be used appropriately in the interest of the Council and the local area. They need to be used with the same care as other channels.

The Council uses Twitter daily and has a redundant Facebook page. The corporate Twitter account is managed by the Senior Communications Officer and the Events Team also has a general account to tweet about council events and some event-specific accounts such as Strawberry Fair. The Mayor also has a Twitter account administered by the Communications Team. These are the only individuals and teams authorised to tweet about Council activities.

The Council Twitter account is mainly used as a channel to further disseminate press releases and to issue general information or promotional messages such as changes to bin collections, event cancellations, or reminders to register to vote. However, Twitter use by residents is increasing as a way of contacting the Council or reporting issues. The Council's Facebook page has not been active for a year but the Senior Communications Officer has recently been made the admin on the account and is looking to bring it back into use.

The Senior Communications Officer systematically monitors and responds to Tweets from residents and businesses. Although the Council's Twitter profile asks people to use other channels for queries or complaints, the Senior Communications Officer will reply to tweets with either an answer/tweet holding response or ask for more information to be emailed into the Council so that the query can be sorted. Tweets are usually responded to within 3 hours, except when it is late at night,

If Council officers notice social media activity that is inappropriate or offensive they should report it to the Communications Manager or the Monitoring Officer.

Council staff should be careful when using their own personal social media accounts that if they refer to their work, they do not give the impression that they are expressing the views of the Council or speaking on behalf of the Council. Public information messages from key organisations such as the police or health services will be re-tweeted by the Communications Team if they are considered relevant to our residents/businesses.

There are separate guidelines for members 'Social Media Protocol for Members' included within the Member Code of Conduct about their own social media activity. These guidelines are also updated on an annual basis.

8 Consultations

Consultations are an important way that the Council communicates and engages with the community. An updated strategy can be developed if considered necessary. This will outline the Council's approach and methods for consultation.

9 Internal communications

The intranet is the principal internal communications tool at the Council. The Communications Team should approve the home page and major news items but a team of web editors along the same lines and with the same skills as the website editors (see 6) above) should be identified and deployed to keep factual information about staff roles, structures and policies up to date.

The Communications Team produce a staff newsletter every Friday called the Town Tabloid that is sent via email.

The Communications Team also put together the members newsletter at the end of each month with information provided by officers.

The Senior Communications Officer will also advise officers on general or specific issues around internal communications.

BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

The Communications Strategy provides a framework and action plan to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan 2013-2016. This strategy will deliver a comprehensive communications plan that is based on the Corporate Plan and uses key messages for all communications both internally and externally.

In practice, this ensures that good communication is always at the heart of what we do.

AIM

We aim to deliver a one year rolling strategy and action plan for communications for Brentwood Borough Council. This will be revised annually to reflect different priorities and needs.

APPROACH

To be proactive and focus on success stories both internally and externally.

To enable the Council's Communications Protocols (last revised June 2013).

Media relations

Targeted to support agreed communications priorities, campaigns and also to build a positive working relationship with local media to support more balanced and positive stories.

Marketing communications

Working closely with the web team to get the most out of the website and ensure residents and businesses are signposted to services, campaigns and consultations.

Internal communications

Use face-to-face regular staff briefings on big issues

Support cascading information and feedback regarding CLB via the Corporate Brief and Tabloid

Use of 'all staff' emails ahead of breaking news in the media on big stories.

Intranet – assist the web team in redesigning the intranet to get the most out of possible two-way engagement

Revamp Members Newsletter so they feel up-to-date on Council news.

OUR JOURNEY

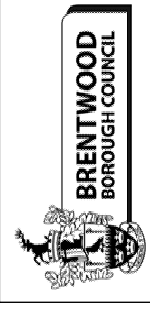
- Deliver the communication theme of the workforce plan
- Respond to communications themes from the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge to:
 - Deliver a Communications Strategy to negate negative press stories
 - Celebrate success to give a more positive vibe across the organisation
- Respond to media enquiries promptly and proactively place news and features across local and national media
- Monitor, assess and continuously strive to improve communication and engagement performance.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

The Communications Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored annually by the Senior Communications Officer and CLB.

Progress and achievement of the aims of this strategy can be measured by:

- "Social Mention" media monitoring provided by the communications team
- More positive and balanced coverage of Council stories in the media
- Increased staff morale as a result of staff feeling more informed about what is happening within their Council
- Positive staff survey results
- An intranet that is seen as the 'canteen' of the Council
- Twice as many positive press releases appearing in the local media in 2014 than in 2013
- Increased resident involvement in events due to positive promotion



IMPLEMENTATION	2014/15
REVIEW	2015/16
RESPONSIBLE	Leona Murray-Green – Senior Communications Officer

VISION

LEARNING

VALUES

LISTENING

BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

External Communications Annual Calendar 2014/15

Month	Activities
April 14	Brentwood branding & marketing (visit Essex workshop) Town Hall Project Contact Centre Business Clinic Recycling Roadshows St George's Day Crossrail Media tour Youth Conference
May 14	Elections Mayor making WHW Consultation Hutton Community Centre Launch Noise Action Week Bellmead Old House Safer Brentwood Website
June 14	Essex Wide Litter Campaign WHW Consultation Section 106 Report School Citizenship lesson Strawberry Fair Food Safety Week LDP? Mayors Quiz Recycling Roadshows
July 14	IER Campaign Family Fun Days Repairs & Maintenance Summer Nuisances HCC Promoting Active Brentwood Taster Sessions
August 14	IER Campaign World War 1 Anniversary Golf Course Community Funding Grants
September 14	Town Hall Project WHW Procurement Green Redeem Scheme HCC Promoting Senior Safety Day
October 14	Crossrail LGA Peer Challenge Update Funding Strategy & Prospectus Halloween (Safer Brentwood) Active Brentwood Funding
November 14	Sports Awards Hutton Community Centre update Remembrance Sunday Fireworks Lighting Up Brentwood Domestic Abuse Crossrail Community Funding Firebreak Course Bank Holiday (28 th)
December 14	Small Business Saturday Christmas Parking LDP Christmas Lights Safety Turkey Warning Personal Safety on New Years Eve Cyber Monday Int Volunteer Day
January 15	Holocaust Memorial Day Leader's message for 2015 Civic Award nominations Recycling rates
February 15	Pre budget Council Tax Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Family Boot Camp Fairtrade Fortnight
March 15	Youth Council Civic Awards Firebreak Course Active Brentwood Networking Event

Internal Communications Annual Calendar 2014/15

Month	Activities
April 14	Walk & Talk Thursday lunchtimes Purdah Organisational Development Strategy Contact Centre Communal Area St George's Day
May 14	Purdah Member induction training Corporate Plan posters go up New Flexi-time scheme HCC Booking Reminder Race for Life
June 14	World Cup sweepstake Member induction training Member/Officer speed dating networking event Chair media awareness training Mayors Quiz Big Lunch
July 14	Tour De France World Cup sweepstake World Cup dress up Friday
August 14	Dress Down Friday drinks "Great Brentwood" bake-off World Cat Day (8 th)
September 14	Quiz Night All Staff roadshows Appeal for Lighting up Brentwood volunteers Town Hall Project Jeans for Genes Day
October 14	Introduce Essex Extras Big Sing Staff lunchtime choir Go Pink Event
November 14	Remembrance Sunday Exercise class November competition Children In Need
December 14	Christmas Carols Christmas Party Ward Allowance Reminder Int Volunteer Day
January 15	MD Message for 2015 Book swap/ amnesty
February 15	Emergency Planning volunteers appeal
March 15	End of Financial Year Party

VISION

LEARNING

SKILLS

VALUES

LISTENING

Brentwood Borough Council

Social Media Protocol for Members

December 2011 (updated June 2014)

1 Introduction

Social media is now an important and legitimate part of the operation of a democratic society. It is an efficient, cost-effective and enjoyable way to get in touch with constituents and discuss important issues with the community you represent.

The intention of this protocol is to provide clear guidelines for members who are new to social media as well as experienced bloggers and networkers. It may also be helpful for standards committee members and monitoring officers in their respective roles.

It aims to explain the positive role of social media. It provides information on how the Member Code of Conduct “The Code” may apply to blogging and social networking and draws from examples of tribunal cases that have dealt with these issues.

Communications during pre-election ‘purdah’ periods are covered as part of a wider purdah protocol within the Council’s Constitution.

2 What is social media?

Social media is a group of online media which offer the capability for participation and conversation. These can be grouped into the following areas:

- **Social networks:** These are sites that allow people to build personal web pages and then connect with friends to share content and communication. Facebook is now the most popular but other examples are MySpace and Bebo.
- **Blogs:** These are online journals, discussing subjects ranging from the personal to the political.
- **Wikis:** These websites allow people to add content to or edit the information on them; they are a communal document or database. The best-known wiki is Wikipedia, an online encyclopaedia.
- **Podcasts:** These are audio and video files that are available online or by subscription.
- **Forums:** These are areas for online discussion, often around specific topics and interests, and are a powerful and popular element of online communities.

- **Content communities:** These are communities which organise and share particular kinds of content such as photos or videos, with popular sites including Flickr and YouTube.
- **Microblogging:** This is bite-sized blogging, where small amounts of content or updates are available. Twitter is the most popular.

3 How do members use social media?

There are a number of different ways you can use socialmedia and this can be:

- sponsored by your authority, eg a leader or member blog
- carried out as an individual
- carried out anonymously

It is important to note that when using social media the Code may apply. This will depend on the factors outlined below.

Using Council-provided media: If you use online media to promote your work as a member or through council websites you will be regarded as conducting the business of the authority. Communicating in this way is most likely to engage the Code.

As an individual: The content of private, non-political social media content is less likely to engage the Code. It will again depend upon the particular facts whether or not the Code applies. There is more scope of course to express personal political views in your own political blog than on Council-provided media.

It is the content of social media sites and the circumstances surrounding their creation that will determine whether or not the content falls under the Code. A disclaimer in a private blog for example which says that any comments are not made in an official capacity will not necessarily prevent breaches of the Code being found.

Anonymous social media: Anonymous satirical websites raise other issues. The first point to consider is whether it can be proved that you uploaded the site content. Although this may be generally suspected it would need to be proved (on a balance of probabilities) that the content has been uploaded by a member.

A standards committee or equivalent would also expect similar proof from an investigating officer. If proof is established it is then necessary to show that you acted, claimed to act or gave the impression that you were acting as a member when you posted the offending comments.

4 How does the Member Code of Conduct apply to social media?

When considering the application of the Code to social media, you must consider whether the Code will apply to your content and which paragraphs you should be aware of in order to ensure ethical use.

For the Code to apply to your content, paragraph 2 of the Code needs to be satisfied. Paragraph 2 makes it clear that the Code only applies when you are acting in your official capacity. Official capacity is defined as conducting the business of the authority or acting, claiming to act or giving the impression that you are acting as a councillor.

The decision as to whether you are acting in your official capacity will depend on the particular facts of each case and the circumstances surrounding your content. There are a number of factors that will be taken into account when assessing this. These include:

- **How well known or high profile you are as a member.** The more high profile you are, the more likely it is that you will be seen as acting in your official capacity when you use a social media site.
- **The privacy settings on your social media site.** If you have a private, personal blog or social media site, ensure that you have appropriate privacy settings so that you decide who can read your posts. If you have a political blog this may well be open to all readers. If residents are able to see your posts, they may assume that you are acting in your official capacity as their representative.
- **The profile on your social media site.** You should set out clearly in your profile if the content is of a political or personal nature. Identifying this will enable readers to better understand if you are seeking to act in your official capacity or not.

Nevertheless it may be possible on a personal site to give the impression that you are acting as a member even though you have stated otherwise. Also, you cannot discuss council business on a personal site, which covers private conversations with other members of the council or members of the public and/or make gratuitously offensive remarks about others who are linked to the council and then claim to be doing so in a private capacity. Clearly, a political blog, whether personal or official will cover expressions of opinions on facts / the subject matter. This is different to using such methods to share private discussions or comment personally on another individual.

When using social media you should bear in mind the following paragraphs of the Code will apply to your online behaviour just as they would to any other form of communication.

- **Paragraph 3(1) - Treating others with respect**
- **Paragraph 4 – Disclosing confidential information**
- Members should also consider other online activities where the Code may apply:
 - **Forum posts:** If you go on to a forum and identify yourself as a member then it is likely that the Code will apply when you post entries. If you put content on the site which you could only have obtained as a member it is possible to argue that you have given the impression that you were acting as a member even if you did not identify yourself as such when you made the posting.
 - **Comments made by others:** It is also important to regularly check your own blog or networking site to ensure there are no defamatory or obscene comments posted by others. If this does happen you should remove the posts as soon as you become aware of them. You should also take steps to discourage users from posting such comments in the future.
 - **Human rights considerations:** In considering whether your use of social media may have breached the Code, Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (the right to freedom of expression) must also be taken into account. The First Tier Tribunal and court cases have made a number of decisions about this issue.

You are less likely to breach the Code where you are making genuine political statements. This means that you are less likely to breach the Code if your comments are about another member's political position or are a genuine expression of political differences with someone. The courts have established that this is because of the fundamental importance of freedom of political expression in a democratic society. However, any political expression should avoid being just an expression of personal anger or abuse towards someone since insults and abuse do not normally qualify for the protection of Article 10. If you make rude comments about a member of the public or an officer of an authority it is more likely that you will be found to have breached the Code.

5 Other important issues to consider

There are also considerations apart from the Code that should be taken into account when using online media. The following is a brief guide to some of the legal pitfalls in establishing personal social media sites such as blogs. Almost all of these can be avoided if your online content is objective, balanced, informative and accurate. In the main, you have the same legal duties online as anyone else, but failures to comply with the law may have more serious consequences. You must consider not just content provided by you, but liabilities you undertake by passing on the content of others, for example by retweeting content on Twitter.

Libel: If you publish an untrue statement about a person which is damaging to their reputation they may take a libel action against you. This will also apply if you allow someone else to publish something libelous on your website if you know about it and do not take prompt action to remove it. A successful libel claim will result in an award of damages against you.

Bias and Predetermination: If you are involved in determining planning or licensing applications, you should avoid publishing anything on your blog that might suggest you have already made up your mind about a matter you may be involved in determining. Otherwise, the decision runs the risk of being invalidated.

Copyright: Placing images or text on your site from a copyrighted source (eg extracts from publications, photos etc) without permission is likely to breach copyright. Avoid

publishing anything you are unsure about or seek permission in advance. Breach of copyright may result in an award of damages against you.

Data protection: Avoid publishing the personal data of individuals unless you have their express written permission.

Obscene material: It goes without saying that you should avoid publishing anything in your blog that people would consider obscene. Publication of obscene material is a criminal offence.

Electoral periods: The Electoral Commission requires that candidates provide a return of expenditure on any form of advertising or campaign literature and that includes web advertising. And there are additional requirements, such as imprint standards for materials which can be downloaded from a website.

Full guidance for candidates can be found at www.electoralcommission.org.uk

Using social media in council meetings: Many politicians, including Members of Parliament, now use Twitter to involve the public in the live progress of meetings. If you choose to do this, you should be careful that this does not detract or appear to detract from your participation in the business of the meeting. This is not a legal issue – just a question of judgment about when it is appropriate or not appropriate.

The Defamation Act 2013 and the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 ('Openness Regulations') have both recently come into force

Defamation Act: In a nutshell any statement about a person which is untrue and affects detrimentally their reputation may be defamatory and could lead to a claim for compensation. The key change is that statements will not be defamatory unless the publication has caused serious harm or likely to do so to a reputation of a person and or it will cause or be likely to cause serious financial loss to an organisation.

Previously there was the defence of justification to a defamation claim. The Act creates new replacement defences of truth or "honest opinion". Finally there is a new defence that the statement it was in the public interest, which while not defined in the Act is

defined in case law as being the conduct of government and political life and governance of public bodies.

The law relating to websites is revised too so if a publisher of a website removes the offending statement immediately and they did not take place in its composition then they have a defence.

2014 Openness Regulations: The Regulations give a right to those who attend meetings of the Council to which citizens would have access to record and or film the proceedings. This does not extend to private and confidential items which remain as before.

Practical Advice: The new regulations mean that members of the public will now be able to record the proceedings of the Council and this could include applicants in quasi judicial matters too. What this means is that anything said or actions in Council meetings could be filmed and then posted on the internet on sites such as Facebook or Youtube.

Clearly there are very serious and reputational implications for the Council of recordings of proceedings which will be effectively unregulated. We would stress the importance of observing the Constitution and appropriate forms of address even when there is a spirited debate. Please remember that the media love a controversy and can mischief-make and selectively edit to stoke-up a matter into a rift to create a story. This means a minor controversy can rapidly spiral out of control and lead to loss of reputation of all concerned even those loosely connected and be extremely damaging to public confidence in local government and deter inward investment into the borough.

The ability to rapidly publish on social media carries similar dangers. We give as an example the recent case of the Speaker of the House of Commons wife was forced to apologise and pay £15,000 compensation following involving innuendo comments made on the internet and "Twitter" about the late Lord MacAlpine. 20 others were also pursued. This demonstrates how flippant remarks on social media can have very serious consequences. This can be particularly so for Members who may find that such actions could be in breach of the Members Code of Conduct and for employees in breach of their contract of employment.

Our advice is that any statement on social media needs to be made with caution as any blog, e-mail or twitter is an act of publishing and it may be impossible to retrieve a comment made in error or rashly. While the use of Facebook and Twitter and “trending” stories can create a sense of urgency they can several days later have disastrous consequences. Furthermore these comments can haunt the maker for years after it was initially made and could get picked up by political opponents and prospective employers.

For any Members or Officer publishers of websites we would advise that all comments are either moderated live or that registration including names and address are provided and that the comments are monitored as reasonably frequent as resources allow and certainly twice a day. If at all possible scanning software should be running to identify profanities and words obviously likely to be inflammatory.

If there is any notice of legal action please do not respond and refer it immediately to me or my team.

The Governance Team will advise corporately and will be the primary contact for any matter relating to Members.

Members Interests

Members of the Council must declare any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests and the nature of the interest at the beginning of an agenda item and that, on declaring a pecuniary interest, they are required to leave the Chamber.

- **What are pecuniary interests?**

A person's pecuniary interests are their business interests (for example their employment trade, profession, contracts, or any company with which they are associated) and wider financial interests they might have (for example trust funds, investments, and asset including land and property).

- **Do I have any disclosable pecuniary interests?**

You have a disclosable pecuniary interest if you, your spouse or civil partner, or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner have a disclosable pecuniary interest set out in the Council's Members' Code of Conduct.

- **What does having a disclosable pecuniary interest stop me doing?**

If you are present at a meeting of your council or authority, of its executive or any committee or the executive, or any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or joint sub-committee of your authority, and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest relating to any business that is or will be considered at the meeting, you must not :

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your disclosable pecuniary interest during the meeting participate further in any discussion of the business or,
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

- **Other Pecuniary Interests**

Other Pecuniary Interests are also set out in the Members' Code of Conduct and apply only to you as a Member.

If you have an Other Pecuniary Interest in an item of business on the agenda then you must disclose that interest and withdraw from the room while that business is being considered

- **Non-Pecuniary Interests**

Non –pecuniary interests are set out in the Council's Code of Conduct and apply to you as a Member and also to relevant persons where the decision might reasonably be regarded as affecting their wellbeing.

A 'relevant person' is your spouse or civil partner, or a person you are living with as a spouse or civil partner

If you have a non-pecuniary interest in any business of the Authority and you are present at a meeting of the Authority at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest whether or not such interest is registered on your Register of Interests or for which you have made a pending notification.

Finance and Resources Committee Terms of Reference

1. The functions within the remit of the Finance and Resources Committee are set out below.
 - 1) Financial Services
 - 2) Contracts, commissioning, procurement
 - 3) Legal services
 - 4) Health and safety at work (in so far as it relates to the Council as an employer)
 - 5) Corporate communications and media protocols
 - 6) Corporate and Democratic services
 - 7) Member Development
 - 8) Data quality
 - 9) Human resources
 - 10) Information Communication Technology
 - 11) Revenues and Benefits
 - 12) Customer Services
2. Overall responsibility for monitoring Council performance.
3. To formulate and develop relevant corporate policy documents and strategies including the Corporate Plan.
4. To formulate the budget proposals in accordance with the Budget and Policy Framework, including capital and revenue spending, and the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (including rent setting for Council homes), in accordance with the Council's priorities and make recommendations to Council for approval.
5. To formulate the Council's Borrowing and Investment Strategy and make recommendations to Council for approval.

6. To take decisions on spending within the annual budget to ensure delivery of the Council's priorities.
7. To approve the making of a virement or payment from the Council's reserves with a maximum value of £200,000.
8. To approve the write-off of any outstanding debt owed to the council above the delegated limit of £5,000.
9. To determine capital grant applications.
10. To make recommendations on the allocation and use of resources to achieve the Council's priorities.
11. To manage and monitor the Council approved budgets;
12. To provide the lead on partnership working including the joint delivery of services.
13. To consider any staffing matters that are not delegated to Officers, such as proposals that are not contained within existing budgetary provision.