



Agenda

Policy, Finance and Resources Committee

Tuesday, 15 December 2015 at 7.00 pm
Council Chamber - Town Hall

Membership (Quorum-3)

Cllrs Mrs McKinlay (Chair), Kerlake (Vice-Chair), Aspinell, Barrett, Clark, Hirst, Hossack, Parker and Russell

Agenda Item	Item	Wards(s) Affected	Page No
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3.	Preliminary Medium Term Financial Plan	All Wards	13 - 26
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| 9. | Income from Property Investment | All Wards 69 - 78 |
| 10. | Update on Planning Process Working Group
Report to follow. | All Wards |
| 11. | Hutton Community Centre
Report to follow. | Hutton
North |
| 12. | Urgent Business | |

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. K. P. 53', with a large, sweeping underline.

Head of Paid Service

Town Hall
Brentwood, Essex
07.12.2015

Information for Members

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.

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A Member who is not a member of the Committee may speak at the meeting. 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.

Members requiring further information, or with specific questions, are asked to raise these with the appropriate officer at least two working days before the meeting.

Point of Order/ Personal explanation/ Point of Information

Point of Order

A member may raise a point of order at any time. The Chair 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 Chair on the point of order will be final.

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 Chair on the admissibility of a personal explanation will be final.

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 Chair. The Member must specify the nature of the information he/she wishes to provide and its importance to the current debate. If the Chair 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 Chair on the admissibility of a point of information or clarification will be final.

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Minutes

Policy, Finance and Resources Committee Monday, 2nd November, 2015

Attendance

Cllr Mrs McKinlay (Chair)
Cllr Hirst (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Aspinell
Cllr Barrett
Cllr Clark

Cllr Faragher
Cllr Hossack
Cllr Parker
Cllr Russell

Also Present

Cllr Barrell
Cllr Carter
Cllr Kendall
Cllr Mrs Murphy
Cllr Mynott
Cllr Ms Rowlands
Cllr Ms Sanders
Cllr Tee

Officers Present

Greg Campbell	- Project Manager - Customer Transformation
Chris Gill	- Strategic Asset Manager
Gordon Glenday	- Head of Planning & Development
Chris Leslie	- Finance Director
Philip Ruck	- Head of Paid Service
Jean Sharp	- Governance and Member Support Officer
Daniel Toohey	- Head of Legal

198. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

199. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the 15 September 2015 Policy, Finance and Resources Committee were approved as a true record.

200. Adoption of the Vision for Brentwood 2016-2019

The report before Members requested their agreement to adopt the three year plan 'Vision for Brentwood' covering 2016 – 2019. This vision replaced the previous corporate plan 2013 – 16 and set out clear strategic direction for the Council which would lead to projects and programmes being formulated in order to deliver the plan's objectives.

Following public consultation on the Council's priorities the draft vision for Brentwood 2016 - 2019 was placed on deposit from the end of the last Policy, Resources and Finance Committee to the end of September 2015.

Members noted that some minor comments had been received and incorporated into the document.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay MOVED and Cllr Hirst SECONDED the recommendations in the report and following a full discussion it was RESOLVED:

- 1. That the new draft corporate plan 'Vision for Brentwood' 2016-2019 be recommended to Council for approval and adoption.**
- 2. That it be agreed that heads of service develop and mature work programmes to deliver the 'Vision for Brentwood' 2016-2019 in consultation with the chair of the relevant committee.**

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

1. The recommendation was based on the previous comments received, the need for a plan to be adopted which identified political priorities, the need to be ever more efficient and develop a modern thinking and delivering council.
2. The need to identify projects to deliver the programmes of work through which the vision could be achieved.

201. Planning Process Review

Members were reminded that on 24 March 2015, Ordinary Council unanimously approved a report relating to the review of the planning service's processes and procedures. This review included a change in the way that the Council operated its planning service in relation to planning applications, incorporating the replacement of the former "weekly list" with an email alert process.

The changes were approved with the aim of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the planning service. This modernisation agenda still remained the focus. However, some concern over various aspects of the new approach had been raised and in order to move ahead and provide Brentwood with a robust planning service, a review of the new process was needed. This would provide an opportunity to identify and iron out any weaknesses. The new approach would ensure that an efficient and effective planning service for all was delivered.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay MOVED and Cllr Parker SECONDED the recommendations in the report and following a vote being taken on a show of hands it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

- 1. That a cross party member working group (Conservatives: 4, LDs: 2, Labour: 1) be established to identify any changes or improvements that are needed to the new system.**
- 2. That the findings and recommended actions of the review be reported to the PFR committee on the 15th December 2015 for formal adoption.**

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Modern Planning service had been in operation for circa 6 months and there was a need to ensure it was fit for purpose. A review was therefore needed to assess how well the new process was working and to gauge if any improvements were needed to increase its effectiveness.

202. Licensing the Town Hall Rooms for Wedding, Civil and Celebratory Services

Members were advised that the Council had been approached by Essex County Council (ECC) to apply for a licence to have marriage ceremony rooms in which to hold weddings, civil and celebratory services. This could generate an income 'upwards of £20,000 per annum' based on historical data. This took into account on-going costs estimated at £22,000 and set up costs of £5,000.

The service would offer rooms for hire from Wednesday to Saturday, maximising revenue, whilst enabling Committee Rooms to be available on Mondays and Tuesdays for Council use. Committee Rooms would therefore be out of use day and evening from Wednesday to Saturday.

The Council would seek to commence the service by early 2016.

Cllr Hirst MOVED and Cllr Russell SECONDED the recommendations within the report. Following a discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

- 1. That the Council applies for a licence to hold ceremonies in the committee suite area including Committee Rooms 1, 2 & 3, Meeting Room 1, the Mayor's Parlour and the Council Chamber.**
- 2. That the Council seeks to commence bookings from early 2016 for Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.**
- 3. That the group rooms be freed up for booking meetings by officers during normal office hours.**

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

This represented an opportunity to realise an income from an area that was under utilised.

Using this space exclusively for ceremonies was unlikely to have a detrimental effect on the ability to book rooms and hold meetings at the Town Hall if other rooms were made available.

203. Proof of Life Certificate

Members were asked to determine the future provision of the Council's Proof of Life Certification service. The options were to continue provision of the service for free, charge for the service or cease the service.

Cllr Faragher MOVED and Cllr Parker SECONDED the recommendation in the report and following a discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That a charge of £25 for the provision of a proof of life certification service is approved.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

This recommendation had been made to give Members the opportunity to decide on the future provision of a Council service.

204. Shenfield Scout Lease

The report before Members considered the granting of a new lease to the 1st Shenfield Scouts for their Scout Hut in Shenfield Road.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay MOVED and Cllr Faragher SECONDED the recommendation in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was RESOLVED:

That a new lease be granted in accordance with the Heads of Terms set out at Appendix B to the report.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

A new lease for the Scouts being put in place would ensure continuity of accommodation for the Scout Group.

205. Land Transfer from Essex County Council

The report before Members considered the acquisition of an area of land adjacent to the Merrymeade House site and Brentwood School football pitches accessed from Shenfield Road.

The area of land was identified on a plan attached to the agenda and Members noted it was currently owned freehold by Essex County Council. The land comprised a single unmade access track which was part of the former Merrymeade Estate and it was proposed that Brentwood Borough Council purchase the land from Essex County Council for the sum of £1.

Cllr Faragher MOVED and Cllr Hirst SECONDED the recommendation in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the area of land is purchased by Brentwood Borough Council in order to secure control of the potential future development of sites adjacent to and accessed from the area of land.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

To secure control of the potential future development of sites adjacent to and accessed from the area of land.

In conjunction with the review of the Local Plan, additional protection to the Green Belt policy could be provided by the land being designated as a Local Green Space. A local green space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

(Cllrs Aspinell and Hirst each declared a non-pecuniary interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being Essex County Councillors).

206. Hutton Community Centre

The purpose of the report was to invite the Committee to consider increasing the potential term available for community groups to lease Hutton Community Centre. A previous report to this Committee dated 30 June 2015 limited the term to a period of 7 years.

The Council was marketing Hutton Community Centre for community use for a term of 7 years subject to the Heads of Terms attached to the report. As part of the marketing process a community organisation had asked if the Council would consider granting a lease of longer than 7 years. They suggested that this was to allow them to raise grant funds to invest in the property.

Details of all offers, outcome of the evaluation of offers and officers' recommendations would be submitted for consideration at this Committee at the 15 December 2015 meeting.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay MOVED and Cllr Russell SECONDED the recommendation in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That proposals for a lease of Hutton Community Centre for a term of longer than 7 years will be considered.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Committee agreeing to consider granting a lease of Hutton Community Centre for a term of longer than 7 years would maximise the appeal of the opportunity to a wider range of organisations.

207. Termination of Meeting

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules, the meeting not having been concluded by two hours after its start, the Chair interrupted the meeting and took a vote as to whether to continue the meeting for 30 minutes and this was accordingly **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

The meeting was adjourned for a short comfort break at this point.

208. Mid Year Budget Review 2015/16

The report before Members provided the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee with an update of the Council's revenue and capital outturn position as at the end of September 2015.

The estimated outturn on General Fund expenditure was projected at £10.180m against the current budget of £9.875m, a projected over spend of around £305k. This figure included a projected shortfall of £80k on the savings target of £650k agreed for 2015/16.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was projecting an in-year surplus of £97k, which was a decrease of £137k when compared with the current budget of an estimated surplus of £234k. The HRA was a ring-fenced account and could make or receive contributions to/from the General Fund.

The projected spend on capital stood at £7.587m for 2015/16 against the current programme of £14.591m. Capital budgets could not contribute to the General Fund revenue position although officers ensured that all appropriate capitalisations occurred.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay MOVED and Cllr Hirst SECONDED the recommendations in the report and following a full discussion and a vote taken on a show of hands it was RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. Notes the projected outturn position for 2015/16 of the Council's General Fund revenue budget as at 30 September 2015, as detailed in paragraph 4 of the report;

2. Notes the progress being made on achieving the savings target of £650k in 2015/16 as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report;

3. Notes the projected outturn position for 2015/16 of the Council's HRA at 30 September 2015, as detailed in paragraph 6 of the report; and

4. Notes the current projected position for 2015/16 of the Council's capital budget as at 30 September 2015, as detailed in paragraph 7 of the report.

Officers were commended for their work in relation to this report.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee was aware of the Council's revenue and capital outturn position as at the end of September 2015.

209. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Mid-year Review Report 2015/16

Members were reminded that the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2015/16 was approved by this Council on 4 March 2015.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) issued a Code of Practice for Treasury Management. The Code suggested that Members should be informed of Treasury Management activities at least twice a year.

The report before Members which covered the first six months of the 2015/16 financial year therefore ensured this Authority was embracing best practice and meeting the statutory requirements.

The legal status of the Code was derived from regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003 which required local authorities to "have regard to guidance that the Secretary of State may by regulations specify." The Code and the CIPFA Prudential Code fell into this category.

Cllr Hirst MOVED and Cllr Faragher SECONDED the recommendation in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee notes the Treasury Management Activity for the period 1 April 2015 to 30 September 2015.

Officers were commended for their work in relation to this report.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The report met the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice of Treasury Management.

210. Town Centre and Town Hall Projects

The report before Members provided the Policy, Finance and Resources (PFR) committee with an update on the key corporate projects of the Council. These were currently defined as:

- a) The Town Hall & Service Delivery Hub
- b) The Local Development Plan (LDP)
- c) The Town Centre (incorporating William Hunter Way)
- d) The Transformation Agenda of the Council

The above was not an inclusive list and other projects might be incorporated as determined by the committee. However such projects were defined as being integral to the delivery of the revised Corporate Plan 2016-2019.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay MOVED and Cllr Parker SECONDED the recommendation within the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was RESOLVED:

That Members agree to the actions and timescales incorporated in the report.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

To ensure that the Corporate Plan 2016-2019 was supported by projects that delivered the necessary change.

Urgent Business

Cllr Mrs McKinlay requested that names of those Members nominated to form part of the Planning Process Review Group (see Minute 201) be submitted to her by 4 November 2015.

The meeting ended at 9.50pm.

15 December 2015

Policy, Finance and Resources Committee

Preliminary Medium Term Financial Plan

Report of: *Chris Leslie, Finance Director*

Wards Affected: *None*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out the key financial management principles and budget assumptions. It is then used as the framework for the detailed budget setting process to ensure that the Council's resources are managed effectively in order to meet its statutory responsibilities and deliver the priorities of the Council, over the medium term.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the preliminary General Fund funding gap for 2016/17 and beyond be agreed.**
- 2.2 That the preliminary new capital proposals for 2016/17 and beyond be agreed.**
- 2.3 That the implications to the HRA resulting from the announcement made by the Chancellor as part of the summer budget to reduce HRA rents by 1% for the next 4 years be agreed.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 At the Council meeting on the 4 March 2015, Council approved the budgets for 2015/16 for the General Fund, HRA and Capital. The budget and capital programme was amended at the Council meeting on 10 June 2015.

4 General Fund

4.1 The General Fund position of the MTFP as approved on 10th June 2015, is outlined in Table 1:

Table 1 – General Fund Position as approved on 10th June 2015

	2015/16 Forecast £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	2018/19 £'000
Total Net Forecast Spend	9,875	10,272	10,372	10,372
Total Funding	(9,875)	(10,087)	(9,858)	(9,658)
Funding Gap	Nil	185	514	714
Working Balance b/fwd	4,511	4,161	3,326	2,812
Less:- Funding Gap	Nil	185	514	714
Less: Earmarked for WHW	350	650	-	-
Working Balance c/fwd	4,161	3,326	2,812	2,098

4.2 The Council has agreed to set aside funds to support the development of William Hunter Way. A sum up to the maximum value of £1 million has been earmarked from Working Balances to support this work.

4.3 Members may also recall that at the meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee in January 2015, a decision was taken to join an Essex Wide Pool for Business Rates in 2015/16. Membership of the pool has the potential to generate additional income for the Council, with current projections of a potential gain of around £100,000 in 2015/16. This has been reflected in the budget for 2015/16.

5 Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

Announcements since the Election

5.1 The Chancellor made an announcement on 9th September 2015 that there will be an Office for Budget Responsibilities (OBR) forecast alongside the Spending Review on Wednesday 25 November 2015. The government therefore published a joint Autumn Statement and Spending Review on this date.

5.2 An announcement was also made on the future of local government funding and focused mainly on Business Rates. In summary:

- By 2020, central funding of local government through the revenue support grant will be replaced entirely by business rates income. Currently, councils can keep half of the business rates collected in their

area. In addition, the nationally set ‘uniform business rate’ will be abolished, allowing authorities to lower their respective rates.

- Combined authorities with directly elected mayors will also be able to increase the tax, provided they have the backing of business.
- Councils will also be required to use the income for extra responsibilities. These are still being worked out and the Communities secretary has committed to working with local government on what they are. Local government expects these extra responsibilities could largely be made up of the abolition of existing grants for some services, such as public health or new homes bonus.
- Under the reform, councils would be expected to fund these services through business rates income. Excluding the dedicated schools grant, councils receive about £11bn in grants from central government departments, including health, transport and the Home Office.

Autumn Statement – Headlines for Local Government

- 5.3 On 25 November 2015 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne MP, announced the outcome of the Spending Review 2015. The Spending Review (SR2015) details spending settlements for each government department over the next four years (2016-17 to 2019-20). In his speech the Chancellor said the Spending Review had four objectives: (i) to develop an integrated health and care system, (ii) spread economic growth through a devolution revolution, (iii) address social failures in order to extend opportunity, and (iv) protect national security.
- 5.4 The Spending Review sets out plans for the local government spending measure, which is made up of the Local Government Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) and locally financed expenditure, as Table 2 shows. Overall local government spending is forecast to rise by £0.2bn in cash terms from £40.3bn in 2015/16 to £40.5bn in 2019/20; this represents a decrease of 6.7% in real terms, based on the latest inflation forecasts.

Table 2 – Local Government DEL & Locally Financed Expenditure

Local Government	£'billion				
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Local Government DEL	11.5	9.6	7.4	6.1	5.4
Locally Financed Expenditure	28.8	29.0	31.5	33.6	35.1
Local Government Spending	40.3	38.6	38.9	39.7	40.5
Year-on-year change to DEL Funding (% cash)		-17%	-23%	-18%	-11%

- 5.5 The Local Government Departmental Expenditure Limit (LG DEL) will reduce from £11.5bn in 2015/16 to £5.4bn in 2019/20; a 56% real terms decrease. Revenue Support Grant is included within the LG DEL.

- 5.6 Locally financed expenditure is forecast to increase by £6.3bn from £28.8bn in 2015/16 to £35.1bn in 2019/20; a 13% real terms increase.

Phasing Out of Revenue Support Grant

- 5.7 As previously announced, Revenue Support Grant (RSG) will be phased out entirely by 2019/20. DCLG will publish a consultation 'shortly' on changes to the local government finance system to 'rebalance support including to those authorities with social care responsibilities'. This consultation will 'pave the way for the implementation of 100% business rate retention' and will assess the main income streams available to local government, including council tax and business rates.

New Homes Bonus

- 5.8 Details of reforms to the New Homes Bonus (NHB) will be set out as part of the provisional local government finance settlement consultation in December. The Government's preferred options will lead to savings in the grant of at least £800m, 'which can be used for social care'. The proposals for changes to the NHB will include reforms 'sharpening the incentive to reward communities for additional homes' and reducing the length of bonus payments for new homes from 6 years to 4 years. The announcement in December will include proposals to introduce a floor in NHB Grant 'to ensure that no authority loses out disproportionately' as a result of the changes. This could result in a future loss in income of around £500k a year.

Finance Settlement

- 5.9 As detailed information on funding will not be available till late December 2015, the funding assumptions are as per those reported at the budget setting meeting on 4th March 2015 and only updated for any known changes.

Planning Assumptions for 2016/17 to 2018/19

- 5.10 **Pay Awards (Inflation)** – For financial planning purposes a 1% increase has been included for 2016/17 onwards.

Pressures

5.11 The current pressures are outlined in Table 3. These are subdivided into 'New Pressures' and 'Recurring Pressures':

Table 3 – General Fund – Current Pressures

Description	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	2018/19 £'000
Historic Recurring Pressures			
Legal Services Costs	150	150	150
IT Costs	70	70	70
Bank Charges	20	20	20
Temporary Accommodation	15	15	15
Increase in HB Bad Debts	50	50	50
Sub-Total Historic Recurring Pressures	305	305	305
New Pressures			
Re-cycling Contract	300	300	300
Investment in the Capital Programme	0	0	100
Insurance Premium Tax	40	40	40
HRA decrease in recharges	35	35	35
Changes in the NI Contributions	212	214	216
Pay Inflation	125	125	226
Sub-Total New Pressures	712	714	917
Total Pressures	1,017	1,019	1,222

Funding

5.12 The current increase / loss in funding is outlined in Table 4:

Table 4 – Funding Analysis

Description	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	2018/19 £'000
Re-cycling Grant no longer available	280	280	280
Loss of Benefit Subsidy Grant	75	75	75
Increase in Council Tax Base (assumes no increase in Council Tax)	(80)	(104)	(128)
Assumed Collection Fund Surplus	(200)	0	0
Net Loss in Funding	75	251	227

- 5.13 **Council Tax Base:** It is estimated that the Council Tax base will increase by around 320 Band D equivalent properties. In addition past collection performances indicate that the Council Tax collection rate can be increased from the current rate of 98% to 99%. The impact of this will be an increase in income of around £80k to that already budgeted for in the MTFP report agreed in March 2015.
- 5.14 **Collection Fund:** Initial calculations indicate that the Collection Fund will have a surplus of around £200k to that already budgeted for in the MTFP report agreed in March 2015. Please note that this is a 'one off' amount.
- 5.15 **Council Tax:** Members should note that if a decision is made to increase the Council Tax by the amount permitted without having a referendum, (which currently is an increase of under 2% or £3.35 per year for a Band D property), this will provide additional income and also increase the Council's base budget position by £107k in 2016/17. The implications for Council Tax increases in subsequent years will be £221k in 2017/18 and £336k in 2018/19.
- 5.16 A benefit of no increase in the Council Tax has been that the availability of Council Tax freeze grant, which equated to around 1% increase in Council Tax. The Council Tax freeze grant has been limited to a year or a number of years and was then incorporated into the general Revenue Support Grant figure, which has decreased significantly year on year. However with the introduction of the new system as outlined in paragraph 5.7, Revenue Support Grant will no longer be available. The disadvantage of accepting the Council Tax freeze grant is that the Council's base budget will decrease.

Summary on General Fund

5.17 Table 5 shows the impact on the original funding position (outlined in Table 1 at paragraph 4.1) of the updated information above, together with the updated information identified through the Half Year Budget Review process:

Table 5 - Revised General Fund Position

	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	2018/19 £'000
Total Net Forecast Spend	9,875	10,272	10,372	10,372
Total Funding	(9,875)	(10,087)	(9,858)	(9,658)
Funding Gap	Nil	185	514	714
Pressures	305	1,017	1,019	1,222
Net Loss in Funding	0	75	251	227
Total Funding Gap	305	1,277	1,784	2,163
Working Balance b/fwd	4,511	3,856	1,929	145
Less: Total Funding Gap	305	1,277	1,784	2,163
Less: Earmarked for WHW	350	650	-	-
Working Balance c/fwd	3,856	1,929	145	(2,018)

5.18 Table 5 identifies a potential funding gap of over £5.2m over the next 3 years (excluding any potential overspends in 2015/16). This is clearly not financially sustainable and the Council must carefully consider its medium and long term strategy to reduce costs and/or generate additional income in order to bridge the funding gap.

Next Steps

5.19 Officers are continuing to work on identifying proposals to bridge the funding gap and will present these for consideration at the next meeting.

Working Balances and Reserves

5.20 A minimum General Fund Working Balance of £2.2m has been agreed. In accordance with best practice, an annual risk assessment will be undertaken to check the level required for 2016/17. Due to the size of the gap it is likely savings will continue to be developed throughout 2016/17 to reduce the draw down from reserves.

5.21 In addition to the General Fund Working Balance, the Council keeps a number of Earmarked Reserves on the Balance Sheet. 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. The balance of these Reserves as at 1st April 2015 is £2.6 million.

6 Capital Programme

6.1 The capital programme as agreed at Council on 10th June 2015, updated for new agreed schemes and carry forwards from 2014/15, is outlined in Table 6.

Table 6 – Existing Capital Programme

Description	Expenditure				
	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000	Total £000
EXISTING					
HRA Decent Homes Schemes	4,566	3,000	3,000	3,000	13,566
Town Hall Remodelling	3,745	0	0	0	3,745
Improvements & Parking Scheme at Brentwood & Shenfield	1,600	200	0	0	1,800
New Homes Build (HRA)	1,555	2,154	2,055	2,000	7,764
Section 106 Funded Schemes	1,045	0	0	0	1,045
Upgrade the multi storey car park	375	664	0	0	1,039
Vehicle & Plant Replacement Programme	350	150	150	0	650
Disabled Facilities Grant	280	250	250	250	1,030
Unauthorised Incursions	150	0	0	0	150
Play Area Refurbishments	130	100	100	0	330
Asset Management Strategy	126	0	0	0	126
Car Park Refurbishment & Upgrade	110	0	0	0	110
ICT Strategy	100	100	100	100	400
Brentwood Leisure Trust	88	0	0	0	88
Hutton Community Centre	50	0	0	0	50
Renaissance Group	48	0	0	0	48
Home Repairs Assistance Grant	30	30	30	30	120
Irrigation for Golf Course	30	0	0	0	30
Wheelie Bins Pilot	20	0	0	0	20
Hutton Drive Parking Bays	20	0	0	0	20
Open Space Sinage	13	0	0	0	13
CCTV System Upgrade	8	5	5	5	23
Folding Machine	2	0	0	0	2
TOTAL	14,441	6,653	5,690	5,385	32,169

6.2 The current projection for the capital programme is that it will spend £7.437m in 2015/16 against the budget of £14.441m. The under spend will likely be carried forward into 2016/17. The capital expenditure in 2015/16 will be funded from capital receipts generated from the sale of assets, which reduces the need to borrow and associated revenue costs.

New Capital Schemes

6.3 Table 7 outlines proposals for new schemes to be included in the 2016/17 and beyond capital programme.

Table 7 – New Capital Schemes

Description	Expenditure			
	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000	Total £000
NEW SCHEMES				
Resurface Car Park at King Georges Playing Field	200	0	0	200
Cemetery Headstones	20	20	20	60
Parking Bays at Woodman Road Cemetery	25	0	0	25
Vehicle & Plant Replacement Programme	900	1,070	175	2,145
Structural & Safety Works at the Multi Storey Car Park	72	0	0	72
Leisure Strategy	250	250	0	500
TOTAL	1,467	1,340	195	3,002

7 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Introduction and Background

7.1 The HRA is the budget operated by the Council which contains the income and expenditure of services connected with the Council's Housing Landlord role.

7.2 The main source of income into the HRA is the rental income from the properties let by the Council. These rents are calculated by reference to a Government formula which provides a target rent for the Council's properties to reach over a period of time.

Announcement since the General Election

- 7.3 As part of the summer budget 2015, it was announced that rents in the social housing sector will be reduced by 1% a year for the next four years.
- 7.4 The implications of the above announcement on the setting of rents in 2016/17 is a loss of £214k as outlined in Table 8:

Table 8 – Implications for the HRA

	Bases	2016/17 Income £'000	2016/17 Expenditure £'000	(Surplus) / Deficit £'000
Current Assumption	CPI	(12,120)	12,093	(27)
New Basis	1% Reduction	(11,905)	12,093	188

- 7.5 The proposed reduction in rents will result in the HRA making a deficit from 2016/17 onwards until 2025 (see Appendix A).
- 7.6 Officers are in the process of reviewing the current HRA capital program and the Affordable Housing Development Program to see how they can bridge the gap.
- 7.7 This will also mean that the Council will need to revisit its strategy to repay the self financing debt. Currently the business plan assumes voluntary MRP payments are made.

8. Reasons for Recommendation

- 8.1 Effective financial management underpins all of the priorities for the Council.

9. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Ramesh Prashar, Financial Services Manager

Tel & Email 01277 312513 / ramesh.prashar@brentwood.gov.uk

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

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Saleem Chughtai, Legal Services Manager

Tel & Email 01277 312500 / saleem.chughtai@brentwood.gov.uk

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

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None.

- 10. Background Papers** (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

None.

- 11. Appendices to this report**

None.

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Ramesh Prashar

Telephone: 01277 312513

E-mail: ramesh.prashar@brentwood.gov.uk

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Brentwood Borough Council

HRA - Summary Business Plan

Details of Expenditure	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000	2020/25 £'000	2025/30 £'000	2030/35 £'000	2035/40 £'000	2040/45 £'000	TOTAL £'000
Repairs and Maintenance	2,670	2,420	2,670	2,737	2,805	15,114	17,100	19,347	21,889	24,765	111,516
General Management	1,456	1,555	1,474	1,494	1,514	7,876	8,420	9,011	9,653	10,352	52,804
Special Services	1,130	1,177	1,151	1,173	1,194	6,301	6,893	7,552	8,284	9,099	43,954
Supervision and Management Total	2,586	2,732	2,625	2,667	2,708	14,176	15,313	16,562	17,937	19,451	96,758
Rent, Rates, Taxes and Other Charges	190	194	198	204	209	1,126	1,274	1,442	1,631	1,845	8,314
Subsidy Payable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Depreciation and Impairment of Property	2,184	2,184	2,184	2,184	2,184	10,150	10,150	10,150	10,150	10,150	61,670
Increased Provision for Bad Debts	85	85	85	39	39	218	259	308	366	435	1,920
Loan Repayment		5,000				5,000	10,000	15,000	15,000	14,166	64,166
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	7,715	12,615	7,762	7,831	7,945	45,784	54,096	62,809	66,973	70,813	344,344
Capital Charges Reversal	0	(5,000)	0	0	0	(5,000)	(10,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	(14,166)	(64,166)
Interest on Loan	2,062	2,062	2,000	2,000	2,000	9,882	9,156	7,645	5,149	2,589	44,545
Interest on Balances	(71)	(65)	(62)	(62)	(62)	(310)	(310)	(310)	(310)	(310)	(1,872)
	9,706	9,612	9,700	9,769	9,883	50,356	52,942	55,144	56,812	58,926	322,851
Details of Income											
Dwelling Rents (net)	(12,027)	(11,905)	(11,786)	(11,668)	(11,551)	(64,225)	(76,498)	(91,118)	(108,530)	(129,271)	(528,580)
Non Dwelling Rents (net)	(532)	(539)	(546)	(566)	(585)	(3,249)	(3,859)	(4,582)	(5,442)	(6,463)	(26,363)
Charges for Services and Facilities	(651)	(663)	(674)	(700)	(723)	(3,988)	(4,691)	(5,520)	(6,494)	(7,641)	(31,745)
Contribution Towards Expenditure	(231)	(231)	(231)	(233)	(236)	(1,228)	(1,318)	(1,424)	(1,551)	(1,701)	(8,383)
Net Cost of HRA Services	(3,735)	(3,726)	(3,537)	(3,397)	(3,212)	(22,334)	(33,424)	(47,500)	(65,205)	(86,150)	(272,221)
CDC	517	440	444	453	461	2,435	2,667	2,924	3,211	3,531	17,084
Pension Interest Cost	300	300	300	315	331	1,919	2,449	3,126	3,989	5,092	18,121
Net Expenditure of HRA Services	(2,918)	(2,986)	(2,793)	(2,629)	(2,420)	(17,979)	(28,308)	(41,450)	(58,005)	(77,528)	(237,016)
Investment Fund	500	500	500	500	500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	15,000
Single Status	0	0									0
Loan Repayment	1,500	1,350	1,500	1,500	1,500	10,500	12,500	12,500	12,599	12,665	68,114
Capital Program Funding	885	1,324	1,405	1,100	1,100	5,500	5,500	5,500	5,500	5,500	33,314
(Surplus)/Deficit for HRA Services	(33)	188	612	471	680	521	(7,808)	(20,950)	(37,406)	(56,863)	(188,702)
Working Balance b/f	1,759	1,792	1,604	992	521	(159)	(679)	7,129	28,079	65,484	122,347
Accumulated Surplus	1,792	1,604	992	521	(159)	(679)	7,129	28,079	65,484	122,347	

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15 December 2015

Policy, Finance and Resources Committee

Draft Complaints Policy

Report of: *Steve Summers, Head of Customer Services*

Wards Affected: *None*

This report is *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Customer Access Strategy provides the overarching framework for the channels (or methods) the Council will use to interact with customers to ensure the successful delivery of our services with the resources available.
- 1.2 Key to the delivery of the Customer Access Strategy is the Implementation Plan which contains a number of actions. One of the actions contained within the Implementation Plan was the review of the Council's complaints procedure and development of a new Complaints Policy.
- 1.3 This report is for Members to consider and approve the draft Complaints Policy as attached at Appendix A.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the draft Complaints Policy.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 One of the actions contained within the Council's Customer Access Strategy Implementation Plan was the review and of its complaints procedure and the development of a new complaints policy.
- 3.2 The purpose of a complaints system is to put right what has gone wrong and to learn from it. The key principles for effective complaint handling are:

- Accessibility – It is well publicised
- Communication – Includes early direct contact with the person making the complaint and continued contact through the process
- Timeliness – It takes no longer than 12 weeks from receipt to resolution
- Fairness – Staff are clear about roles and responsibilities
- Credibility – It is managed by someone who can take an overview and implement changes in the complaints system
- Accountability – Information is provided in a clear and open way and is properly managed

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 Following a review of its complaints procedure the Council has introduced a three stage complaints process which is intended to improve on the previous procedure for customers to take issue with any perceived failure to provide a service, failure to respond to requests or failure to adhere to standards on the part of the Council and its officers. The process has been trialled for a period of time to enable feedback to its effectiveness.
- 4.2 The new process itself has three stages. In the first instance, the complaint is forwarded to the service Investigator for a meaningful and informed review. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response then it will be forwarded to the Head of Service for the department concerned or an appointed Senior Officer to conduct a second stage investigation into the matter. If the complainant is not satisfied with the response from the Head of Services they can request a third stage investigation into the matter by the Head of Paid Services. At all stages, the Council aims to respond fully following the investigation within 20 working days.
- 4.3 Once the complaint has been through our complaints process they will be informed of their rights to refer the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman.
- 4.4 Monitoring of the complaints and outcomes is undertaken by the Council's Corporate Leadership Board and the Audit, Scrutiny and Transformation Committee on a half yearly basis.

5. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Chris Leslie, Finance Director

Tel & Email 01277 312712/chris.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk

6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Christopher Potter, Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 212743/christopher.potter@brentwood.gov.uk

6.2 None - although a robust complaints mechanism contributes towards good governance.

6. Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

6.1 None.

7. Appendices to this report

Appendix A - Draft Complaints Policy.

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Steve Summers

Telephone: 01277 312629

E-mail: steve.summers@brentwood.gov.uk

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BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL

DRAFT COMPLAINTS POLICY

November 2015

1. Introduction

We want to provide excellent services and deliver those services right first time for our customers. Where we fail to do so we expect officers to take ownership and work with customers to resolve any issues. There may be times, however, when customers feel we have let them down and wish to make a complaint.

Brentwood Borough Council recognises the value of customer complaints and welcomes them as an important form of feedback on our services. We will learn from and use the information from complaints to drive forward improvements and respond positively to our customer's needs and expectations. We will put a strong emphasis on making personal contact with complainants and finding out from them what we need to do to put things right. We want to resolve all complaints quickly and effectively, resolving them straight away where possible.

We accept complaints in all formats and they can be made in a number of ways, including:

- Visiting our website
- Completing a complaints form
- Emailing us
- Ringing us
- Writing to us

***Please note:** Complaints against a member of staff must be made in writing.*

2. Our Aims

We believe that all our service users have the right to:

- Have their views heard
- Receive a good quality service
- Expect prompt action when our performance is below standard, balanced by the resources we have available

Our staff and contractors will be:

- Efficient and sensitive to the needs of the service users
- Accessible and clearly identified
- Aware of the day-to-day concerns of our service users

Our procedure will:

- Be easy to access and widely advertised
- Advise service users of the standard of service they should expect, a time limit for replying to their complaint and their right to appeal
- Provide a code of practice for handling complaints
- Ensure we monitor complaints
- Ensure we meet our standards

3. How we handle a complaint

We define a complaint in the following way:

“Any expression of dissatisfaction about any of our services requiring a response.”

Who can make a complaint?

We accept complaints from residents, local businesses, visitors to the borough, suppliers of services, community groups and any other groups or individuals that use or are affected by our services. We also accept complaints from people acting on behalf of someone else such as councillors, members of parliament (MPs) and representatives.

Informal Complaints

The majority of customer complaints can be successfully resolved at the point of service delivery within 10 days and do not need to go into the formal complaints procedure.

An informal complaint can be made via telephone, email, website (Contact Us/Report It system), face to face or letter. **Please note:** *Complaints against a member of staff must be made in writing.*

Formal Complaints

If, after dealing directly with a department the customer is still not satisfied with the response they can request the issue to be dealt with as a formal complaint by email, letter or by using the on line form available on the Council website. In order for the Council to deal effectively with a customer’s complaint it would be helpful and assist the process for the complainant to provide the date the initial complaint was made to the service, name of officer who handled the complaint, copies of correspondence and any other useful background information.

Stage 1: Resolution

The focus of resolution is on encouraging communication and exchanging information; exploring and explaining the thinking behind decisions and actions; and agreeing a way forward.

Service Investigation

A formal complaint should be resolved as close as possible to where the problem has occurred. The service Investigator will complete a meaningful and informed review and a response will be sent to the complainant within 20 working days. It is not appropriate for an officer who has been named in a complaint to respond to the complaint as it will raise questions regarding impartiality and independence of the complaints process.

Stage 2: Review

If the Stage 1 is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction they can request a Stage 2 Review. This is undertaken by the Head of Service or appointed Senior Officer. The review will not reinvestigate the complaint, but will focus on understanding the complainants continuing concerns and whether the Stage 1 Resolution process was undertaken fairly and that the conclusions reached were reasonable.

The Stage 2 Review process will look to identify any further practical remedies which may resolve the continuing concerns of the complainant and again will be dealt with within 20 working days.

Stage 3: Review

There should be very few occasions when a Stage 3 Review is required, however in the event of the complainant not being satisfied with the outcome of Stage 2 they can then request a Stage 3 Review, which will be directed to the Head of Paid Service for their delegation.

What happens if the complainant is still dissatisfied once they have been through our complaints process?

Once the complaint has been through our complaints process they will be informed of their rights to refer the complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman.

Complaints against local authorities in their role as social landlords and in some instances in respect of their management of leasehold properties will be considered by the Housing Ombudsman.

The Local Government Ombudsman deals with complaints with most council services, including planning, social care, housing benefit, environment and waste, transport and highways, council tax and some education matters.

Is there a time limit for making a complaint?

We will not normally consider a complaint that is made more than twelve months after the individual first became aware of the issue they want to complain about. This is in line with good practice as operated by the Local Government Ombudsman. There are exceptions to this where the council accepts that such a delay was reasonable.

How do we learn from complaints?

When we do not provide customers with the right service at the right time it costs the Council money. We learn from complaints by offering timely and effective remedies. This gives us the best outcome in terms of cost effectiveness and customer service. Where a complaint highlights the need for changes in working practice, systems, staff training or procedure the officer is required to highlight this and other learning points to the customer resolutions team. They will work with the service manager(s) concerned to make sure the necessary actions to bring about the change are carried out.

Lessons learned will be highlighted in the quarterly complaints reports so that learning and good practice can be shared across the council.

What complaints aren't covered by this policy?

There are certain types of complaints that will not be dealt with under this policy because there are specific policies for dealing with these including:

- Matters for which there is a statutory right of appeal
- Complaints where legal proceedings, court or tribunal action is being taken (although related issues that are not subject to legal proceedings may be considered)
- Employee complaints about terms and conditions of employment, working conditions or personnel issues which come under the employee complaint procedure
- Matters which are subject to an insurance claim
- Complaints that are submitted anonymously (although we may still investigate)
- Reasonableness of service charges for leaseholders

Further details can be found at www.brentwood.gov.uk

Maintaining confidentiality

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the way in which organisations can use personal information. When dealing with local authority complaints there are specific issues which need to be kept in mind:

- A complaint cannot be discussed with, or information disclosed to, a third party without the written permission of the customer. For example, where an advice worker or solicitor is making a complaint on behalf of a customer a letter of authorisation must be obtained.
- An exception to this rule allows a constituent's own ward councillor or MP to be given information when following up a complaint made on their behalf.
- However, where a councillor is acting on behalf of a constituent of a different ward the customer's permission must be sought before disclosing.

4. Complaints resolution

Brentwood Borough Council aims to resolve complaints by putting things right where there has been a failure in service. Our approach will be fair and consistent across all the complaints we uphold.

What we will do when resolving a complaint?

In resolving complaints we will:

- Try to call the complainant to make personal contact including, where appropriate, offering to meet with the complainant to provide us with the opportunity to fully understand what they want us to do to remedy the complaint
- Where possible, agree with the complainant actions that will be taken and when
- Update the complainant at each step of the way and advise them of any delay in completing the actions
- Contact the complainant to ensure any issues have been resolved and the actions completed

What we will do when answering a complaint?

When answering a complaint we will:

- Address the issues raised
- Explain the basic policy/procedure or level of service we provide

- Say how we have handled the matter including, where appropriate, a chronology of the events
- Give a clear outcome as to whether we uphold the complaint

Where our service has not met our standards we will:

- Apologise for the failure in service
- Explain what went wrong
- Say what we have done to put things right
- Where appropriate, say how we have learned from the complaint

5. Putting things right

There are a number of actions we can take to put things right.

- Providing the service

Where we have failed to provide a service that we agree a customer is entitled to, we should ensure that the service is provided in line with an agreed timetable, explaining any delay.

- Backdating the service

Where we have not provided a service that we should have, it may be appropriate to backdate the service to when it should have been provided in the first instance. For example a benefits application that needs to be backdated to the original claim date.

- Stopping enforcement action

Where the complainant disputes the reasons for the enforcement action it may be appropriate to stop the action or postpone the action pending further investigation.

6. Financial Compensation

Our first priority is to resolve failures and put them right. Unless we agree that the council is liable for material loss, we will usually only consider compensation when we review if the complaint has been adequately resolved.

Compensation should be appropriate and proportionate. It is not automatic payment when the council makes a mistake. Compensation should only be considered where the complaint investigation has identified maladministration (a mistake or delay that has caused a customer to suffer injustice) and the council, or those working on behalf of the council are wholly or partially at fault.

Under what circumstances will financial compensation be considered?

If we cannot put a complainant back in the position that they would have been in but for our mistake/delay then we would consider financial compensation as a substitute. This may be because of the passage of time or the nature of events.

We will not consider financial compensation in the following circumstances:

- Any matter settled via an insurance claim
- Any settlement agreed via court proceedings
- Where there is a specific statutory process of remedy open to the complainant, such as parking appeals process

Exceptions to these circumstances:

- We may pay compensation to settle a claim where it is cost effective for the council to do so
- If a tenant is not covered by insurance we will use our discretion to compensate them in the case of especially vulnerable tenants

Further information

For details on the levels of compensation and who has the authority to authorise payments see the appendix to this document.

For further information on complaints you can:

- Visit our website www.brentwood.gov.uk
- Email enquiry@brentwood.gov.uk
- Ring on 01277 312500

Contact details for the Local Government Ombudsman are as follows:

Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Address: Local Government Ombudsman
PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH

Telephone: 0845 602 1983

Contact details for the Housing Ombudsman are as follows:

Website: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Address: Housing Ombudsman Service
81 Aldwych

London
WC2B 4HN

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

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15 December 2015

Policy, Finance and Resources Committee

Partnership Policy and Procedures 2015

Report of: *Kim Anderson, Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager.*

Wards Affected: *All wards.*

This report is: *Public report.*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council needs to ensure that any partnerships that it is involved in are both efficient, effective and that they can deliver value for money for our residents. A large amount of public money is invested in partnerships and therefore partnerships should be action and outcome focussed, whilst encouraging innovative solutions for change. Partnerships should also be monitored regularly to ensure any underperforming partnerships are highlighted and any appropriate action is taken
- 1.2 The outcome of an internal audit report dated 31 March 2015 indicated limited design and effectiveness of the Council's current partnership working and provided four recommendations for improvement. As a result of the audit recommendations the revised Partnership Policy and Procedures will ensure that there is a framework of procedures for staff to follow who are engaged in, giving consideration to engagement in, or withdrawing from partnership activities. This will provide a consistent approach when the Council enters into a partnership agreement to ensure that the partnership will not only support the Council's priorities, but strengthen the accountability amongst partners, minimise the risk to the Council and rationalise the Council's partnership working arrangements.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Members agree to the revised Partnership Policy and Procedures as appended to this report.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Council underwent an internal audit of its partnership working arrangements in March 2015 which set out a number of recommendations. As a result of that audit and its recommendations the

report before Members sets out the revised Partnership Policy and Procedures which will ensure that any partnerships working that the Council is involved in is efficient, delivers value for money for our residents and supports the Council's priorities.

- 3.2 The Partnership Policy and Procedures include a number of separate documents that will enable officers to have a standardised approach when involved in partnership working. This will include the following:
- A definition of a 'partnership'
 - A partnership checklist, which provides questions that need to be asked before entering into any partnership agreement
 - A Terms of Reference/Agreement template in order that officers have a standardised template to follow which will set out the aims, objectives and expected outcomes of the partnership
 - A self assessment tool so that officers can evaluate and review the effectiveness of any existing partnerships
- 3.3 These documents will be available to staff through a dedicated partnership microsite.
- 3.4 The Council's partnership arrangements will be published on the Council's Partnership Register. The Partnership Register will also be linked to the Council's Corporate Risk Register, which will identify any underperforming partnerships. The register will detail each of the partners involved in the partnerships and how each partnership supports the Council's priorities.
- 3.5 It is proposed to have a rolling programme of reporting the Council's partnership working to the Council's Audit, Scrutiny and Transformation Committee.
- 3.6 It is important for officers to estimate the cost to the Council of partnership working, measured in officer time and financial commitment, in order to ensure that the benefits it receives from the partnership are sufficient to justify and formalise new partnership arrangements.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 When setting up a new partnership arrangement officers need to be confident that the partnership will contribute to the Council's priorities and objectives and whether it will deliver best value for money for Brentwood residents.
- 4.2 In principle Brentwood Borough Council will actively seek to work in partnership and make positive contributions where:
- It has statutory obligations to be a member of the partnership;

- It is considered that partnership working will provide a more efficient or effective way of achieving its aims and objectives, than by simply working alone
 - Partnership working will potentially increase opportunities for accessing or saving money or resources in line with the above, thus ensuring best value delivery for the residents of Brentwood.
- 4.3 Whilst the benefits of working in partnership are overwhelmingly positive, there are also risks which must be fully considered and mitigated against.
- 4.4 Officers need to question whether the Council needs to be involved in the proposed partnership in the first place or whether another working arrangement could deliver a similar objective and outcome.
- 4.5 This Partnership Policy and Procedure seeks to ensure that Brentwood Borough Council are able to recognise the full range of partnerships we are engaged with, and be satisfied that they are:-
- Properly risk assessed and suitably managed;
 - Formally approved and registered on the Council's Partnership Register;
 - Monitored and reviewed on at least an annual basis in order that a focus on delivery can be maintained;
 - Have clear aims, objectives and outcomes;
 - Have a clear terms of reference;
 - Where appropriate, operate an information sharing protocol which partners have responsibility to adhere to;
 - Have clear governance in place to ensure accountability;
 - Establish a clear understanding between partners regarding their individual and collective responsibility and liability for the actions of the partnership;
 - Operating effectively in adding value to our efforts to achieve our priorities and as appropriate supporting the delivery of partnership priorities, or discharging our statutory responsibilities;
 - Providing Brentwood Borough Council, our partners and the public good value for money in relation to the level of investment being made;
 - Establish clear processes and procedures in place for the dissolving of partnership arrangements;
 - Delivering positive outcomes for the people of Brentwood.
- 4.6 The new Partnership Policy and Procedures should ensure that there is accountability within the partnership amongst the various partners and also that the partnership itself is accountable to another body for audit and

scrutiny purposes to ensure that it is still delivering on the partnership objectives and outcomes.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The Internal Audit review of our partnership working recommends strengthening our partnership arrangements. The revised Partnership Policy and Procedures will ensure that the Council is only involved in partnership working which supports one or more of the Council's priorities to deliver the outcomes that will support Brentwood Borough residents.

6. References to Corporate Plan

- 6.1 Good partnership working will enhance and support the Council's priorities and objectives and deliver effective and efficient ways of working that will deliver value for money for Brentwood residents.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Christopher Leslie, Finance Director

Tel & Email: 01277 312542 / Christopher.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk

All partnership working will involve some resource from Brentwood Borough Council whether this is officer time, financial commitment or other in kind support. The Partnership Policy and Procedures should ensure that a consistent, transparent approach is in place when setting up, reviewing and monitoring partnership arrangements, which in turn should minimise any financial or reputational risk to the Council.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Head of Legal Services

Tel & Email: daniel.toohey@BDTL.org.uk

A robust governance framework in place will ensure that the Council will only enter into partnership arrangements that will assist in the delivery of expected outcomes which support the Council's priorities.

It will also ensure that clear roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are identified prior to entering a partnership arrangement and that a regular review of partnership working is undertaken to ensure that the partnership is still delivering outcomes against Council priorities and that the partnership is still fit for purpose.

Risk management

By utilising the standardised checklist for entering into any new partnership, the Council will properly risk assess, manage and minimise the risk to the Council.

8. Background Documents:

- Internal Audit review of partnership working
- Definition of a partnership?
- Partnership checklist
- Terms of Reference/Agreement template
- Self Assessment Tool

9. Appendices to this report

Appendix A - Partnership Policy and Procedures

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Kim Anderson

Telephone: 01277 312634

E-mail: kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk

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Brentwood Borough Council

Partnership Policy

Aims, Scope and Key Drivers

AIMS:

This policy and associated procedures are introduced to provide a framework for officers who are engaged in, giving consideration to engagement in, or withdrawing from partnership activities.

Brentwood Borough Council recognises that the quality and cost effectiveness of services can be significantly improved when organisations work well together.

Working as a partnership is integral to the way that Brentwood Borough Council and many of our partners operate and seeks to achieve their ambitions. Collaboration with other agencies and the public is fundamental to Brentwood Borough Council's approach to achieving the shared priorities and outcomes desired by not only our partners and ourselves, but importantly the public of Brentwood.

This policy is one of inclusion. We aim to ensure that partnership working is supportive of the diverse communities within Brentwood and will continue to support those with protected characteristics as identified in the Equality Act 2010.

The public expect that the Council will work within the very best partnerships, delivering positive outcomes that they value, in the most cost effective way possible. Supporting our staff to achieve this, Brentwood Borough Council's Partnership Policy sets out the Council's broad approach to working in partnership and details how this important means of delivering services will be managed.

In principle, Brentwood Borough Council will actively seek to work in partnership and make positive contributions where:-

- It has statutory obligations to be a member of the partnership;
- It is considered that partnership working will provide a more efficient or effective way of achieving its aim of supporting our residents and businesses, or will deliver the commitments contained within the Council's Corporate Plan , more appropriately than would be possible by simply working alone;
- Partnership working will potentially increase opportunities for accessing or saving money or resources in line with the above, thus ensuring best value delivery for residents or businesses of Brentwood.

Whilst the benefits of working in partnership are overwhelmingly positive, there are risks which must be fully considered and mitigated against.

This Policy seeks to ensure that Brentwood Borough Council are able to recognise the full range of partnerships in which we have become engaged, and be satisfied that they are:-

- Properly risk assessed and suitably managed;
- Formally approved and registered on the Council's Partnerships Register;
- Monitored and reviewed on at least an annual basis in order that a focus on delivery can be maintained;
- Have clear aims, objectives and outcomes;
- Have clear terms of reference;
- Where appropriate, operate an information sharing protocol which partners have responsibility to adhere to;
- Have clear governance arrangements in place to ensure accountability;
- Establish a clear understanding between partners regarding their individual and collective responsibility and liability for the actions of the partnership;
- Operating effectively in adding value to our efforts to achieve our priorities and as appropriate supporting the delivery of partnership priorities, or discharging our statutory responsibilities;
- Providing Brentwood Borough Council, our partners and the public good value for money in relation to the level of investment being made;
- Delivering positive outcomes for the people of Brentwood.

Brentwood Borough Council's view is that the partnerships it enters into should add significant value. As such, where it is considered that the costs of being involved in a partnership outweigh, or are likely to outweigh the benefits gained, then Brentwood Borough Council may challenge and potentially discontinue support for those partnership arrangements.

This policy sets out the formal processes that will support Brentwood Borough Council in consistently, professionally and objectively making sound decisions when it considers whether to establish or enter into a partnership and reviews whether it should continue to support a partnership arrangement. It also aims to provide staff with clarity about the Council's approach to partnership working and help enable them to understand their personal responsibilities when developing or working in the partnership arena.

SCOPE:

The word partnership can mean different things to different people. To make partnerships work effectively, they need to be differentiated from other joint arrangements such as funding regimes, contractual arrangements and informal relationships or networks.

As such Brentwood Borough Council defines a partnership in relation to this policy as a joint working arrangement where two or more partners:

- Are otherwise independent bodies;
- Agree to co-operate to achieve a common goal, which supports the delivery of at least one Council priority or target;
- Create a new organisational structure or process to achieve a goal, separate from their own organisations; and
- Plan and implement a jointly agreed programme of work which may often result in joint staffing, shared use of resources or information and a perception that some element of risk and reward is also shared.

Independent bodies' would normally mean that partners are separate entities in a legal sense.

Partnership is a concept that is difficult to define precisely. A distinction can be made between establishing a formal partnership such as 'Multi-agency Licensing Group' and an informal way of working involving partners such as a localised 'Keep Safe' initiative.

This policy is primarily concerned with defining the arrangements for managing formal partnerships.

Such arrangements will identify key responsibilities / accountabilities or liabilities that would be shared with members, formally recorded within a Terms of Reference or a Partnership Agreement.

It is also recognised that if Brentwood Borough Council leaves a partnership it does not automatically imply that the partnership itself should cease. It is felt to be good practice for a Terms of Reference to indicate how each individual organisations can leave a partnership.

Brentwood Borough Council also acknowledges that the 3rd sector (voluntary and community sector organisations) can be a key partner and play a prominent role in supporting our local communities.

An initial **Equality Impact Assessment** should be completed for those partnerships that could impact on service delivery or our residents to ensure that the Council continues its commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Legal

Brentwood Borough Council needs to ensure that any decision making in relation to partnership working is properly authorised and made by the relevant constituent bodies forming the particular partnership through agreed governance arrangements as partnerships are not usually separate legal entities. In the absence of Council officers having the delegated authority to take decisions on behalf of the Council, such matters have to be reported back to the Council or their Committee for decision. It is important for good governance that such decisions are 'scrutinised and challenged effectively'.

KEY DRIVERS:

The Council has a statutory responsibility for the delivery of certain services and a specific legal responsibility for working in certain statutory partnerships (i.e. Community Safety Partnerships).

Partnership working offers opportunities to deliver services in more efficient and effective ways and the Council's emphasis on providing value for money services that deliver positive outcomes for communities within Brentwood means that consideration about whether services could be delivered better, or more efficiently collaboratively with partners should be regularly explored by officers.

Financial Implications

Through collaborative working arrangements, Brentwood Borough Council aims to work with its partners to deliver effective, value for money, quality services to the residents of Brentwood.

Financial pressures will increase on all partner agencies in future years and may lead to requests being made to the Council to enter into partnerships and share resources to address issues that may not be of sufficient priority to the Council and these will be carefully considered.

Within any partnership arrangement there will be some resource implication for Brentwood Borough Council. This could be a financial commitment, officer support or other in kind support for the partnership. These costs will need to be identified before any formal decisions are agreed.

Before entering into any financial arrangements with external bodies, guidance will be sought from the Finance Director (Section 151 Officer) and the relevant account officer with regard to procurement or other related financial matters. Agreements/or arrangements entered into must not have an adverse effect on the services provided by the Council.

Data retention

Partnership procedures will involve a sharing of information through formal meetings. As such, there are a wide range of potential outcomes with regard to final disposal of information, and whilst many will involve Brentwood Borough Council, some may involve partner agencies. More detail is contained within the documented procedures which accompany this Council's Partnership Policy.

The above may involve the creation of further records such as meeting minutes, action records and it would not be practicable to detail the retention periods for the whole spectrum. Under normal circumstances, all partnership information will be held for a period of 36 months, after the partnership arrangement has ceased. All records should therefore be retained, reviewed and disposed of in line with the Council's Data Retention Policies.

Publicising Partnership working

The Policy seeks to formally record the benefit of formal collaborative working to meet the priorities of Brentwood Borough Council, its partners and to deliver value for money and quality services to local communities, through the Partnership Register and through a rolling audit process. By publicising our partnership working the Council can provide the public with information about the partnerships that the Council is involved in, a dedicated webpage listing the Council's Partnership arrangements together with a Partnership Register which will give a brief description of each partnership, its aims and objectives and the partners involved.

Partnership Policy - Procedure details

Joining, recording, monitoring and withdrawing from Partnerships

Approval of a Brentwood Borough Partnership

Where a Brentwood Borough Partnership is considered as 'operational' then the decision in relation to approval will be made by elected members at the relevant Committee (unless delegated authority is given) in order to ensure proper governance.

In all other cases the Council's formal engagement will be subject to the approval by Head of Paid Service for Service Level Partnerships.

Key controls have been established which must be in place before authorisation is given to the engagement in a Brentwood Borough Partnership. In every such case it must be possible to:

- Recognise the statutory context in which the proposed partnership is to be established;
- Identify the objectives the proposed partnership is designed to achieve/fulfil;
- Demonstrate how such objectives will support the Council's corporate vision and priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan;
- Identify and assess all known risks associated with the proposed partnership and the extent to which those risks affect the viability of the proposals;
- Identify and assess through a robust project appraisal process the viability of the proposals in terms of resources, staffing and expertise;
- Identify and assess the contractual, legal and financial frameworks of the proposed partnership and to ensure that those arrangements comply with the Council's financial regulations and Contract Standing Orders;
- Identify and agree with other partners the roles and responsibilities of each of the other partners involved in the proposals and the lines of accountability from the proposed partnership to Brentwood Borough Council, and to other partners;
- Be satisfied that other partners have carried out similar assessments for their own purposes, so far as practicable, of the matters referred to in above;
- Ensure that the proposed partnership and its operation will not affect adversely any of the services provided by or for Brentwood Borough Council.

For further guidance refer to the Partnership checklist.

Documentation in support of this will be captured on the Council's Partnership Register and related business case reports.

All Brentwood Borough Council Partnerships will be subject to routine monitoring and scrutiny by the Council. This will be at least annually, regardless of whether the Authority was the decision-making body or not.

APPROVAL OF A SERVICE LEVEL PARTNERSHIP

A Head of Service can give approval for joining service level partnerships subject to adherence to the Council's Constitution, Standing Orders, Delegated Powers and Budgetary responsibility.

However, if any of the following criteria apply, then such a service level partnership approval request must be escalated to the Head of Service/Elected Members for sanction.

- All partnerships where personal information is to be shared;
- All partnerships where there is a requirement for financial investment in budget/cash terms;
- All partnerships where there is a requirement for 'in-kind' or human resource investment of above £5K;
- All partnerships where linkage with Council objectives/priorities is felt to be in question or is limited;
- Any partnership where for any other reason it is felt appropriate that a more formal or structured decision-making process be used by the Officers prior to any decision being taken.

The decision-making process will be broadly proportionate to the level of perceived risk and benefit and involved support from specialist staff as appropriate.

A standardised **Terms of Reference/Partnership Agreement** template has been developed to assist officers when establishing partnership arrangements.

CONDITIONAL PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

It is recognised that the development of some partnerships can be a dynamic process and that some form of organisational support may be needed and appropriate at an early stage in order that staff with some expertise and experience in this area can potentially influence and help shape the further improvement and development of a particular partnership.

To delay engagement with a partnership under development may hinder its progression and as a consequence the effective delivery of services to the public. Therefore, under some circumstances, decision-makers are able to grant 'conditional support' to engage in the development of a partnership prior to being required to make a formal or long-term decision.

Conditional support will only be granted for a period up to 3 months at a time. This is to encourage the registering of prospective partnerships at the earliest point in time and provide managers and partnership workers sufficient opportunity to influence the creation of high quality partnerships which are well constructed and thought through prior to formal approval being granted.

DECLINING PARTNERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

Where potential difficulties or risks from partnership working are clear from an early stage, an early decision to decline involvement may be prudent. Such cases would include:-

- Partnership with any organisations promoting tobacco, gambling, drugs or alcohol consumption for instance;
- Partnerships where the support from Brentwood Borough Council cannot be readily or easily discontinued;
- Partnerships that would involve the Council in unbudgeted revenue costs, particularly on an on-going basis;
- Partnerships which involve potentially sensitive associations with companies already in contractual arrangements with the Council, which could be construed by competitors as preferential treatment;
- Partnerships with conditions attached that interfere with the Council's operational independence on how the Council's resources are used;
- Partnerships of unclear or unqualified benefits to core Council activities and the delivery of our key aims and objectives;

If the Council is requested to formally join partnerships where it is clear that it is against the interests of Brentwood Borough Council or the public of Brentwood, requests are registered on the Council's Partnerships Database and a recommendation made that they not be approved.

This decision will be taken by the appropriate person or body depending on the nature of the partnership and communicated sensitively to the interested parties at the earliest opportunity.

RECORDING A PARTNERSHIP

All partnerships that meet the Council's definition are recorded on the Council's Partnership Register by the relevant service manager. The Register, which is monitored by the Council's Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager, will be reviewed on an annual basis. The responsibility for entries on to the Register lies with the service directly involved in the partnership.

This Register records information to support the assessment of risk to the Council in joining an identified partnership and establish the level at which the Council will / will not be engaged.

The information recorded on the database includes:

- Partnership name;
- Membership details;
- Aims and objectives of partnership;
- Linkage to Council priority(ies);
- Accountability;

- Brentwood Borough Council lead;
- Whether engagement is a statutory obligation;
- Terms of reference availability;
- Frequency of meeting forum;
- Budget;
- Collaborative working arrangements;
- Risk to organisation;
- Governance for Information exchange;
- Equality & Diversity considerations;
- Funding Arrangements

As part of the Council's Partnerships Register and the responses to key questions contained within it, risks to Brentwood Borough Council in relation to engagement in partnership working will be identified and detailed. This unified view, will be updated annually as part of the monitoring arrangements.

If appropriate, such risks will be escalated to the Council's Corporate Risk Register where remedial action will be taken or supported.

MONITORING AND SCRUTINY OF A PARTNERSHIP

Decision makers and partnership staff have a responsibility to ensure that the work of approved partnerships is properly monitored and to ensure that all partnership arrangements are formally reviewed on an annual basis, at which point a decision will be made about the continuance of Brentwood Borough Council's involvement.

A **self assessment reference tool** has been designed to assist officers when reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of the partnership.

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be pre-agreed by partners as appropriate, and these should always be proportionate to the level of the partnership and the risks or benefits involved.

Documented Terms of Reference for a partnership, key responsibilities, accountabilities and liabilities of each agency should be recorded and maintained.

For Brentwood Borough partnerships, formal scrutiny will principally be undertaken through the work of the Audit, Scrutiny and Transformation Committee. For local level partnerships, scrutiny will be undertaken through the work of individual members, with activities recorded and documented on the Council's Partnership Register.

The Council's Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager will monitor all partnerships across the Council and report, where appropriate, in relation to compliance with policy. This may necessitate some level of exception reporting where updates, monitoring or formal reviews have not been undertaken as required.

Service Managers will maintain an overview of the partnerships that operate within their service areas of responsibility and provide support for their effective monitoring and improvement.

An annual performance assessment of the benefit and value provided by the partnership to the work of Brentwood Borough Council and the delivery of services to the public will be conducted and recorded, as appropriate by the Service Manager directly involved with that partnership.

At the conclusion of the assessment the lead member of staff for the partnership will be required to make a recommendation to the decision-maker to either:-

- continue to support engagement in the partnership (approval);
- continue to support engagement in the partnership with a view to improving the partnership working (conditional approval); or
- critically review the partnership with a view to considering Brentwood Borough Council's disengagement from it.

COMMUNICATION

When a partnership is being set up there needs to be clear expectations between partners about the values and behaviours that are expected within the partnership.

Partnership working will be clearly recognised within the Council's Corporate Plan and given the public facing nature of collaborative working, it will be appropriate for specific communication advice and guidance to be sought by partners from professionals within their collective organisations.

Within the Terms of Reference for each partnership arrangement, a pre-identified and agreed agency will take the lead for communication activity within the partnership to ensure that there is a collaborative approach that will ensure consistency of message, accuracy and commitment to the partnership's values and behaviours.

WITHDRAWING FROM OR ENDING A PARTNERSHIP

Partnership arrangements inevitably may come to an end due to a number of reasons including:

- Achievement of objectives;
- Change in Council or partner priorities;
- Partnership replaced by alternative working arrangements;
- External funding sources/resources cease;
- After review, the Partnership is deemed to be not delivering the outputs and outcomes it was set up to do and new approaches need to be explored;
- After review, an unacceptable level of risk in continuing the Partnership is identified;
- The legal framework upon which the Partnership was founded changes.

The decision whether Brentwood Borough Council's involvement in a Partnership ceases will be made on a case by case basis, to recognise the full range of circumstances involved. The decision to withdraw will be made at the same level at which approval was given to engage.

In circumstances where withdrawn from local or low level partnerships is difficult due to political or reputational reasons, decisions regarding withdrawal will be escalated to the elected Members for consideration and decision.

It is acknowledged that Brentwood Borough Council leaving a Partnership does not automatically imply that the partnership itself should cease. Terms of Reference for each partnership will indicate how each individual organisation can leave a partnership and actions which might be necessary in such eventualities.

Where Brentwood Borough Council does decide to leave a Partnership, the reason for departure will be documented on the Council's Partnership Register.

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15 December 2015

Policy, Finance and Resources

Delegated Authority for Grant of Leases

Report of: *Phil Ruck, Head of Paid Service*

Wards Affected: *N/A*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Delegated authority is requested to be given to the Section 151 Officer to grant leases of up to £25,000 per year on properties leased at market rate.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That delegated authority be granted to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and Chair or Vice Chair of the Policy Finance and Resources Committee to grant leases of up to £25,000 (excluding VAT) per year on properties leased at market value.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The current process operated by the Council is that leases of up to £10,000 are approved through emergency powers. This ensures income is maximised by agreeing leases in a timely fashion and avoids an excessive number of operational reports going to Committee.
- 3.2 To stream line the process and to make the scheme of delegation fit for purpose it is proposed that suitable delegated authority be granted.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 A lot of work has been undertaken in updating the Council's leases which has generated additional income and resulted in several new leases being granted.

- 4.2 Having suitable delegated authority allows the Council to operate efficiently and assists in generating income. A limit of £25,000 is considered reasonable given the current market conditions.
- 4.3 Any lease at less than best consideration would still require Committee approval regardless of value.
- 4.4 As the post of Strategic Asset Manager is currently vacant, delegated authority is being sought at the level of Section 151 Officer.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To ensure the Council operates effectively it is important to have suitable delegated powers.

6. References to Corporate Plan

- 6.1 This reflects the Council's priority of a Prosperous Borough.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Chris Leslie, Finance Director

Tel & Email: 01277 312 542 / christopher.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.1 The delegated authority will allow the Council to maximise rental income and reduced the administration required.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Chris Potter, Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312 860 / christopher.potter@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.2 The Council can delegate authority to an officer of the Council under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Phil Ruck, Head of Paid Service
Telephone: 01277 312542
E-mail: philip.ruck@brentwood.gov.uk

15 December 2015

Policy, Finance and Resources

Income Generation Update

Report of: *Chris Leslie, Finance Director*

Wards Affected: *N/A*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the income generation activities presented to the Committee on 15 September 2015 and requests that the future actions are agreed.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the income generation actions outlined in appendix A are approved.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 On 15 September 2015 the Committee agreed the income generation activities that would be developed and reported back to the committee.
- 3.2 An update on these activities is provided at Appendix A.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 Members are asked to agree the income generation actions detailed in Appendix A.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 It was agreed by the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 15 September 2015 that the income generation activities agreed would be developed and presented to the Committee.

6. References to Corporate Plan

6.1 This reflects the Council's priority of a Prosperous Borough.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Chris Leslie, Finance Director

Tel & Email: 01277 312 542 / christopher.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk

7.1 The income generation activities will create additional revenue for the Council.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Chris Potter, Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312 860 /christopher.potter@brentwood.gov.uk

7.2 None directly arising from this report but as part of any business case it will be essential to ensure the correct legal and governance arrangements are in-built.

8. Appendices to this report

Appendix A – Income Generation Activities

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Chris Leslie, Finance Director

Telephone: 01277 312542

E-mail: christopher.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk

Income Generation Activities

No	Activity	Description	Status	Action to be Agreed
1	Review of existing property assets	All information on the Council's assets is being brought together into an updated asset register so work on maximising their potential revenue streams can be realised and use reviewed.	Assets continue to be added to the database and work is expected to be completed by the end of 2015/16.	That a review of each property asset currently on the database commences with a view to maximising the commercial return where appropriate.
2	New leases and lease reviews	Work is ongoing in compiling a single list of properties that the Council rents out and identifying new rental opportunities within the existing portfolio. This ensures rent reviews are carried out in a timely manner and prevents items from being missed.	As at October there is expected additional income of £125k, of which £52k is ongoing annually.	That the review of property leases continues and all rental opportunities be maximised.
3	Sale of surplus assets	The identification and disposal of surplus assets is ongoing to create additional resources for the Council that can be more efficiently utilised.	Over the next 12 months it is anticipated that £6m of funding from sales will be received that will help fund the existing capital programme and reduce the need to borrow.	That the Council continue to identify assets for disposal for reinvestment based on economic and community suitability.
4	Acquiring income generating assets	A Separate agenda item has been prepared.	A Separate agenda item has been prepared.	N/A
5	Procurement review	A procurement challenge is being commissioned through the East of England Local Government Association. The challenge provides a check of the effectiveness of the current approach to procurement, including comparisons to best practice. It will also give recommendations for actions which will help to secure efficiency savings and better overall performance.	The challenge is now complete and a draft report with actions has been prepared for review.	That the recommendations from the procurement review are presented to the Committee.

6	Provision of homeless accommodation	To tackle the high costs of private sector accommodation in relation to homelessness the feasibility of acquiring property for this purpose is to be investigated.	An agreement has been entered into with a Housing Association to provide accommodation rather than using the private sector.	That other alternative options for homelessness accommodation continue to be considered.
7	Reclaiming VAT	Specialist VAT consultants have been engaged to explore the possibility of reclaiming VAT. The Council has previously had success in reclaiming VAT through its 'Fleming Claims'.	Initial data has been provided that will allow an analysis of possible routes for reclaiming VAT.	That investigations into the possibility of reclaiming VAT continue.
8	External funding opportunities	External sources of funding should be explored where possible and officers alerted to opportunities.	A process is being developed to identify funding opportunities that relevant officers can then be made aware of.	That the Council puts in place a process for identifying external funding opportunities.

15 December 2015

Policy, Finance and Resources Committee

Local Council Tax Support scheme - 2016/17

Report of: *Rob Manser - Shared Services Revenues & Benefits Manager*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 It was previously agreed to form a Member's Task & Finish Group to consider any changes to the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme for 2016/17.
- 1.2 Following the Welfare Reforms announced by the Chancellor in his Summer Budget on the 8th July 2015 consideration was given to the possible impact on our current scheme costs. Officers subsequently modelled proposed changes and concluded that there would be little to no impact on the cost of the existing scheme.
- 1.3 The Task & Finish Group were advised therefore that no major changes to the scheme would be proposed for 2016/17.
- 1.4 Two minor proposals to the scheme were proposed to the group;
 - the rules for assessing self employed claimants
 - the rules dealing with late applications

These proposals were subsequently raised as part of our public consultation.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 **To approve minor changes to our current Council Tax Support scheme by introducing;**
- 2.2 **Where claimants are claiming that they are self employed and submitting accounts to show that they are earning consistently below minimum wage, officers will be able to decide the level of award based on at least minimum wage (or the national living wage). This will only come into effect after their first year of claiming support or trading or whichever is sooner.**
- 2.3 **To restrict late applications of Council Tax Support to 4 weeks provided 'good cause' has been shown; this will bring the Council Tax Support scheme in line with Universal Credit and Housing Benefit legislation.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Council Tax Support (CTS) replaced Council Tax Benefit in April 2013. Each authority must adopt a Council Tax Scheme each year by the 31st January, or the previous year's scheme will continue.
- 3.2 Brentwood's Ordinary Council has approved and adopted a Council Tax Support scheme for each subsequent year.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 The Council Tax Support scheme is designed to provide support for helping residents pay their Council Tax, it is also designed to make work pay.
- 4.2 An analysis of the Revenues database shows that our current scheme has not adversely affected our levels of Council Tax collection, which remain as expected and on target when compared to previous years.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To agree and adopt the proposed Council Tax Support scheme for 2016/17 prior to the 31st January 2016.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation commenced on the 7th September 2015 and completed on the 15th November 2015, a period of 10 weeks.
- 6.2 Letters and emails were sent to customers asking for their participation; the survey was conducted online, through our website. A paper version was available on request.
- 6.3 A total of 30 customers responded to our Council Tax Support consultation; the results are as follows;

Council Tax Support Consultation - 2016/17				
		YES	NO	UNSURE
Q1	Do you agree that Brentwood Borough Council should continue a scheme, which is, broadly, self-funding?	96.7%	3.3%	0.0%
Q2	Our partner authorities, County, Police and Fire, need us to control scheme costs. Brentwood proposes to do this by clamping down on fraudulently claimed discounts and exemptions. Do you agree with this	85.7%	3.6%	10.7%
Q3	If there is an increase in demand for Council Tax Support or if average incomes for recipients fall, (for example as a result of changes to tax credits) scheme costs are likely to increase. This will require more money from local taxpayers. How should this be financed?			
	Answer Options			
	Reduce the level of support offered.	57.7%	42.3%	0.0%
	Use local authority reserves.	42.1%	57.9%	0.0%
	Reduce funding for other services.	47.4%	52.6%	0.0%
	Increase Council Tax and or other charges	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%
Q4	Brentwood Borough Council could potentially change how we assess working age residents that are self-employed and claiming Local Council Tax Support. Where a working age resident is in self-employment and continues to run a business where their assessed income is below the minimum level, they will be assumed to earn at least the minimum wage / national living wage for the hours that they work. This minimum would not apply for a designated start-up period of one year in order to allow a period to establish the business. Currently this start up period is set to two years. We propose to change	77.80%	22.20%	0.0%
Q5	Currently, entitlement to Local Council Tax Support can be backdated to a maximum of 26 weeks based on the presence of 'good cause'. Brentwood Borough Council could potentially reduce the amount of backdating from 26 to four weeks, in line with welfare reform changes. This change would only apply to working age applicants. Do you agree	82.1%	17.9%	0.0%
Q6	Do you get a Council Tax discount or exemption?	23.1%	76.9%	0.0%
Q7	Do you get Council Tax Support?	4.2%	95.8%	0.0%

7. References to Corporate Plan

7.1 A Prosperous Borough

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Ramesh Prashar – Financial Services Manager

Tel & Email: 01277 312513 / ramesh.prashar@brentwood.gov.uk

8.1 There are no financial implications from the introduction of the LCTS technical changes which will be funded from within existing scheme resources.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Saleem Chughtai – Legal Services Manager

Tel & Email: 01277 312500 – saleem.chughtai@bdtlegal.org.uk

8.2 The CTS Scheme is subject to the Council's duties for local welfare support under primary and secondary legislation including The Welfare Reform Act 2012, the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) and the Council Tax Reduction

Schemes (Default Scheme) (England) Regulations 2012. In addition the Council takes account of guidance published by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

8.3 Equality Impact and Consultation response is available as a background document.

9. Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

9.1 Background papers are held by the Revenues & Benefits service.

10. Appendices

None

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Rob Manser – Shared Services Revenues & Benefits Manager
Telephone: 01277 312855
E-mail: rob.manser@brentwood.gov.uk

15 December 2015

Policy, Finance and Resources

Income from Property Investment

Report of: *Chris Leslie, Finance Director*

Wards Affected: *All Wards*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In March 2015 the Asset and Enterprise Committee approved the Acquisition Policy which sets out the process for acquiring income generating assets.
- 1.2 The Committee also recommended that the Finance and Resource Committee approve a capital allocation to fund the acquisitions.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the acquisition policy agreed in March 2015 be reviewed and a revision brought forward, to a future committee.**
- 2.2 That the creation of a £10m property acquisition fund is revisited regarding the appropriateness of the sum and a staged approach be considered and brought forward to a future committee.**
- 2.3 That the use of existing assets be considered for future property development with an options report and associated business cases to be presented to future Committees.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Assets and Enterprise Committee in March 2015 proposed an acquisition fund of £10m. The Committee is asked to consider revised options of the potential for generating income from property.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 To fund the acquisition of income generating properties the Council will need to borrow. These borrowing costs will be fully considered as part of the financial assessments undertaken.
- 4.2 The approved Acquisition Policy is available at Appendix A. The policy states that any use of delegated authority should be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.
- 4.3 In the report presented in March 2015 a restriction of a 100 mile radius of Brentwood was mentioned. However this is not included in the Acquisition Policy that was approved by the Committee and it is intended that no restriction would be applied to location and that each opportunity be considered on its merits. Furthermore, the policy will be reviewed to ensure the council can operate in a flexible manner, required on the open market, whilst maintaining transparency when spending taxpayers' money.

Option 1 – Borrowing to Fund Acquisitions

- 4.4 Based on the investment returns figures that were presented to the Assets and Enterprise Committee in March 2015 and reproduced in Appendix A of this report the following additional income could be expected after borrowing costs.

Investment	Yield			
	6%	7%	8%	9%
£2m	£13k	£33k	£53k	£73k
£4m	£27k	£67k	£107k	£147k
£6m	£40k	£100k	£160k	£220k
£8m	£54k	£134k	£214k	£294k
£10m	£67k	£167k	£267k	£367k

- 4.5 These figures do not include management costs and assume maintenance is the responsibility of the tenant. Additionally no allowance is provided for void periods and this needs to be considered when selecting the best option for property investment.
- 4.6 Returns of 6% - 7% can be expected in the secondary class of investment properties as outlined in the investment returns section of appendix A. Returns above 7% are only expected in the tertiary class where risk is considered higher.

Option 2 – Invest from the Capital Programme

- 4.7 By investing from existing financial resources there is the opportunity cost of interest on surplus money which at short term rates is approximately 1%.
- 4.8 Taking the loss of interest into account the following additional income could be expected.

Investment	Yield			
	6%	7%	8%	9%
£1.0m	£50k	£60k	£70k	£80k
£1.5m	£75k	£90k	£105k	£120k
£2.0m	£100k	£120k	£140k	£160k

- 4.9 These figures do not include management costs and assume maintenance is the responsibility of the tenant. Additionally no allowance is provided for void periods.
- 4.10 Based on the existing capital programme there is unlikely to be capacity to invest in this activity without withdrawing some of the current capital schemes.

Option 3 – Development of Current Property Assets

- 4.11 Due to the cost of acquiring property it maybe more cost effective to develop the Council's existing property assets.
- 4.12 This would require a review of the current asset register for potential opportunities and a robust business case prepared for Members to review.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 It was agreed by the Asset and Enterprise Committee in March 2015 that a capital allocation be considered in relation to the Acquisition Policy.
- 5.2 A robust programme needs to be developed on a sound financial footing if a property acquisition programme is to be undertaken.

6. References to Corporate Plan

- 6.1 This reflects the Council's priority of a Prosperous Borough.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Chris Leslie, Finance Director

Tel & Email: 01277 312 542 christopher.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.1 A thorough financial appraisal will be carried out before any development decision is made.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Saleem Chughtai, Legal Services Manager

Tel & Email: 01277 312 500 saleem.chughtai@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.2 The recommendations are in relation to Option 3 in the report . If the recommendations are approved then there are no legal implications other than the issue of whether Options 1 and 2 are entirely rejected or deferred for further consideration after the existing property portfolio has been reviewed

8. Appendices to this report

- Appendix A – Acquisition Policy

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Chris Leslie, Finance Director

Telephone: 01277 312542

E-mail: christopher.leslie@brentwood.gov.uk

Property Acquisition Fund Policy & Procedure

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has set up a capital fund to be made available for the acquisition of land and property to generate a revenue stream to support and safeguard the services that the council provides.
- 1.2 The current policy for the acquisition of land & property is set in the Property Acquisition Policy. The policy and process lacks the flexibility particularly in terms of timescales and was drafted on the basis of acquisitions for operational reasons and that all negotiations would be by negotiation
- 1.3 Markets conditions continue to improve and there have been cases where vendors have brought properties to the market on the basis that they are to be sold very quickly.
- 1.4 The Council needs to review its acquisition process in the current dynamic market if it is to acquire attractive and appropriate properties. It is proposed that duly authorised officers be given the necessary authority to agree and complete the purchase of suitable properties subject to prior consultation and unanimous agreement of the Leader of the Council, Chair of Asset & Enterprise Committee, Acting Chief Executive/Chief Executive & s151 Officer.

2. Background

- 2.1 The property market stalled in the summer of 2007 however, in the last 2/3 years there has been a marked improvement both in the residential and commercial markets.
- 2.2 Land and Property can be acquired by private treaty (negotiation), auction, CPO and by way of partnership working, e.g. land swaps. Generally, properties are marketed by way of private treaty and terms and conditions are negotiable. The acquisition of any property is dependent upon the market and the willingness of owners to sell. Unless a vendor is a distressed seller then it may be difficult to persuade any particular vendor to sell. Therefore both a focussed and opportunistic approach needs to be adopted.

- 2.3 Vendors and their advisers take into account the price offered and also the ability of the prospective purchaser to agree, contract and complete. Offers that are submitted conditional upon certain requirements or require a prolonged approvals process, whether real or perceived, are likely to be discounted from consideration or at least considered to be less attractive than others without such conditions.
- 2.4 The proposed Property Acquisition Fund Policy & Procedure sets out a process that provides for a truncation of acquisition process in order to capture these opportunities and to allow for flexibility. It is recommended that the application of the process as set out in the Acquisitions Policy be suspended in specified circumstances to enable the Council to bid at auctions or to enter binding contracts at short notice where the purchase terms are particularly attractive or beneficial to the Council. The Policy will be used in exceptional situations and only after consultation with key Members and Officers.

3. Policy

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Strategic Asset Manager is authorised in appropriate circumstances to purchase on behalf of the Council land and property up to the maximum value of the Property Acquisition Fund subject to consultation and the unanimous agreement of the Leader of the Council, Chair of Assets & Enterprise, Chief Executive/Acting Chief Executive and the s151 Officer, subject to the following:
- Where such authorisation is exercised the property must be consistent with the aims and objectives of the Council and that the process contained within the adopted Acquisitions Policy can not be complied within the timescales stipulated by the vendor
 - Prior to authorisation a “Justification Certificate” for the purchase should be prepared.
 - The Justification Certificate shall comprise an appraisal of the open market capital and rental value, purchase costs, estimate of any repair/refurbishment costs and whole life cost analysis.
 - Any use of the delegated authority should be reported to the next available meetings of the Asset & Enterprise and Finance & Resources Committees and Council.

4. Considerations

4.1 When property is purchased at auction, there may be a buyer's commission to be paid

4.2 Stamp Duty Land Tax is payable on properties according to the statutory scale which is currently:

Purchase price/lease premium or transfer value	SDLT rate
<£125,000	0%
£125,000 - <£250,000	1%
£250,000 - <£500,000	3%
£500,000 - <£1,000,000	4%
£1,000,000 - <£2,000,000	5%
>£2,000,000	7%
>£2,000,000 (purchased by certain persons, including corporate bodies)	15%

4.3 In addition certain vendors may opt to tax (i.e. impose VAT) on the sale price. This cost will be in addition to the purchase price. Land registration fees are also payable to the Land Registry to register the completion of the acquisition on a prescribed scale based on the value of the relevant property. Search fees and legal fees may also be payable.

4.4 All expenses directly attributable to any purchase will in accordance with accounting regulations be charged to the fund as part of the cost of acquisition. Any VAT attributable to the purchase will unless the Council's partial exemption limited is exceeded be recovered from HMRC.

5. Legal Considerations

5.1 The power to acquire land for purposes in connection with the Council's functions by agreement is contained in s 120 of the Local Government Act 1972 and s121 in the case of compulsory acquisition. Whilst there is no general duty to purchase at the best consideration but the Council must be able to demonstrate that it has exercised those powers in a manner consistent with its fiduciary duty to the Council Tax payer i.e. by ensuring that it is satisfied that the purchase price paid is reasonable in the light of the particular facts and circumstances.

6. Criteria

- 6.1 All sectors of property are to be considered, i.e. residential and commercial and acquisition geographical area should be within the South East, including Essex and the Home Counties. Individual lot sizes up to £2,000,000 are to be purchased. Consideration should be given when acquiring investment properties to length of lease and the security of the income subject to any other material consideration. The revenue yield should generally be in excess of the cost of borrowing unless the intension is to assemble a site for development purposes or to enable a development to be undertaken at some future point.

Investment Returns

Capital	Repayment Over 50 Years	Interest 3.33%	Total Borrowing Costs	Annual Return								
				5%	5.50%	6%	6.50%	7%	7.50%	8%	8.50%	9%
£ 1,000,000.00	£ 20,000.00	£33,300.00	£ 53,300.00	£ 50,000.00	£ 55,000.00	£ 60,000.00	£ 65,000.00	£ 70,000.00	£ 75,000.00	£ 80,000.00	£ 85,000.00	£ 90,000.00
£ 2,000,000.00	£ 40,000.00	£66,600.00	£ 106,600.00	£ 100,000.00	£ 110,000.00	£ 120,000.00	£ 130,000.00	£ 140,000.00	£ 150,000.00	£ 160,000.00	£ 170,000.00	£ 180,000.00
£ 3,000,000.00	£ 60,000.00	£99,900.00	£ 159,900.00	£ 150,000.00	£ 165,000.00	£ 180,000.00	£ 195,000.00	£ 210,000.00	£ 225,000.00	£ 240,000.00	£ 255,000.00	£ 270,000.00
£ 4,000,000.00	£ 80,000.00	£133,200.00	£ 213,200.00	£ 200,000.00	£ 220,000.00	£ 240,000.00	£ 260,000.00	£ 280,000.00	£ 300,000.00	£ 320,000.00	£ 340,000.00	£ 360,000.00
£ 5,000,000.00	£ 100,000.00	£166,500.00	£ 266,500.00	£ 250,000.00	£ 275,000.00	£ 300,000.00	£ 325,000.00	£ 350,000.00	£ 375,000.00	£ 400,000.00	£ 425,000.00	£ 450,000.00
£ 6,000,000.00	£ 120,000.00	£199,800.00	£ 319,800.00	£ 300,000.00	£ 330,000.00	£ 360,000.00	£ 390,000.00	£ 420,000.00	£ 450,000.00	£ 480,000.00	£ 510,000.00	£ 540,000.00
£ 7,000,000.00	£ 140,000.00	£233,100.00	£ 373,100.00	£ 350,000.00	£ 385,000.00	£ 420,000.00	£ 455,000.00	£ 490,000.00	£ 525,000.00	£ 560,000.00	£ 595,000.00	£ 630,000.00
£ 8,000,000.00	£ 160,000.00	£266,400.00	£ 426,400.00	£ 400,000.00	£ 440,000.00	£ 480,000.00	£ 520,000.00	£ 560,000.00	£ 600,000.00	£ 640,000.00	£ 680,000.00	£ 720,000.00
£ 9,000,000.00	£ 180,000.00	£299,700.00	£ 479,700.00	£ 450,000.00	£ 495,000.00	£ 540,000.00	£ 585,000.00	£ 630,000.00	£ 675,000.00	£ 720,000.00	£ 765,000.00	£ 810,000.00
£ 10,000,000.00	£ 200,000.00	£333,000.00	£ 533,000.00	£ 500,000.00	£ 550,000.00	£ 600,000.00	£ 650,000.00	£ 700,000.00	£ 750,000.00	£ 800,000.00	£ 850,000.00	£ 900,000.00

Current Returns	Retail	Industrial	Distribution	Office
Prime	5%	5.75%	5.25%	5.75%
Secondary	6%	7%	6.50%	7%
Tertiary	7%	9%	7.50%	8%
Standard investment categories - Prime = institutional properties which are let to good covenants and on long leases. Secondary = good property company stock with mixture of covenants and varying lease terms. Tertiary = mixed quality and relatively short leases in perhaps less attractive locations				
Yields: indicative yields - will vary depending on quality of asset, location, covenant and lease length				

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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 of 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, of 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.

Policy, Finance and Resources Committee

1. The functions within the remit of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee include all financial matters relating to the budget, (and for the avoidance of doubt, being the superior Committee on all such matters including capital, revenue and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) except where the law otherwise requires), and, without prejudice to the generality of this, include the specific functions which are set out below.

Policy

To undertake and discharge any functions in relation to strategic policies including periodic reviews of the policy framework adopted by full Council from time to time except where required by law to be undertaken elsewhere.

Finance

- 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
 - 13) Assets (strategically)
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.
14. To strategically manage any lands or property of the Council and provide strategic property advice relating to the Council's Housing Stock and without prejudice to the generality of this, to specifically undertake the following:-

The Council's Asset Management Plan

- (a) The acquisition and disposal of land and property and taking of leases, licenses, dedications and easements.
- (b) The granting variation renewal review management and termination of leases licenses dedications and easements.
- (c) Promoting the use of Council owned assets by the local community and other interested parties.
- (d) To manage any lands or property of the Council;
- (e) To include properties within the Council's Asset Management Portfolio including Halls etc.
- (f) To take a strategic approach to asset management, ensuring that the use of all of the Council's Property assets achieves Value for Money and supports the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities.
- (g) To review the Corporate Asset Management Plan annually.
- (h) The acquisition of land in advance of requirements for the benefit, improvement or development of the Borough.
- (i) Disposal of land (including by lease) surplus to the requirements of any Panel or Committee.
- (j) Appropriation of land surplus to the requirements of a committee.
- (k) Promote the use of Council owned assets by the local community and other interested parties where appropriate.
- (l) Property and asset management, including acquisitions and disposals not included in the approved Asset Management Plan.

(m) To take a strategic approach to commercial activity, both existing and new, ensuring the Council realises revenue generation opportunities and supports the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities.

(n) Promoting a culture of entrepreneurialism and building the required skills and capacity.

(o) To consider, and approve, business cases and commercial business plans for commercial activity.

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