

Confident, Capable Council

Scrutiny Panel

20 April 2016

Time 6.00 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Scrutiny
Venue Committee Room 1 - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

Membership

Chair Cllr Rita Potter (Lab)
Vice-chair Cllr Andrew Wynne (Con)

Labour

Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz
Cllr Harbans Bagri
Cllr Lorna McGregor
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Payal Bedi

Conservative

Cllr Wendy Thompson

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the democratic support team:

Contact Earl Piggott-Smith
Tel/Email Tel: 01902 551251 or earl.piggott-smith@wolverhampton.gov.uk
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Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

1 **Apologies**

MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS

2 **Declarations of interest**

3 **Minutes of previous meeting (3 February 2016)** (Pages 3 - 8)
[To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record]

4 **Matters arising**
[To consider any matters arising from the minutes]

DISCUSSION ITEMS

5 **Future People - Update on Employee Volunteering Scheme** (Pages 9 - 26)
[Sam Axtel, Consultation and Community Involvement Officer, to present progress report on the Employee Volunteering Scheme.]

6 **Future Money - Budget Update and Review Report** (Pages 27 - 36)
[Claire Nye, Chief Accountant, will present report about the Council's finances that has been reported to either the Cabinet and/or Cabinet (Resources) Panel since the last update. The report will include information relating to Monitoring of the Council's Budgets and the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.]

Confident, Capable Council Scrutiny Panel Minutes - 3 February 2016

Attendance

Members of the Confident, Capable Council Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz
Cllr Andrew Wynne (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Harbans Bagri
Cllr Rita Potter (Chair)
Cllr Wendy Thompson

Employees

Earl Piggott-Smith	Scrutiny Officer
Darren Herries	Payments Manager – The Hub
Tim Johnson	Strategic Director - Place
Adrian McCormick	Head of Transformation
Lisa Taylor	Head of Service – The Hub
Mark Taylor	Director of Finance
Mark Bassett	Programme Director

In attendance

Cllr Andrew Johnson Cabinet Member for Resources

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies**
Apologies were received from the following members of the panel:

Councillor Payal Bed
Councillor Milkinderpal Jaspal
- 2 Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interest recorded.

3 **Minutes of previous meeting**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 **Matters arising**

Minute 6: Terms of Reference and Nominations for Specific Reserves Working Group

The Scrutiny Officer commented that the members of Specific Reserves Working Group met on 14 January 2016. The groups considered a report detailing reserves set aside by City of Wolverhampton Council in previous years in order to meet either specific items of expenditure or deal with unexpected budget pressures.

The Scrutiny Officer commented that Claire Nye, Chief Accountant, agreed to co-ordinate the preparation of briefings with the information requested by the group. The comments of the group will be included as an appendix to the report that will be presented to Cabinet.

The Scrutiny Officer to send the information to panel members when received.

5 **Future Space - developing the right accommodation to deliver the Council's services**

Cllr Andrew Johnson, Cabinet Member for Resources, introduced the report and explained that the Future Space programme is part of wide range of work focused on effectively managing the Council's property portfolio. The policy involves closing buildings no longer required. The Cabinet Member for Resources explained the plans for redeveloping the Civic Centre were aimed at carrying out necessary electrical and engineering maintenance work to extend the life of the building. The work is estimated to cost £10 million and is expected to deliver savings of £500,000 and extend the lifespan of the building for a further 25 years.

The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that the building work to the Civic Centre also includes maintenance work to the underground car park area. The Civic Centre car park provides the Council with an income of £600,000 annually and it is important to protect the asset. The planned work will deliver better customer service, reduced energy use. The scheme is a major project and will be partly funded by receipts from the sale of buildings no longer used and borrowing of £500,000. The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that there was not another alternative option and this work was part of wider efforts to improve the City centre economy.

Mark Bassett, Programme Director, outlined the progress to date and explained that it is a complex programme and involves consultation and discussions with a range of colleagues about the plans for the Civic Centre. The Programme Director explained that an important part of the work involves meeting regularly with key people to better understand their current and future business needs, that will deliver a better customer service experience.

The Programme Director outlined the range of survey work done to inspect heating and ventilation systems to help inform plans that will give the building a further 25 years of use. The Programme Director explained that the plans are designed to minimise disruption to people who work in the building. The Programme Manager explained the plans for the redevelopment of the ground floor to improve the resident and visitor experience and how they access Council services.

The work will look in detail at the different needs of services, working styles and their location within the building and technology needs.

The Programme Director explained that repair work will need to deal with issues that might arise during the building work programme. The Programme Director explained that work will comply with legal and building safety standards.

Tim Johnson, Strategic Director Place, commented on the learning from doing similar large scale projects elsewhere and also there was in-house expertise to manage the programme. The Strategic Director explained that there will be an element of disruption while the work is being done but it will bring a number of benefits to the organisation.

The panel requested details of the performance measures that will be used to monitor progress and also give Councillors an overview of the project. The Strategic Director explained that the work is monitored regularly; this includes face-to-face meetings with the Heads of Service.

The programme board is presented with regular reports to give an update on the monitoring of costs and issues arising from the programme of planned work. The project links to the Corporate Plan priorities.

The Strategic Director commented on the complexity of the building and that plans for the redesign are aimed at making changes that will go beyond improving the first floor but also make more rational use of the space. The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that plans will involve looking at the whole customer service and was confident it would deliver the required changes.

The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that the capital budget of £19.9 million is a significant amount of money and that there are risks of costs overspends.

The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that there will be monthly meetings with the Head of Procurement and Strategic Director. The Cabinet Member for Resources was confident that expenditure will be kept within budget. The Council will also be recruiting contractors with the necessary experience and expertise. The performance of contractors will be monitored on a monthly basis

The panel queried whether the current plans were flexible enough to deal with future technological and other advancements in the next 25 years and the re-modelling work done to take account of these developments. The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that if there is a reduced demand for work space in the future then the Council will look at the idea of renting the space or accommodation to a partner organisation.

The Strategic Director explained that at the end of the project the Council will have a more flexible building that can be used in different ways and also respond to demand from businesses wanting quality building space in the city centre.

The panel queried if the Council strategic risk register could be shared with the panel. The Cabinet Member for Resources confirmed that he would be happy to share the information with the panel. The panel discussed the management of different risks. The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that there is a built-in contingency fund to cover unforeseen risks.

The panel queried the current state of the building and the results of any recent inspection work. The Programme Director explained that the building has been inspected and it is generally in a good state of repair. However, the underground car park is in need of repair as the concrete has been affected by the environmental conditions and water damage over the years, which will need to be made good. The repair work related to the Civic Centre is related to general maintenance and electrical issues.

Mark Taylor, Director of Finance, explained that the inflation will be built into the lifetime of the contract. The Director of Finance explained the need to actively manage risks and test that the programme is delivering value for money.

The panel queried the responses received to the public consultation about the plans. The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that customers will see a clean and efficient building that can deal with their queries quickly and also provide the environment that can help people to deliver the service. The starting point for the project is considering the needs of the customer.

The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that discussions are on-going about creating project spaces and also looking at the meeting requirements to avoid people meeting outside the Civic Centre. The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that the changes are aimed creating a space that can showcase the City and provide a flexible workspace.

The panel queried how residents would view the decision to spend £10 - £20 million at this time and if the money would only be spent on what was considered to be essential repair work. The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that £10 million would cover the cost of fixing the necessary electrical work and building maintenance. However, this would not create the required flexible space and now was a good opportunity to invest in the building. The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that the money would not be used to refurbish the third floor of the Civic Centre, but to create a building that was fit for purpose. The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that the money would not be spent on vanity projects only those areas needed to bring the building up to a decent standard.

The panel commented that would like reassurance that the money would be spent on what was needed. The Cabinet Member for Resources explained that the budget would be spent on putting things right in the building and getting the customer service areas on the first floor right. The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that the ground floor space would be used to accommodate the new Multi Agency Strategic Hub (MASH) team.

The panel welcomed the report.

Resolved:

The panel agreed to receive a copy of the Strategic Risk Register.

The panel agreed to receive further progress report on the FutureSpace Programme at a future meeting.

6 **Future Money : Agresso payment performance**

Lisa Taylor, Head of Service – The Hub, explained that this report is a follow up to a briefing paper on the payment performance within the Agresso finance system since being introduced. The Head of Service explained that background to the changes.

Darren Herries, Payments Manager – The Hub, gave a brief overview of the legacy mainframe system that was used to manage payments to individuals and suppliers. The Payment Manager detailed the range of difficulties with the using this system, for example, delays in the payment of invoices to suppliers.

The Payments Manager commented on the benefits to the Council following the implementation of Agresso system. The Payments Manager commented that the current payment system was considered to be good and continuing to improve. The Payments Manager explained that the service has been promoted to small firms who have been encouraged to change to an electronic payment system rather than cheques, which take longer to process. The Agresso system links the receipt to the invoice order which makes it possible to process payments much quicker.

The Payments Manager commented on the progress made since Agresso was introduced. Payments Manager explained 81 per cent of invoices are paid within 30 days. Furthermore, that during 2014/15 the Agresso system paid 150,000 invoices across 85,000 payment transaction, with a value of £360 million.

The Payments Manager commented that the service recently received an Excellence in Finance category award. The award was made in recognition of the quantifiable savings and process improvements and in delivering value to the Council as a whole. The Payments Manager explained that the service is currently taking stock about what has been learnt following the introduction of Agresso. The Payments Manager outlined other changes that have been introduced to the system and future plans for improving the service.

The Head of Service – The Hub explained the work being done with suppliers about further changes that would deliver a better service. The Payments Manager explained that the service is offering an advice workshop to local businesses on Agresso to explain the benefits of moving to an electronic payment system.

The panel queried the reference in the report that 20 per cent of commercial suppliers do not have a valid email address and what was being done to reduce this figure further. The Payments Manager commented on the benefits to businesses having an email contact such as a prompt payment. In addition, the change will reduce the costs to the Council in processing invoices and issuing cheques. The production of a cheque costs the Council £20. The panel discussed options for encouraging businesses to make the change.

The Payments Manager explained that based on contract principles the Council must pay an invoice within 30 days of receipt. A supplier cannot be forced to change the invoice method and it will be long term challenge to make progress in this area. The Payments Manager commented on the cash flow problems caused to small businesses due to the delay in receiving payment.

The Head of Service – The Hub commented that supplier engagement was critical and the importance of two-way communication with businesses.

The panel queried the current Council performance on recovering payment owed by debtors for domiciliary services. The panel requested that a report be presented to the panel at a future meeting. The panel requested that a report include details on the impact on the number of debtors owing money to the Council since the introduction the Agresso system.

The panel discussed the payment of invoices to school suppliers. The Payments Manager explained that the Council has no control over how long invoices are held by the school suppliers and will process payments as quickly as possible.

The panel discussed the current policy about the use of purchase cards and restrictions on their use. The Payments Manager that there is a restricted limit and category in the new system and there is work being done to reduce the numbers and amount spent on cards. The Payments Manager explained the circumstances where a payment card would be used and also payments are analysed by procurement. The Payments Manager explained that Sandwell MBC are interested in introducing a similar system to reduce the number of purchase cards.

The panel queried the effectiveness of internet security and the Council's firewall. The Payments Manager explained the measures in place to protect the Agresso system from security threats.

The panel welcomed the report and the progress made.

Resolved:

The panel to receive a report on debt recovery at a future meeting.

The meeting ended at 19:32



Confident Capable Council Scrutiny Panel 11 April 2016

Report title	Update on Employee Volunteering Scheme	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds Cabinet Member for City Economy	
Corporate Plan priority	Future People.	
Corporate Plan outcome	Enabling Communities to Support Themselves	
Wards affected	(All Wards);	
Accountable Director	Tim Johnson, Strategic Director, Place	
Originating service	Economic Inclusion	
Accountable employee	Sam Axtell	Consultation and Community Involvement Officer
	Tel	01902 554918
	Email	sam.axtell2@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by		

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Confident Capable Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

1. Review the progress of the Employee Volunteering scheme
2. Comment on the proposed future direction of the scheme

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report is intended to update the Confidential, Capable Council Scrutiny Panel on progress made with the Employee Volunteering Scheme and to ask the panel to review progress to date.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 On 5 November 2013, Cabinet Resources Panel approved a report proposing the development of an Employee Volunteering Scheme.
- 2.2 The agreed scheme comprised:
- An allowance of up to two days per year of paid time for council employees to volunteer (pro-rata for part-time staff). (This amount of time is standard national best practice.)
 - That all employee volunteer activities to be considered as a direct contribution to employee development as part of the staff appraisal process
 - That all activities should take place within the Wolverhampton geographical boundaries
 - That all volunteering should be of benefit to the not for profit sector in the city
 - Volunteer activities to support the corporate priorities for communities to increase their self-reliance.
 - Linkages with the Volunteer Centre.
- 2.3 A clear benefit of the scheme is the ability of employees and managers to use the scheme as a very cost efficient staff development tool. If, for instance, an employee wanted to gain skills in project management, a placement could be arranged enabling them to receive on the job experience of this area.
- 2.4 If an employee is interested in volunteering but is not sure what sort of activity they would like to do, they complete an Expression of Interest form which is forwarded to the Volunteer Centre. Based on the information provided, the Volunteer Centre will suggest some suitable volunteering activities.
- 2.5 The Volunteer Centre is also proactive in offering group activities to employees wishing to volunteer. This might include gardening, decorating or fundraising.
- 2.6 The scheme has been incorporated into the suite of Human Resources policies.

3.0 Progress

- 3.1 Since the previous report there has been a lot of activity around the Employee Volunteering Scheme.
- 3.2 There have been features on City People promoting the scheme and encouraging employees to take part.

- 3.3 The Consultation and Community Involvement Officer has spoken to all three leadership teams who have agreed to cascade the scheme to their employees. All three teams have agreed to promote the scheme by volunteering themselves. The first of these activities during Resident's Week saw nine members of the Corporate Leadership Team volunteering at the Well Food Bank and the Little Brothers Soup Kitchen.
- 3.4 Another activity during Resident's Week, saw the launch of the council's Employee Volunteering Portal, hosted on the City People Intranet pages. The portal has a growing number of volunteering activities that employees may wish to take part in and will be a key tool in assisting employees to find suitable volunteering opportunities.
- 3.5 A special code for booking volunteering leave has now been added to the Agresso system. Human Resources are no longer able to provide a monitoring function related to the number of volunteers and the type of activities they are undertaking, so the code will be the way that volunteer numbers are monitored as we move forward.
- 3.6 There is an input on Employee Volunteering as part of the face to face Corporate Induction Programme and it is included in the new e-learning corporate induction programme.
- 3.7 A section has been added as a resource within the develop yourself section of the Management Development toolkit
- 3.8 The scheme has been promoted at an Employee Benefits Road Show.
- 3.9 Two members of staff have been nominated for Star Awards for their outstanding contribution to volunteering.
- 3.10 Whilst outside of the scope of this work, it is nonetheless worth noting that as a direct result of input at a previous Confident Capable Council panel meeting, an award has been established, recognising the contribution of community volunteers. An awards ceremony was held in Mayor's Parlour during Resident's Week.
- 3.11 Since February 2015, when the new code was added to the Agresso system, 19 employees have participated in the scheme (including employees from the Corporate Leadership Team). This shows a steady growth in the numbers of employees participating – previously 14 employees had taken part in the scheme. However, in order to sustain this growth it will be important to keep the scheme at the forefront of peoples' minds through regular stories in City People.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the volunteering scheme. The policy stipulates that volunteering will only be allowed where it does not involve a visible financial cost to back-fill staff cover. Expenses arising from any volunteering undertaken will be met by the individual or the organisation for which they volunteer.

5.2 Each application for volunteering will be assessed on a case by case basis by the line manager to confirm that the leave for volunteering can be accommodated and that there are no financial implications
[ES/09032016/V]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 Any potential legal implications of the scheme have been mitigated. Whilst the City of Wolverhampton Council will allow staff up to two days per year volunteering time, the staff member will be attending as an individual rather than as an employee of the council, therefore releasing the council from direct responsibility. Wherever possible, Wolverhampton Volunteer Centre will broker any volunteering arrangements.
[RB/21032016/G]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 The equalities analysis did not uncover any adverse impacts. However, under equalities legislation the council is also under a duty to foster good relations between communities and to support participation in public life. The Employee Volunteering Scheme has the potential to contribute significantly to this agenda through, for instance, encouraging staff to volunteer within organisations and activities that foster good relations and by encouraging a diverse range of staff to participate in public life.

6.2 Part of the scheme encourages that disabled staff are assisted to participate in the scheme through the provision of 'reasonable adjustments' by the council. This would not incur any additional costs. For instance, if a staff member had an adapted phone, they would be permitted to utilise it as part of their volunteering. This would be at the manager's discretion.

6.3 The council is also monitoring take up of the scheme across the equalities strands.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 The scheme is already showing some benefits to the environment as employees are beginning to volunteer at environmental projects.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 Under the scheme employees are allocated up to two days paid time for volunteering. Any application would need to be approved by the line manager, having taken business needs into consideration, and the appropriate documentation would be sent to the human resources support desk.

8.2 Employees book their volunteering time as they would special leave.

8.3 The benefits of this scheme has the potential to outweigh the cost. These are laid out in full in the Employee Volunteering Scheme in Appendix A, but they include:

- Improving employee job satisfaction, morale, commitment and performance.
- Enhancing the council's reputation and profile.
- Helping the council to attract and retain high-performing employees.
- Encouraging individual and team development.
- Helping team building through group volunteering.
- Strengthening relationships with voluntary, community and faith sectors – creating a “one team” approach.
- Helping to demonstrate its commitment and support to employees by encouraging them to play a more active role in society

9.0 Risk implications

9.1 No risk implications have been identified for this scheme.

10.0 Corporate landlord implications

10.1 There are no corporate landlord implications for this scheme

11.0 Schedule of background papers

11.1 10 October 2013, Employee Volunteering Scheme, Confident Capable Council Scrutiny Panel

5 November 2013, Employee Volunteering Scheme, Cabinet Resources Panel.

10 October 2013, Employee Volunteering Scheme, Confident Capable Council Scrutiny Panel

7 October 2015, Employee Volunteering Scheme – progress report, Confident Capable Council Scrutiny Panel

Employee Volunteering Scheme

Our commitment to volunteering





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Our Commitment to Volunteering

Statement from the Managing Director of Wolverhampton City Council

I am delighted to support the Employee Volunteering Scheme, which is designed to support those already volunteering and to encourage new people to get involved in something really worthwhile. The smallest contribution can make a real difference and I hope the scheme will help you to find your ideal volunteering opportunity.



As well as the chance to expand and share your skills and experience, it's a great way of playing a more active role in society. It can broaden our outlook and appreciation of diverse communities, creating a greater awareness of the needs of our community. Volunteering can enhance working relationships, create wider connections and enhance possibilities of future joint working practices. It can improve job satisfaction, morale and personal development, and simply be a means of giving, to create a more self-reliant and resilient society.

I would encourage all my colleagues to get involved if you feel it is something you wish to do.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Ireland". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Keith Ireland

Managing Director

City of Wolverhampton City Council

1. Introduction

This scheme allows employees to take up to two days or equivalent (pro-rata) paid time off to volunteer. It's a great way to develop new skills and support something that's worthwhile. Employees can get involved in activities that benefit individuals, clubs, charities, faith groups and the environment.

The scheme applies to all Council employees with the exception of those working in schools and those employed centrally on teachers' terms and conditions of service.



2. Aim of the scheme

The Employee Volunteering Scheme aims to increase volunteering opportunities for employees at Wolverhampton City Council.

The council will do this by:

- Releasing employees from normal duties for two days (14.40 hours) per year (pro-rata) to continue current volunteering or undertake new volunteering activities
- Encouraging employees to volunteer in their own time too
- Encouraging volunteering to be used for staff development via the appraisal processes
- Identifying possible opportunities for volunteering linked to the Corporate commitment to developing more active self-reliant communities
- Communicating effectively
- Reviewing and revising the scheme where appropriate or necessary.

3. Why volunteer?

For volunteers, it can:

- bring a great sense of personal achievement and self-worth by contributing to the community
- give a broader outlook and appreciation of diverse communities
- give others the benefit of experience and skills
- help to develop new skills and experiences
- improve employability – providing valuable experience and demonstrating a ‘can do’ attitude
- be fun, social and enhance health and wellbeing
- help adjustment from work to retirement.

For communities, it can:

- help voluntary organisations to deliver services and improve communities
- build a more robust and resilient society
- improve relationships between council staff and residents.

For the council, it can:

- improve employee job satisfaction, morale, commitment and performance
- enhance its reputation and profile
- help it to attract and retain high-performing employees
- encourage individual and team development
- help team building through group volunteering
- strengthen relationships with voluntary, community and faith sectors – creating a ‘one team’ approach
- help to demonstrate its commitment and support to employees by encouraging them to play a more active role in society.

4. Volunteering allowance

4.1 Time allowance and eligibility criteria

All employees are allowed two days pro-rata per year paid time off to volunteer, provided that:

- You have agreed it with your manager at least two weeks in advance of the volunteering activity taking place so that cover arrangements can be made if necessary. As with annual leave, the needs of the service must be taken into account and you must obtain agreement to volunteering leave before making any commitments to a voluntary organisation
- It does not involve a visible financial cost to “back-fill” staff cover, e.g. employees based in schools. Time taken to volunteer will not disrupt or adversely affect individual or team activity
- There are no conflicts of interest, e.g. political campaigning
- Activities benefit the environment, individuals or groups other than close relatives, within Wolverhampton
- Activities undertaken are with organisations which are “not for profit”
- Any development activities undertaken benefit the role and service (see “additional paid time” below)
- Activities are not used to replace council jobs
- The two days pro-rata are taken within your leave year

This Scheme covers employees who already volunteer and those just starting out. You can use your volunteering time flexibly, one day at a time, two together or broken down into hours to fit the needs of the activity and the voluntary organisation or group. You will need to discuss this with your manager to make sure that this fits both your and the team's needs.

You can also 'top-up' volunteering allowances with annual leave or unpaid leave if necessary. Eg you could use three days' annual leave and two days' volunteering allowance for a week off to work at a children's camp.

4.2 Allowance for those working part-time

The 2 days volunteering hours are calculated pro-rotta to working hours, in the same way as annual leave e.g. if you work for half of every week, you would be able to volunteer for 7.24 hours per annum.

4.3 Carrying over volunteering days

Volunteering days cannot be carried over from one year to the next.

4.4 Criminal Records Bureau checks

Certain activities that involve working with young people or other vulnerable groups may require you to have a check by the Disclosure and Barring Service (formally CRB). The organisation that you are volunteering with will indicate if this is necessary. Please see the DBS guidance note accompanying this document.

4.5 Public duties

Duties associated with school governance, duties as a magistrate, election candidacy, support at polling stations, trade union activities and employee advocacy are not covered by this policy.

4.6 Expenses

Please discuss out of pocket expenses with the organisation with which you are volunteering.

4.7 Monitoring

The level of detail required to agree and monitor an employee's volunteering activity is at the manager's discretion. The employee should complete a simple application form setting out how the volunteering activity fits in the scheme; the purpose of the activity; what they will do; and how they will do it.

4.8 Recording volunteering time

Once you have agreed your volunteering activity with your manager, you will need to record it in the time recording system. Any approved volunteering activity should be recorded as volunteering leave on Agresso.

5. Before volunteering

5.1 Discussion with manager

Before you volunteer, you must discuss with your manager the type of volunteering you wish to do. If you know which organisation you would like to volunteer for, you should contact the organisation to find out what opportunities are available, then speak to your manager.

If you don't know what sort of volunteering you would like to do you should complete an Expression of Interest form and return it to sam.axtell2@wolverhampton.gov.uk

You must provide your manager with the following information at least two weeks in advance, using the employee volunteering application form:

- The type of volunteering activity
- The name of the voluntary organisation
- Where the activity will be carried out
- The benefits of the activity, both to the employee and the voluntary organisation
- Duration, frequency and commitment required
- Any risks, e.g. conflicts of interest, contravention of political restrictions or political campaigning

The information you provide to your manager will enable them to discuss and explore any implications or risks. The manager will need to understand enough about the proposed volunteering activity to be able to approve it.

Where at all possible, managers are expected to support volunteering activities, demonstrating flexibility for cover arrangements e.g. swapping shifts, covering each other's work, working flexibly and/or remotely, use of flexi-time, time off in lieu and unpaid leave. You and your manager should agree what is reasonable.

Managers will need to consider:

- The possible impact of volunteering time on service activity, e.g. operational and shift cover

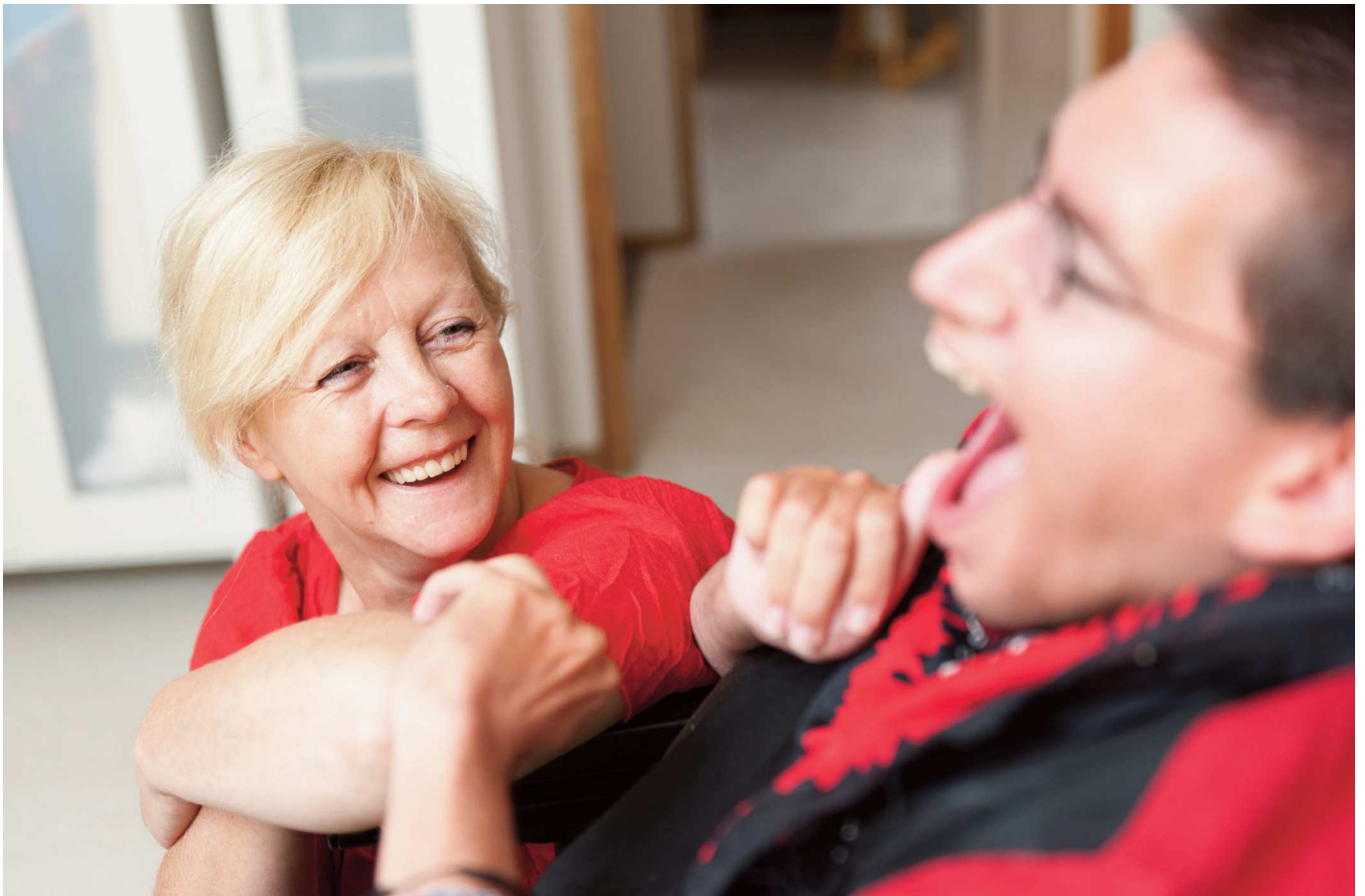
5.2 Review of refusal

If your manager does not approve your proposed volunteering activity, you have the right to a review of the refusal through your manager's manager. Your manager will need to evidence the reason for their decision.

5.3 Liability

It is the manager's responsibility to be satisfied that there are no conflicts of interest and that you have considered and accepted any risks. The council will not be liable for damages or injuries that occur while you are volunteering for other organisations.





6. Volunteering activities

6.1 Types of volunteering

You can volunteer for any not for profit organisation, but where the organisation is not constituted you may be required to provide further evidence that the activity is legitimate e.g. a Make:Shift idea or a grass roots community activity.

For example:

- Engaging with a Local Neighbourhood Network
- Mentoring Looked After Children and vulnerable people
- Developing or mentoring a project for Make:Shift
- Supporting vulnerable adults and disabled people
- Reading and listening activities at school
- Outdoor activities e.g. environmental clean ups, recycling initiatives
- Sponsoring charities e.g. through fund-raising
- Club leader, treasurer or secretary, e.g. at youth clubs, Scouts, Guides or similar groups
- Organising sports activities or events
- Trustee for a charity
- PTA officer/member
- Decorating a community centre or doing gardening as a staff team

You could discuss with your manager:

- Taking up a volunteering opportunity, as an individual, that you have a particular interest in and might wish to continue doing
- Giving a one-off contribution to a voluntary organisation, whether individually or as part of a team activity or project
- Exploring activities that have the potential for longer-term volunteering, for example, spending time with a charity or job-shadowing another volunteer to gain experience and knowledge that benefits your work
- Undertaking specific training linked to a new or current volunteering activity, such as charity law training for trustees or treasurers.

The Volunteer Centre's website sets out lots of volunteering opportunities and sources of advice.

6.2 Scope of volunteering

You can volunteer to do almost any activity and it need not be connected in any way with your work for the council. Many people use volunteering as a way of trying something completely new.

6.3 Geographical volunteering boundaries

The volunteering activity must be within Wolverhampton. You can volunteer to work with any not for profit organisation in Wolverhampton, provided there is no conflict of interest with our volunteering principles (see section 7 below).

6.4 Training requirements (including health and safety) to perform volunteering activities

The organisation for which you volunteer is responsible for providing any induction or other training to allow you to perform your volunteering role and remain safe. Where this training benefits your role at the council or your career progression and cannot be met by Will, you will need to negotiate an extra paid day with your manager.

If you are involved in volunteering using your own car, you will need to check that your own motor policy is suitable.

6.5 Clothing and equipment

If the volunteering activity requires specialist clothing or equipment, this will need to be provided by the organisation or by the volunteer. The organisation will provide details of what is required.

6.6 Expenses

The council will not be liable for any expenses incurred by staff as part of the Employee Volunteering Scheme.

6.7 Reasonable Adjustments

The council will consider making reasonable adjustments for disabled staff to enable them to participate in a volunteering activity e.g. allowing staff to use specialist equipment such as a council provided adapted phone at the volunteer placement.

7. Volunteering principles

When volunteering, you agree to:

- Respect the privacy, property and confidentiality of others
- Report any problems you experience to your manager and Volunteer Centre (where it has acted as a broker)
- Aim to fulfil the commitment you have made and inform your named contact in the voluntary organisation if you are unable to attend
- Act in a professional way, recognising that you are representing the council while carrying out the volunteering activities.

The code of conduct continues to apply to employees when volunteering. The code contains provisions that encourage the highest standards of integrity and personal conduct on the part of all employees.

The council strongly recommends that the organisation for which you volunteer is registered with Wolverhampton Volunteers, the City's Volunteer Centre, for quality assurance purposes. If the organisation that you wish to volunteer with is not registered, you can suggest that it registers with Wolverhampton Volunteers for free. Wolverhampton Volunteers can be contacted on wwalker@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk or 01902 328980.

If the organisation is unlikely to register with the Volunteer centre, you and your manager should satisfy yourselves that the organisation's quality assurance and health and safety policies are adequate.



8. After volunteering

You should discuss your volunteering activity with your manager and share the experience with colleagues by providing photo's and a short write up.

If you experience any blockages or challenges to communities being more active as part of your volunteering these should be forward to the self-reliant communities' task group via sam.axtell2@wolverhampton.gov.uk

9. Six easy steps to help you start volunteering

1. Discuss and agree the volunteering activity with your manager.
2. Complete the Volunteering Application form and return it to Human Resources support desk.
3. Record paid time in on Aggresso.
4. Get volunteering and tell your colleagues about your experience!
5. After you've volunteered, discuss the experience with your manager at your next one-to-one and appraisal and plan your next volunteering activity.
6. Let us know about any blockages that feel communities face in terms of being more active. Contact us by emailing sam.axtell2@wolverhampton.gov.uk

10. More information and useful links

If you have any questions or would like more information about the volunteering scheme, please contact HR on **01902 552345** or email **HR.supportdesk@wolverhampton.gov.uk**

Helpful websites with further information on volunteering:

wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk/volunteer-service/do-it.org.uk

Confident Capable Council Scrutiny Panel

20 April 2016

Report title	Budget Update and Review	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Andrew Johnson Resources	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Mark Taylor, Director of Finance	
Originating service	Strategic Finance	
Accountable employee(s)	Claire Nye Tel Email	Chief Accountant 01902 550478 claire.nye@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by		

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Panel is recommended to:

1. Scrutinise the arrangements for:
 - a. Ensuring adequate identification and management of budget risks;
 - b. Budget planning and forecasting for future years.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To bring to the Panel's attention, information about the Council's finances that has been reported to either the Cabinet and/or Cabinet (Resources) Panel since the last update, including:

Reports relating to Monitoring of the Council's Budgets

- Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2019/20 Quarter Three Review and 2016/17 to 2020/21 Budget Strategy
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (including 2016/17 budget rents and service charges)
- Quarter Three Treasury Management Activity Monitoring
- Revenue Budget Monitoring 2015/16

Reports relating to the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 - Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement Update
- Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17
- 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20

2.0 Background

- 2.1 As set out in the Confident Capable Council Scrutiny Panel work plan, regular updates on the budget and medium term financial strategy will be received throughout the year. This is the first report of this nature during 2016/17.
- 2.2 Since the last update, five reports focussing on the Council's finances have been received by Cabinet, as set out below:

Cabinet, 13 January 2016

- 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Strategy 2016/17 - 2018/19 - Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement Update
- Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (including 2016/17 budget rents and service charges)

Cabinet, 24 February 2016

- Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2019/20 Quarter Three Review and 2016/17 to 2020/21 Budget Strategy

- Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17
- 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20

2.3 In addition, since the last update, two reports focussing on the Council's finances have been received by Cabinet (Resources) Panel, as set out below:

Cabinet (Resources) Panel 9 February 2016

- Quarter Three Treasury Management Activity Monitoring

Cabinet (Resources) Panel 8 March 2016

- Revenue Budget Monitoring 2015/16

In order to minimise printing costs, the Panel Chair has agreed that full versions of the reports will not be circulated again. It is recommended, however, that Panel members review the reports ahead of the meeting, and are requested to please bring the full versions that were circulated with the relevant Cabinet and Cabinet (Resources) Panel agenda papers to this meeting. Summaries of the relevant reports are shown below together with, for each report, a link to the original document.

3.0 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 - Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement Update

3.1 This report, which was considered on 13 January 2016, provided Cabinet with an update on the 2016/17 provisional local government finance settlement, which the Government announced on 17 December 2015. The report is [available via this link](#).

3.2 The following table provides a comparison of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) assumptions as at October 2015 and the provisional settlement update reported to Cabinet on 13 January.

Description	MTFS	Provisional	Difference Over /	
	Assumption	Settlement	(Under)	
	£M	£M	£M	%
Revenue Support Grant	53.772	50.280	(3.492)	-6.5
Top Up Grant	36.258	36.200	(0.058)	-0.2
New Homes Bonus	3.957	3.957	-	0.0
Education Services Grant	2.710	2.600	(0.110)	-4.1
Total	96.697	93.037	(3.660)	-3.8

3.3 The provisional Education Services Grant settlement (£2.807 million) is based on pupil numbers as at November 2015 but due to impending academy conversions it is estimated that the grant will be reduced to £2.6 million during 2016/17, as shown in the table.

- 3.4 The table presented to Cabinet in mid-January illustrated further overall reductions in funding of £3.6 million in 2016/17 in addition to that previously reported.
- 3.5 In particular Cabinet approved that the Director of Finance notifies the Secretary of State that the Council intended to take up the 2 per cent option to increase council tax to support Adult Social Care.
- 4.0 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (including 2016/17 budget rents and service charges)**
- 4.1 The updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan was presented to Cabinet on 13 January 2016 for recommendation to Council. The report is [available via this link](#).
- 4.2 The report also provided a proposed HRA budget for 2016/17, including proposed rents and service charges to take effect from 4 April 2016 and a proposed HRA capital programme for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 for recommendation to Council.
- 4.3 The report recommended that Cabinet recommends that Council:
1. Implements the one per cent reduction in social housing rents in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Bill and to give 28 days' notice to all secure and introductory tenants of the rent reduction from 4 April 2016.
 2. Adopts the business plan as the approved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan including the revenue budget for 2016/17 and the capital programme for 2015/16 to 2019/20.
 3. Agrees the increases to garage rents and service charges as set out in the report appendices and formally notify tenants.
- 4.4 Cabinet was also asked to note:
1. That all Council dwelling rents will reduce by one per cent in line with the proposals contained in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill.
 2. The consultation responses as outlined at Appendix C of the 13 January report to Cabinet.
 3. Proposals to meet the requirements of the Heat Network regulations 2014 for the district heating schemes at Heath Town and New Park Village.
 4. The potential impact of the current Housing and Planning Bill on the HRA business Plan.
- 4.5 The announcement by central Government that social housing rents are required to be reduced by 1 per cent per annum over the next four years has required a significant review of the HRA business plan in order to bridge the funding shortfall of £622 million.

Reviews have been undertaken on underlying assumptions within the business plan, the required scale of the 30 year capital programme, payments to management organisations, service charges, and future rent levels for void properties. The changes set out in the report are reflected in the revised business plan which includes funding for additional new build housing within the HRA.

- 4.6 The HRA is expected to have sufficient resources to fund £1.6 billion of capital works that will be required to its houses over the next 30 years, as well as meeting its management and maintenance obligations over the same period. In addition, the savings achieved on the review of the capital programme and other changes has released resources that will enable an additional 400 new homes to be built over the next four years.
- 4.7 The level of rent increase has been determined by central government. Increases to non-dwelling rents and service charges are set out in the report. These have generally been increased in line with inflation other than central heating charges which for gas heating will be increased over the next four years to a level that recovers the cost of the service.
- 4.8 As part of the self-financing arrangements introduced from April 2012 there is a cap placed on the level of debt that can be incurred in the HRA. The maximum amount for Wolverhampton is £356.8 million. The Cabinet report illustrates the maximum anticipated debt of £319.4 million in 2017/18 providing headroom for realisation of some of the risks to the business plan.
- 4.9 There remains considerable uncertainty around the impact on the HRA of the Housing and Planning Bill currently passing through Parliament. In particular there could be a one off payment required as early as 2016/17 to cover the potential sale income from high cost voids which will be required by Government to support its policy of right to buy for housing association properties. There is no information currently available as to the basis of calculation of the one off payment or what sum might be required to be paid. This could have a significant impact on the business plan, dependent on the value of payment, and a further update will be provided to Cabinet once final information is available.
- 5.0 Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2019/20 Quarter Three Review and 2016/17 to 2020/21 Budget Strategy**
- 5.1 This report was considered by Cabinet on 24 February 2016 and is [available via this link](#).

The purpose of the report was to:

- provide Cabinet with an update on the financial performance of the General Fund and HRA capital programmes for 2015/16 and the revised forecast for 2015/16 to 2020/21 as at quarter three of 2015/16, and
- recommend a revised General Fund capital programme and to note the HRA capital programme for the period 2015/16 to 2020/21.

- 5.2 It was resolved that Cabinet recommends that Council approves the revised medium term General Fund capital programme of £246.0 million and approves additional resources for six new and thirty one existing General Fund projects totalling £31.3 million.
- 5.3 Additionally it was agreed to approve thirteen General Fund virements totalling £7.5 million and approve the updated schedules of works for several capital projects which are detailed in the Cabinet report.
- 5.4 Cabinet was also asked to note the revised budgets for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as approved by Council on the 27 January 2016, the expenditure position for quarter three of 2015/16 which stood at 43.5 per cent of the approved general fund capital budget, the expenditure position for quarter three of 2015/16 which stood at 49.9 per cent of the approved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital budget and that the report incorporates three budget reduction proposals which were subject to approval at the 24 February meeting and Council on 2 March 2016.

6.0 Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17

- 6.1 The Treasury Management Strategy for 2016/17 was presented to Cabinet on 24 February 2016. The report ([available via this link](#)) sets out the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2016/17 for approval by Full Council.
- 6.2 The strategy incorporates six elements, which are detailed in separate documents which were appended to the report (Treasury Management Strategy, the Annual Investment Strategy, the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement, the Disclosure for Certainty Rate and the Treasury Management Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices).
- 6.3 As a result of the report, Cabinet recommended that Council approves:
1. The authorised borrowing limit for 2016/17 as required under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 be set at £1,008.6 million.
 2. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2016/17.
 3. The Annual Investment Strategy 2016/17.
 4. The Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators.
 5. The Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement setting out the method used to calculate MRP for 2016/17 onwards.
 6. The method used to calculate MRP for 2015/16 as set out in the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement approved by Council on 4 March 2015 be amended to the method.
 7. The Treasury Management Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices.

8. That authority continues to be delegated to the Director of Finance to amend the Treasury Management Policy and Practices and any corresponding changes required to the Treasury Management Strategy, the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators, the Investment Strategy and the Annual MRP Statement to ensure they remain aligned. Any amendments will be reported to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Cabinet (Resources) Panel as appropriate.

6.4 As a result of the report Cabinet also recommended that Council notes:

1. That as a result of the changes to the MRP policy approved and implemented during 2014/15, the MRP charge for financial years 2015/16 to 2017/18 will be zero increasing to £12.3 million in 2018/19.
2. That Cabinet (Resources) Panel and Council will receive regular Treasury Management reports during 2016/17 on performance against the key targets and Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators in the Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy.

7.0 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20

7.1 This report was presented to Cabinet on 24 February 2016 ([available via this link](#)) and was the final one on the 2016/17 Budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2019/20. The report provided Cabinet with a budget for recommendation to Full Council.

7.2 As a result of the report, Cabinet recommended that Council approves:

1. The net budget requirement for 2016/17 of £217.4 million for General Fund services.
2. The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20 as detailed in the table below and the budget preparation parameters underpinning the MTFS.

	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000
Previous Years Net Budget Brought Forward	224,875	217,350	234,461	251,125
Increasing/ (Decreasing) Cost Pressures				
- Pay Related Pressures	12,176	13,256	2,092	4,150
- Treasury Management	(632)	2,455	14,309	164
- Budget Growth	6,679	6,035	6,239	6,000
- Full year effect of prior years budget reductions	(6,410)	(8,669)	(7,878)	(283)
- Financial Transactions and Base Budget Adjustments	(7,068)	1,349	1,204	-
- Budget Reduction Proposals - 2016/17 budget process	(12,887)	2,793	450	-
- Net Impact of change in specific grants	617	(108)	248	-
	(7,525)	17,111	16,664	10,031
Net Budget (Before Use of Resources)	217,350	234,461	251,125	261,156
Projected Corporate Resources				
Council Tax	(84,381)	(86,490)	(88,653)	(90,869)
Social Care Precept	(1,655)	(3,351)	(5,089)	(6,871)
Revenue Support Grant	(50,283)	(38,392)	(30,298)	(22,124)
Enterprise Zone Business Rates	(1,532)	(2,394)	(2,800)	(2,800)
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	2,237	-	-	-
Use of Business rates Equalisation Reserve	(1,592)	-	-	-
Top Up Grant	(36,198)	(36,910)	(38,000)	(39,213)
Localised Business Rates	(37,805)	(38,561)	(39,332)	(40,119)
New Homes Bonus	(3,957)	(4,154)	(2,610)	(2,504)
New Homes Bonus Adjustment Grant	(167)	-	-	-
Business Rates Section 31 Grant	(2,017)	(2,017)	(2,017)	(2,017)
	(217,350)	(212,269)	(208,799)	(206,518)
Projected Annual Change in Budget Deficit/(Surplus)	-	22,192	20,135	12,313
Projected Cumulative Budget Deficit	-	22,192	42,326	54,639

3. A Council Tax for Council services in 2016/17 of £1,424.29 for a Band D property, being an increase of 3.99 per cent on 2015/16 levels, which incorporates the newly permitted two per cent increase in relation to Adult Social Care.
4. In principle the acceptance of the Government's offer of a four year settlement by 14 October 2016, noting that the Financial Plan and Efficiency Strategy will be reported to Cabinet and Council ahead of final acceptance of the offer.
5. The Council's Efficiency Plan Relating to Capital Receipts Flexibility.
6. That work starts on developing budget reductions for 2017/18 and progress be reported to Cabinet in July 2016.

7.3 Cabinet was also recommended to note

1. That the budget for 2016/17 is in balance without the use of general reserves.
2. That, in the opinion of the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) the 2016/17 budget estimates are robust.
3. That, in the opinion of the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), the proposed levels of reserves, provisions and balances is adequate in respect of the forthcoming financial year.
4. That a further £54.6 million needs to be identified over the period 2017/18 to 2019/20 in order to address the projected budget deficit.
5. That due to external factors, budget assumptions remain subject to significant change, which could, therefore, result in alterations to the financial position facing the Council.
6. That, having identified significant budget reductions over the last six financial years, the extent of the financial challenge over the medium term continues to represent the most significant that the council has ever faced.

8.0 Quarter Three Treasury Management Activity Monitoring

- 8.1 This report ([available via this link](#)) provided a monitoring and progress report on treasury management activity for the third quarter of 2015/16, in line with the Prudential Indicators approved by Council in March 2015.
- 8.2 The report confirmed that the Council was operating within the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators approved by Council, and also within the requirements set out in the Council's approved Treasury Management Policy Statement.
- 8.3 Forecast savings of £3.7 million for the General Fund and £1.5 million for the Housing Revenue Account from treasury management activities were reported in 2015/16.

9.0 Revenue Budget Monitoring 2015/16

- 9.1 The latest revenue budget monitoring report for both General Fund and Housing Revenue account was presented to Cabinet (Resources) Panel on 8 March 2016 and is [available via this link](#).
- 9.2 The overall projected outturn for the General Fund was reported as an underspend of £348,000 with a net underspend of £4.8 million against service budgets. In addition, a forecast increase in Corporate Resources due to additional New Homes Bonus adjustment grant totalling £233,000 and additional S31 grant funding totalling £524,000 in 2015/16 was reported, which was not budgeted for due to the uncertainty surrounding government funding.

- 9.3 The report also included a number of recommendations for the use of certain specific reserves, write-off of debts and budget virements.
- 9.4 For the Housing Revenue Account the forecast outturn position for the year was reported as a surplus of £18.5 million, compared to a budgeted surplus of £15.7 million.
- 9.5 The report also provided an update on schools balances and the financial performance of Yoo Recruit together with benefits accruing to the Council.

10.0 Financial Implications

- 10.1 These are detailed within the individual reports to Cabinet and Cabinet (Resources) Panel. [RT/04042016/G]

11.0 Legal Implications

- 11.1 These are detailed within the individual reports to Cabinet and Cabinet (Resources) Panel. [TS/04042016/]

12.0 Equalities Implications

- 12.1 These are detailed within the individual reports to Cabinet and Cabinet (Resources) Panel.

13.0 Environmental Implications

- 13.1 These are detailed within the individual reports to Cabinet and Cabinet (Resources) Panel.

14.0 Schedule of Background Papers

13 January 2016, 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 - Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement Update, Cabinet.

13 January 2016, Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (including 2016/17 budget rents and service charges), Cabinet.

9 February 2016, Quarter Three Treasury Management Activity Monitoring, Cabinet (Resources) Panel

24 February 2016, Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2019/20 Quarter Three Review and 2016/17 to 2020/21 Budget Strategy, Cabinet

24 February 2016, Treasury Management Strategy 2016/17, Cabinet

24 February 2016, 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 to 2019/20, Cabinet

8 March 2016, Revenue Budget Monitoring 2015/16, Cabinet (Resources) Panel