

Democratic Services

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Date: 20 September 2013

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To: All Members of the Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

Councillor John Bull
Councillor Roger Symonds
Councillor Colin Barrett
Councillor Paul Myers
Councillor Charles Gerrish
Councillor Barry Macrae
Councillor Nigel Roberts

Chief Executive and other appropriate officers
Press and Public

Dear Member

Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel: Monday, 30th September, 2013

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel**, to be held on **Monday, 30th September, 2013** at **5.30 pm** in the Drawing Room, **Pump Rooms, Bath**.

The agenda is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely



Michaela Gay
for Chief Executive

If you need to access this agenda or any of the supporting reports in an alternative accessible format please contact Democratic Services or the relevant report author whose details are listed at the end of each report.

This Agenda and all accompanying reports are printed on recycled paper

NOTES:

- 1. Inspection of Papers:** Any person wishing to inspect minutes, reports, or a list of the background papers relating to any item on this Agenda should contact Michaela Gay who is available by telephoning Bath 01225 394411 or by calling at the Riverside Offices Keynsham (during normal office hours).
- 2. Public Speaking at Meetings:** The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group. Advance notice is required not less than two full working days before the meeting (this means that for meetings held on Wednesdays notice must be received in Democratic Services by 4.30pm the previous Friday)

The public may also ask a question to which a written answer will be given. Questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services at least two full working days in advance of the meeting (this means that for meetings held on Wednesdays, notice must be received in Democratic Services by 4.30pm the previous Friday). If an answer cannot be prepared in time for the meeting it will be sent out within five days afterwards. Further details of the scheme can be obtained by contacting Michaela Gay as above.

- 3. Details of Decisions taken at this meeting** can be found in the minutes which will be published as soon as possible after the meeting, and also circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime details can be obtained by contacting Michaela Gay as above.

Appendices to reports are available for inspection as follows:-

Public Access points - Riverside - Keynsham, Guildhall - Bath, Hollies - Midsomer Norton, and Bath Central, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton public libraries.

For Councillors and Officers papers may be inspected via Political Group Research Assistants and Group Rooms/Members' Rooms.

- 4. Attendance Register:** Members should sign the Register which will be circulated at the meeting.
- 5. THE APPENDED SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ARE IDENTIFIED BY AGENDA ITEM NUMBER.**
- 6. Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

When the continuous alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building by one of the designated exits and proceed to the named assembly point. The designated exits are sign-posted.

Arrangements are in place for the safe evacuation of disabled people.

Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel - Monday, 30th September, 2013

at 5.30 pm in the Pump Rooms

A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out under Note 6.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting declarations of interest are received from Members in any of the agenda items under consideration at the meeting. Members are asked to indicate:

- (a) The agenda item number in which they have an interest to declare.
- (b) The nature of their interest.
- (c) Whether their interest is **a disclosable pecuniary interest** *or* **an other interest**,
(as defined in Part 2, A and B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests)

Any Member who needs to clarify any matters relating to the declaration of interests is recommended to seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer before the meeting to expedite dealing with the item during the meeting.

5. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN
6. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

At the time of publication no notifications had been received.

7. MINUTES - 15TH JULY 2013 (Pages 7 - 12)

The minutes of the last meeting held on 15th July 2013 are attached for confirmation as a correct record.

8. WORKPLACES - OFFICE ACCOMMODATION BRIEFING (Pages 13 - 26)

There will be a presentation on this item, the presentation is attached. (Please note that this presentation also covers the next item – 'Staff Resources Organisational Development'.

9. STAFF RESOURCES - ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STAFF SUPPORT

There will be a presentation on this item. Please see the presentation attached to the previous item (Workplaces) as it also covers this item.

10. WELFARE REFORM (Pages 27 - 60)

The Welfare Reform Update report is attached. An update has been made to page 11, paragraph 6.5.

11. REVIEW OF COUNCIL LETTINGS FOR USE OF ROOMS (Pages 61 - 72)

The report attached outlines the progress made in preparing a revised Corporate Hospitality Strategy for Bath's Historic Buildings to be included in the revised Heritage Services Business Plan 2014-2019.

12. PROPERTY - BUDGET SAVINGS REVIEW (Pages 73 - 76)

This report provides an update on the organisational change principles being undertaken within Property and Project Delivery to achieve the 13/14 and 14/15 savings targets.

13. CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet Member will give a verbal update to the panel on any relevant issues. Panel members may ask questions

14. PANEL WORKPLAN (Pages 77 - 80)

This report presents the latest workplan for the Panel (Appendix 1).

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Michaela Gay who can be contacted on

01225 394411.

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BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday, 15th July, 2013

Present:- Councillors John Bull (Chair), Colin Barrett, Charles Gerrish, Barry Macrae and Nigel Roberts

14 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

15 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillors Roger Symonds (substituted by Councillor Manda Rigby) and Paul Myers (substituted by Councillor Patrick Anketell-Jones) sent their apologies.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

18 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

19 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

Shelagh James made a statement to the Panel regarding 'Save Our Larkhall Public Toilets'. A copy of the statement can be found on the Panel's Minute Book.

In response to a question from Councillor Barrett, Mrs James explained that there were no alternatives as the Oriel Hall is only open for short periods and the local cafes and pubs are not happy for members of the public to use their toilets. She further explained that the ladies toilet in the pub was located upstairs so there would be access issues.

In response to a question from Councillor Bull, Mrs James said that she did not agree that people should pay to use public toilets as there are public health considerations.

In response to a question from Councillor Anketell-Jones, Mrs James that she did not think it was realistic to think that the building could be sold and a smaller provision for public toilets could be made.

Councillor Bull thanked Mrs James and explained that the Panel would pass on her concerns to the relevant Cabinet Member (Councillor Dave Dixon).

20 MINUTES

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

21 CORPORATE COMPLAINTS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Ian Savigar - Divisional Director Customer Services and David Langman – Customer Services, introduced the report. It was explained that complaints come in to all departments and are collated by Customer Services and at present a new system 'Customer Relationship Management System' is being introduced. The new system will encourage officers to see complaints as feedback and opportunities. They also explained that the new system would drive a standardisation of approach to complaints. The officers explained that the new policy is detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Panel raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Roberts asked that officers be trained to record all complaints, he also asked if there would be any trend analysis. The officer explained that using the word 'feedback' will hopefully open out reports of complaints and officers are encouraged to capture wider information than they do at present. Regarding trend analysis, the officer explained that some analysis has been started with some experienced complaints officers. The Divisional Director explained that there was some work to be done at Divisional Director level on how complaints are perceived. Councillor Roberts asked the officers to pass on to the Divisional Directors that the Resources Panel see complaints as an important way of understanding ways we can improve as a Council.

Councillor Gerrish endorsed the above comments. He added that customers should have the process of complaints explained to them, for example why an officer from a different department would be dealing with the complaint. He added that an organisation is judged by the way it handles complaints and officers should be encouraged to see this as a positive process. He added that Cabinet members often pick up complaints and deal with them direct with their lead officer, he asked that these complaints be picked up by the system. Overall he felt that the system was moving in the right direction. The officer acknowledged these points.

In response to a query, the officers explained that in the new system, complaints would be tracked and costs would be reduced, the plan is to correct the old system. Councillor Macrae stated that he hoped that in the new system there would be more of a degree of urgency in how complaints are dealt with. The Divisional Director

explained that the ethos of Customer Services was to deal with complaints at the point of contact.

Councillor Anketell-Jones explained that a lot of time and money can be spent with a complaint if it is allowed to proceed to stage two. He felt a lot more complaints could be settled at stage one or before. He pointed to the Ombudsman leaflet which recommends that complaints are dealt with by direct contact with the complainant; he recommended that in the new system, stages 1 and 2 could be preceded by face to face contact. The officer agreed that dialogue is the key and that was built in to the new system. The Strategic Director, Andrew Pate commented that the personal touch does not come across in the policy but that this must be conveyed to staff. He added that he would like to see a tightening up around vexatious complaints.

Councillor Rigby stated that having a named person as the contact in a complaint would be helpful. She added that she had had feedback in her ward that Council Connect do not always respond until a Councillor writes to them.

Councillor Barrett asked about a report on complaints to Members, the officer explained that this was very labour intensive but he could provide the figures. The Chair stated that maybe performance figures could be provided as part of this information.

Councillor Roberts thanked the Council Connect staff for their work.

22 BUSINESS RATES AND COUNCIL TAX - COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Ian Savigar – Divisional Director Customer Services, introduced the report and explained how the new system would work with regards to business rates. He explained that he was also learning from other authorities who had a higher rate of collection. He also explained that after taking questions on business rates, he would give the Panel information regarding Council Tax.

The Panel raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Bull asked when the figures would be given as to the potential amount that could be collected. The officer explained that this would be contained in the Panel's performance report.

Councillor Barrett noted that there had been a 1% reduction in collection and asked what this amounted to? The officer explained that this would be approximately £600,000 of which this Council's share would be £300,000. He explained that he wanted to improve the collection rate. Councillor Macrae stated that he hoped that staff cuts had not been the cause of this reduction in collection rates.

Council Tax

The officer gave a verbal update on Council Tax collection. He explained that full Council agrees the tax base level and then his department issue the correct bills (with the correct exemptions, discounts etc.) and then carry out debt recovery. He reported that the collection rate is 98% for this authority which was 8th in the UK which was excellent. He explained that there would be a change this year with the

Council Tax Benefit System and the issue would be how the collection rate is affected and so far there had only been a 0.1% drop which is good considering the changes.

The Panel raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Bull asked if the problems may come when the second instalment is due and the officer agreed that there were more problems later in the year. He explained that some people have suggested that the Council Tax be attached to benefits and that he had suggested this as a change in the process.

The Chair thanked the officers.

23 REVIEW OF DELIVERY OF BUDGET SAVINGS AND INCOME

Tim Richens – Divisional Director Finance, gave a presentation to the Panel (a copy of this presentation is kept on the minute book for this Panel). The presentation covered the following:

- Budget savings and income delivery update
- Background
- Delivery and Monitoring
- Savings and Income Update
- Years 2 and 3 Items
- 2014/15 Budget Process

The Panel raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Councillor Gerrish asked that the issue of adult care services be looked at in terms of the impact of budget savings. The Chair stated that he would flag this up with the Wellbeing Panel.

Councillor Macrae stated that it looked like staff are consulted on budget savings but service users are not. He stated that it also looked like services are cut before other things are looked at. The Strategic Director stated that this was a harsh interpretation.

Councillor Gerrish stated that it should be a learning curve for Members not to put something in the budget in February when consultation has not yet taken place and expect the saving to be made by 1st April of that year.

Councillor Gerrish asked for an update in September from the Property Estates Manager on how much of the budget savings he hopes to achieve.

The Strategic Director explained that this was a major programme of delivery on savings and good progress had been made on the three year programme but it was early days. He explained that the next budget will contain some possible amendments to the current budget and that this was a different way of working. Councillor Roberts stated that it was better to have a three year budget and that he felt it allowed members to think about priorities.

Councillor Bull stated that we should not be complacent regarding reduction of expenditure without thinking about the loss of jobs.

24 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor David Bellotti – Cabinet Member for Community Resources updated the Panel on the following:

- He reported that the benefits cap had come in this week and there had been a rise in the number of people getting back into work. He is monitoring the situation carefully.
- The Corporate Audit Committee had recommended that this authority find a partner to provide internal audit, he explained that when there is a proposal, he will bring it to this Panel.
- Keynsham regeneration is doing well, the development is on time and on budget.
- He reported that the authority is working with the Government on the pilot for Universal Credit and had been invited to be one of the path finders which means we would have an influence on how the policy develops. He explained that Ian Savigar – Divisional Director Customer Services had done a lot of work on this and is one of the country's top officers.
- Regarding City Deal (South Gloucestershire meet on 17th July and the LEP Board meet on 16th July) the approval process is progressing.
- Regarding the spending review, he explained that the media have reported some funding for the Council regarding health, he did not yet know if this was new money. Some bad news is that the Government have decided to take £400million from the new homes bonus and put it in Enterprise Partnerships, he explained that the Council is lobbying against this.

The Panel raised the following points and asked the following questions:

Regarding a question from Councillor Gerrish, the Cabinet Member reported that we are still on target for a lead tenant for September regarding Keynsham development.

Councillor Gerrish asked that the process be explained fully to staff regarding the new building. The Cabinet Member agreed.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member.

25 PANEL FUTURE WORKPLAN

With the following additions, the future work plan was noted:

- September – Update from Property Estates Manager – how far he is achieving budget savings (from Councillor Gerrish)
- November – Update on Budget Savings and Income Delivery – T.Richens

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

Update for Resources PDS Panel

30 September 2013

Agenda item 2: Workplaces Office Accommodation briefing

Agenda item 3: Staff resources- Organisational Development & Staff Support

“One Council” Organisational Development Programme

Three Workstreams



- **Supporting staff through change:**
 - Development through OD Programme
 - Impacts of budget reductions

Workplaces: Changing How We Work

5	3	1,500	1,000
BUILDINGS	WORKSTYLES	STAFF	DESKS

Principles

- 3:2 staff to desk ratio
- Staff located close to their customers, supporting Corporate Travel Plan.

5 Buildings

Keynsham



- Fully flexible
- Ashley Ayre's base

Lewis House



- Flexible but with specialist IT
- Louise Fradd's base

Guildhall



- Limited flexibility
- Democratic & political HQ
- Andrew Pate's base

The Hollies



- As is
- Partner organisations & those serving local community

St Martin's



- Limited flexibility
- Usage broadly as is

- All buildings will have facilities for hot desking and meeting rooms.
- All staff could work from any location (within IT & Information governance limits).

3 Workstyles

- Permanent **office-based**
- Permanent **home-based**
- **Mobile** (> 20% working time out of office)
- Managers assess working arrangements to optimise opportunities flexible working brings
- Supported by the right IT

1,500 staff : 1,000 desks

- Accommodation model drafted that accommodates all 1,500 staff based on overall 3:2 staff to desk ratio;
- Includes partner organisations.
- Provision of appropriate ICT is critical.
- Significant change management to support this programme “Changing How We Work”

“Changing How we Work”

- Within principles, this programme will be **manager owned and led.**
- Range of support includes:
 - Workshops for managers;
 - Champions representing staff at all levels to build office spirit;
 - Tours for staff;
 - E- learning ;
 - Theatre training (*scenarios staged to think about how to manage resistance , unhelpful behaviours*) ;
 - IT training ;
 - Moving celebrations;
 - Open days post move;
 - Integrated with communications and information on the website.

NB Not just for Keynsham New Build.

“Changing How We Work” is a key part of our OD Programme.

“One Council” Organisational Development Programme

Three Workstreams



Staff and Leadership
Engagement



Workplaces:
“Changing How We
Work”



10 in 100
10 projects delivered by staff
in 100 days

“One Council”

What it feels like for Services, Teams and Staff



Everyone knows where we are going as an organisation

Leaders work collaboratively and managers help unblock obstacles staff encounter

Staff are encouraged and supported to be creative and play their part in helping to shape the future



Our workforce is highly motivated and productive, making use of modern, flexible working practices

There is One Conversation between public services and our communities – changing the way we deliver services.



One Council OD Programme

Characteristics of “One Council”	Activities that contribute
<p>Everyone knowing where we are going as an organisation</p>	<p>Staff events All member event OD Comms eg Jo Blogs Leadership (Cabinet/SMT/ DG Workshops & coaching)</p>
<p>Staff are encouraged and supported to be creative and play their part in helping to shape the future</p>	<p>10 in 100 programme Staff events</p>
<p>Leaders work collaboratively and managers help unblock obstacles staff encounter</p>	<p>10 in 100 programme Top 100 events and resources (eg webportal)</p>
<p>Our workforce is highly motivated and productive, making use of modern, flexible working practices</p>	<p>Changing How We Work (Workplaces Change Programme) Staff events and OD comms</p>
<p>There is One Conversation between public services and our communities – changing the way we deliver services</p>	<p>NEW – approach is in design.</p>

Supporting staff through change

Training through Corporate Training Programme:

- **Half day Managing Redundancy Training** - Soft Skills
- **Investing in Your Future** (4 day personal development programme for non managers)
- **Experience Counts** (personal development/career planning for the "older worker")
- 2 x .5 day **Job Search Workshops** on writing CVs/application forms and preparing for interview
- **Future Focus** - a team day for those teams who have been through significant change/restructure to engage them in planning for their new future

Supporting staff through change

On line /e learning resources :

- Information/ resources on **public website for job search/outplacement support** (also for staff once they have left the Council's employment).
- Internal CiS pages in place for supporting staff at risk including **e-learning tools on job search and career planning** and useful practical weblinks such as for job search advice, further education and financial planning.
- **Skills for Life/upskilling in key skills** including free NVQ training/assessment at level 2 in Customer Service, ICT and Business Admin to improve peoples' employability.

Supporting staff through change

Outplacement Services to Those Formally at Risk:

- Local outplacement provider "Workout Solutions":
 - Provides **personal 121 support** help to those formally at risk of Redundancy (on going advice and support for up to 1 year after an employee has left the Council.)

Employee Assistance Programme:

- **24/7 counselling and support**
- Confidential face to face and telephone

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Welfare Reform Update – September 2013

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been produced in order to give Members and Officers of Bath & North East Somerset Council an understanding of events relating to Welfare Reforms for Benefits that have come in to effect since April 2013, with specific reference to the impacts for residents within the area.
- 1.2 The situation is clearly dynamic and is a snapshot of evidence over the period from April 2013 to the end of August 2013.
- 1.3 It builds upon previous workshops and presentations provided to Members and Divisional Directors in the lead up to; and following the implementation of changes which started in April 2013; and therefore assumes a degree of knowledge and understanding about the changes. However, reference is provided to additional information where appropriate.
- 1.4 Divisional Director for Customer Services Ian Savigar has drawn together the Information within this report which has been received from a number of sources and acknowledgements listed at the end of the report.
- 1.5 The Executive Summary seeks to pull together the main themes covered within the detailed report and also draw together the linkages between the individual sections.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Successive Governments have made many attempts at simplifying the provision of State Benefits, but in reality the complex nature of people and the desire to meet all of their needs has led to even greater complexity.
- 2.2 These latest set of changes are the most significant and wide ranging changes since the Welfare State as we know it was first introduced.
- 2.3 It is widely accepted that the current system needs simplifying and it is also understood that the current economic climate means that existing funding levels are not sustainable.
- 2.4 It should also be recognised that it is not just the Benefit changes that are impacting on the Welfare State; there are also many changes within Health Services; Social Care and Pensions which add to the emerging picture.
- 2.5 Detailed changes to Benefits have been discussed on a number of occasions, they are well documented and the latest position as it relates to Bath & North East Somerset is set out in the report.
- 2.6 A recent study by the Financial Times and Sheffield Hallam University projected the local financial impacts of the welfare reforms on local authorities. In Bath and North East Somerset it was estimated that £40 million will be lost to the local economy.
- 2.7 The change to an increase in the minimum level at which tax contributions are made has meant that take home pay for many households has increased, although some families who are in work but on low income will not have gained this time around due to the limit in benefit uprating and Tax Credits.
- 2.8 Plans to develop the Enterprise Areas in Bath; City Deal and other local initiatives to encourage growth are a step in the right direction to address this issue.
- 2.9 The key themes to pick out from the report are that whilst there is evidence of reduced numbers claiming job seekers allowance and a rather mixed message about the longer term impacts of the changes, it is clear that some of our most vulnerable households are in danger of being evicted from their homes. It is also clear that whilst additional help in terms of Welfare Support is available through a variety of schemes both within the Council, through Charities and other bodies there are still a number of households where people are choosing not to adjust their lifestyles in order to receive this help.
- 2.10 Information from our Registered Social Landlords suggests that Rent arrears are on the increase and this is most noticeable although not

exclusive to tenants who have been impacted by the changes to size criteria for those in receipt of Housing Benefit. There is also growing concern that the level of arrears will continue to grow when Universal Credit is implemented because this will mean that tenants are paid direct, one month in arrears and will need substantial support in order to manage their budgets.

- 2.11 The report highlights the numerous actions that are taking place to try and mitigate the impacts of these changes on our most vulnerable as well as protecting those that are struggling to deal with the changes.
- 2.12 We are slightly below the level of spending expected for Discretionary Housing Payments at this point in the year, but we do expect this to change as a result of the introduction of Housing Benefit Capping and improved targeting of our work. The lack of clarity around Size criteria and outcomes of recent appeal cases means that we need to constantly review our procedures and policy to protect all Council Tax payers including the most vulnerable.
- 2.13 Spending of the cash limited Social Fund which the Council inherited this year is also lower than expected, but again this is likely to change as the colder weather approaches and as more cases relating to Council Tax arrears come forward. We will be seeking to improve our ability to support customers who are struggling to meet essential needs and again continue to seek new and innovative ways to do this by working with partners.
- 2.14 It is clear that in order for all of the organisations trying to manage this situation, that the ability to share data is imperative if we are to maximise the efficiency of our limited resources.
- 2.15 We do need to be clear that in cases that are reaching the stage of eviction that we have done everything we possibly can to support the household in question. In those cases where children are involved the consequences can be severe and in all cases the additional costs incurred will have an impact on services, particularly where we have a statutory duty to protect
- 2.16 Through our work as a Local Authority led Pilot for Universal Credits and our close working relationship with Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) it is evident that we need to develop clearer partnership arrangements in preparation for the abolition of Housing Benefits and the changing roll each organisation will be expected to play under Universal Credits. The Local Support Service framework provides us with the opportunity to do this. However, the on-going lack of clarity and timetable is a major risk for us as a Council in terms of both financial planning and staff resources.

3. Index

3.1 Big Changes from April:-

- *Council Tax Support Scheme*
- *Social Fund*
- *Size Criteria*
- *Housing Benefit Cap*
- *Discretionary Housing Payments*
- *Personal Independence Payments*
- *Limit on uprating for Working Age*

3.2 Needed time to start to see impacts

- *Crime & Disorder*
- *Local Economy*
- *Economy and Employment*
- *Health & Wellbeing*
- *Citizens Advice*
- *Foodbank*
- *Homelessness*
- *Homesearch*
- *Trading standards*

3.3 Relevant Projects and Initiatives to Support

- *Connecting Families*
- *Universal Credit Pilot*
- *Welfare Support Team*
- *Partnership Working*
- *Housing Allocation Policy changes*

3.4 Upcoming Opportunities

- *Local Support Service Framework (Community Budget)*
- *Universal Credit Pilot Extension & Pathfinder*
- *Data Sharing*
- *Connecting Communities Approach*
- *Community Hubs (Better use of Assets)*
- *Commissioning for Support & Advice*
- *Pre-Eviction Panels*
- *Use of Additional funding*

The Big changes from April :-

4.0 Council Tax Support Scheme

- 4.1 Members will recall that in November 2012 we set a new tax base for the current year. This tax base calculation took in to account the fact that Council Tax Benefits were being abolished and replaced by a local discretionary scheme of Council Tax Support.
- 4.2 Bath & North East Somerset had to find a shortfall in funding of around £1.2million and set a tax base and support scheme to reflect this. The scheme set out to protect the most vulnerable and encourage people in to work.
- 4.3 *The Council Tax Support scheme was agreed by full council on the 8th November 2012, more details about the scheme can be found at <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/council-tax-benefits-and-grants/benefits/council-tax-support-april-2013>*

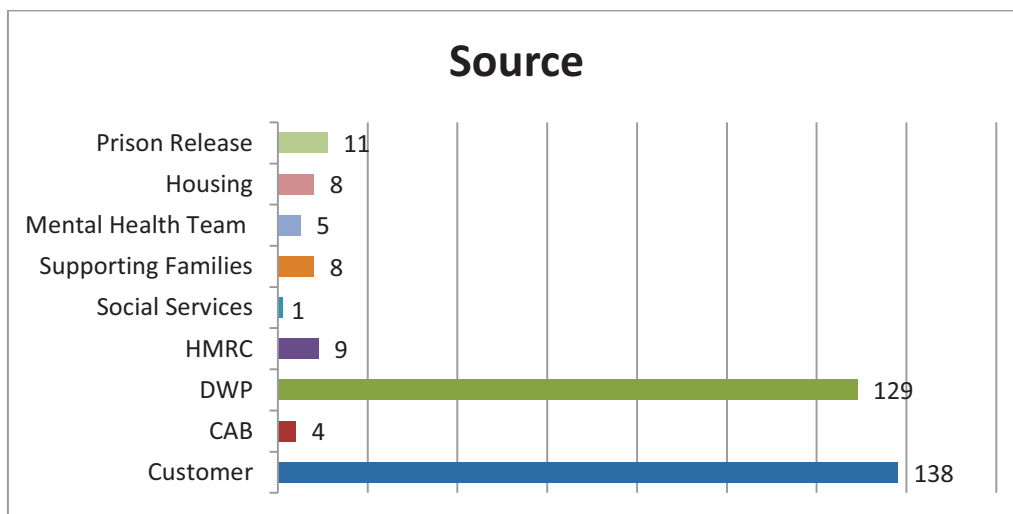
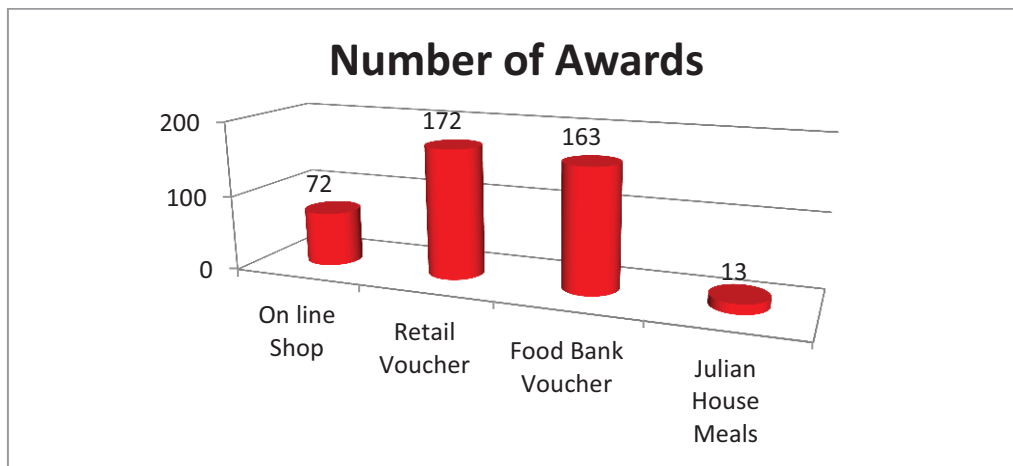
In 2012/13 we awarded Council Tax Benefit in the sum of :-	£10,572,238.00
As at 31/8/2013 the Council Tax Control Account shows that we have awarded Council Tax Support of:-	£9,241,202.94
Overall Funding provided for the Council & Major Preceptors in 2013/14 amounts to:-	£9,419,000.00

- 4.4 It should be noted that within the new scheme, full Council Tax Support (100%) is being provided to 1538 vulnerable people, at a total cost of £1,290,852.09.
- 4.5 In addition and from the outset we have attempted to support those most impacted by the changes by contacting them at an early stage and encouraging the take up of 12 monthly instalments, direct debit payment options and signposting people to debt advice and support.
- 4.6 There were around 3,600 households that were previously on full Council Tax Benefits and have now become liable to pay at least 22% of Council Tax charges for the home they live in.
- 4.7 We have now gone through a full cycle of debt recovery actions, including the issue of reminders, finals and summonses and have obtained Liability Orders against those that have not paid.

- 4.8 Within these cases there are 482 households that are in receipt of Council Tax Support, for the majority of these we will now be deducting the payment from on-going benefit at the rate of £3.60 per week. This will not clear the full debt by the end of the year if these customers remain in receipt of Benefits.
- 4.9 There are 28 cases that have been passed on to our Bailiffs for recovery action to commence; these will be cases that are no longer in receipt of on-going Benefit awards.
- 4.10 From anecdotal information provided by other Council's we seem to be faring slightly better than most and this is thought to be down to the pro-active activities we have undertaken.
- 4.11 In addition to the pro-active support Members also decided at the November meeting of full Council that in cases of hardship we should provide temporary support through use of our Social fund allocation.
- 4.12 This fund is again administered by the Welfare Support Team and is assessed on a case by case basis.
- 4.13 To date 44 cases have been awarded this support totalling £4,490.67. The majority of awards granted are to assist those customers who:-
- Face delays or changes to their DWP income
 - Referred by CAB/Reach due to debt etc.
 - Cover a period of hardship
- 4.14 We were concerned that these changes would have a detrimental impact on our ability to collect Council Tax and lead to a shortfall in our Collection Fund, to date this is not the case and our collection rate at the end of August was 48.58% of collectable debit compared with 49.09% at the same point last year.
- 4.15 If you take in to account the new rule of enabling 12 instalments and the changes to Council Tax Support this is a very good rate of collection
- 4.16 We have also introduced some other changes to the Council Tax system relating to discounts and exemptions and although there has been an increase in the level of work created due to increases in debt recovery work, we have not increased our staffing resource but we continue to review and improve our working methods.

5.0 Social Fund

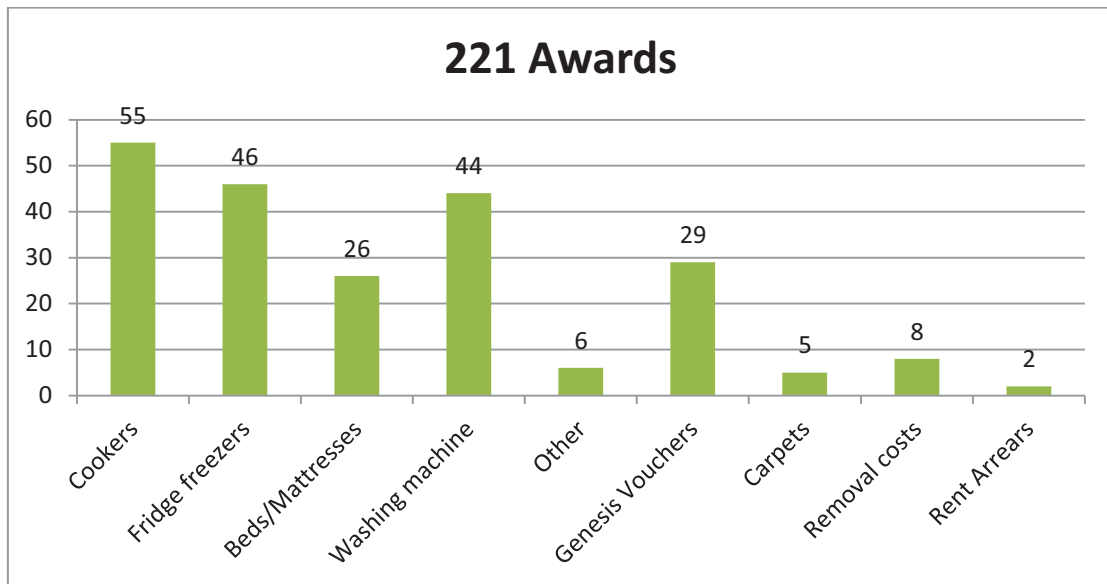
- 5.1 The council was allocated £249,260 by the DWP as its share of the Social Fund this year and although there were no mandatory responsibilities to provide the same or similar provision to the one previously administered by the DWP we did at very short notice set up our own local Welfare Support Scheme. **More details about the scheme can be found at: - <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/council-tax-benefits-and-grants/benefits/welfare-support-scheme>**
- 5.2 The Scheme is administered within the Customer Services Directorate by our Welfare Support Team.
- 5.3 The awards are in two sections, discretionary awards to cover short term emergency Support and non-emergency support for basic household items. As well as these provisions the fund is also used to award short term support for Council Tax as detailed previously.
- 5.4 **Emergency Support to cover daily crisis** - This covers elements of the social fund previously administered by DWP and now part of our own “non-cash” scheme



- 5.5 The majority of claims are made by DWP customers and those who appear to live hand to mouth on a daily basis. Most applications result from:
- DWP sanctions
 - Debt problems
 - Poor budgeting skills
 - Loan repayments
 - Irresponsible spending
- 5.6 Conditions for financial help normally include:
- Money Advice
 - Bristol Credit Union
 - Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
 - Developing Health and Independence (formerly DHI)
- 5.7 These awards are provided to help people meet fundamental Living Needs that would previously have been met by the Social Fund
- 5.8 In order to prevent the retail voucher scheme from being abused, Bath Foodbank Centre has agreed that the Welfare Support Team can issue foodbank vouchers as alternative means to those who may not use the retail vouchers for the purpose to which they are intended. 67 out of the 163 foodbank vouchers that have been issued have been used for this purpose.
- 5.9 To provide on-going support to the Bath Foodbank Centre the Welfare Support Team has purchased £500 worth of food to replace supplies.

Non-Emergency Support

- 5.10 Basic household items are purchased to support the homeless and those moving to affordable housing. This is deemed essential support to those who have been placed within accommodation with no means to vital household possessions.
- 5.11 Where possible we use local suppliers and charities such as Sofa Project, St Johns, Genesis Furniture Project and St Monica Trust etc. to reduce or share the costs. The welfare Support Team has agreed with Genesis Furniture Project a voucher scheme whereby customers are awarded an amount to spend on essential items. Quite often the Genesis Furniture Project will add additional items free of charge to support the needs of the customer.



5.12 We have also been working closely on a new project with the Council's Recycling Team to reuse suitable items of furniture brought into our Recycling Centres. The project aims to make furniture available to people the Council are assisting to set up home or for those trying to maintain their place in the community. Although it's early days, it is exciting to think that a good proportion of the high volume of furniture brought to the sites for recycling will instead directly benefit local residents.

5.13 We currently have not awarded any travel expenses and are just starting to award rent in advance payments

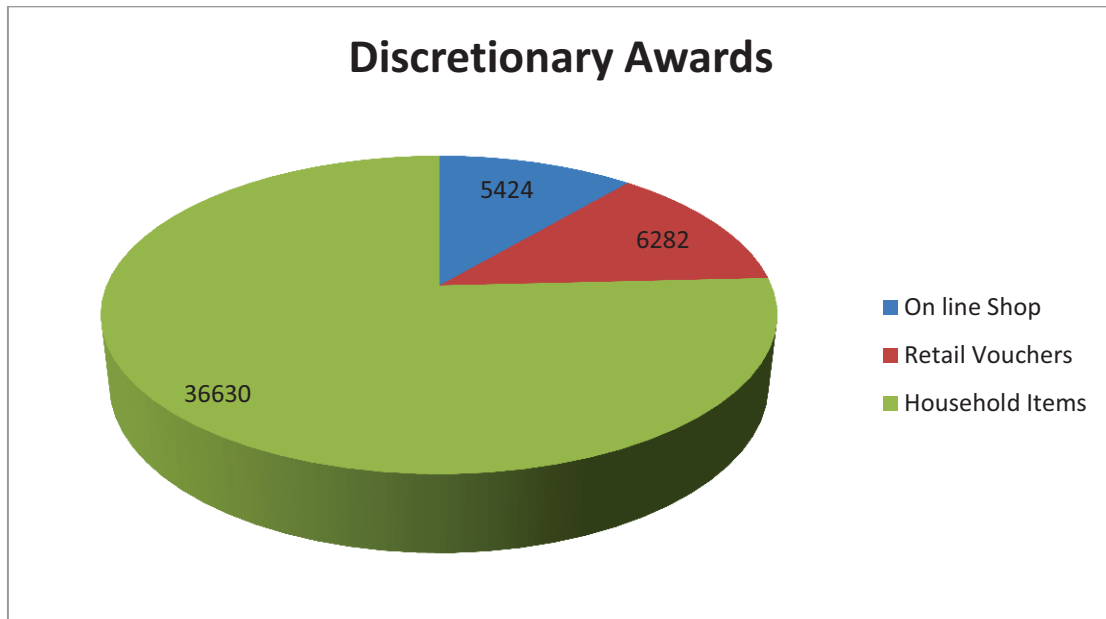
- **Number of Refusals 436**

5.14 Principal reasons for refusing support are mainly excess income, DWP sanction, lack of evidence or non-acceptance/compliant of conditions. There are also those who only want cash, therefore rejecting all other offers of help.

- **Pending 50**

5.15 Applications waiting evidence, very few people return with relevant information and these cases are normally rejected.

- **Social Fund replacement Budget / Spend (April to August)**



This is a summary of the overall scheme spend.

Number of discretionary awards	Annual Budget	Amount Paid to date	Average award Per Claim
641	£249,260.00	• £54,722.92	£78

- ***This includes Council Tax Support of £4,490.67 (see report above)***

5.16 To summarise it should be noted that whilst spend appears to be low, we do expect this to increase substantially over the coming months.

5.17 In addition to this funding for the scheme we have also received £52,000 in Revenue funding to enable the Welfare Support Team to be created along with the developing systems and resources needed.

6.0 Size Criteria

- 6.1 Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC) regulations are often referred to as the “Bedroom tax” – this is a link to the DWP website relating to this issue:- <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/adviser/updates/size-criteria-social-rented/>
- 6.2 A size criterion is a condition that already exists within the Private Rented Sector where Housing Benefit is restricted by the Local Housing Allowance rules for tenants who are deemed to be under occupied. However, tenants who negotiate a lower rent or choose to over occupy can still get all or most of their Housing Costs met.
- 6.3 The rules in the Public Sector are slightly different in that a household that is deemed to be under occupied by 1 bedroom will lose 14% of their benefit entitlement and households under occupied by 2 or more bedrooms lose 25% of their Benefit entitlement.
- 6.4 This was a new change in April and has required us to obtain information from local registered social landlords as to the size and makeup of households in order to apply the size criteria rules.
- 6.5 The number of claims affected by SSSC has reduced quite dramatically by almost 20% since we started to identify the information required to assess these cases.

Date	Total number of claims affected	25%	14%	Total Amount of Weekly Restriction 25%	Average Weekly Restriction 25%	Total Amount of Weekly Restriction 14%	Average Weekly Restriction 14%
25/03/2013	954	180	774	£5,011.27	£27.84	£11,525.55	£14.89
17/04/2013	903	174	729	£4,851.54	£27.88	£10,827.79	£14.85
29/05/2013	854	159	695	£4,439.36	£27.92	£10,365.10	£14.91
22/08/2013	776	139	637	£3,862.06	£27.78	£9,476.62	£14.88

6.6 This is mainly to do with:

- Customers telling us about dependants that were not declared before (pass ported claims so would not have made any difference to the entitlement before)
- Non-dependants moving back into the household
- Taking a lodger in
- Moving to a property with the appropriate number of bedrooms
- The number of bedrooms originally declared was incorrect.

- 6.7 This rule change continues to be controversial and forms the main reasons for people claiming Discretionary Housing Payments through the Welfare Support Team.
- 6.8 There is also still ambiguity in the guidance provided by the DWP as to what actually constitutes a bedroom and this has further been questioned by the outcome of a recent Tribunal case between Fife Borough Council and a Mr David Nelson of Glenroths which could lead to an increase in Appeals.
- 6.9 To-date we have only received 3 Appeals about this particular issue, and these are still in the process of being considered by an Appeals officer.
- 6.10 In view of these issues we do need to constantly review our policies around Discretionary Housing Payments and our application of procedures to ensure we comply with the rules and regulations.
- 6.11 On the 20th June 2013 we received a letter from Lord Freud clearly stating that if it were found that Councils had altered size criteria without the proper evidence, then they could be liable to loss of subsidy.
- 6.12 This has subsequently been the subject of debate with our external auditors who at this stage are unable to clarify the process they will follow in respect of these cases in their audit of any subsidy claim next year as this is to be determined by the National Audit Office in December.

7.0 *Housing Benefit Cap*

7.1 This is based on the premise of fairness and that households in receipt of Welfare should not receive more than a set limit; (£26,000 for lone parents and couples with or without children, £18,200 for a single person). This will be an important part of Universal Credit rules but Housing Benefit has been used as the hook to implement this in advance of Universal Credit.

This link provides information about the Benefit cap:-
<https://www.gov.uk/benefit-cap>

- 7.2 The Housing Benefit cap was only introduced from April in three London Boroughs as a pathfinder and has started to be rolled out across the Country since the middle of July 2013
- 7.3 We understand that we have now received all cases in our area within the existing caseload for this area and we have received 15 cases that have had the cap applied to their Benefit entitlement. The amount of the cap ranges from 0.09p to £237.73 per week.
- 7.4 The Welfare Support Team and Universal Credit Pilot team have joined forces to visit and speak with all the households that are impacted and we are also working closely with the Connecting families team on any relevant cases, as it is usually households with four or more children that are impacted by this Cap.
- 7.5 The numbers thought to be impacted by this change have greatly reduced since the original data scans were provided to us. This has been due to a number of factors. Firstly the original scans included households that were actually in receipt of qualifying benefits and are exempt from the cap, secondly a number of households have found employment and are therefore no longer impacted by it.
- 7.6 These remaining cases are a challenge and we will continue to work with them to try and achieve the best outcomes.

8.0 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

8.1 Discretionary Housing Payments are what it says on the tin. Local Authorities are able to make discretionary awards to householders who are struggling to meet their rent liabilities providing they adhere to guidance issued by the DWP and adopt a relevant Policy. Our approach to this was reviewed along with the Social Fund changes and is included in the Welfare Support Policy:-
<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=544>

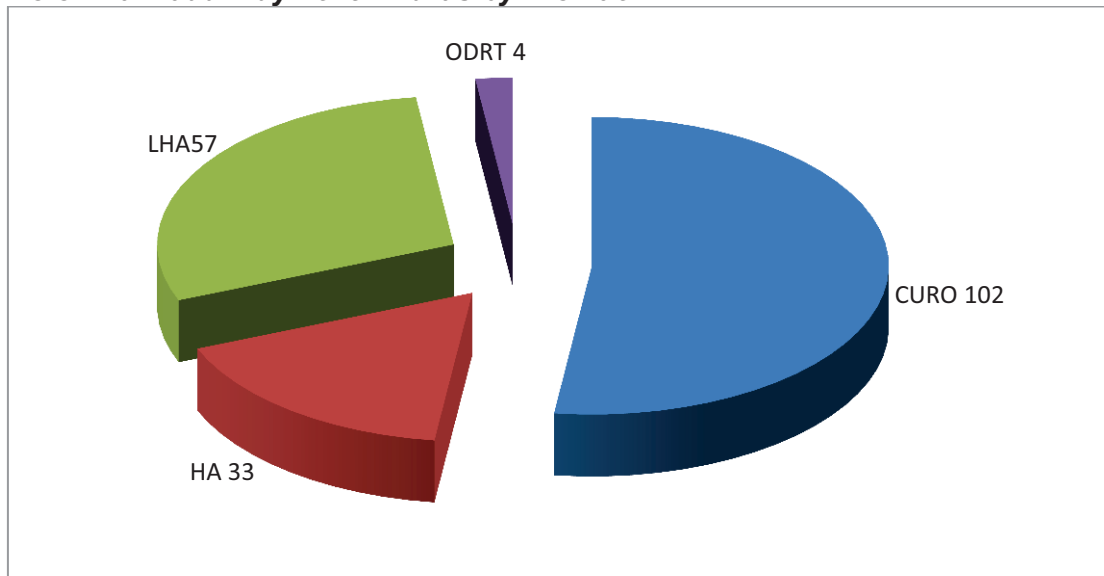
8.2 Our funding for DHP's was increased from April this year to take in to account the impacts of size criteria in the public sector.

	Government Funding	B&NES permitted Spending level
2012/13	£141,389	£353,472
2013/14	£243,479	£608,698

8.3 We have taken an holistic approach to the award of DHP's by combining the process within our Welfare Support Team and trying to understand the wider issues faced by our Customers.

8.4 Awards this year are detailed in these graphs

No of individual Payment Awards by Provider



LHA – Local Housing Allowance claimants

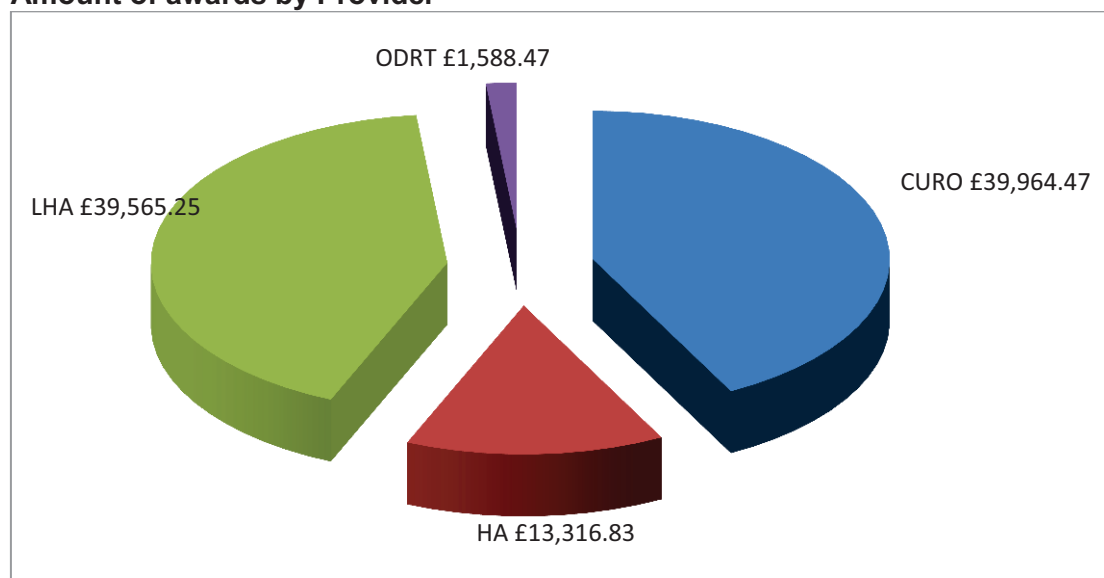
HA – Housing Association claimants

CURO – Curo claimants

ODRT – Private sector claimants not subject to Local Housing Allowance, eg) cases subject to individual rent officer decisions

8.5 Curo Tenants have received the majority of awards in comparison to other Housing Association and Private sector tenants.

Amount of awards by Provider



LHA – Local Housing Allowance claimants

HA – Housing Association claimants

CURO – Curo claimants

ODRT – Private sector claimants not subject to Local Housing Allowance, eg) cases subject to individual rent officer decisions

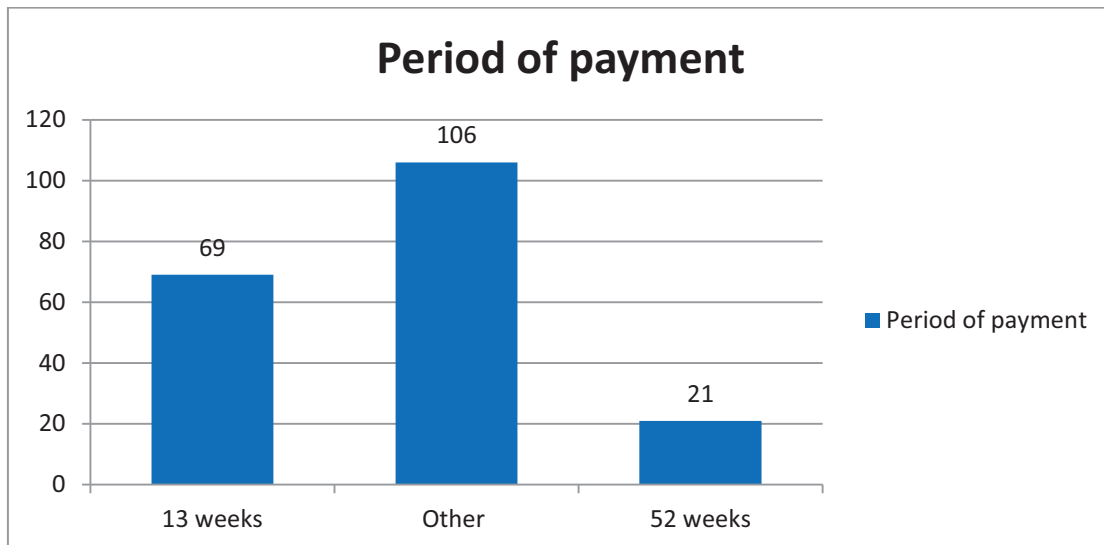
8.6 Current expenditure is more evenly spread and is just below anticipated spend; however this is likely to change with the implementation of the Benefit Cap and increased demand.

Number Of DHP Applications	Number of DHP Awards	Total Amount paid out	Average Award Per claim	Annual Budget	Outstanding Budget
420	196	£94,434.82	£463	£243,479.15	£149,044.33

8.7 Discretionary awards are provided to cover a particular point of hardship.

8.8 Decisions are based upon:

- Income versus expenditure (disabled income is taken into account and offset by any care/mobility costs)
- Level/period of need
- Medical/health factors
- Referred by an organisation and supported by evidence
- Other factors such as, fleeing domestic violence etc.
- Compliance to any conditions that may be attached to award (debt advice, moving etc.)



8.9 Period of payment can vary depending on a person's set of circumstances, financial help maybe provided for longer than 13 weeks if they can demonstrate/evidence that their circumstances will change/improve (examples – moving, employment, benefit change, dependants birthdays etc.).

8.10 The application of Discretionary Housing Payments is a matter for careful consideration and it needs to be viewed on a case by case basis. Our staff take an holistic view to an individual's needs and may determine a different course of action where appropriate. The rules around size criteria are still in a state of confusion.

8.11 We are aware that DWP has been ordered recently to issue clearer rules following the outcome in the case(s) of Gorrey, Trengrove & Burnip relating to rooms provided for disabled people and we continue to monitor this situation in relation to the application of our policy for awarding Discretionary Housing Payments and the classification of size criteria.

Benefit Cap and Discretionary Housing Payment

8.12 Both the Welfare Support Team and Helen Holbrook from our Universal Credit Pilot team are currently visiting 15 households affected by the Benefit Cap as a means to addressing employability and hardship issues. It is currently estimated that £772 per week, will be awarded to those claims affected by the change. Based on approximately 30 weeks, this will reduce the DHP fund by around £23,160.00. However, these figures are founded upon current information and may change as households either become liable or move out of Capping criteria.

9.0 *Personal Independence payments (PIP)*

9.1 A link to Gov.Uk explains the switch to Personal Independence Payments that has come in to effect this year.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/simplifying-the-welfare-system-and-making-sure-work-pays/supporting-pages/introducing-personal-independence-payment>

9.2 These payments are administered by the DWP but they do impact our residents.

9.3 All Customer services staff have received information and training on the new rules so that they can advise claimants of their responsibilities, although we do not get many of these cases in our One Stop Shops.

9.4 Customers are advising our Visiting Officers that the DWP advise them that following their new claim/initial telephone call it will take between 6 to 12 weeks to send the form for verification and then up to 24 weeks for payment depending on the level of assessment required.

10.0 *Limit on Uprating & Tax Credit changes*

10.1 From April 2013, there were two main factors used to increase benefit awards.

- a. Benefits received by disabled people and pensioners increased in line with CPI inflation (+2.2%).
- b. Benefits and tax credits for working age people were increased by 1%.

10.2 This has had the effect of reducing benefit entitlement for working age benefit claimants.

Needed time to start to see impacts

11.0 This updates information provided in the initial welfare reform impact assessment published in April 2013.

11.1 <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/your-council-and-democracy/local-research-and-statistics/wiki/welfare-reform>

11.2 This assessment focussed on the following categories of impact:

- Wider social and economic impacts - These are impacts which are likely to affect the entire population
- Impacts on vulnerable or newly vulnerable individuals and families
- Impacts on the most vulnerable. (see Connecting Families, below)

Wider social and economic impacts

11.3 ***Crime and Disorder***

There have been no recorded impacts of the welfare reform on local trends in crime and disorder.

11.4 ***Economy***

The overall impacts of the welfare reforms on the local economy have been projected to be up to £40million. However, limited impacts have been observed to date, business start-ups appear unaffected and changes in economic activity/inactivity seem small.

11.5 ***Employment and Economic Activity***

Total out of work claimants have fallen over time. In particular Job Seekers allowance claimants dropped below 2% of the working age population, which is nearly half the national average. There has also been a large reduction in the % and number of those people who are economically inactive and long term sick. There is some evidence that these changes appear to relate to longer term trends and should not be considered to relate to the welfare reforms specifically.

11.6 ***Health & Wellbeing***

No specific impacts have been observed, although it is still too early to examine many health and wellbeing related data.

Vulnerable or Newly Vulnerable

11.7 ***Citizens Advice Bureau***

Overall numbers of enquiries to CAB in B&NES have been declining since its highest level in Jan 2012. The number in May 2013 was 1010, compared to 1298 in May 2012. Enquiry figures fell by 13% from January to May this year.

11.8 The largest enquiry type is for benefits, making up nearly 60% of all enquiries since June 2011. The trend for benefits related enquiries has

closely followed the overall rates, while figures for enquiries relating to employment and housing has remained low and static.

- 11.9 The numbers of enquiries regarding debt have nearly doubled from February 2013 to 343 in May 2013, but remain at approximately 20% of all enquiries and were at their peak back in January 2012.

11.10 Food Bank

In Q1 2012/13 there were 207 foodbank vouchers issued in B&NES. In Q1 2013/14 this figure was 663, an increase of 220%. The largest numbers of vouchers awarded were in Twerton, Abbey and Kingsmead wards.

11.11 Homelessness

Data represents applications to the council for homelessness status and access to services.

- 11.12 There has not been a statistically significant increase in the numbers of persons applying for homelessness, although the data shows a general upward trend over the past financial year.

- 11.13 Overall, the majority of applicants are White-British, aged under 44, lone female parents or single males. The main priority need remains having dependent children and the main reason for homelessness due to parents or friends being unable or unwilling to accommodate them any longer.

- 11.14 There is no significant evidence of any direct impact from the welfare reforms on homelessness as of yet. For more information see this link:- <http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/housing/homeless>

11.15 Homesearch

Homesearch is the register for social housing in Bath and North East Somerset. Properties are advertised weekly on the website. Applicants choose which properties they are interested in and can 'bid' online, by text or phone. Demand is high and some people have to wait years before being rehoused.

- 11.16 There were 12,746 applicants on the list as of the end of January 2013, falling to 4,803 as of the beginning of September following the review of the allocation scheme. It is difficult therefore to accurately assess the impact of the Welfare Reforms on housing need in the area at this stage. We do, however, know that one in four registered are CURO tenants and that there has been an increase of social housing tenants registered since the reforms came in.

11.17 Trading Standards

There have been small increases in the number of complaints made with regards to credit and loan trading practices between Apr-Jul 2012 (2) and Apr-Jul 2013 (6).

Relevant Projects and Initiatives to Support

12.0 *Connecting Families*

- 12.1 This programme of service transformation is running hand in hand with Central Government's Troubled Families Initiative, which the Council fully supports. Connecting Families will streamline services that are working with families, by co coordinating the services they are receiving and compiling information to give a full assessment of needs so the right services are involved with the family. This approach maximises resources and avoids duplication.
- 12.2 Central Government has estimated that nationally 2% of families are "troubled". This equates to an indicative number of 215 families in Bath and North East Somerset. 'Troubled families' with complex issues place significant demands on criminal justice, education, health, welfare benefits, housing and social services.
- 12.3 Funding is provided by the Troubled Families Unit for all Local Authorities. For each family identified it is anticipated that £10,000 will be spent on that family: consisting of £6,000 of Council resources and up to an additional £4,000 from the Troubled Families Unit for each family identified to work with.
- 12.4 Connecting Families aims to invest upfront in transforming service delivery and the leadership and culture which underpin it so that the Council and its partners will see a reduction in the costs of responding to these families as well as improvement in their lives and of those around them, including the wider communities.
- 12.5 A core team has been appointed consisting of an operational lead reporting to the Divisional Director for Preventive Services with a core team of 2 Team Leaders each with 3 Key Workers. In addition to this core team the team leads will support a wide range of Council Services, Commissioned Services and partners beyond the Council to work in a co-ordinated way with identified families.
- 12.6 The connecting families approach is underpinned by a conviction that families can change, people must take responsibility for their lives and all people are worth persevering with. Five key strategies have been identified as being crucial to the success of the new way of working and these are the foundation of the work with the families: -
1. Named workers to named families – each family will have a dedicated worker.

2. Persistence backed up by sanction – key workers will not give up.
 3. Understanding families as a whole – not just looking at each issue in isolation.
 4. One plan for the family with clear outcomes agreed at the outset.
 5. Practical hands on support - rolling up sleeves and working alongside the family members to achieve agreed goals.
- 12.8 On the 24th June the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander announced an additional £200 million for 2015/16 – the first of five years – to expand the Troubled Families programme. This is a welcome extension to the programme and will enable Connecting Families to embed the good work currently being undertaken with partners.
- 12.9 Currently, the core staff team are working intensively with 32 Families and a further 108 families are being supported by wider partners.

13.0 *Universal Credit Pilot*

- 13.1 Universal Credit is the cornerstone of this Government's Welfare Reforms; it is a well-publicised change in the way Benefits are administered, which aims to bring together 6 existing Benefits into one single assessment.
- 13.2 The implementation of this process was due to commence National Roll out in October this year but due to its complexity it has been plagued by delays, primarily in relation to the IT. The Universal Credit programme's main concern is that it lands safely and securely.
- 13.3 Bath & North Somerset has been chosen as one of 12 Pilot sites across the Country to work with the DWP and the LGA to develop learning and understanding that can inform best practice which can be adopted in the eventual roll out of a National Programme.
- 13.4 We have been working very closely with the DWP and other partners under the existing Benefit system to try and help understand the issues that are likely to be faced by customers adapting to the fundamental changes in the new system such as:-
- Digital by Default
 - Monthly Payment in arrears; and
 - Direct Payment
- 13.5 Since the pilot started January 2013, we have developed a small team which consists of 4 staff that have been working very closely with customers in our One Stop Shop in Bath as well as conducting external visits and workshops.
- 13.6 A key part to our bid for Pilot status was that we received funding to support this team including Helen Holbrook from our local Job Centre, which has been an invaluable resource. The team are very self-motivated and have recognised the need to share understanding between the Council and DWP, organising days where staff have moved between our offices to learn what we each do.
- 13.7 Many of the Pilots that have requested an extension are required to provide information to Lord Freud that he can use to help other Authorities prepare for the introduction of Universal Credits. This has been done in the format of 20 Questions which we along with other Pilots will help to answer in order that all Councils can be prepared for the changes.
- 13.8 We will be holding a workshop on the 21st October 2013 to share our learning with other Local Authorities as part of our commitment to the Local Government Association (LGA) and DWP.

- 13.9 Our learning from the Pilot focuses on three specific issues:-
- Digital Access
 - Budgeting Support; and
 - Employability
- 13.10 The outcome of our testing has in many ways validated National data and our own thinking. For instance on the subject of Computer access, over 80% of customers tell us that they would be happy to self-serve and have some form of internet access. However, when questioned further about Universal Credits, only around 50% have access to a computer and around 40% would need some form of support in order to claim.
- 13.11 It has also become evident that knowledge of accessible Public PC's is mixed and often inaccurate, so we have set about creating a digital map to identify this.
- 13.12 We have also found that many people have said that they need help with budgeting in preparation for Universal Credits or indeed to manage now, but engaging these people has been difficult. Some successful workshops, organised with partner organisations have proved successful in starting a dialogue.
- 13.13 Working much closer with DWP has enabled us (the Council) to become more confident in asking customers about employment and working together we have had a number of successes in helping customers find work.
- 13.14 Regular reports are provided to the DWP in relation to learning and progress of the Pilot and a final evaluation of the Pilot will be publicised. We have applied to extend this Pilot and this has been approved. Details about our Pilot extension are covered later in this report.

14.0 Welfare Support Team

- 14.1 The Welfare Support team was created in March 2013 at extremely short notice; it is managed by Customer Service Team Leader Teresa Welch and consists of 4 team members who have experience of working within a wide variety of functions across the Revenue & Benefits service.
- 14.2 The team is responsible for administering our Local Welfare Support provision which includes Social Fund replacement scheme and Discretionary Housing Payment requests.
- 14.3 We are developing very good relations with both internal services such as Connecting families; Family Information Service; Universal Credit Pilot and Housing Services; but also developing links with external agencies and providers such as Food banks, Advice Agencies and Social Landlords.
- 14.4 In recent meetings with CURO & Knightstone Housing we have offered the opportunity for Welfare Officers in these organisations to accompany our officers on visits involving their tenants to see how our process works and we hope that will lead to greater understanding and clarity of what is a difficult and complex process
- 14.5 It is our intention to use this team as a gateway for customers to access all advice and support needed when they are unable to cope with the basic Welfare Provisions.
- 14.6 When Housing Benefits is finally replaced by Universal Credits, not only do we expect an increase in demand for this type of service, but at this point in time it is envisaged that the Local Authority will still receive funding for Discretionary Housing Payments and Local Welfare provision.

15.0 *Partnership Working*

- 15.1 Since the new One Stop Shop opened in Bath in May 2012 we have continued to improve our relationship with a wide range of Partners. This has enabled us to deal with the life events of customers in a more joined up way.
- 15.2 The Universal Credit Pilot has clearly demonstrated that a close working relationship with DWP and the relevant Housing & Advice Agencies is critical. It has also enabled us to recognise the importance of face to face delivery going forward and we seek to encourage the appropriate partners and in-particular DWP to work with us from our One Stop Shops and in the community.
- 15.3 Keynsham One Stop Shop development will help us to build on the model we have created for handling customer enquiries in Bath and Midsomer Norton. We need to build further on the definition of Community Hubs and determine what is needed and effective across Bath & North east Somerset.

16.0 *Housing Allocation Policy*

- 16.1 A new allocations policy (Homesearch) was fully implemented from April 2013.
<http://www.homesearchbathnes.org.uk/Data/ASPPages/1/30.aspx>
- 16.2 Significant changes in the Homesearch policy include;
- Applicants must have a local connection to the area
 - Most owner occupiers are excluded from the scheme
 - Applicants with significant financial means are excluded from the scheme.
 - The number of priority groups has been reduced
 - Priority now given for under occupation
 - Curo Transfers are now offered through Homesearch
 - Changes to bedroom entitlement
 - New Hardship and Welfare panel
- 16.3 New restrictions mean that applicants with no local connection to Bath and North East Somerset as well as those with significant financial means and those who are owner occupiers no longer qualify to be on the Homesearch Register. These new restrictions have resulted in a significant reduction to the number of people on the Housing Register from over 12,000 to 4,100. The reduction to the number of households on the Register means that local people with housing need have a greater chance of being re-housed through Homesearch. Operating a register requiring a local connection is known as a closed register. However, if neighbouring authorities also

operate a closed register, the opportunities for Banes residents to move elsewhere are diminished.

- 16.4 The Homeseach policy now gives the highest priority for under-occupation (group A) and this was introduced in January 2013 to reduce problems prior to the introduction of the Spare-Room Under-Occupation Subsidy. This has resulted in tenants being able to downsize in advance of the policy changes and has significantly contributed to the reduction in the number of tenants underoccupying properties. Another change to Homeseach is that Curo transfer properties are now advertised through the scheme. This has made more properties available to those who are under-occupying and who need to downsize.
- 16.5 Homeseach has changed its bedroom entitlement for children who share rooms, this is to reflect Housing Benefit entitlement. The change to this entitlement has and will result in fewer Housing Benefit claimants under-occupying their homes.
- 16.6 A new Hardship and Welfare panel has been set up to replace the former Social Panel. The new panel is able to give additional priority for Housing, and has a wider brief to consider economic hardship which may occur as a result of welfare reforms.

Upcoming Opportunities

17.0 Local Support Service Framework (Community Budgets)

- 17.1 “On the 5 July the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced nine new places that will receive tailored support to develop and implement local transformation plans. Bath and North East Somerset is one of these areas, following an Expression of Interest in being part of this Network made on behalf of our Public Services Board, which comprises the Council, Police, Fire and Rescue Service, CCG, Curo and voluntary/community sector representation. The key aim of our involvement in this Network is to build on and develop our innovative work on integration and prevention, including our work on Connecting Families and health and social care to improve local services and “join up” budgets across agencies.
- 17.2 The Network draws on experience from 4 “ Whole Place” pilots (Cheshire West & Chester, Essex, Greater Manchester, and the “Tri-Borough authorities in London”) which led to the development of a range of “Business Cases” for service outcomes ranging from the local economy to domestic violence, drawing on local partnership working and building new approaches to delivery.
- 17.3 We are currently working with central government on Joint Statements of Intent with the Network, which will identify the areas of focus for our work as part of the Network. One of the themes currently being explored as part of this is developing our work with DWP on Welfare Reform, as highlighted in the report.
- 17.4 The Council will become a Universal Credit Pathfinder from February 2014. The Government are proposing that the future funding of face-to-face service delivery of Universal Credits will be based on a funding model that incorporates an element of standard funding and an element of outcome-based funding, specifically targeted at our most vulnerable and hard to reach claimants. We are currently engaging with DWP on a local delivery partnership model and to understand the costs and opportunities. This work package therefore aims to examine the whole system including links with DWP, local RSLs and other partners. It will:
- examine challenges relating to advice provision, channel shift and on-line access
 - chart the “client journey” and identify options for a Single Support Gateway
 - focus on prevention and reducing avoidable costs, for example those relating to eviction, food poverty and “failure demands”
 - build on the success of our One-Stop Shop now providing services across the Partnership- including CAB, Age UK, Credit Union, HMRC, Sirona and Curo housing- 80% of questions dealt with at the first point of contact

- understand changes to welfare provision (and other income/financial issues) have an impact on local communities
- 17.5 We have also made a bid to the Government's Transformation Challenge Fund to develop further our approach to sharing information and data across Council services."
- 17.6 The Local Support Service Framework is still in development and as part of our role as a Pilot site for Universal Credits we have been involved in its development, although we do have some major concerns about the funding proposal to include outcome based payments. This poses a huge risk for the authority, particularly if the outcomes chosen are beyond our influence.
- 17.7 The real opportunity here is to work closely with the DWP and key partners to adopt a range of shared principles and to truly join up our service delivery to the Community. We would particularly like to encourage the DWP to share resources at each of our One Stop Shops to provide the initial face to face service delivery for customers and ideally performing the Conditionality interview and Claimant Commitment agreement from these locations.

18.0 Universal Credit Pilot Extension

18.1 Following on from the success of our initial Pilot we have been granted permission to extend our Pilot Status from October until the end of December 2013, during which time we aim to focus on issues around improving customers opportunities when it comes to employability, and improved access to budgeting support and advice on a one to one client trial basis.

From October 2013

18.2 In view of the delays that had already been encountered and the concerns raised by the National Audit Office it has been decided that in order for a safe landing of Universal Credits there will not yet be a National roll-out as expected, starting from October, the national roll-out will be comprised of 3 strands.

18.3 First, across all Jobcentres DWP will roll out components to drive the cultural shift under Universal Credit. Notably 20,000 Jobcentre Plus advisers will be retrained to deliver the Claimant Commitment (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/claimant-commitment-to-spell-out-what-jobseekers-must-do-in-return-for-benefits>) and enhanced jobsearch support nationally. And 10 in-work conditionality pilots will test how best to encourage claimants to progress in work.

18.4 Second, DWP will roll-out improved access to digital services across Jobcentre Plus. 6000 new computers will be installed across the country, embedding digital technology and ensuring that jobseekers become used to online transactions.

18.6 Third, expanding on the early approach in the Pathfinder and plans to deliver Universal Credit safely, DWP will roll out the current Pathfinder process on a phased timeline to a further 6 Jobcentres across the regions/countries: Hammersmith, Rugby, Inverness, Harrogate, Bath and Shotton.

18.7 Our Pathfinder will run along the same lines as those already started in the North West and are restricted to a very small segment of customers. It will mean that anyone who is single and needs to claim Job Seekers Allowance from **February 2014** in the Bath area will have to make a claim for Universal Credits and not JSA. Even fewer of this client group have any Housing Costs, but if they do they will no longer claim Housing Benefit, their claim for Universal Credits will also include this. If these claimants subsequently have a change in circumstances, such as getting married, having a child or moving house they will remain a claimant under universal credit.

18.8 By being a Pathfinder Authority it will continue to give us the opportunity to influence the future design and help us to develop an

effective local deliver agreement with the DWP and other Partners as required under the Local Support Service Framework.

19.0 Data Sharing

- 19.1 It is becoming evident from the many links between the new opportunities and the identified impacts that we need to be able to quantify the risk groups and tailor our responses accordingly.
- 19.2 We are working with partners and internal services to ensure we understand the barriers to sharing information.

20.0 Connecting Communities

- 20.1 Connecting Communities alongside the Customer Service Excellence programme are seen as priority work streams for this Council and will enable us to ensure that services are provided to the right level across Bath & North East Somerset.
- 20.2 We are working together to ensure that the “One Council” ethos is reflected by these two key strategic pieces of work.

21.1 Community Hubs

- 21.2 There are a number of initiatives across Council and other organisations where we are attempting to deliver what are being termed Community Hubs, be they in Children centres, Libraries, Health Centres or other places.
- 21.3 These initiatives are now being considered alongside the best use of Assets and within the Connecting Communities Programme and should help us to target support in the most appropriate and cost effective way.

22.0 Commissioning Support & Advice

- 22.1 We have learnt from co-locating partners within our One Stop shops that there is duplication in the work that the Council, Partners and Voluntary Organisations provide and with smarter commissioning of some of these services we can improve the way we do this.

23.0 Pre-Eviction Panels

- 23.1 Having met with a whole range of people involved with handling our most vulnerable members of the Community, we concluded that in addition to better sharing of data to identify and support high risk groups, we should seek to ensure that absolutely every attempt has been made to help those who are potentially subject to eviction from their home.

23.2 We have decided to trial a process whereby RSL's that are about to commence this kind of action will come together with relevant service providers and support services in the Council to ensure all opportunities of support have been explored and to understand the impacts of this action on the household and the wider taxpayers.

24.0 *Additional funding*

24.1 The council receives funding from Central Government to Administer Housing Benefits and Council Tax Support by way of Administration Grant. This funding has been reducing by about 5% year on year for some time, but it has been topped up on occasions by one off funding streams.

24.2 This year since April we have been notified of further additional funding on top of those mentioned in this report, these include:-

- Funding to meet new burdens of £30,471

24.3 The funding is intended to meet "New Burdens" incurred by local authorities (LAs) as a result of the implementation of the following areas of Welfare reform:

- a. Implementation of changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) (including the move to an annual uprating cycle and changes to the Shared Accommodation Rate)
- b. Implementation of the Removal of the Spare Bedroom Subsidy (formerly Social Sector Size Criteria)
- c. Introduction of the overall benefit cap (phased introduction, starting in April 2013)
- d. Net impact of implementing Universal Credit (UC) in 2013/14

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/225822/s4-2013.pdf

- Additional Transition Funding of £18,614

Examples of potential use of funding include:-

- a. support for Housing Options or Homelessness teams to deal with customers affected by the reforms
- b. obtaining services, such as money advice or help finding work, provided by partner organisations
- c. pooling resources for joint initiatives between different LAs
- d. Lump sum costs associated with housing such as removal costs, rent in advance and deposits.

24.4 This funding is part of a total additional funding package of £35 million (Nationally) which is comprised of three elements:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/spare-room-subsidy-funding-update>

- £10 million of new in-year transitional funding (our share being £18,614)
- £20 million of new Discretionary Housing Payment funding (subject to a bidding process)
- £5 million of new Discretionary Housing Payment funding for remote rural areas (not relevant to Bath & North East Somerset)

Acknowledgements

Jon Poole & David Singleton	Collating information about many of the impacts and creating the Wi-ki link
Teresa Welch;	Providing an update on the work done by the Welfare Support Team; Social Fund replacement and Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's)
Damien Peak; David Massey; John Boxall	Checking and updating information relating to Housing Benefit; DHP and Social Fund issues
David Waters; Maxine Wilson; & Sara Kennedy	Information relating to Council Tax Support; Benefit Cap & Size Criteria
Tony Parker & Paula Bromley	Information relating to Connecting Families
Mike Chedzoy	Home Search and New Housing Allocations Policy information
David Hammond; Elaine Riddle; & Helen Holbrook	Universal Credit Pilot; Pilot Extension & Pathfinder preparation.
Andy Thomas	Community Budgets and local transformation plan.

Abbreviations:-

DWP	Department For Work & Pensions
DHP	Discretionary Housing Payment
LGA	Local Government Association
SSSC	Social Sector Size Criteria
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
RSL	Registered Social Landlord

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Bath & North East Somerset Council	
MEETING:	Resources, Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
MEETING DATE:	30 September 2013
TITLE:	Review of Council Lettings for Use of Rooms
WARD:	ALL
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
<p>List of attachments to this report:</p> <p>Annex A: Revised Terms & Conditions of Hire.</p> <p>Annex B: Comparable venues consulted / websites examined.</p>	

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 The report outlines the progress made in preparing a revised Corporate Hospitality Strategy for Bath's Historic Buildings to be included in the revised Heritage Services Business Plan 2014-2019.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Resources PDS Panel is asked to note the report.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The hire of the Council's historic venues for civic, public, private and corporate events is one of the principal secondary income streams for Heritage Services. In 2012/13 corporate hospitality activities earned £423k in room hire income and a further £188k from functions-related catering commission. The Heritage Services Business Plan 2013-2018 aims to increase these sums to £502k and £250k respectively by the end of 2017/18.
- 3.2 Benchmarking with other major UK visitor attractions demonstrates that Heritage Services consistently performs at or near the level of the top 25% of all leading visitor attractions in the UK for income generated from corporate hospitality.
- 3.3 The Business Plan also identifies five areas of activity requiring particular attention to counter the effects of the economic downturn. Two of these – improving turnover and reducing costs at the Assembly Rooms, and further developing income from corporate hospitality and functions – are pertinent to the Corporate Hospitality Strategy and dependent upon its implementation to achieve the levels of income required by the Business Plan by 2017/18.

4 THE REPORT

- 4.1 Heritage Services manages the Council's historic venues under a Room Hire Policy that sets out the criteria for suitable events to take place in the venues and a sales strategy for achieving the optimum income from them on a sustainable basis. The policy was last revised and updated in 2005 and adopted by the then Executive Member for Tourism Leisure & Culture.
- 4.2 Responsibility for the management of the Guildhall Banqueting Room transferred to Property Services in 2008, although Heritage Services still provides a professional sales and marketing service for it and includes it in its printed and web-based promotional material.
- 4.3 The Corporate Hospitality Strategy seeks to further integrate room hire and functions-based catering and is being developed in partnership with Searcys, the Heritage Services caterers. It will set both the policy framework within which the room hire and catering teams will operate, as well as the marketing plan aimed at maximising business in order to achieve the income required by the Business Plan 2013-2018.
- 4.4 The Mission Statement of the Corporate Hospitality Team is: "To maximise income from the commercial hire of the Pump Room, Roman Baths, Assembly Rooms, Guildhall and Victoria Art Gallery in ways that are appropriate to their historic nature, complementary to their use as visitor attractions, and which exceed customer expectations."
- 4.5 **Criteria for the hire of rooms:** 'appropriate activities' are broadly defined as the kinds of activity for which the buildings were originally intended, ie for the purposes of assembly, entertainment and hospitality. These include:
 - Assembly: meetings, seminars, conferences, company AGMs, trade fairs, product launches and award ceremonies;

- Entertainment: concerts, recitals, festivals, dances, exhibitions and fashion shows;
 - Hospitality: parties, weddings and receptions, dinner-dances, banquets and drinks receptions.
- 4.6 Inappropriate activities are considered those which might damage the fabric or contents of the building, bring the Council or the Service into disrepute, involve excessive quantities of alcohol, cause a nuisance to the building's neighbours or incite racial hatred or civil unrest. The Service does not accept stag nights, hen parties or birthday parties for young adults because these are high risk events. Events that require extensive construction work or large structures may be considered unsuitable for the venues.
- 4.7 Legal and moral restrictions in keeping with the Council's overall ethos and adopted policies will be imposed.
- 4.8 The distinction as to whether an event is appropriate or inappropriate can be marginal. Following public concerns in 2012 over a proposed conference at the Assembly Rooms, measures have been put in place to deal with similar situations in the future. In particular:
- (1) The Terms & Conditions of Hire have been strengthened and the bookings procedure tightened to ensure that all prospective hirers are fully open and transparent about the nature and content of their proposed event; the revised Terms & Conditions are attached at Annex A;
 - (2) All enquiries will now be the subject of a risk assessment to discover at an early stage whether the hirer or the event has the potential for controversy, inappropriate or offensive activity or loss of reputation to the Council. If the risk assessment indicates that the event is likely to be controversial and the enquirer cannot provide suitable assurances, the matter will be referred to the Head of Service and, if necessary, the booking will be refused. This is to protect the Sales Team officers from being accused by the enquirer of prejudicial treatment and of acting alone. In particularly sensitive cases the matter will be brought to the attention of the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development for discussion.
- 4.9 In revising the Terms & Conditions of Hire and determining the best way to assess the suitability of a proposed event, the Head of Service consulted widely with other similar historic venues, principally through the peer group of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions. This research found no other governing body that has drawn up a Corporate Hospitality Strategy Policy for its venue(s).
- 4.10 Many venues have Terms & Conditions of Hire that are very comprehensive and, in some cases, these contain clauses that could be viewed as 'ethical' on subjects such as gambling, the presence of animals and child protection.
- 4.11 No venues were identified that impose restrictions on events in their marketing material or on their websites. All those consulted avoid deterring prospective hirers until they have at least had a conversation with them to discuss their event. Invariably the suitability of events is assessed on a case-by-case basis.

- 4.12 A list of the venues and organisations consulted is attached as Annex B.
- 4.13 **Concessions:** the current policy on concessions is that there is no such thing as a 'free let' and that Heritage Services is not required to subsidise events or meetings arranged or hosted by other Council Services or outside individuals or organisations. This policy is still valid and will be maintained and will also be applied by Property Services with regards to the Guildhall. Outside hirers may be supported corporately or by other Council Services, which are therefore best placed to bear the cost of any concession offered. As previously, personal approaches made to senior officers or elected Members will carry no weight in securing concessions for outside hirers.
- 4.14 There is a presumption against discounting, although for commercial reasons delegated authority to officers to discount rates will continue to be necessary. Any discounts made will continue to be documented with the reasons for the discount given.
- 4.15 **Marketing Strategy:** this will concentrate on two areas of activity:
- consumer marketing: attracting civil ceremonies and wedding receptions; other opportunities for private hire include anniversaries, birthday parties and retirement celebrations;
 - business-to-business marketing: the most important sectors in this area are corporate dinners and conferences for 80 to 300 people, though up to 500 people can be accommodated for a conference. The buildings are also marketed for product launches, award ceremonies, receptions, presentations and exhibitions. Although well used as such, the rooms are not heavily promoted as concert venues because of the limited return and lack of catering requirements.
- 4.16 Marketing tools will include targeted advertising both in print and online, the dedicated bathvenues.co.uk website, telephoning of warm and cold leads, familiarisation visits, social media and special promotions.
- 4.17 When completed, the Corporate Hospitality Strategy 2013-2018 will be discussed with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development and appropriate colleagues. It will be incorporated into the Heritage Services Business Plan 2014-2019 when it goes to Cabinet for decision in early 2014.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

6 EQUALITIES

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment for the Room Hire activities has been completed.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Cabinet Member; Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel; Staff; Service Users; Section 151 Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer.

7.2 Consultation is carried out with users on an ongoing basis. Consultation with colleagues has been carried out in person, by telephone or by email.

8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

8.1 Customer Focus; Sustainability; Property; Corporate; Health & Safety; Other Legal Considerations.

9 ADVICE SOUGHT

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director, Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director, Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

Contact person	Stephen Bird, Head of Heritage Services ext. 7750
Background papers	Heritage Services Business Plan 2013-2018 Heritage Services Room Hire Policy 2005
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

Hire of Bath's Historic Buildings Terms and Conditions

1. DEFINITIONS

In these conditions of hire:-

- 1.1 The 'Council' means the Heritage Services and Property Services Divisions of Bath & North East Somerset Council acting as Bath's Historic Buildings.
- 1.2 The 'Hirer' means the person signing the Hire Agreement (the 'Contract'). Where an organisation is named in the Contract, that organisation shall also be considered the hirer and shall be jointly and severally liable with the person who signed the Contract.
- 1.3 The 'Contract' means the Hire Agreement and Bath's Historic Buildings' Terms & Conditions and also any other relevant correspondence passing between the parties and their agents.
- 1.4 The 'Premises' means those parts of the Building(s) used for the purpose of the Event and referred to in the Contract and other correspondence. The Premises also includes those areas that might reasonably be used by the Hirer or their guests during the Event including entranceways, toilets, lifts and stairways.
- 1.5 The 'Building' means the entire interior and exterior of the specific property containing the Premises as described above in 1.4.
- 1.6 The 'Period of Hire' means the dates and times for hire referred to in the Contract and other correspondence. This may also be referred to as the 'Hire' or the 'Event'.
- 1.7 The 'Authorised Officer' means the Heritage Services Corporate Hospitality Manager of the Council or any person or persons nominated by him. This will include, but shall not be limited to, members of Bath's Historic Buildings team and the Event Officer appointed to oversee a specific event.
- 1.8 The masculine shall include the feminine and the singular shall include the plural.

2. APPLICATIONS TO HIRE

- 2.1 All Hires are subject to the approval of the Authorised Officer to ensure that they conform to the policies and practices of the Council. Applications which will not be approved include those that, in the reasonable opinion of the Council, are likely to promote or incite racial or religious hatred, civil unrest or cause offence.
- 2.2 No application should be considered as approved until written confirmation has been received from the Authorised Officer. E-mail is deemed to be an acceptable form of communication.
- 2.3 Hires are made to the individual making the application ("the Hirer") and are non-transferable. Applications will not be accepted from persons acting on behalf of a third party unless this is declared at the time of the application. Where an application is made by an agent on behalf of a client, the identity of that client and the nature of the event must be revealed before the application is considered.
- 2.4 The purpose of the Hire and also the subject matter must be clearly stated at the time of making the application. The Hirer must honestly declare and fully represent the purpose for hiring the Premises. Any actual or apparent misrepresentation, material omission or misstatement may result in immediate written termination of the Event by the Council. An additional fee, at the sole discretion of the Council, may be levied to cover the reasonable costs incurred by the Council resulting from such termination.
- 2.5 Applications for corporate hire will only be accepted from *bona fide* organisations.
- 2.6 Applications for 18th or 21st birthday parties are generally refused at the complete discretion of the Council.

3. GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 3.1 For the purposes of the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 this Agreement is not intended to and does not give any person who is not a party to it any right to enforce any of its provisions.
- 3.2 The Hirer shall not use the Premises, or permit the Premises to be used, for any purpose other than for the purpose or purposes specified at the time of booking and in the Contract.
- 3.3 The Hirer must not use the Premises, or any part of thereof, for any illegal purpose or in any manner that may, in the Council's reasonable opinion, cause loss, damage, injury or legal nuisance to the Council or any other owner/ occupier of any neighbouring property or which may cause prejudice to the Council.
- 3.4 The Hirer must not use the Premises for purposes whose nature or content could bring the name and reputation of the Council or its venues into disrepute.
- 3.5 The Hirer and his servants, agents, contractors and others allowed on the premises by reason of its hire shall leave the premises at the end of the Period of Hire.
- 3.6 The Council will provide for the normal heating and normal lighting of the premises but shall not be responsible for any failure, defect, damage or loss resulting from any failure unless due solely to negligence by the Council or their servants/ agents.
- 3.7 No nail or fixing of any kind shall be driven into, or applied to, any wall, floor, partition, pillar, ceiling, fitting or furniture of any kind.
- 3.8 No adhesive tape or material may be used to secure loose cables to the floor. Cable matting must be used in all cases.
- 3.9 No alteration or additions to the fixtures, fittings, decorations or equipment at the Building shall be carried out without the prior written consent of the Authorised Officer. Such consent may provide pre-conditions and instructions.
- 3.10 The Hirer is responsible for the conduct of his staff, agents, colleagues, contractors, sub-contractors and guests throughout the Period of Hire.
- 3.11 The Hirer, their agents, guests or contractors who arrive under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be refused entry. The Authorised Officer, other officers of the Council or their authorised contractors on duty during the Period of Hire can refuse the right of entry at any time.
- 3.12 Anyone considered to be excessively under the influence of alcohol will not be served. The Authorised Officer may require guests to vacate the Premises during the Event if behaviour is considered by the Authorised Officer, or their authorised contractors, to be unacceptable. Reasonable force as appropriate may be used.
- 3.13 The Council will be responsible for the employment of any security or door staff required to ensure the safety of an Event and the cost for these will be included in the Hirer's final invoice. Depending on the nature of the Event additional security staff may be required at short notice. The number of security staff required will be at the reasonable discretion of the Council and the Hirer will be notified in advance of any additional costs.
- 3.14 No animal, other than an assistance animal, may be brought into the Building without the prior consent of the Authorised Officer.
- 3.15 With the exception of performances and meetings, catering is required for all events. See section 12.1 regarding the responsibility for catering at the Pump Room and Assembly Rooms
- 3.16 The Hirer shall not be entitled to grant sound, television broadcasting or filming rights without the prior written consent of the Authorised Officer.
- 3.17 The latest finishing time for an Event will be 0100hrs. Any bar facilities will close ½ hour before the end of the Event. Guests will be expected to vacate the building at the finishing time.
- 3.18 Ice sculptures, helium balloons, silly string, dry ice/ smoke machines, foam and bubbles or arcade-style rides etc are not permitted within the Premises.
- 3.19 Confetti may be thrown outside the Building only.
- 3.20 The Hirer, his servants, guests, contractors and employees shall comply with all reasonable requests of the Authorised Officer during the Period of Hire and during such other times as any of them shall be in the Premises.
- 3.21 Where significant changes are required to agreed room layouts after rooms have been prepared for an Event, a surcharge of 10% (with a minimum of £100) of the relevant room fee may be applied to the Booking to cover additional costs incurred.

4. PAYMENTS AND CANCELLATION

- 4.1 A deposit of 25% of the total anticipated room hire charge is required to confirm an Event. All such deposits paid are non-refundable.
- 4.2 Full payment is due at least 14 days prior to the Period of Hire for all events.
- 4.3 Cancellation terms

61 days or more prior to the commencement of the Period of Hire	25% deposit retained
29-60 days prior to the Period of Hire	50% of the total room hire fee
28 days or fewer prior to the Hire Period	100% of the total room hire fee

- 4.4 Any cancellation by the Hirer is deemed to be effective once notice is received in writing by Bath's Historic Buildings.
- 4.5 The Hirer shall be responsible for the payment of all fees such as Performing Rights Society (PRS) where such costs are attributable to the Period of Hire. The Hirer will also indemnify the Council for any claims arising out of non-payment of such fees.

5. TERMINATION

- 5.1 The Council may, at its discretion, terminate the Hire forthwith if the Hirer is found to be in breach of any of these conditions.
- 5.2 The Council may terminate a Hire by notice in writing, without prejudice to any other rights or remedies the Council may have, if the Hirer becomes bankrupt or insolvent or enters into liquidation or receivership or is subject to an application for an administration order or suffers an administrative receiver to be appointed in relation to the whole or part of its assets or makes a composition with its creditors or suffers any judgment to be executed in relation to any of its property or assets.

6. INSURANCE & INDEMNITY

- 6.1 The Hirer must arrange for public liability cover to a minimum value of £5,000,000 for the duration of the Period of Hire. This must also include cover for 3rd party property damage caused through the actions of the Hirer, his servants or guests during the Period of Hire. Failure to submit proof of such insurance prior to the Period of Hire may, at the sole discretion of the Council, result in the termination of the Hire. In such circumstances the Hirer will remain fully liable for the fees payable in respect of the Hire. The Council will not be responsible for any costs or losses which are incurred by the Hirer as a result of such termination.
- 6.2 The Hirer shall be liable for, and, will indemnify the Council against, all actions including proceedings, claims, damages, charges, costs, expenses whatsoever brought or made against the Council in respect of any loss, property damage or personal injury arising from negligence by the hirer or his servants/ guests.
- 6.3 Unless due to the negligence of the Council, the Hirer will indemnify the Council in respect of any damage, theft or loss of any property, goods, or articles brought into or left in the building by reason of the Hire.
- 6.4 The Council shall not be liable for any loss due to industrial action, breakdown of machinery, failure of supply of electricity, leakage of water, fire, Government restrictions or any other circumstances beyond its reasonable control, which may cause any part of the Premises to be temporarily closed or inaccessible or the Period of Hire to be interrupted or cancelled.
- 6.5 The Council shall not be responsible for any loss or damage howsoever caused, to the Hirer's property or the property of any of the Hirer's guests, audience members, participants or contractors. It is understood that all property used or stored in the Building by the Hirer shall be so used or stored at the Hirer's own risk.

7. DAMAGE

- 7.1 The Hirer shall take good care of and, shall not cause any damage or permit any damage to be done to, the Premises or any other part of the Building.
- 7.2 The Hirer shall take good care of and, shall not cause or permit any damage to be done, to any fixtures, fittings, furniture and equipment in any part of the Building during the Period of Hire.

- 7.3 Any damage that is caused or permitted by the hirer, his servants, agents, contractors or any other person resorting to the Premises by reason of the Hire shall be made good by the Council and will be charged to the hirer. The cost of any damage shall be certified by the Authorised Officer whose decision shall be final.
- 7.4 Any unreasonable or unforeseen cleaning, including but not limited to vomit and broken glass, will be recharged to the Hirer. The cost of any such cleaning shall be certified by the Authorised Officer whose decision shall be final.

8. HEALTH & SAFETY

- 8.1 The Hirer will not exceed the maximum capacity of the Premises as advised by the Authorised Officer and published on the website www.bathvenues.co.uk.
- 8.2 The Hirer will ensure that all fire exits from the Premises shall be kept unobstructed and immediately available for exit during the whole time the Premises is in use and until the Premises are cleared by the Hirer, his servants/ guests.
- 8.3 With the exception of candles, the Hirer shall not permit the use of any naked lights within the Premises. All candles must be of the non-drip variety and must be placed in heat-proof containers with drip trays and must not be positioned near other combustible materials. The position of candles is restricted to certain positions in each room, the details of which are available upon request. The Authorised Officer, or any authorised contractor may at any time insist candles are removed or extinguished if it is determined they present an unacceptable risk.
- 8.4 No weapons, explosives, inflammable material, fireworks or other pyrotechnics are permitted in any part of the Building.
- 8.5 Any electrical appliance or lighting brought in to Building for use during the Period of Hire period must have a visible current Portable Appliance Test (PAT) certificate.
- 8.6 No alterations to the electrical distribution or other infrastructure in the Building will be permitted.
- 8.7 The Hirer undertakes to ensure that any children less than 18 years of age attending the Event or using the Premises are properly supervised at all times by a designated guardian. If children arrive at the Building without proper supervision, the Authorised Officer (or their contracted agents) reserves the right to refuse them access. If the Authorised Officer believes any child could objectively be regarded as not being properly supervised, staff may require them and their guardian to leave the Building using reasonable force as appropriate.
- 8.8 The Authorised Officer shall be permitted to immediately terminate the Hire if he determines that the safety of the Building or people within it are at risk due to the Hirer failing to comply with any of the terms above relating to Health and Safety. The Council will not be liable for any damages arising from the termination or suspension unless arising directly from the Council's negligence.
- 8.9 Before the Period of Hire, the Hirer must provide in writing any relevant risk assessments, method statements and/or safe systems of work as required by the Authorised Officer for any activities or procedures to be undertaken by the Hirer or his contractors to enable the Event.

9.0 COMPLIANCE

- 9.1 The Hirer must ensure that the Hire does not contravene UK or EU legislation.
- 9.2 The Hirer must ensure that the Hire complies with all statutory requirements in respect of Environmental Health and Health & Safety legislation.
- 9.3 The Hirer shall observe and comply with the terms, conditions, restrictions and requirements of any relevant Act of Parliament, statutory instrument, licence or regulations under which the Premises may be used.
- 9.4 The Hirer shall not allow any activity that may cause any such statute, regulation or licence to be infringed, suspended, forfeited or jeopardise future renewal or transfer.
- 9.5 The Hirer shall comply with the Council's Equalities Policy, and ensure nothing is done at or in respect of the Building during the Period of Hire which would give serious offence to other people/ organisations by discriminating, denigrating or caricaturing them on the grounds of gender, race, disability, religion, sexual orientation or other such grounds.

10. MARKETING & PROMOTION

- 10.1 The Hirer shall not permit, encourage or arrange for flyposting or other illegal advertising.
- 10.2 No promotional material shall be posted on or in any property belonging to the Council except with prior consent.
- 10.3 Use of the Council's branding, logos and photographs is only permitted with prior consent.
- 10.4 Any press or media attendance or involvement must be clearly communicated in writing to the Authorised Officer in advance and will be subject to approval by the Council's Communications and Marketing Manager.

11. PERSONAL DATA

- 11.1 The Council will only use the personal information provided to it by the Hirer to provide the Services, or to inform the Hirer about similar services which the Council provides, unless the Hirer informs the Council in writing that the Hirer does not want to receive this information.
- 11.2 The Hirer acknowledges and agrees that the Council may pass the Hirer's details to credit reference agencies.

12. VENUE SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

- 12.1 All catering at the Pump Room and Assembly Rooms is the sole responsibility of the Council's appointed Caterer. No outside body or organisation will be permitted to cater on the Premises or to supply food or refreshments without the permission of the Authorised Officer and also the General Manager of the Caterer.
- 12.2 Access to the Roman Baths by the Hirer and his servants for preparation shall not be possible until 1815hrs on the day of the Hire. Access to the Pump Room by the Hirer and his servants for preparation shall not be possible until 1830hrs on the day of the Hire.
- 12.3 The Hirer will ensure that no interference is caused to daytime visitors to the Roman Baths or Fashion Museum or to other users of the Building.
- 12.4 Because of limited space and preparation time available, chair covers may not be used within the Pump Room Building. Where these are used at the Assembly Rooms or Guildhall, the Hirer must ensure that they are removed from the Building immediately at the end of the Period of Hire. A surcharge may be applied where a Hirer or their contractor fails to remove these.
- 12.5 At the Victoria Art Gallery only clear drinks are permitted in the Upper Gallery.

13. VARIATION

- 13.1 The parties may agree between themselves, in writing, to vary the terms of the Contract in whole or in part throughout the duration of the agreement.

BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET

Updated by Bath & North East Somerset Council's Heritage Services

April 2013

Comparable venues consulted / websites examined

Comparable local authority venues:

Brighton Royal Pavilion (Brighton & Hove Council)
 Brighton Museum and Art Gallery (Brighton & Hove Council)
 Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery (Bristol City Council)
 Cardiff Castle (Cardiff Council)
 Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum (Cheltenham Borough Council)
 Cheltenham Town Hall (Cheltenham Borough Council)
 Pittville Pump Room, Cheltenham (Cheltenham Borough Council)
 Edinburgh Assembly Rooms (Edinburgh City Council)
 Leamington Spa Royal Pump Rooms (Warwick District Council)
 Norwich Castle Museum (Norfolk County Council)
 Shugborough Hall (Staffordshire County Council)
 Winchester Guildhall (Winchester City Council)

Other museums / groups of museums:

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
 Birmingham Museums
 British Museum
 Colchester Castle Museum
 Glasgow Museums
 Liverpool Museums
 MShed, Bristol
 Museum of London
 National Gallery
 National Museum of Wales
 National Museum of Scotland
 National Portrait Gallery
 Natural History Museum
 Science Museum
 SS Great Britain
 Tate Britain
 Tate Modern
 Victoria & Albert Museum

Other venues / governing bodies:

Barbican Centre
 Bishopwood House
 Blenheim Palace
 Canterbury Cathedral
 Commonwealth Club
 Eden Project
 English Heritage
 Hurlingham Club
 Inner Temple
 Kew Gardens
 London Zoo
 Manor by the Lake
 National Trust
 Newcastle Assembly Rooms
 Norwich Assembly House
 St Paul's Cathedral
 Stanton Manor
 Vintners Hall
 Westminster Abbey
 York Assembly Rooms

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Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING	Resources - Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel Committee	
MEETING/ DATE:	30th September 2013	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: <i>[Cabinet reports only]</i>
		E 9999
TITLE:	Property Budget Savings Review	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Provide an update to the Resources PDS on the organisational change principles being undertaken within Property and Project Delivery to achieve the 13/14 and 14/15 savings targets

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the content of the report.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 Savings targets are in line with the agreed targets in the MTSRP for Property

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 N/A

5 THE REPORT

5.1 Organisational Change in Project Delivery and Property Services

Financial Background

In response to the significant budget pressure on the Council's overall budget the 13/14 approved budget has resulted in a reduction in expenditure on planned and reactive maintenance. The Property Services savings target of £721,000 for 13/14 comprise a reduction of £344,000 from the repair and maintenance budget and £377,000 on staffing costs. Further savings of £315,000 are planned for 2014/15.

In addition the planned expenditure on capital projects across the schools estate is planned to reduce still further as Children Services receive further reductions in capital grants from central government.

It is against this background that has driven the need to change. Without taking action to reduce the overall cost of delivering maintenance and capital projects Project Delivery and Property Services would experience a significant budget pressure resulting in revenue overspend.

Integration of Building Consultancy within Project Delivery

Following an internal organisational review a decision was made to combine the former Major Projects and Building Consultancy team into a single Project Delivery team, managing both planned and reactive building maintenance and capital projects on behalf of the Corporate Body.

In order to achieve the maximum benefits of this opportunity a wider review took place to investigate the roles and responsibilities across the Property Services Estates Divisions and the former Building Consultancy and Major Projects teams to simplify and clarify each of the functions and teams.

In April 2013 Project Delivery and Property Services commissioned an external review of the current Building Consultancy group and how it works with other areas within the Council.

The review was carried out as part of the on-going process of investigating ways of achieving efficiencies across all the service areas in which it operates, whilst where possible maintaining or improving the quality of the service it delivers.

Summary of the Recommendations

In undertaking the overall review of the Property and Major Projects functions within B&NES we have identified a number of positive areas, including: -

- Robust management and reporting of projects
- Clear understanding of customer needs
- There is a lot of technical knowledge that is held by individuals which needs to be extracted into an overall database.
- Looking to enhance revenue for departments by offering "Commercial Services" to third parties

There are, however, areas that with simple changes to the current situation would result in improved productivity and efficiency.

In order to address these issues and build on the positive areas it is recommended that the following changes are undertaken:

- Combine all current Asset Management functions to form a strengthened asset management team, avoiding duplication and improving the quality of communication and asset information
- Combine the Major Projects and BC Project Management team into a single Project Delivery function adopting the principles of the commission led approach to delivery where appropriate
- Adopt the principle of client and delivery functions with clear lines of responsibility and accountability

Asset Management

The knowledge regarding the Asset Estate needs to sit within a single location. It is recommended that this should be the responsibility of an extended asset management group incorporating the corporate and commercial building surveying team.

The expanded asset management team should be responsible for the following functions across the Schools Corporate and Commercial Estates:

- The determination and review of maintenance and new building standards and strategies for assets
- The formulation of a strategic maintenance plan
- Production and management of asset knowledge
- Delivery of the programme of insurance valuations
- Commissioning and / or development of client feasibility studies and client scopes to PIDG stage
- Commissioning of the planned and term maintenance works
- The development and, after approval, allocation of maintenance budgets across operational and revenue areas
- The collation analysis and review of maintenance information from the Corporate Information System for management, planning and reporting purposes
- The provision of data to the Council, Government and other benchmarking partners
- Regulatory compliance management and health and safety advice
- Technical support including the helpdesk

The new Asset Management team will act as 'Intelligent Client' for all built assets including the corporate and commercial asset groups plus the schools estate.

Project Delivery (Incorporating Building Consultancy)

The Project Delivery Teams should be responsible for the following functions:

- Development of maintenance and capital delivery strategies
- Procurement of all contracts
- Commercial management of maintenance and capital contracts

- Commissioning of external consultants to develop schemes from the agreed client briefs
- Management of the operational responsive maintenance team
- Management of reactive maintenance demand within the annual budget
- Preparation of future reactive maintenance projections
- Delivery of maintenance contracts
- Delivery of capital contracts
- Project reporting to the client teams

6 RATIONALE

6.1 The approach outlined above will improve the efficiency of the Property Services function, reducing duplication and achieving costs savings

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 Informal staff consultation on the change has taken place. Formal consultation will be carried out in line with Council policy.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations will be undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance prior to the commencement of any formal consultation.

Contact person	<i>Derek Quilter / Richard Long</i>
Background papers	
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

RESOURCES PDS FORWARD PLAN

This Forward Plan lists all the items coming to the Panel over the next few months.

Inevitably, some of the published information may change; Government guidance recognises that the plan is a best assessment, at the time of publication, of anticipated decision making. The online Forward Plan is updated regularly and can be seen on the Council's website at:

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=1>

The Forward Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to openness and participation in decision making. It assists the Panel in planning their input to policy formulation and development, and in reviewing the work of the Cabinet.

Should you wish to make representations, please contact the report author or Michaela Gay, Democratic Services (01225 394411). A formal agenda will be issued 5 clear working days before the meeting.

Agenda papers can be inspected on the Council's website and at the Guildhall (Bath), Hollies (Midsomer Norton), Riverside (Keynsham) and at Bath Central, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton public libraries.

Resources PDS Forward Plan

Bath & North East Somerset Council
Anticipated business at future Panel meetings

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Strategic Director Lead
RESOURCES PDS PANEL - 30TH SEPTEMBER 2013				
30 Sep 2013	Resources PDS	Workplaces Update (including Guildhall and Keynsham)	David Thompson, Derek Quilter Tel: 01225 394368, Tel: 01225 477739	Andrew Pate
30 Sep 2013	Resources PDS	Review of Council Lettings for Use of Rooms	Stephen Bird Tel: 01225 477750	Andrew Pate
Page 78 30 Sep 2013	Resources PDS	Welfare Reform	Ian Savigar Tel: 01225 477327	Andrew Pate
30 Sep 2013	Resources PDS	Staff Resources	David Thompson, William Harding Tel: 01225 394368, Tel: 01225 477203	Andrew Pate
30 Sep 2013	Resources PDS	Property - Budget Savings Review	Derek Quilter, Richard Long Tel: 01225 477739,	Andrew Pate
30 Sep 2013	Resources PDS	Cabinet Member Update	Andrew Pate Tel: 01225 477300	Andrew Pate
RESOURCES PDS PANEL - 11TH NOVEMBER 2013				

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Strategic Director Lead
11 Nov 2013	Resources PDS	Grand Parade and Undercroft Update	Tom McBain Tel: 01225 477806	Andrew Pate
11 Nov 2013	Resources PDS	Update on Budget Savings and Income Delivery	Tim Richens Tel: 01225 477468	Andrew Pate
11 Nov 2013	Resources PDS	Medium Term Plans	Andrew Pate Tel: 01225 477300	Andrew Pate
11 Nov 2013	Resources PDS	Performance Management	Steve Harman	Andrew Pate
11 Nov 2013	Resources PDS	Procurement	Tim Richens Tel: 01225 477468	Andrew Pate
11 Nov 2013	Resources PDS	Cabinet Member Update	Andrew Pate Tel: 01225 477300	Andrew Pate
RESOURCES PDS PANEL - 13TH JANUARY 2014 - RESERVE DATE				
RESOURCES PDS PANEL - 10TH FEBRUARY 2014				

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Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Strategic Director Lead
10 Feb 2014 12 Feb 2014 18 Feb 2014 E2592	Resources PDS Cabinet Council	Budget & Council Tax 2014/15 and Financial Plan 2014/15 - 2015/16	Tim Richens Gary Adams Tel: 01225 477468 Tel: 01225 477107	Andrew Pate
RESOURCES PDS PANEL - 17TH MARCH 2014				
RESOURCES PDS PANEL - 12TH MAY 2014				
The Forward Plan is administered by DEMOCRATIC SERVICES : Michaela Gay 01225 394411 Democratic_Services@bathnes.gov.uk				