BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

16 FEBRUARY 2016

CORPORATE DIRECTOR RESOURCES

BUDGET MONITORING – QUARTER 3 2015-16

1. Purpose of this report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an update on the Council's financial position as at 31st December 2015.

2. Connections to Corporate Improvement Objectives and Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 The budget monitoring report provides an overview of the current financial position and projected outturn for the year against the budget approved by Council in February 2015. The allocation of budget determines the extent to which the corporate improvement priorities can be delivered.

3. Background

3.1 On 25th February 2015, Council approved a net revenue budget of £252.201 million for 2015-16, along with a capital programme for the year of £36.441 million, which was revised in October 2015 to £40.223 million. As part of the Performance Management Framework, budget projections are reviewed regularly and reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The drawdown of earmarked reserves and the delivery of agreed budget reductions is also kept under review and reported to Cabinet as part of this process.

4.0 Current Situation

4.1 Summary financial position at 31st December 2015.

- 4.1.1 The overall projected position as at 31st December 2015 is a net under spend of £1.165 million, comprising £602,000 net under spend on directorates and £563,000 under spend on corporate budgets. A detailed analysis of the more significant projected under and over spends is set out in section 4.3.
- 4.1.2 The Council's net revenue budget and projected outturn for 2015-16 is shown in Table 1 below.

Directorate/Divisions	Revised Budget 2015-16 £'000	Projected Outturn 2015-16 £'000	Projected Over / (Under) Spend Qtr 3 2015-16 £'000	Projected Over / (Under) Spend Qtr 2 2015-16 £'000
Directorate				
Education and Transformation Social Services and Wellbeing Communities Resources Legal & Regulatory Services	105,835 60,987 25,210 14,438 6,089	105,735 60,885 25,344 14,273 5,720	(100) (102) 134 (165) (369)	(221) (7) 104 (333) (114)
Total Directorate Budgets	212,559	211,957	(602)	(571)
Council Wide Budgets				
Capital Financing Precepts and Levies Repairs and Maintenance Council Tax Reduction Scheme Insurance Costs Other Corporate Budgets	10,372 6,912 1,100 13,869 1,634 5,755	10,372 6,912 1,000 13,500 1,634 5,661	0 0 (100) (369) 0 (94)	0 0 (385) 0 (390)
Total Council Wide Budgets	39,642	39,079	(563)	(775)
Total	252,201	251,036	(1,165)	(1,346)

Table 1- Comparison of budget against projected outturn at 31st December 2015

- 4.1.3 The budget was set on the assumption of full implementation of the current year budget reduction requirements across the Council's budget which amount to £11.225 million. However, in some cases proposals to meet this requirement have been delayed, or have been found to be unachievable. In these cases directorates have identified alternative proposals such as holding vacancies to bridge any in-year shortfall.
- 4.1.4 In January 2016 Cabinet approved for consultation a Draft Budget for 2016-17 and an outline Medium Term Financial Strategy which estimated that the Council will have to find £36.5 million of recurrent budget reductions between 2016 and 2020. Against that background it is critical for the Council to keep expenditure within the approved 2015-16 budget and that longer term budget reductions proposals continue to be developed.
- 4.1.5 At year end consideration will be given to the overall financial position of the Council including the final outturn, any accrued Council Tax income, the Council's reserve levels and any new pressures or risks that need to be provided for. At that time in line with the Council's reserves protocol Directors will be invited to submit earmarked reserve requests to meet any specific unfunded one-off expenditure that they expect to arise in 2016-17 and these will be considered in the context of

Directorate outturn positions as well as that of the Council as a whole. At this stage in the financial year officers are aware of two significant issues that, subject to business cases and Cabinet/Council approval, will require significant investment during the MTFS period - the Digital Transformation Programme and provision of Extra Care facilities. The S151 Officer is also currently assessing the business case for making a contribution to the Pension Fund to meet outstanding superannuation liabilities as a means of reducing pressure on the Council's revenue budget in the future by slowing the rate of employer contribution rate increases. A recommendation will be brought to Cabinet once detailed information has been provided by the fund actuary. Consideration will also be given at year end to the potential to repay outstanding prudential borrowing where this is affordable and it would reduce future capital financing charges.

4.2 Monitoring of Budget Reduction Proposals

4.2.1 The budget approved for 2015-16 included budget reduction proposals of £11.225 million, which is broken down in Appendix 1 and summarised with a RAG status in Table 2 below. At this point in the financial year 76% of the proposals are GREEN compared to 83% at the half year stage. This is mainly due to delays in implementing the Learner Transport budget reductions (£300,000), and failures to realise in full savings from remodelling the childcare team (£72,000), children's residential care (£200,000) and management and administrative savings in the Social Services and Wellbeing directorate (£215,000).

	GREEN		AMBER		RED		TOTAL	
DIRECTORATE	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%	£'000	%
Education and Transformation	2,039	83.2%	412	16.8%	0	0.0%	2,451	21.8%
Social Services and Wellbeing	2,357	66.7%	572	16.2%	605	17.1%	3,534	31.5%
Communities	1,366	54.9%	497	20.0%	625	25.1%	2,488	22.2%
Resources	1,153	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1,153	10.3%
Legal and Regulatory Services	554	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	554	4.9%
Corporate	1,045	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1,045	9.3%
TOTAL	8,514	75.8%	1,481	13.2%	1,230	11.0%	11,225	100.0%

Table 2 – Monitoring of Budget Reductions 2015-16

- 4.2.2 Nine proposals are currently RED, totalling £1.230 million and these are unlikely to be realised at all during this financial year. Five are in the Communities Directorate (total £625,000) and relate to the following proposals: the MREC project (£300,000); car parking provision (£60,000); public conveniences (£50,000); parking charges for blue badge holders (£165,000); and charging for black bags (£50,000). The others are in the Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate and relate to: the Learning Disabilities Tender (£220,000); the re-provision and remodelling of Shared Lives (£135,000); Remodelling of Children's Residential Care (£200,000) and Directorate sickness cover costs (£50,000).
- 4.2.3 Nine budget reduction proposals are AMBER, totalling £1.481 million and these are likely to be only partially realised in the current the financial year. The most significant are: the School Transport Route Efficiencies and Rationalisation of SEN Transport (£200,000 and £100,000 respectively); specialist and complex homecare (£307,000); the review of Grounds Maintenance and Bereavement Services (£437,000); and the review of school crossing patrol service (£60,000).

4.2.4 The forecast outturn reflects that Directors have found short term measures to manage the in-year shortfall caused by the RED and AMBER budget reductions identified above.

4.3 Commentary on the financial position as at 31st December 2015

A summary of the financial position for each main service area is attached as Appendix 2 to this report and comments on the most significant variances are provided below, along with draw down on earmarked reserves to date.

4.3.1 Education and Transformation Directorate

The net budget for the Directorate for 2015-16 is £105.835 million. Current projections indicate an under spend of £100,000 at year end, which assumes that the £412,000 of AMBER reductions are met from elsewhere within the directorate. Earmarked reserves had been established for the roll out of cashless catering and implementing health and safety improvements in school kitchens, and expenditure has been incurred in these areas but, due to the overall directorate under spend, these have not been drawn down. The main variances are:

EDUCATION & TRANSFORMATION DIRECTORATE	Net Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Variance Over/(under) budget £'000	% Variance
Schools Based SEN	2,540	2,322	(218)	-8.6%
Inter Authority Recoupment / Out of County	326	(122)	(448)	-137.4%
School Improvement	785	927	142	18.1%
Home to School / College Transport	4,310	4,480	170	3.9%
Catering Service	664	753	89	13.4%
Dismissal / Retirement Costs	983	1,154	171	17.4%

School Based Special Educational Needs

• The under spend of £218,000 is a combination of vacancies across specialist bases in schools and reduced spend on one-to-one support for pupils during the year, due to difficulties in recruiting additional support staff. The directorate is considering options to improve recruitment in 2016-17.

Inter-Authority Recoupment / Out of County (OOC) Placements

 There is currently an under spend of £411,000 projected on the education budget for out of county placements, due to a reduction in the number of placements, from 32 in March 2015 to 27 currently, as pupils are brought back in-County to be educated . Alongside this, the authority is projecting an additional £37,000 income in respect of pupils from other local authorities attending this authority's schools.

School Improvement

• There is a projected over spend on the School Improvement budget of £142,000 as a result of additional support provided by the Corporate Director to schools in difficulty and facing challenges, including additional teaching support and resources.

Home to School / College Transport

There is a potential over spend of £170,000 on Home to School / College transport as savings anticipated due to further retendering of contracts are less than anticipated. In addition, the 2015-16 MTFS savings have not been fully achieved partly from the limited rationalisation of contracts because of increases in the number of pupils eligible for transport. Route efficiencies have not being fully realised as the agreed change to the Learner Travel policy by Cabinet will not now be implemented until September 2016 and this will not bring the same level of savings as were originally identified. Further efficiencies to SEN and Looked After Children (LAC) transport have been ongoing but have been impacted by some increased demand for individual transport due to the needs of individual children and our duty as a Local Authority to ensure that they are transported in line with our statutory responsibilities and our current Learner Travel policy.

Catering Service

• The projected over spend of £89,000 on the catering service has arisen as a result of not drawing down earmarked reserves for the roll out of the cashless catering system (£37,000) and health and safety improvements in school kitchens (£123,000) due to the overall under spend position in the directorate. This complies with the Council's protocol on the use of reserves and balances. The service would be projecting an under spend of £71,000 if the reserve had been drawn down.

Dismissal / Retirement Costs

• The projected over spend of £171,000 relates to an increased number of school redundancies and early retirements in 2015-16, as a result of falling school rolls, or pressure on school budgets, which have been approved by the Corporate Director. An earmarked reserve was established at the end of 2014-15 to meet any additional costs above budget, but this has not been drawn down to date due to the Directorate's overall under spend.

4.3.2 Social Services and Wellbeing Directorate

The Directorate's net budget for 2015-16 is £60.987 million. Current projections indicate an under spend of £102,000 at year end, assuming that any shortfall in RED and AMBER budget reductions (£977,000 in total) is met from elsewhere within the directorate budget. This is also after draw down of £248,000 from earmarked reserves for remodelling of adult social care (£112,000), Looked After Children strategy (£23,000), Connecting Families (£12,000), Homecare and meals at home (£67,000), residual job evaluation costs for safeguarding (£34,000) and Regional Adoption Service (£290,000). The main variances are:

SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING DIRECTORATE	Net Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Variance Over/(under) budget £'000	% Variance
Older People Residential Care	8,261	7,969	(292)	-3.5%
Older People Home Care	7,941	8,307	366	4.6%
Learning Disabilities Residential Care	1,487	1,644	157	10.6%
Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities	3,232	3,099	(133)	-4.1%
Administrative and Central Services	606	814	208	34.3%
Looked After Children	10,923	11,069	146	1.3%
Family Support Services	978	808	(170)	-17.4%
Other Child and Family Services	725	805	80	11.0%

Older People Residential Care

 A projected net under spend of £292,000 is likely as a result of increased income (£54,000) from client contributions and for respite care and reductions in nursing placements (£236,000) and running costs (£50,000), which are partly offsetting additional staffing pressures mainly as a result of sickness in the service (£51,000).

Older People Home Care

• The projected over spend is due to the increased demand for homecare hours, which are higher than those forecasted by the service at this point in the financial year. The directorate is currently remodelling the homecare service with a view to retaining only critical and complex care internally and transferring other care to independent providers.

Learning Disabilities Residential Care

• A projected over spend of £157,000 is likely as a result of the continued provision of 2 additional residential placements. These placements will continue into the new financial year. The directorate will re-align budgets in 2016-17 to meet this pressure.

Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities

• There is currently a projected under spend of £133,000 on the day opportunities budget as a consequence of staff vacancies within the service, part of which is held in anticipation of budget reductions in 2016-17. The under spend on these posts will not reoccur in 2016-17.

Administrative and Central Services

• The directorate is carrying a budget pressure from the non-achievement of some 2015-16 budget reductions, including sickness absence savings. Whilst these are being mitigated by additional savings generated elsewhere in the 2015-16 budget, the directorate may need to re-align budgets in 2016-17 to ensure the over spend does not reoccur.

Looked After Children

• The number of LAC at 31st December 2015 was 367 compared to 390 at the end of March 2015, but there is a projected over spend of £146,000 because the budget was based on a projected number of LAC of 351 at the end of March 2016. There has been a need to extend two out of county placements to the end of the financial year (£122,000). An under spend is projected

within this budget as a result of a forecast reduction of 9 independent fostering agency placements, but this is being used to cover the remodelling of children's residential services budget reduction proposal which will be mitigated by budget realignment in 2016-17.

Family Support Services

 There is a projected under spend of £170,000, partly as a result of underutilised direct payments (£96,000), which have been re-claimed, and partly due to under spends on salary budgets and residence orders, which have reduced in total from those granted in 2014-15. A recurrent budget pressure allocation of £400,000 for direct payments was approved by Council in February 2015 for 2015-16 onwards. As there is a projected under spend on this budget currently, the position will be reviewed at year end to determine future on-going requirement of this pressure.

Other Child and Family Support Services

• There is a projected over spend of £80,000 on adoptions due to a higher number of adoptions expected by year end than forecast (30 compared to 27). The shared service business case highlighted that the cost of the service was expected to reduce in 2016-17 on the assumption that the number of adoptions in Bridgend would be lower than in the other two authorities. If however the Council can maintain the numbers of adoptions at the current level the cost will not reduce, but the resultant budget shortfall will be met by the LAC budget, which should reduce accordingly.

4.3.3 Communities Directorate

The net budget for the Directorate for 2015-16 is £25.210 million and the current projection is an anticipated over spend of £134,000 after draw down of £332,000 from earmarked reserves. A total of £1.122 million budget reductions are currently classed as RED or AMBER, and the majority of these are met from elsewhere within the directorate, thus reducing the projected net over spend. The earmarked reserve draw down includes funding for the Cultural Trust (£125,000), Review of Infrastructure Assets (£11,000), Highways Review (£16,000), Community Asset Transfer (CAT) (£8,000), redundancy costs (£69,000), procurement of the new waste contract (£20,000), street cleaning (£35,000) and Depot feasibility spend (£29,000). This also takes into account draw down of the one-off budget pressure of £135,000 in respect of the costs of increased tonnage at the MREC. The main variances are:

COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE	Net Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Variance Over/(under) budget £'000	% Variance
Housing options, strategy and homelessness	1,341	1,090	(251)	-18.7%
Waste Disposal	5,253	5,453	200	3.8%
Street Lighting	1,630	1,480	(150)	-9.2%
Fleet	(68)	132	200	-294.1%
Transport and Engineering	861	985	124	14.4%

Housing Options, Strategy and Homelessness

 There is a projected under spend on this area of £251,000. This is mainly as a result of a £205,000 projected under spend on bed and breakfast costs, in addition to a projected under spend of £40,000 relating to a non-staffing efficiency saving identified in advance of budget reductions in 2016-17.

Waste Disposal

• The MREC procurement is ongoing so the £300,000 budget reduction target will not be achieved in 2015-16. There are also additional costs incurred at the MREC due to additional tonnage, but this has been mitigated by the one-off budget pressure (£135,000) agreed for 2015-16 and savings from the interim Anaerobic Digestion procurement project, which commenced in August 2015, bringing the net over spend down to £200,000.

Street Lighting

• There is a projected under spend on street lighting of £150,000. This relates to a budget reduction proposal for 2016-17, which has been brought forward in order to offset non-achievement of 2015-16 budget reductions elsewhere within the directorate.

Fleet

• There is a projected over spend of £200,000 in this service area, which is primarily due to a downturn in income against hire charge expenditure.

Transport and Engineering

• There is a projected overall over spend of £124,000 on transport and engineering primarily due to delays in the implementation of car park budget reductions for 2015-16 (£225,000), such as charging blue badge holders, and staff car parking charges, which has been offset by higher income than anticipated on the engineering service. There will be a loss of income at the Rhiw car park during the Vibrant and Viable construction works, but an earmarked reserve has been established to meet this shortfall and will be drawn down when the actual cost is known.

4.3.4 **Resources Directorate**

The net budget for the Directorate for 2015-16 is £14.438 million and current projections anticipate an under spend against this budget of £165,000 after draw down of £48,000 from earmarked reserves in respect of Change Fund projects and feasibility works on energy related projects. The main variances are:

RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	Net Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Variance Over/(under) budget £'000	% Variance
Facilities Management	1,535	1,376	(159)	-10.4%
Commercial Income	(787)	(605)	182	-23.1%
Housing Benefit: Admin and Claims	478	567	89	18.6%
Audit Fees	816	676	(140)	-17.2%

Property Services

- Facilities Management: The under spend of £159,000 primarily relates to a combination of reduced business rates and running costs on Council premises.
- Commercial Income: The under spend on Facilities Management is offset by an over spend relating to voids on non-operational assets (£182,000).

Housing Benefit: Admin and Claims

• The net over spend of £89,000 comprises an under spend of £141,000 on the administration of housing benefit claims, due to the transfer of fraud activity to DWP, offset by a projected over spend of £230,000 on payments of housing benefit, based on the latest estimate of housing benefit subsidy to be claimed.

Audit Fees

• The under spend of £140,000 comprises an under spend of £45,000 on internal audit fees, as a result of staffing vacancies, and £95,000 relating to reduced external audit fees, based on current spend profile.

4.3.5 Legal and Regulatory Services Directorate

The net budget for the Directorate for 2015-16 is £6.089 million and current projections anticipate an under spend against this budget of £369,000, after draw down of £46,000 from earmarked reserves in respect of legal and administrative support from the Change Fund, and £100,000 in respect of land litigation charges. The main variances are:

LEGAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES DIRECTORATE	Net Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Variance Over/(under) budget £'000	% Variance
Legal Services	2,256	2,142	(114)	-5.1%
Regulatory Services	1,631	1,573	(58)	-3.6%
Procurement	287	222	(65)	-22.6%
Partnerships	353	264	(89)	-25.2%

Legal Services

• The projected under spend on Legal Services is mainly a combination of additional income from the Registrar's service of £62,000, and an under spend on Child Care disbursements of £42,000.

Regulatory Services

• The Joint Regulatory Service, which came into existence in May, is currently projecting an under spend, as a result of vacancies held whilst the new structure was being populated.

Procurement

• The under spend relates to vacancy management in preparation for future MTFS budget reductions. These under spends will not reoccur in 2016-17.

Partnerships

• The under spend relates to vacancy management in preparation for future MTFS budget reductions. These under spends will not reoccur in 2016-17.

4.3.6 Council Wide budgets

This section of the accounts includes budgets, provisions and services which are council wide, and not managed by an individual directorate. The budget is £39.642 million and the projected outturn is £39.079 million, resulting in a projected under spend of £563,000. The half year position identified an under spend on corporate budgets of £775,000 and this has been transferred to earmarked reserves to support the Council's Capital Programme following a review of the Council's investment needs. The main variances at Quarter 3 are detailed below:

CORPORATE BUDGETS	Net Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Variance Over/(under) budget £'000	% Variance
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	13,869	13,500	(369)	-2.7%
Building Maintenance	1,100	1,000	(100)	-9.1%
Other Corporate Budgets	5,755	5,661	(94)	-1.6%

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

• The under spend of £369,000 is a result of lower demand than forecast for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. This is a demand led budget which is based on full take up, and whilst actual take up is not known with certainty until year end, the potential under spend is considered realistic at this point in the financial year. Budget reduction proposals of £300,000 in both 2016-17 and 2017-18 are built into the draft MTFS so this level of under spend is not expected to recur.

Building Maintenance

• The budget contains funding to repay prudential borrowing to fund the £1 million capital investment in parks pavilions in the capital programme. These works are now linked to Community Asset Transfer and consequently no spend has yet been incurred, and no funding drawn down.

Other Corporate Budgets

• The net under spend of £94,000 is a combination of lower draw down of funding for pay and price pressures than anticipated due to lower inflation rates, which is partly offset by a transfer of £750,000 to earmarked reserves to support the Council's Capital Programme, the detail of which will be presented for approval to Council in March 2016 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

It should be noted that the projected outturn for Corporate Budgets is likely to change towards the end of the financial year, depending on additional redundancies incurred during the remainder of the financial year, the extent of inclement weather, further demands on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the superannuation business case referred to in paragraph 4.1.5.

4.4 Capital programme monitoring

- 4.4.1 The Council approved a revised Capital Programme in October 2015 with a budget of £40.223 million in 2015-16. The current capital programme budget for 2015-16 totals £40.088 million of which £24.794 million is BCBC resources with the remaining £15.294 million coming from external grants. The main reasons for the difference between the October programme and the current programme are:
 - £187,000 Provision of a new artificial pitch at Pencoed Comprehensive School. In October 2015 Council agreed to use the £87,000 balance on the 'escrow' account in respect of Bridgend Town Football Club to improve sports facilities within the County Borough. £52,000 of this funding has been supplemented by £75,000 of grant from Sports Wales and £60,000 from the Children's minor works budget to cover the full cost. The remaining £35,000 of escrow funding will be carried forward into 2016-17.
 - £61,000 Additional Welsh Government funding for Coity By-Pass Land compensation scheme (reported in quarter 2 monitoring report).
 - Adjustments against the Vibrant and Viable Places Programme to maximise grant.
- 4.4.2 Appendix 3 provides details of the larger schemes within the capital programme, showing the budget available in 2015-16 compared to the projected spend. Commentary is provided detailing any issues associated with these projects.
- 4.4.3 As at quarter 3 there is a projected under spend of £62,000 against budget, after slippage of £8.399 million, compared to the programme approved by Council in October 2015. The main schemes affected are:
 - 21st Century School Programme following submission of the updated spending profile to Welsh Government, the capital programme has been revised to reflect the planned delivery of the new schools within the 21st Century Schools programme.
 - Housing Renewal / Disabled Facilities Grants slippage requested due to a backlog in occupational therapy referrals.
 - Relocation and Rationalisation of Depot Facilities slippage requested whilst full feasibility is undertaken on the preferred site.
- 4.4.4 At this point in the financial year, and following discussions with directorates, it is assumed that all other projects will be in line with the revised budget as set out in Appendix 3. However, this will depend upon any inclement weather experienced during the last quarter, which may place additional pressure on project timescales.

4.5 Review of Earmarked reserves

The Council is required to maintain adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the organisation. The MTFS includes the Council's Reserves and Balances Protocol which sets out how the Council will determine and review the level of its Council Fund balance and Earmarked Reserves. A quarter 3 review of the particular pressures that were to be covered by earmarked reserves was undertaken, but earmarked reserves were not drawn down if the Directorate could absorb these pressures from forecast under spends elsewhere within their budgets. This will again be reviewed at year-end as per the Protocol. During the period until December 2015, Directorates drew down £288,000 of funding from their Directorate specific earmarked reserves that were created as part of the 2014-15 year-end process, and £940,000 from Corporate Reserves including the Major Claims Reserve and the Change Fund. A full breakdown of total movement on earmarked reserves at 31st December is provided in Appendix 4.

5.0 Effect upon policy framework & procedural rules

5.1 As required by section 3 (budgetary control) of the Financial Procedure Rules; Chief Officers in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member are expected to manage their services within the approved cash limited budget and to provide the Chief Finance Officer with such information as is required to facilitate and monitor budgetary control.

6.0 Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no implications in this report.

7.0 Financial implications

7.1 These are reflected in the body of the report.

8.0 Recommendations

Cabinet is requested to note the projected revenue and capital outturn position for 2015-16.

Ness Young Corporate Director Resources February 2016

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Background Papers

Individual Directorate Monitoring Reports Report to Council 15th July 2015 Report to Council 7th October 2015