ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE Finance, Policy and Resources

DATE 7 June 2016

INTERIM DIRECTOR Richard Ellis

TITLE OF REPORT Council Year End Monitoring Report 2015/16

REPORT NUMBER CG/16/072

CHECKLIST COMPLETED Yes

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an opportunity to consider the financial position for the Council for the financial year 2015/16 subject to Committee approval.
- 1.2 This report provides an overview of the year-end financial position and the provisions and reserves of the Council as at 31 March 2016.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) note the current final outturn for the various Council accounts for the financial year 2015/16, subject to committee approval;
- b) approve the various transfers between Council accounts and earmarked sums for the General Fund, Common Good and Housing Revenue Account as at 31 March 2016 as detailed in paragraph 5.2.17, 5.4.3 and 5.5.5;
- c) approve the working balances of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Common Good as detailed in paragraphs 5.2.17, 5.4.3 and 5.5.5;
- d) approve that in accordance with the relevant strategies to maintain revenue balances the Council's objective of retaining recommended levels of uncommitted balances has been achieved; and
- e) note that the unaudited Annual Accounts for 2015/16 will be presented to the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Committee, along with the Annual Governance Statement and Remuneration Report at its meeting later this month.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The financial position of the Council's three main accounts in terms of actual performance against budget as at 31 March 2016 is summarised below:

	2015/16 Budget £'000	2015/16 Actual (Surplus) / Deficit £'000	(Favourable) / Adverse Movement £'000
General Fund	0	(5,324)	(5,324)
Housing Revenue Account	0	(1,000)	(1,000)
Common Good	534	(94)	(628)

- 3.2 From this position a number of year end adjustments are made for legislative, accounting or other reasons and these are detailed throughout the body of the report.
- 3.3 The Council continues to operate on a strong financial platform and is well prepared for the medium term financial challenges that have been identified. Strong fiscal management coupled with financial restraint and a strong balance sheet should see the Council demonstrate its capability to deliver a balanced budget for future years.
- 3.4 The Council has an ambitious capital investment programme over the coming years and where possible, resources are made available to meet the capital financing pressures of this investment. The main advantage of this is that it reduces the future revenue liabilities and therefore protects the resources that can be directed at delivering front line services in the medium term. Front line services will face a number of challenges over the coming years as government funding at best remains static or at worst reduces. All financial decision making should therefore be made with this in mind.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other implications directly arising from this report.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

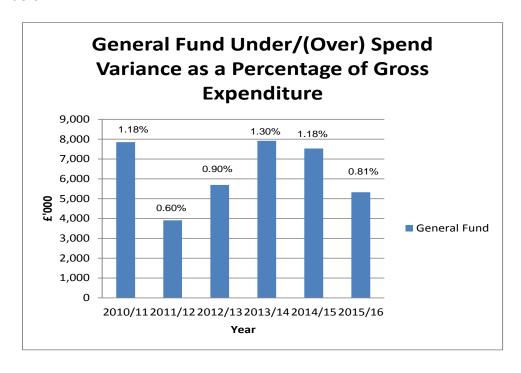
5.1.1 During the financial year 2015/16 the Committee has received regular reports on the financial performance of the General Fund – Revenue, Capital and Trading Services - ensuring that Elected Members are aware of the financial performance of the Council. There have also been reports presenting the Common Good position to this Committee, whilst the Housing Revenue Account was monitored by the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee.

- 5.1.2 This report has been prepared on the basis of a final actual position, as reported to management, with this being built into the Annual Accounts.
- 5.1.3 There is a statutory requirement that the unaudited annual accounts for each financial year be submitted for audit no later than 30 June in the next financial year.
- 5.1.4 This means that the unaudited Annual Accounts for 2015/16, prepared in accordance with Accounting Codes of Practice, requires to be submitted by 30 June 2016 to Audit Scotland. Scrutiny of the accounts will be carried out by the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 27 June 2016.
- 5.1.5 For ease of reference the report is broken down into the following sections:
 - 5.2 General Fund
 - 5.3 Trading Operations
 - 5.4 Common Good
 - 5.5 Housing Revenue Account

5.2 General Fund

Revenue

- 5.2.1 As shown above in paragraph 3.1, on an operational basis, a positive outturn position is reported for the General Fund, being a favourable £5.3 million variance from budget. Appendix A provides further details by service as well as a comparison with the last reported position.
- 5.2.2 The variance represents 0.81% of gross spend for the year which is in line with recent years and demonstrates the good financial management that exists within the Council and can be seen graphically below:



5.2.3 A number of factors that contributed to the £5.3 million favourable variance and these were reported during the year to both this Committee as well as individual service committees.

Some examples include:

- Staff vacancy and turnover savings across a number of services:
- Higher than anticipated income levels;
- Increased number of Band D equivalent properties;
- · Reduced costs associated with commissioning.
- 5.2.4 The Corporate Budgets include contributions to investment as well as associated repayment and servicing of borrowing to pay for capital projects. Savings have arisen from both the lower value of expenditure on capital projects than budgeted and, through active treasury management, the reduction in the loans pool interest rate that applies to the cost of borrowing. This, coupled with the use of the capital fund and investment strategy, has resulted in keeping capital financing costs below budget and is a key objective for future years to minimise the impact on front line services of any potential grant reductions.
- 5.2.5 In recent years the level of General Fund debt has remained relatively static. The Council has an ambitious investment programme in place which may have an impact on debt levels going forward. However, it is important to put this in the context of the Council's asset base which has a value at 31 March 2016 of £2,467 million. Further, the cost of servicing the current debt level represents 4% of General Fund gross spend.
- 5.2.6 To ensure compliance with legislative requirements and the Accounting Code of Practice a number of year end adjustments are required. At a summary level, the impact of these adjustments are shown below:

				Year End Ad		
				Legislative	Year	Final
As at 31 March 2016	Budget	Actual	Variance	& Other	End	Actual
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Total Net Expenditure	444,557	439,941	(4,616)	(2,241)	4,919	442,619
Total Funding	(444,557)	(445,265)	(708)	(1,528)	(533)	(447,326)
Net Impact on General Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	0	(5,324)	(5,324)	(3,769)	4,386	(4,707)
Use of Earmarked Reserves	10,538	10,538	0	0	0	10,538
Addition to Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0	(3,769)	(170)	(4,707)
Net Impact on General Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	10,538	5,214	(5,324)	(3,769)	(170)	5,831

5.2.7 Further details of the year end adjustments can be seen within Appendix A and are detailed in paragraphs 5.2.8 to 5.2.13 below.

- 5.2.8 In forecasting the likely outturn position during the year a number of assumptions are made for legislative or other reasons. For example, the Council is required by statute to set aside surplus bus lane enforcement income (£0.5 million) to fund its Local Transport Strategy and council tax income from second/long term empty homes (£1.5 million) for affordable housing schemes. As such this income is not included within the figures reported during the year.
- 5.2.9 In addition, it is assumed that all devolved education (DEM) budgets will be fully spent during the year on the basis that any underspend will require to be earmarked for use the following year. An amount of £0.8 million remained unspent at year end.
- 5.2.10 Assumptions were made that a number of revenue grants received would be spent during the year. £0.6 million of such grants remained unspent and for accounting purposes these must be earmarked for use the following year.
- 5.2.11 At its meeting on 19th April 2016, this committee approved the funding of £0.3 million towards roof repairs at HMT from the 2015/16 underspend.
- 5.2.12 As detailed above for legislative and other reasons, there is a requirement to earmark £3.7 million for use in future years.
- 5.2.13 In March 2016 the Council was advised by the Scottish Government that under the Business Rates Incentivisation Scheme (BRIS) it was entitled to retain a sum of £0.5 million in relation to 2014/15. No assumption had been made for this in 2014/15 and is therefore now reflected as additional funding within 2015/16. At this stage no assumption has been made for the retention of any sums under BRIS for 2015/16 until greater certainty on the basis on which the calculation will be undertaken is obtained.
- 5.2.14 The net effect of all other year end adjustments to actuals arising from the review of provisions, funds and reserves as well as the use of £5 million of the underspend to fund capital expenditure was £4.9 million which with the additional funding above provides a net underspend of £4.7 million of which £3.9 million is required to be earmarked. It is recommended that the balance £0.8 million be set aside for the investment strategy and this is reflected in the total addition to earmarked reserves.
- 5.2.15 The overall impact on the General Fund balance after taking account of the use of previously earmarked reserves and the year end review of provisions, funds and reserves is a net reduction of £5.8 million. The Council has built up a strong level of reserves in support of its ambitious capital investment programme and this reflects the use of those reserves to fund the programme which in turn minimises the impact on the revenue budget in future.

- 5.2.16 It was approved earlier in the year that the Head of Finance would review and consider the overall 2015/16 position of the council and take appropriate action to ensure, as far as possible that the council is suitably financially prepared for future revenue and capital investment purposes.
- 5.2.17 Earmarked sums are a crucial part of how the council manages its resources and within the overall position reported there is use of and creation of earmarked sums. These are actively managed to ensure the decisions made by the council during the year are captured ensures the Council is in a strong position to face future financial challenges. The outcome of the movement of earmarked reserves is shown below:

	General Fund at 1 April 2015 £'000	General Fund Movement £'000	General Fund at 31 March 2016 £'000
Balance as at 31 March 2016	(64,828)	5,831	(58,997)
Earmarked Sums -			
Financial Risks:			
Financial Risk Fund	5,541	2,837	8,378
Welfare Reform	2,000	-	2,000
Contingent Risks:			
De-risk contingent liabilities	2,872	-	2,872
Unspent Grant Income:			
Various grants received not yet spent	2,164	(642)	1,522
Specific Projects:			
Strategic Infrastructure Plan	357	(357)	_
ICT Projects	2,349	(1,570)	679
Business Plan Service Options	2,275	(1,766)	509
Star Awards	25	•	25
Events Review	-	23	23
Employee Benefit Scheme	113	(36)	77
H&S Training Programme for Managers	-	25	25
City Deal	300	1	300
Shopmobility	91	(91)	-
Fairer Aberdeen	36	-	36
Energy Efficiency Fund	1,164	40	1,224
Roads Repairs/Projects	162	(37)	125
'The Green' Townscape Project	50	(50)	-
South of the City Regeneration	1,337	(1,337)	-
Windfarm Start Up	93	(93)	-
Bus Lane Enforcement	1,265	25	1,290
Property Transfer	155	-	155
Zero Waste	350	(350)	-
Mobile Working	97	(97)	-
Big Belly Bins	-	105	105
Affordable Housing; Council Tax Discount	5,370	1,528	6,898
Replace Handheld Devices	148	(148)	-
Park Improvement Schemes	173	(67)	106
Hazlehead Pets Corner	100	-	100
Duthie Park Winter Gardens	40	(1)	39
Men's Shed	10	(3)	7

	General Fund at 1 April 2015 £'000	General Fund Movement £'000	General Fund at 31 March 2016 £'000
Balnagask Community Centre	7	(2)	5
Community Planning Participatory Budget	-	24	24
City Of Culture	592	(592)	-
Transition Extreme *	100	(100)	-
Youth Work & Under 12's Club	100	(100)	-
Sea Cadets	10	(10)	-
Music Hall Redevelopment	1,000	(200)	800
HMT Roof Works	-	288	288
Reclaim Social Work; Initial Set Up Costs	337	•	337
Reclaim Social Work; Lead In Costs	2,930	1	2,930
Hilton Outdoor Centre	25	(25)	1
Developing Young Workforce	-	300	300
School Drive / Abbotswell	-	29	29
Scottish Welfare Fund	40	(5)	35
Investment Strategy	15,982	(3,953)	12,029
Devolved Education Management			
Schools	2,752	812	3,564
Community Education Centres	1,105	(235)	870
Total Earmarked Balance	53,537	(5,831)	47,706
Total Uncommitted Balance	(11,291)	-	(11,291)
Recommended uncommitted balance	(11,291)	-	(11,291)

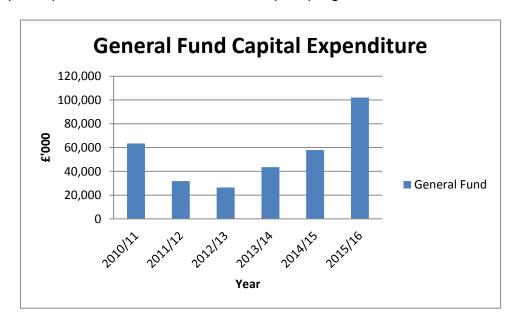
- * It should be noted that this funding along with £0.1 million from Common Good was paid during the year to Transition Extreme in order to carry out capital works. Subsequently, the organisation approached the Council with a request to convert this to additional revenue grant in order to support the business through tightening financial times. It is recommended that committee approve this change in the purpose of the funding provided.
- 5.2.18 The movement reflected above is represented by the use of £10.5 million of amounts previously earmarked therefore reducing the General Fund balance by this amount offset by surplus generated after year end adjustments of £4.7 million.
- 5.2.19 The uncommitted General Fund balance has been maintained at £11.3 million and this remains in line with the Council's risk based policy on retention of working balances. In accordance with the regular review of council policies, the appropriateness of the value of uncommitted balances will again be considered during 2016/17. The retention of £11.3 million as uncommitted reserves represents 2.5% of the 2015/16 net revenue budget

Capital

- 5.2.20 Capital expenditure is undertaken by the Council having regard to the Prudential Code for Finance in Local Authorities and considerations, in all years, of affordability and sustainability.
- 5.2.21 A summary of the total capital expenditure and funding is as follows:

As at 31 March 2016	General Fund
	£'000
Capital Expenditure:	102,027
Funding:	
Borrowing	(26,397)
General Capital Grant	(24,808)
Specific & Other Capital Grants	(5,174)
Capital Receipts / Capital Fund	(32,153)
Revenue Contributions	(13,495)
Total Funding	(102,027)

- 5.2.22 Examples of some of the main projects undertaken in 2015/16 included work on Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route, 3rd Don Crossing, A96 Park & Choose/Dyce Drive Link Road, Renewal and Replacement of Roads Infrastructure, Property Condition and Sustainability Programme, Fleet Replacement, Various Waste Projects, New Brimmond and ASN Schools, Purchase of St Josephs School and the Art Gallery Redevelopment.
- 5.2.23 The chart below shows the Council's investment in its assets over the last six years with the growth in the level of expenditure in 2015/16, demonstrating the additional capacity and capability the Council has put in place to deliver its ambitious capital programme.



5.3 <u>Trading Operations & Arm's Length External Organisations</u>

5.3.1 The Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 sets out a statutory duty for Councils to achieve Best Value. It also provides a strong link between the duty of Best Value, the delivery of services and the reporting of financial performance.

- 5.3.2 Councils are required, under paragraph 10 of the Act, to maintain statutory trading accounts for 'significant trading operations'.
- 5.3.3 The trading operations in place for 2015/16 were:
 - Building and Maintenance
 - Letting of Industrial, Commercial & other Properties
 - Provision and Management of Car Parking Facilities
- 5.3.4 In 2015/16 the total contribution made to the General Fund by the trading operations was £11.7 million against a budgeted £13.4 million.
- 5.3.5 While Car Parking and the Letting of Commercial properties have an external customer base, Building and Maintenance Services is operated to support an internal need for work to be carried out and while there are some external customers, on the whole, the Council will have initially paid for the service to be provided.
- 5.3.6 Building and Maintenance secured a surplus for the General Fund of £2.7 million against a budget of £4 million with the shortfall against budget largely due to increased staff and materials costs only partially offset by increased income.
- 5.3.7 Property Letting achieved an overall surplus of £4.5 million which was £0.2 million below that budgeted largely due to a shortfall in income.
- 5.3.8 Car Parking performance was £0.2 million below budget with a surplus of £4.4 million being achieved. Income was slightly below that budgeted whilst greater administration and premises costs were offset by lower staff costs arising from vacancies in the City Warden and Car Parks teams.
- 5.3.9 As part of the Council's Annual Accounts, the Council is required to disclose the financial performance of the following ALEO's in its Group Accounts and the table below shows the funding provided by the council in 2015/16:

Organisation	£'000
Aberdeen Exhibition & Conference Centre	1,021
Aberdeen Sports Village	1,040
Sport Aberdeen	5,251
Bon Accord Care	26,146

5.4 Common Good

5.4.1 Full details of the year end position against budget of the Common Good are provided in a separate report to this committee. It should be noted that this report does not take account of year end accounting transactions applied to reflect the actual change in value from year to year from the sale of assets and the revaluation of the investment properties that comprise the Common Good.

- 5.4.2 In summary, against a budgeted net expenditure budget of £0.5 million a surplus of £0.1 million was achieved.
- 5.4.3 A number of projects were not completed fully during 2015/16 and it is therefore recommended that a sum of £0.5 million be earmarked from the Common Good balance to complete these projects. These are detailed below:

	Common Good £'000
Balance as at 31 March 2016 *	(16,881)
Specific Projects:	
Repairs & Maintenance	112
Greenfern & Newhills Developments	133
Farm Buildings	100
Consultancy Costs	22
Fishing Industry Memorial	50
Grove Nursery	70
Aberdeen Arts Centre Feasibility	5
Total Earmarked Balance	492
Total Uncommitted Balance	(16,389)
Recommended uncommitted	
balance	(15,201)

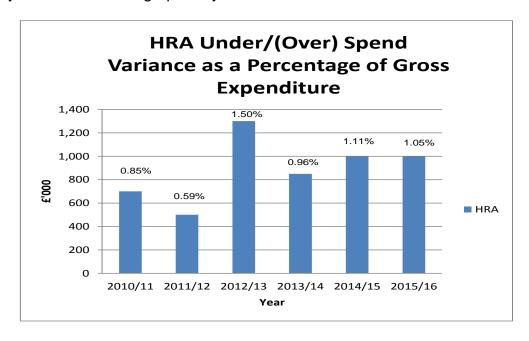
^{*} This balance includes the impact of capital receipts from the sale of Pinewood/Hazledene which flow through the capital account rather than revenue.

5.5 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Revenue

- 5.5.1 At its meeting of 17th May 2016 the Communities, Housing & Infrastructure Committee reviewed the financial performance of the Housing Revenue Account for the financial year 2015/16, based on expenditure to the end of February 2016 (Period 11).
- 5.5.2 The net expenditure on the HRA, prior to any CFCR contribution or increase in working balances was £23.2 million. From this position a CFCR contribution of £22 million to fund the capital programme was made. A further net cost of £0.2 million was used to fund the transfer at market value of the sites of Victoria House from the General Fund to the HRA and Langdykes Road from HRA to the General Fund.
- 5.5.3 A number of factors contributed to the overall position of the HRA and these were reported during the year to the Communities, Housing & Infrastructure Committee including:
 - Higher income from rents;
 - Higher repairs and maintenance costs;
 - Higher loss of rent (voids) costs;
 - Higher admin & management costs;
 - Lower capital financing costs.

- 5.5.4 The effect of these transactions was a net underspend of £1 million which was used to increase the working balance as previously agreed.
- 5.5.5 This demonstrates good financial management of the HRA. The amounts by which working balances have been increased over recent years can be seen graphically in the table below:



5.5.6 Amounts recommended to be earmarked against the HRA balance are:

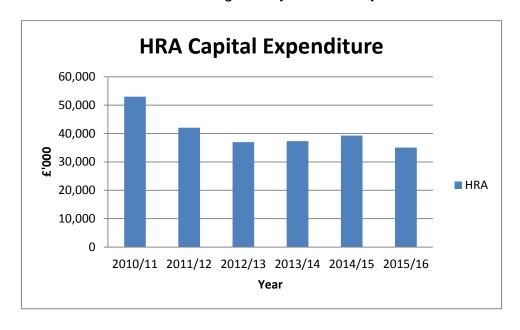
	Housing Revenue Account £'000
Balance as at 31 March 2016	(10,808)
Specific Projects:	
Affordable Housing	245
Repairs & Maintenance	1,193
Total Earmarked Balance	1,438
Total Uncommitted Balance	(9,370)
Recommended uncommitted balance	(8,495)

Capital

- 5.5.7 Capital expenditure is undertaken by the Council having regard to the Prudential Code for Finance in Local Authorities and considerations, in all years, of affordability and sustainability.
- 5.5.8 A summary of the total capital expenditure and funding is as follows:

As at 31 March 2016	HRA
	£'000
Capital Expenditure:	35,037
Funding:	
Borrowing	(2,630)
Specific & Other Capital Grants	(1,325)
Capital Receipts	(9,087)
Revenue Contributions	(21,995)
Total Funding	(35,037)

- 5.5.9 Examples of projects undertaken include structural works on multistorey blocks, heating system replacement and the modernisation programme.
- 5.5.10 Capital spend within the Housing Revenue Account has reduced over recent years as the Council moves towards completing its programme to achieve the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015.



6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience -

Whilst there is no direct impact arising from this report, the efficient use of funds available to provide services will contribute to customer experience.

Improving Staff Experience –

Whilst there is no direct impact arising from this report, a robust budget monitoring process assists budget holders in their role which in turn should enhance the staff experience.

Improving our use of Resources -

As a recognised top priority the Council must take the necessary measures to balance its budget. Therefore, Services are expected to work within a financial constraint as defined by their annual budgets.

Each Director reports on a regular basis to their service committee, providing the opportunity to consider the financial position and impact in more detail.

Corporate -

Financial governance is a vital part of ensuring that the resources required to take forward the council's plans and vision are robustly monitored and used effectively.

It is the aim of the Council to maintain working balances to a level that provides sufficient scope to deal with unexpected or unforeseen events in order that this does not have a detrimental and immediate impact on service delivery.

Public -

This report is likely to be of interest to the public as it concerns the stewardship of the council's financial resources.

MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Every organisation has to manage the risks inherent in the operation of services. The financial risks are minimised by the regular review of financial information by Services and corporately by CMT and Elected Members. This report forms part of the end of year reporting cycle and seeks to clarify the overall operating conditions and outcomes that have resulted in the past year.

The robust process of closing the accounts at the financial year-end means that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that they are reflective of the financial circumstances of the Council during 2015/16 and as at 31 March 2016. A risk remains that the external audit process reveals potential errors or adjustments and these will be discussed throughout by officers before the auditor's report and opinion is presented to the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Committee in September.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Financial Monitoring Reports for Financial Year 2015/16; and Redetermination letters received from the Scottish Government.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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APPENDIX A

Corporate Financial Reporting Summa	ry 2015/1	ь									
-							Vea	r End Adjustme	nts		
As at 31 March 2016	Budget 2015/16 £'000	Actual 2015/16 £'000	Variance fro	om Budget	Forecast Variance at Period 11 £'000	Period 12	Legislative & Other Adjustments 2015/16	Year End	Net Impact of	Note	Final Actual 2015/16
Services				-							
Office of Chief Executive	3,259	3,345	86	2.6%	5	81	0	0	0)	3,345
Corporate Governance	27,629	25,499	(2,130)	(7.7%)	(1,996)	(134)	0	820	820		26,319
Communities, Housing & Infrastructure	83,303	83,341	38	0.0%	65	(27)	(619)	0_0	(619)		82,722
Education & Children's Services	213,219	212,133	(1,086)	(0.5%)	(695)	(391)	(1,367)	(550)	(1,917)		210,216
Adult Social Care	88,327	87,304	(1,023)	(1.2%)	(882)	(141)	(255)	0	(255)		87,049
Total Service Budgets	415,737	411,622	(4,115)	(1.0%)	(3,503)	(612)	(2,241)	270	(1,971)		409,651
Total Corporate Budgets	28,820	28,319	(501)	(1.7%)	3	(504)	0	4,649	4,649	5	32,968
Total Net Expenditure	444,557	439,941	(4,616)	(1.0%)	(3,500)	(1,116)	(2,241)	4,919	2,678		442,619
Funding:											
Government Support:-											
Revenue Support Grant & Non Domestic Rates	(340,734)	(340,622)	112	(0.0%)	0	112	0	(533)	(533)	6	(341,155)
Local Taxation:-											
Council Tax & Community Charge Arrears	(103,823)	(104,643)	(820)	0.8%	(1,076)	256	(1,528)	0	(1,528)	7	(106,171)
Total Funding	(444,557)	(445,265)	(708)	0.2%	(1,076)	368	(1,528)	(533)	(2,061)		(447,326)
Net Impact on General Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	0	(5,324)	(5,324)		(4,576)	(748)	(3,769)	4,386	617		(4,707)
Use of General Fund Earmarked Reserves	10,538	10,538	0		0	0	0	0	0)	10,538
Addition to General Fund Earmarked Reserves	0	0	0		(4,576)	4,576	(3,769)	(170)	(3,939)		(4,707)
Net Impact on General Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	10,538	5,214	(5,324)		0	(5,324)	(3,769)	(170)	(3,939)		5,831
Notes:											
1. Contribution to Insurance Fund and Provision	Adjustment										
2. Sums to be Earmarked - Surplus Bus Lane Enfo	orcement Inc	ome & Unsp	ent Revenu	e Grants							
3. Sums to be Earmarked - DEM, HMT Roof Repai	irs & Develo	ping Young I	People and P	rovision Adju	stment						
4. Unspent Revenue Grant to be Earmarked											
5. Revenue Contribution to fund Capital Expend	diture and Pro	ovision Adju	stment								
6. BRIS 2014/15 Sum to be Retained											