Public Document Pack

NOTICE

OF

MEETING



CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

will meet on

THURSDAY, 31ST AUGUST, 2017

on the rising of the meeting of the Joint Corporate Services and Culture & Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

in the

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, MAIDENHEAD,

TO: <u>MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY</u> <u>PANEL</u>

COUNCILLORS COLIN RAYNER (CHAIRMAN), DAVID BURBAGE (VICE-CHAIRMAN), JOHN BOWDEN, DR LILLY EVANS, ROSS MCWILLIAMS, EILEEN QUICK AND LYNNE JONES

SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

COUNCILLORS GERRY CLARK, MARIUS GILMORE, JESSE GREY, JOHN LENTON, JOHN STORY, MALCOLM BEER, WISDOM DA COSTA, SIMON WERNER AND 1 VACANCY

> Karen Shepherd - Democratic Services Manager Issued: 22 August 2017

Members of the Press and Public are welcome to attend Part I of this meeting.

The agenda is available on the Council's web site at <u>www.rbwm.gov.uk</u> or contact the Panel Administrator **Shilpa Manek (01628 796310)**

Fire Alarm - In the event of the fire alarm sounding or other emergency, please leave the building quickly and calmly by the nearest exit. Do not stop to collect personal belongings and do not use the lifts. Congregate in the Town Hall Car Park, Park Street, Maidenhead (immediately adjacent to the Town Hall) and do not re-enter the building until told to do so by a member of staff.

Recording of Meetings – The Council allows the filming, recording and photography of public Council meetings. This may be undertaken by the Council itself, or any person attending the meeting. By entering the meeting room you are acknowledging that you may be audio or video recorded and that this recording will be available for public viewing on the RBWM website. If you have any questions regarding the council's policy, please speak to the Democratic Services or Legal representative at the meeting.

<u>AGENDA</u>

<u>PART I</u>

<u>ITEM</u>	SUBJECT	<u>WARD</u>	<u>PAGE</u> <u>NO</u>
1.	APOLOGIES To receive any apologies of absence.		
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.		5 - 6
3.	MINUTES To approve the Part I minutes of the meeting held on 20 th July 2017.		7 - 10
4.	TELEPHONY OPTIONS To note the 24 th August 2017 Cabinet report and ask any questions arising.		11 - 16
5.	FINANCIAL UPDATE To note the 24th August 2017 Cabinet report and ask any questions arising.		17 - 32
6.	STATION OPPORTUNITY AREA To comment on the 5 September 2017 Cabinet Regeneration Sub Committee report.		To Follow
7.	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC To consider passing the following resolution:-		
	"That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act"		

PRIVATE MEETING - PART II

<u>ITEM</u>	SUBJECT	<u>WARD</u>	<u>PAGE</u> <u>NO</u>
8.	MINUTES		33 - 36
	To approve the Part II minutes of the meeting held on 20 th July 2017.		
	(Not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)		
9.	CCTV - TECHNOLOGICAL REVIEW		37 - 54
	To note the 24th August 2017 Cabinet report and ask any questions arising.		
	(Not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)		

I I I

∣ii.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 2 MEMBERS' GUIDE TO DECLARING INTERESTS IN MEETINGS

Disclosure at Meetings

If a Member has not disclosed an interest in their Register of Interests, they **must make** the declaration of interest at the beginning of the meeting, or as soon as they are aware that they have a DPI or Prejudicial Interest. If a Member has already disclosed the interest in their Register of Interests they are still required to disclose this in the meeting if it relates to the matter being discussed.

A member with a DPI or Prejudicial Interest **may make representations at the start of the item but must not take part in the discussion or vote at a meeting.** The speaking time allocated for Members to make representations is at the discretion of the Chairman of the meeting. In order to avoid any accusations of taking part in the discussion or vote, after speaking, Members should move away from the panel table to a public area or, if they wish, leave the room. If the interest declared has not been entered on to a Members' Register of Interests, they must notify the Monitoring Officer in writing within the next 28 days following the meeting.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) (relating to the Member or their partner) include:

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
- Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit made in respect of any expenses occurred in carrying out member duties or election expenses.
- Any contract under which goods and services are to be provided/works to be executed which has not been fully discharged.
- Any beneficial interest in land within the area of the relevant authority.
- Any licence to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
- Any tenancy where the landlord is the relevant authority, and the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.
- Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:
 - a) that body has a piece of business or land in the area of the relevant authority, and

b) either (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body <u>or</u> (ii) the total nominal value of the shares of any one class belonging to the relevant person exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

Any Member who is unsure if their interest falls within any of the above legal definitions should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting.

A Member with a DPI should state in the meeting: 'I declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'

Or, if making representations on the item: 'I declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will make representations, then I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'

Prejudicial Interests

Any interest which a reasonable, fair minded and informed member of the public would reasonably believe is so significant that it harms or impairs the Member's ability to judge the public interest in the item, i.e. a Member's decision making is influenced by their interest so that they are not able to impartially consider relevant issues.

A Member with a Prejudicial interest should state in the meeting: 'I declare a Prejudicial Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'

Or, if making representations in the item: 'I declare a Prejudicial Interest in item x because xxx. As soon as we come to that item, I will make representations, then I will leave the room/ move to the public area for the entire duration of the discussion and not take part in the vote.'

Personal interests

Any other connection or association which a member of the public may reasonably think may influence a Member when making a decision on council matters.

Members with a Personal Interest should state at the meeting: 'I wish to declare a Personal Interest in item x because xxx'. As this is a Personal Interest only, I will take part in the discussion and vote on the matter.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 3

CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 20 JULY 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Colin Rayner, John Bowden, Eileen Quick and Lynne Jones.

Also in attendance: Councillor Edward Wilson, Stuart Carroll, Carwyn Cox, David Evans, Philip Love, Jack Rankin, Samantha Rayner and MJ Saunders.

Officers: Alison Alexander, Craig Miller, Rob Stubbs, Russell O'Keefe, Louisa Dean and David Cook.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received by Cllr Burbage, Cllr L Evans and Cllr McWilliams.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

MINUTES

The Part I minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2017 were approved as a true and correct record.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

The Panel considered the latest Cabinet Financial Update report.

The Lead Member highlighted that at this early stage in the financial year, reserves at year end were anticipated to be \pounds 7.3m, comfortably above the recommended minimum of \pounds 5.8m. A number of pressures had emerged especially in the Children's Directorate that were being offset from other areas.

Cllr Quick mentioned that Children's O&S Panel had looked at the paper and discussed the pressures under their remit. The Panel endorsed the recommendations and understood that that the pressure was due to necessity and not lack of planning.

Cllr Bowden mentioned that Crime and Disorder O&S Panel had made comments to the areas under their remit.

The Chairman raised concern about the lack of consultation regarding the additional funding for bus routes especially the 305 route as there were alternative funding options and some routes were not fit for purpose.

Cllr E Wilson mentioned that at Children's O&S Panel he had been informed that the increased spend on bus routes was being of set by increased parking income. The Panel were informed that it was a combination of increased parking income and savings.

The Chairman mentioned that the Bus Champion had informed that Heathrow was reducing its support of services in the borough.

Resolved unanimously: that the Corporate Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet report and fully endorsed the recommendations. Concern was raised that Ward Members had not been consulted on the additional funding towards saving bus routes, with regards to route 305B alternative funding arrangements were offered and

available and the current bus route 305 was not fit for purpose and did not meet residents needs. Also other bus routes were now under pressure due to reduction of subsidy from Heathrow Airport.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Chairman mentioned that he had requested this update to be brought to Panel as the authority used to have emergency plans in place when there was recent flooding and he wished to ask if they were still in place.

The Panel were informed that emergency plans such as the Major Incident Plan and Flood Plan were still in place. There were also a number of major events in the borough and therefore the plans had been tested. The authority worked closely with other Berkshire authorities and multi agency support was available. A new shared emergency planning team had been created that provided increased resilience.

Cllr Bowden asked if we liaised with other local authorities regarding Heathrow airport and was informed that we did and that RBWM took part in a recent off airport emergency exercise.

(Cllr D Evans, Cllr Love and Russel O'Keefe joined the meeting)

Cllr E Wilson asked if there were specific plans for Dedworth and was informed that there were no specific plans for the area but the would be covered under the Major Incident Plan. Officers would be willing to work with residents if they wished to develop a plan.

Cllr Jones mentioned that she approved of the joint working arrangements and asked if emergency planning would be in the communications strategy. The Panel were informed that there was a communications plan for emergencies and that during the 2014 flood the communications team provided 24 hour 7 days a week support.

The Chairmen asked if the Leader of council was able to request support from the police or armed forces. The Panel were informed that he could and so could Gold Command.

The Chairman also asked if the authority could still call upon staff that had been outsauced. The Panel were informed that yes they would be available as the contracts had a section on emergency planning.

The Chairman thanked officers and Cllr Cox for attending.

BROADWAY PARKING

The Panel agreed that the two Cabinet Regeneration Sub Committee reports, Broadway Parking and Parking Provision, would be considered at the same time.

Members considered a proposed development brief for the redevelopment of the Broadway Car Park based on the feasibility study and financial modelling that had been carried out. It was explained that the next stage was the appointment of a professional team to get more detailed information, including costs, potential income streams and likely return on investment.

The Parking Provision report looked at wider parking provision across the whole borough. The recommendations were based on further assessments and feasibility studies that had been carried out. This was an emerging Parking Plan for the Borough and not the final draft therefore some options may be changed. It was proposed to move onto the next stage.

Cllr D Evans informed that the proposals for the Broadway car park was about getting a modern, easy to use car park where it was easier for parents and blue badge drivers to find spaces. With regards to the Parking Provision report this was to show that our towns were still open for business during regeneration work.

Cllr Cox reported that a lot of work had been done with officers and our consultants with due care and thought.

The Chairman asked if the exterior of Broadway car park had been decided. Cllr D Evans replied that this had not yet been decided and the pictures in the report were examples from around the country.

The Chairman mentioned that the Riverside car park was in a conservation area and was informed that the feasibility study had shown it was possible to add a deck to the car park. The deck would need to be sympathetic to the area and thus would not be multiple decks. Planning would make the final decision.

The Chairman also mentioned that he had been asking for a number of years that a new offices should be compelled to utilise their car parking to residents outside of office hours. Cllr Cox commented that this was not in the paper as that is a planning matter and that to have this policy, this would need to be in a new Parking Supplementary Planning Document. It was advised that this would need to be introduced after the BLP had been adopted. Cllr Rankin agreed to write to the Lead Member for Planning.

Resolved unanimously: that the Corporate Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet Regeneration Sub Committee report and endorsed with reservations the recommendations, as long as the cladding and design of the exterior look was of a high specification and of architectural merit, in keeping with Maidenhead and would not be carbuncle on a friendly town. There should be meaningful consultation with local residents and interested parties. There were already too many ugly car parks in other towns.

PARKING PROVISION

The Panel considered this item with the Broadway Parking report.

Resolved unanimously: that the Corporate Services O&S Panel considered the Cabinet Regeneration Sub Committee report and fully endorsed the recommendations. The Panel felt that once the Borough Local Plan was approved a new Parking Supplementary Planning Document should be introduced so that new office buildings should make their parking available to the public at weekends. Cllr Rankin agreed to write to the Lead Member for Planning. There were concerns about placing a second deck on River Street car park in a world renowned town; also loss of the car park provision when it was being built. Cllr Rayner commented at weekends there were hundreds of private car park spaces empty and private office car parks in the centre of Windsor. We must be able to use these assets before spending public money on River Street Car Park.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting whilst discussion takes place on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1-7 of part I of Schedule 12A of the Act The meeting, which began at 6.30 pm, finished at 8.40 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....

Agenda Item 4

Report Title:	Telephony Options	× 1
Contains Confidential or Exempt Information?	NO - Part I	gov.u
Member reporting:	Councillor S Rayner, Lead Member for Culture and Communities including Resident and Business Services	n.vog.mwdr.w
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet - 24 August 2017	
Responsible Officer(s):	Andy Jeffs, Executive Director	
Wards affected:	All	



REPORT SUMMARY

- 1 The phone performance of the contact centre has significantly improved since corrective action was taken at the end of May 2017, and since 8 June 2017, 96.8% of all calls received have been answered, and 88.7% of these calls have been answered within 60 seconds, compared previously to 60%.
- 2 This paper proposes that the council's telephone system is upgraded at a capital cost of £273,000.
- 3 This investment not only supports the existing improvements in performance, it provides significant additional functionality to the contact centre and the council's wider telephony, delivering additional improvements to the service provided to residents, businesses and staff.
- 4 This investment also provides on-going annual revenue saving of £80,000.

1 DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet notes the report and:

- i) Approves capital budget of £273,000 in 2017/18 to upgrade the existing customer service centre and wider council telephony system.
- ii) Notes the continued improvement in telephony performance, and requests quarterly updates on contact centre performance as part of the Performance Management Framework.

2 REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Background

- 2.1 Cabinet agreed in November 2016 to merge Customer Services with Culture, Libraries and Registration to create a single combined front facing service, Library and Resident Services. The new service which was successfully launched on 1 July 2017, and now delivers face to face, telephony and digital services across three service hubs in, Ascot, Windsor and Maidenhead seven days a week.
- 2.2 The Royal Borough's drivers for telephony have changed over the last few years, requiring the technology to be better, flexible and easier for residents, back office staff, customer service staff and mobile workers to use. Works to integrate Adult and Children's services into Optalis and AfC have provided different working arrangements to be developed and the system is unable to satisfy these requirements.

Telephone technology requirements

- 2.3 The telephone technology requirements are split into two distinct areas:
 - Contact centre
 The wider council

Contact centre

- 2.4 The contact centre is the first point of contact for residents phoning the council, now over seven days a week. Residents want to know how long they will have to wait, or how many people are in the queue or have options including a call back facility without losing their place in the queue. It is essential that the council can record and play immediate messages of information or advice when required and that resources can be increased by using a bank of trained zero hours staff working from home or remotely particularly in a case of bad weather, increased demand and emergency situations.
- 2.5 The licensing model should be flexible enough to support this. The use of modern nonphysical phones (soft phones) and high quality noise reducing headsets are paramount. In addition being able to listen to a live call or a recorded call from any desk along with a comprehensive suite of management reports that span back over at least 12 months will enhance the quality management capability of the service.

The wider council

- 2.6 The majority of council's buildings operate as a hot desking and open plan set up that supports the way in which services are delivered to residents across the borough and each service's business systems have changed to allow mobile/digital contact and interactions.
- 2.7 More staff are working out on site, or in touch down places between meetings or working at home, the technology needs to support mobile, digital changes and home working. Again the technology and licensing model needs to be flexible to ensure that as the organisation transforms it is not paying for a fixed number of licenses which aren't being utilised.
- 2.8 The technology and equipment needs to allow calls to be received when staff are based in the office but without the necessity to always have a physical handset on a desk, this needs to be more flexible than just forwarding all calls from a landline to a mobile phone. Applications installed on a laptop or a mobile device will allow a headset/ear piece to receive and make calls with the same features available from a handset in the office.
- 2.9 Full and detailed call performance management information is required for the wider council, in line with the contact centre, so we know how many calls in total are received and where do they go.

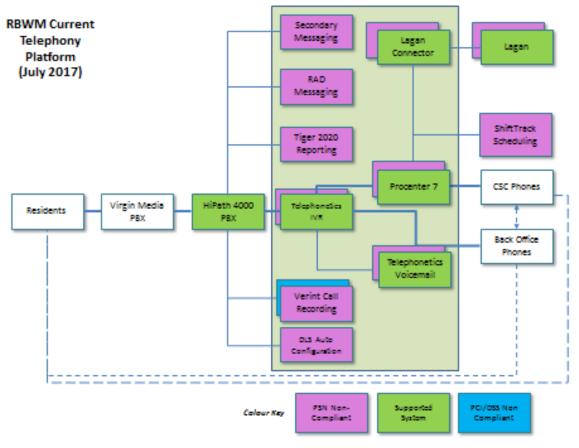
The current telephony system set up

- 2.10 Phoning the council is still the residents' preferred daily contact method, and the Royal Borough receives around 250,000 calls each year via the contact centre ranging from 600 calls to 1,400 calls a day depending on the demand, in addition there are calls that are received by the back office services directly, that number of calls is not known.
- 2.11 The current set up has been in place since 2005 when the contact centre was created. Siemens are the current telephony provider for both the contact centre and the wider

council, with a number of other third party applications bolted on. There are around 1,300 wider council users and 60 contact centre users (all are not based in the contact centre).

2.12 Diagram 1 below details the component elements that make up the existing telephony system. All calls come through the HiPath4000 into Telephonetics, some then go into the contact centre via Procenter and others go straight to the desk phones, and some of them are forwarded on to mobile phones or voicemail.

Diagram 1- component elements of the council's phone system.



NB: Lagan CRM is in the process of being decommissioned and Jadu CXM is in the process of being developed.

Improvements delivered by upgrading

- 2.13 The upgrade will significantly improve the functionality of the telephony system. In particular the functionality gained will include:
 - Ability to add more queues and staff to the contact centre
 - Ability to advise position and wait time in queue to callers
 - Able to buy new phones for better sound quality
 - Ability for callers to request a call back while not losing their place in the queue
 - Being able to identify callers that hang up so that the contact centre can call them back in real time
 - Fully compliant call recording that can be accessed from anywhere allowing call quality management
 - Ability to add, replace and change messages as required in real time
 - Allows contact centre staff to work from home

- A multimedia queue for email and social media contacts, allowing all contacts to be visible and performance tracked
- Enhanced historical and real time reporting for performance management, with the ability to view from a mobile device

2.14 Three options have been considered:

- Do nothing
- Procure a completely new telephone system
- Upgrade the current telephone system

Table 1: Options considered	,
Option	Comments
Do nothing	The existing equipment is 12 years old and
This is not the	the software is numerous releases behind the
recommended option	current version and the does not provide the
	functionality the council needs, physical
	equipment is obsolete as well as not being
	able to buy anymore licenses. The current
	cost to do nothing is £1,169,000 over seven
	years.
Procure a completely new	This will require a full OJEU procurement
telephony system	process and there is a minimum
This is not the	implementation time of 120 working days
recommended option	from contact award. The indicative costs
	from previous exercises range from £882,000
	to £1,889,000 over seven years. We will
	have to rebuild the new phone system
	running two in parallel for a period of time
	during implementation. A large amount of
	user training will be required.
Upgrade the existing	This is the simplest and quickest route to
telephony systems and	better and flexible functionality. The actual
component parts This is the	upgrade can be conducted out of hours
recommended option	ensuring there is minimal risk of disruption to
	service. User training for core staff will not be
	needed. The cost of the new telephone
	system over seven years is £854,770.

Table 1: Options considered

3 KEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The key implications are:

Table 2: Key implications

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
Telephony upgraded	31/12/17	30/11/17	31/10/17	15/10/17	30/11/17

4 FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

4.1 This reports requests new Capital budget of £273,000 in 2017/18 for the telephony system upgrade, and generates £80,000 revenue savings from 2018/19

REVENUE	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Addition	£0	£0	£0
Reduction	£0	-£80,000	£0
Net impact	£0	-£80,000	£0

Table 3: Financial impact of report's recommendations

CAPITAL	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Addition	£273,000	£0	£0
Reduction	£0	£0	£0
Net impact	£273,000	£0	£0

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Upgrading will ensure the telephone system is fully compliant.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The following risks have been identified:

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
System downtime during normal operational hours	No access to phones	Work will be delivered out of working hours and if issues identified will be rolled back to pre-upgrade	No loss of phone system during normal working hours
Additional functionality not delivered	No improvement in service to residents, businesses and staff	Functionality improvements have been scoped as part of business case and through case studies	Additional functionality delivered
Revenue efficiencies of £80,000 per annum not delivered	<£80,000 in annual revenue savings delivered	Business case built using quotes provided and based on fix price	Revenue efficiencies fully delivered

Table 4: Impact of risk and mitigation

7 POTENTIAL IMPACTS

7.1 There is no requirement for an EQIA to be completed.

8 CONSULTATION

8.1 The report will be considered by Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 17 August 2017, comments will be reported to Cabinet.

9 TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 The table below shows the timetable for implementation of the upgrade of the telephony system.

Table 5: Implementation timetable

Date	Details
24 Aug 2017	Cabinet approve the upgrade of the existing telephony system
1 Sep 2017	Supplier notified and project initiated
30 Nov 2017	Upgrade completed

10 APPENDICES

10.1 None.

11 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 None.

12 CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Commented & returned
Cllr Mrs S Rayner	Lead Member for Culture and Communities including Resident and Business Services	26/07/17	27/07/17
Cllr L Targowska	Principal Member for HR, Legal and IT	26/07/17	27/07/17
Alison Alexander	Managing Director	26/07/17	27/07/17
Russell O'Keefe	Executive Director	26/07/17	
Andy Jeffs	Executive Director	26/07/17	27/07/17
Rob Stubbs	Section 151 Officer	26/07/17	
Terry Baldwin	Head of HR	26/07/17	27/07/17
Mary Kilner	Head of Law and Governance	26/07/17	
Louisa Dean	Communications and Marketing Manager	26/07/17	
John Tordoff	Head of IT	26/07/17	
David Wright	IT Manager	26/07/17	
Mark Taylor	Deputy Head of Library and Resident Services	26/07/17	
Mark Lampard	Finance Business Partner	26/07/17	27/07/17

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?	
Key decision: No	No	
Report Author: Jacqui Hurd, Head of Library and Resident Services		

Agenda Item 5

Report Title:	Financial Update
Contains Confidential or	NO - Part I
Exempt Information?	
Member reporting:	Councillor Saunders, Lead Member for
	Finance
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 24 August 2017
Responsible Officer(s):	Russell O'Keefe, Executive Director,
	Rob Stubbs, Deputy Director and Head of
	Finance.
Wards affected:	All



REPORT SUMMARY

- 1. This report sets out the Council's financial performance to date in 2017-18. In summary there is a £828,000 projected overspend on the General Fund, see Appendix A. This is due to net overspends being forecast in service budgets.
- 2. The Council is in a strong financial position; with combined General Fund Reserves of £7,279,000 (8.23% of budget) in excess of the £5,780,000 (6.54% of budget) recommended minimum level set at Council in February 2017.

1 DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

RECOMMENDATION: That Cabinet:

- i) Notes the Council's projected outturn position for 2017-18 and mitigating actions to address service pressures.
- ii) Approves the addition of a £173,000 grant funded budget to the capital programme to repair potholes across the Borough (details in paragraph 4.22).

2 REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

As this is a monitoring report decisions are not normally necessary but may occasionally be required.

3 KEY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Council has a General Fund Reserve of £4,050,000 and a Development Fund balance of £3,229,000, see appendix B for a breakdown of the Development Fund. The combined reserves total £7,279,000. The 2017-18 budget report recommended a minimal reserve level of £5,780,000 to cover known risks for 18 months.

Table 1: Performance of general fund reserves

Outcome	Unmet	Met	Exceeded	Significantly Exceeded	Date of delivery
General	Below	£5,800,000	£6,000,000	Above	31 May
Fund	£5,800,000	to	to	£6,500,000	2018
Reserves		£6,000,000	£6,500,000		
Achieved					

4 FINANCIAL DETAILS / VALUE FOR MONEY

Managing Director

- 4.1 The Managing Director reports a projected outturn figure for 2017-18 of £61,190,000 against a controllable net budget of £60,549,000, an over-spend of £828,000, which is unchanged from the last reported position.
- 4.2 There is a range of pressures in Children's Services totalling £1,316,000:

Home to school transport	£226,000
Placements for young people	£602,000
Legal costs	£162,000
 Agency costs 	£326,000

4.3 An over-achievement in Adult social care income gives provides a mitigation and allows the net pressure for the directorate to be reduced to £828,000.

Home to school transport

4.4 The £226,000 pressure in the home to school transport budget reported last month remains unchanged.

Placements

- 4.5 Currently there is a forecasted increase of 16% in the volume of placements for young people. This is a consequence of an increase in the number of young people 18 plus with SEND and Disabilities who require accommodation following the SEND reforms. These reforms entitle young adults to support with education and placements until the age of 25. This increase in demand is forecasted to cost £400,000. This change in statutory requirement came with no additional government funding. Allowing for this increase in demand and further SEND change that occurs in September, there is a projected LA budget shortfall of £602,000 on external placements at the current time.
- 4.6 There is a requirement to increase the level of in house foster carers by 9% in 2017-18 compared to 2016-17. The service has contracted Cornerstone to run a programme of foster carer recruitment. They are successful at recruiting adopted parents. Since they have been contracted they have identified and started the assessment process on three families.

Legal

4.7 There has been an increase in the number of children being brought into care. This has directly impacted on the legal budget, giving a pressure of £162,000. Mitigating action is under way with closer contract management to ensure that the Joint Legal Team only contracts external legal advice in highly specialist cases.

Agency

4.8 Agency staff costs continue to be high, creating a budget pressure of £326,000. The recent IR35 regulation changes (tightening up of tax legislation designed to reduce tax avoidance by contractors) have had little impact on the number of staff willing to convert to permanent. There are 15 agency social workers across Children's Services at 30 June 2017.

There are two mitigations underway:

- In October, seven social workers will complete their qualification training as a result of the decision to invest in the Frontline training programme. This team of newly qualified social workers will replace seven agency workers. A further eight students are enrolled for the next Frontline cohort, building the pipeline for the future.
- A refreshed recruitment campaign for experienced social workers will take place in September 2017. This will seek to secure experienced social workers to augment the newly qualified staff developed via the Frontline programme.

Adult social care

4.9 Adult social care income is showing an underspend of £451,000, mainly due to three successful continuing healthcare claims where Health is now responsible for costs of the individuals, this is partially offset by a £30,000 overspend in adult social care spend due to increasing volumes of homecare being delivered.

Housing

4.10 Housing are showing an overspend of £213,000 which is the unbudgeted running cost of the night shelter. This is being mitigated through the Royal Borough's allocation of the flexible homelessness support grant.

Commissioning & Support

- 4.11 Detailed review of concessionary transport spend is suggesting a small underspend of £56,000.
- 4.12 There are no significant variances to report on the Human Resources budget, the Law & Governance budget or the Communication & Marketing budget.

Communities

- 4.13 The Executive Director maintains his projection of a balanced budget outturn on the Communities directorate's 2017-18 controllable budget of £15,057,000.
- 4.14 The £153,000 overspend reported on bus services will be mitigated by overachievement of income from parking fees and registrars charges.

Place

- 4.15 The Executive Director projects a balanced budget outturn on the Place directorate's 2017-18 controllable budget of £4,092,000.
- 4.16 Several minor budget pressures are now being reported, but these are mitigated by underspends in other service areas.

Revenue budget movement

4.17 Revenue budget movements this month are in table 2, see Appendix C for an expanded full year Movement Statement.

Table 2: Revenue budget movement

Service expenditure budget reported to February 2017	£79,207,000
Council.	
Allocation of pay reward budget to services	£425,000
Legal budget for Heathrow expansion	£40,000
Redundancy cost funded by provision	£38,000
Election security costs	£19,000
IPad / IPhone maintenance budget	£10,000
Return on pre-payment of Optalis pension contributions	(£41,000)
Service expenditure budget this month	£79,698,000

Cash balances projection

4.18 Appendix D provides details of the Borough's cash balance which is based on the assumptions contained in the 2017-18 budget report. In addition to the investments in the 2017-18 capital programme, the projection considers other capital proposals likely to come forward for approval during the year. The level of borrowing is currently being reviewed and any changes will be reflected in a future Cabinet report and Finance Update.

Capital Programme

- 4.19 The approved 2017-18 capital estimate is £67,789,000, see table 4. The projected outturn for the financial year is £67,741,000, an increase on the capital outturn in 2016-17 of £28,861,000.
- 4.20 There is scheme showing a variance and no slippage to report this month. Details provided in appendix E and F. Table 5 shows the status of schemes in the capital programme.
- 4.21 Further information on key capital schemes has been provided in Appendix G.

Table 4: Capital outturn

	Exp	Inc	Net
Approved estimate	£67,789,000	(£29,592,000)	£38,197,000
Variances identified	(£48,000)	£48,000	£0
Slippage to 2018-19	£0	£0	£0
Projected Outturn 2017-18	£67,741,000	(£29,544,000)	£38,197,000

Table 5: Capital programme status

	Report Cabinet July 2017
Number of schemes in programme	300
Yet to Start	39%
In Progress	39%
Completed	14%
Ongoing Programmes e.g. Disabled Facilities Grant	8%
Devolved Formula Capital Grant schemes budgets devolved to schools	0%

4.22 A grant of £173,000 from the Department for Transport has been awarded to repair potholes across the Borough. It is therefore recommended that an additional budget of £173,000 is added to the capital programme.

Business Rates

- 4.23 Business rate income at the end of July was 32.95% against a target of 31%. The annual collection target is 98.4%.
- 4.24 Following the Chancellor's announcement in the Spring Budget of 3 new types of Business Rate Relief, the Council has to date undertaken the following activity in connection with these:
- 4.25 **New Business Rate Relief for Pubs.** We have identified 89 public houses that fit within the guidelines provided by DCLG. An application form has been designed and was issued to them on 21st July 2017, inviting them to confirm their eligibility for this assistance i.e. essentially that they are not disqualified on the grounds of State Aid. As at 25th July, we have received 2 applications back. Those eligible will receive a flat £1,000 relief against their current year bill.
- 4.26 **New Discretionary Relief Scheme.** In line with the requirements for receipt of the S31 grant, the Council has consulted with the Fire Authority and received confirmation of their agreement to proceed with the proposed scheme. The Discretionary Rate Relief policy has been re-written and is awaiting approval, effectively incorporating this Revaluation Support into the Hardship process. We have identified 1,980 potential beneficiaries on the basis that:
 - Their rateable value for 2017-18 is less than £200,000; and
 - The increase in their bill for 2017-18 is more than 12.5% compared to their 2016-17 bill (before reliefs).

An application form has been designed, building on the existing Hardship Relief application, and will be issued when the revised policy is approved.

- 4.27 **Supporting Small Businesses.** We have identified a potential 34 ratepayers who may benefit from this new relief and it is our intention to amend the existing Small Business Rate Relief application form to cover applications from these ratepayers. Unfortunately however, the software requirements to enable this relief to be calculated will not be available until 21st August. This is the same position for all 3 major software suppliers and is despite the Minister for Local Government, Marcus Jones MP, bringing pressure to bear on them.
- 4.28 As soon as the application form is ready, applications will be invited and held until such time as the software changes enable assessment. Recovery action on these accounts will not be pursued.
- 4.29 It is our intention to publicise these changes and update the website.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 In producing and reviewing this report the Council is meeting its legal obligations to monitor its financial position.

6. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Table 6: risks resulting from this report

Risks	Uncontrolled Risk	Controls	Controlled Risk
None			

7. **POTENTIAL IMPACTS**

7.1 None

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Overview & Scrutiny meetings are scheduled prior to this Cabinet. Any comments from those meetings will be reported verbally to Cabinet.

9. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

9.1 Implementation date if not called in: Immediately.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendices attached to this report are shown below.
 - Appendix A Revenue budget summary
 - Appendix B Development fund analysis
 - Appendix C Revenue movement statement
 - Appendix D Cash flow projection
 - Appendix E Capital budget summary
 - Appendix F Capital variances
 - Appendix G Key capital scheme performance

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

11.1 Background documents relating to this report are detailed below.Budget Report to Cabinet February 2017.

12. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent	Commented & returned
Cllr. Saunders	Lead Member for Finance.	24/7/17	27/7/17
Cllr. Rankin	Deputy Lead Member for Finance.	24/7/17	
Alison Alexander	Managing Director.	17/7/17	
Russell O'Keefe	Executive Director	17/7/17	
Andy Jeffs	Executive Director	17/7/17	
Rob Stubbs	Deputy Director and Head of Finance	17/7/17	

REPORT HISTORY

Decision type:	Urgency item?
For information	No
Report Author: Richard Bunn	Chief Accountant

Appendix A

Revenue Monitoring Statement 2017/18 for August 2017 Cabinet

		2017/18		
SUMMARY	Budget	Approved Estimate	Projected Variance	
	£000	£000	£000	
Corporate & Governance	3,762	3,671	0	
Commissioning & Support	3,530	2,219	(67)	
AfC Contract	46.229	43,681	1,316	
Childrens Services - retained	340	516	0	
Optalis Contract	0	29,074	0	
Adult Social Care - retained spend	42,061	14,865	30	
Adult Social Care - retained income	(10,570)	(9,199)	(451)	
Housing	1,107	1,107	213	
Better Care Fund	7,787	6,760	0	
Public Health	2,263	2,299	0	
Dedicated Schools Grant Spend	35,156	36,842	0	
Grant Income	(72,290)	(71,286)	(213)	
Total Managing Director's Directorate	59,375	60,549	828	
Executive Director of Communities	184	187	0	
Revenues & Benefits	370	273	0	
Highways & Countryside	5,164	5,104	153	
Community Protection & Enforcement	5.825	5,923	(120)	
Library & Resident Services	3,670	3,570	(33)	
Total Communities Directorate	15,213	15,057	0	
Executive Director of Place	153	301	0	
Planning Service	1,471	1,491	0	
Regeneration Service	(1,805)	(1,802)	0	
Finance	2.149	2,051	0	
ICT	2,149	2,051	0	
Total Place Directorate	4,167	4,092	0	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	78,755	79,698	828	

Appendix A

Revenue Monitoring Statement 2017/18 for August 2017 Cabinet

	2017/18				
SUMMARY	Budget	Approved Estimate	Projected Variance		
	£000	£000	£000		
Total Service Expenditure	78,755	79,698	828		
Contribution to / (from) Development Fund	2,255	2,225	0		
Pensions deficit recovery	2,415	2,415	0		
Pay reward	500	0	0		
Transfer to/(from) Provision for Redundancy	0	(81)	0		
Apprenice Levy	280	244	0		
Environment Agency levy	153	153	0		
Capital Financing inc Interest Receipts	5,069	5,110	0		
NET REQUIREMENTS	89,427	89,764	828		
Less - Special Expenses	(1,009)	(1,009)	0		
Transfer to / (from) balances	0	(337)	(828)		
GROSS COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT	88,418	88,418	0		
General Fund					
Opening Balance	5,291	5,215	4,878		
Transfers to / (from) balances	0	(337)	(828)		
	5,291	4,878	4,050		
NOTE Service variances that are negative represent an undersp	end positive represe	nts an overspend			

Memorandum Item	
Current balance on the Development Fund	
	£000
Opening Balance	1,004
Transfer (to) / from other reserves	
Transfer from General Fund - sweep	
Transfer (to) / from General Fund - other initiatives	2,225
	3,229

Corporate Development Fund (AE35) £000 Balance B/F from 2016/17 1,004 Transacted amounts in 2017/18 0 To/From Capital Fund 0 To/From General Fund 1,263 Contribution from the General Fund (2017/18 budget - February 2017 Council) 1,263 Contribution from the General Fund (2017/18 budget - February 2017 Council) 1,109 Restructure of the Development and Regeneration service (2017/18 budget - February 2017 Council) -56 Minerals and Waste Strategy (2017/18 budget - February 2017 Council) -61 Crematorium feasibility study (CMT April 2017) -30 2,225 3,229

Appendix C

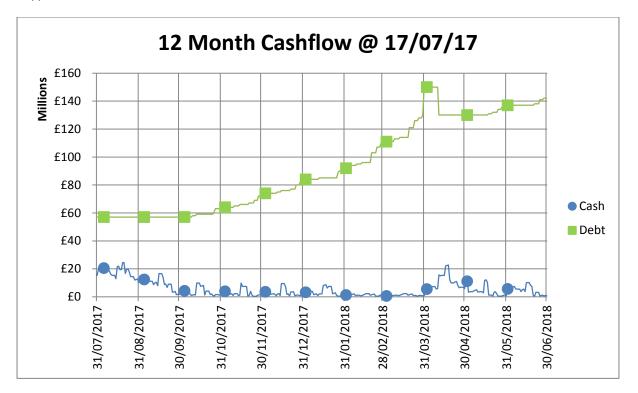
Budget Movement Statement 2017-18

		Funded by	Funded by		Included in		
		Development	the General	Funded by	the original		
		Fund (1)	Fund (2)	Provision (3)	budget (4)	Total	Approval
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
	Original Budget					78,755	
	Carry forward of transforming services budgets re-allocated		264			264	Cabinet May 2017
2	Optalis share of pay reward / award budget re-allocated				75	75	Council Feb. 2017
3	Optalis share of apprentice levy budget re-allocated				36	36	Council Feb. 2017
4	Redundancy cost			43		43	Cabinet May 2017
5	Crematorium feasibility study	30				30	CMT April 2017
6	Budget rounding		4			4	N/A
7	Allocation of pay reward budget to services				425	425	Council Feb. 2017
8	Legal budget for Heathrow expansion		40			40	Prioritisation Sub Committee Oct 201
9	Redundancy cost funded by provision			38		38	Cabinet May 2017
10	Election security costs		19			19	CMT June 2017
11	IPad / IPhone maintenance budget		10			10	Head of Finance delegated powers
12	Return on pre-payment of Optalis pension contributions		(41)			(41)	Treasury management policy
	Changes Approved	30	296	81	536	943	
	Approved Estimate May Cabinet					79,698	

NOTES

- 1 When additional budget is approved, a funding source is agreed with the Lead Member of Finance. Transactions in column 1 have been funded from a usable reserve (Development Fund).
- 2 If additional budget is approved but no funding is specified, the transaction would, by default, be funded from the General Fund Reserve. Transactions in column 2 are funded by the General Fund.
- 3 A provision for future redundancy costs is created every year and this is used to fund additional budget in services for the costs of redundancy they incur during the year. Transactions in column 3 are redundancy costs funded by the provision for redundancy.
- 4 Transactions in column 4 are amounts approved in the annual budget which for various reasons need to be allocated to service budgets in-year. An example would be the pay reward budget. Pay reward payments are not approved until June. The budget therefore has to be

Appendix D



Note 1 – Capital expenditure is projected to increase steadily throughout 2017/18. The exact profile may vary and monitoring of schemes and cash balances will decide the rate at which our borrowing will increase to ensure that no unnecessary debt charges are incurred.

	2017/18	3 Original Budg		y Schemes – Approved Est	imate	Schemes Ap	oproved in Pri	or Years	Projections – Gross Expenditure							
Portfolio Summary	Gross	Income	Net	Gross	Income	Net	Gross	Income	Net	2017/18 Projected	2017/18 SLIPPAGE Projected	TOTAL Projected	VARIANCE Projected	VARIANCE Projected		
t	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(£'000)	(%)		
Communities Directorate																
Sports & Leisure	2,050	0	2,050	2,050	0	2,050	647	(11)	636	2,697	0	2,697	0	0%		
Community Facilities	310	(70)	240	310	(70)	240	443	0	443	753	0	753	0	0%		
Outdoor Facilities	310	(120)	190	510	(320)	190	920	(400)	520	1430	0	1,430	0	0%		
Revenues & Benefits	0	0	0	0	0	0	126	0	126	126	0	126	0			
Green Spaces & Parks	281	(231)	50	281	(231)	50	99	(81)	18	332	0	332	(48)	-17%		
Highways & Countryside	5,438	(2,977)	2,461	5,921	(3,460)	2,461	3,610	(1,004)	2,606	9,531	0	9,531	0	0%		
Community, Protection & Enforcement Services	668	(608)	60	668	(608)	60	1,063	(493)	570	1,731	0	1,731	0	0%		
Library & Resident Services	470	(12)	458	470	(12)	458	958	(312)	646	1,428	0	1,428	0	0%		
Total Communities Directorate	9,527	(4,018)	5,509	10,210	(4,701)	5,509	7,866	(2,301)	5,565	18,028	0	18,028	(48)	(0)		
Place Directorate																
Technology & Change Delivery	275	0	275	275	0	275	96	0	96	371	0	371	0	0%		
Property & Development	4,950	0	4,950	4,950	0	4,950	852	(251)	601	5,802	0	5,802	0	0%		
Regeneration & Economic Development	560	0	560	1,235	0	1,235	5,685	(328)	5,357	6,920	0	6,920	0	0%		
Planning (CAP51)	470	0	470	470	0	470	339	(185)	154	809	0	809	0	0%		
Total Place Directorate	6,255	0	6,255	6,930	0	6,930	6,972	(764)	6,208	13,902	0	13,902	0	0		
Managing Director																
Adult Social Care	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	(51)	0	51	0	51	0			
Housing	500	(500)	0	1,495	(1,495)	0	575	(545)	30	2,070	0	2,070	0	0%		
Democratic Representation	88	0	88	88	0	88	130	0	130	218	0	218	0	0%		
Non Schools	475	0	475	475	0	475	259	(234)	25	734	0	734	0	0%		
Schools – Non Devolved	28,030	(16,640)	11,390	28,220	(16,830)	11,390	3,573	(1,726)	1,847	31,793	0	31,793	0	0%		
Schools – Devolved Capital	223	(223)	0	292	(292)	0	653	(653)	0	945	0	945	0	0%		
Total Managing Director	29,316	(17,363)	11,953	30,570	(18,617)	11,953	5,241	(3,209)	2,032	35,811	0	35,811	0	0		
			,						,		-	,	-			
Total Committed Schemes	45,098	(21,381)	23,717	47,710	(23,318)	24,392	20,079	(6,274)	13,805	67,741	0	67,741	(48)	0		

	(£'000)	(£'000)
Portfolio Total	45,098	67,789
External Funding		
Government Grants	(17,447)	(19,317)
Developers' Contributions	(3,934)	(5,898)
Other Contributions	0	(4,377)
Total External Funding Sources	(21,381)	(29,592)
Total Corporate Funding	23,717	38,197

(£'000)

67,741

(19,269) (5,898) (4,377)

(29,544)

38,197

Capital Monitoring Report - July 2017-18

At 31 July 2017, the approved estimate stood at £67.789m

	Exp	Inc	Net
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Approved Estimate	67,789	(29,592)	38,197
Variances identified	(48)	48	0
Slippage to 2018/19	0	0	0
Projected Outturn 2017/18	67,741	(29,544)	38,197

Overall Projected Expenditure and Slippage Projected outturn for the financial year is £67.741m

There is one variance to report this month. There is currently no slippage to report.

CZ46	P&OS-Vansittart Road Skate Park-Extension /Imps	(48)	48	<u>0</u> Scheme will not be undertaken due to insufficient funding.
		(48)	48	0

Overall Programme Status

The project statistics show the following position:

Scheme progress	No.	%
Yet to Start	118	39%
In Progress	118	39%
Completed	39	14%
Ongoing Programmes e.g Disabled Facilities Grant	24	8%
Devolved Formula Capital Grant schemes budgets devolved		
to schools	1	0%
Total Schemes	300	100%

		July 2017 @ 06/7	/17															
Project	CAPITAL SCHEME		2017/18 IVED ESTIMAT	Ē		OVED SLIPPAG		т	OTAL BUDGET		PROJE	CTIONS-MAY	2017	1	F	PROJECT STATUS		
											2017/18 Projected Variance Underspend as negative	2018/19 Expected Slippage	2018/19 SLIPPAGE Projected	Yet To Start	Preliminary / Feasibility Work	Work On- site	Ongoing Annual Programme	Expected Completion
		Gross	Income	Estimate	Gross	Income	Estimate	1	Income	Estimate		1 1						
Commun	ities Directorate	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000					
	Sports & Leisure	1.050		1.650	250		250	2.000		2.000								
CZ18	Magnet LC Reprovision Design / Initial Site Costs	1,650	0	1,650	350	0	350	2,000	0	2,000	0		0					
	Highways & Transport											1						
CD12	Roads Resurfacing-Transport Asset & Safety	1,650	(1,650)	0	132	(131)	1	1,782	(1,781)	1	0		0					
CD84	Street Lighting-LED Upgrade	1,600	0	1,600	634	0	634	2,234	0	2,234	0		0					
																		ļ
<u> </u>	Community, Protection & Enforcement Services	1		1				1	1			1						
СТ52	Disabled Facilities Grant	600	(600)	0	0	0	0	600	(600)	0	0		0					
Place Dire	ectorate																	
	Regeneration																	
CI14	Maidenhead Waterways Construction phase 1	0	0	0	1707	(141)	1566	1,707	(141)	1,566	0		0					
CI29	Nicholson's Car Park & Central House Scheme	0	0	0	2952	(187)	2765	2,952	(187)	2,765	0		0					
Mananin	Director																	
Managing	Housing																	
	Key Worker DIYSO		1			1			1			1						
CT51	Brill House Capital Funding	0	0	0	510	(510)	0	510	(510)	0	0		0					
CT55	bin house capital funding	500	(500)	0	0	0	0	500	(500)	0	0		0					
	Non Schools																	
СКУТ	Marlow Road Youth Centre Roofing and Maintenance Work	400	0	400	0	0	0	400	0	400	0		0					
	Schools – Non Devolved																	
CSGR	Charters Expansion	3,420	(2,952)	468	203	(203)	0	3,623	(3,155)	468	0		0					

Project	 CAPITAL SCHEME		017/18 VED ESTIMAT	E		OVED SLIPPAG M PRIOR YEARS		т	OTAL BUDG 2017/18	ET	PROJEC	CTIONS-MAY	2017	PROJECT STATUS					
											2017/18 Projected Variance Underspend as negative	2018/19 Expected Slippage	2018/19 SLIPPAGE Projected	Yet To Start	Preliminary / Feasibility Work		Ongoing Annual Programme	Expected Completion	
		Gross	Income	Estimate	Gross	Income	Estimate	Gross	Income	Estimate									
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000						
CSGT	Windsor Boys Expansion	1,120	(1,120)	0	(108)	108	0	1,012	(1,012)	0	0		0						
CSGV	Cox Green School Expansion Year 1 of 3	3,780	(2,127)	1,653	133	(133)	0	3,913	(2,260)	1,653	0		0						
CSGW	Furze Platt Senior expansion Year 1 of 3	6,750	(2,212)	4,538	431	(431)	0	7,181	(2,643)	4,538	0		0						
CSGX	Dedworth Middle School Expansion Year 1 of 3	3,780	(2,081)	1,699	153	(153)	0	3,933	(2,234)	1,699	0		0						
CSHU	Windsor Girls Expansion	1,800	(1,800)	0	(64)	64	0	1,736	(1,736)	0	0		0						
CSHV	Lowbrook Expansion	0	0	0	1,543	0	1,543	1,543	0	1,543	0		0						

Agenda Item 8

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 9

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank