

CABINET AGENDA



4th March 2013

at 9.30 am

in Committee Room B,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool

MEMBERS: CABINET:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond

Councillors Hill, Lauderdale and Thompson.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**

3. **MINUTES**

To receive the Record of Decision in respect of the meeting held on 18th February 2013 (previously circulated)

4. **BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

No items

5. **KEY DECISIONS**

5.1 Local Welfare Support / Discretionary Housing Payment Administration –
Chief Finance Officer

6. **OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

6.1 Quarter 3 – Council Overview of Performance and Risk 2012/13 – *Corporate Management Team*



7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/INFORMATION

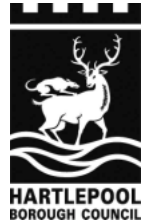
No items

8. REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW OF SCRUTINY FORUMS

No items



<h1>CABINET</h1> <h2>4th March 2013</h2>



Report of: Chief Finance Officer

Subject: Local Welfare Support / Discretionary Housing
Payment Administration

1. TYPE OF DECISION / APPLICABLE CATEGORY

- 1.1 Key decision – test (i) and (ii) apply. Forward Plan Reference
No. CE 54/12

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- i) Inform Cabinet of the Council's proposed Local Welfare Support Scheme and associated delivery model that will apply from April 2013.
- ii) Inform Cabinet of the proposed arrangements for administering Discretionary Housing Payments from April 2013.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 As previously reported to Cabinet, the Government is transferring responsibility for some elements of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)'s Discretionary Social Fund to local authorities in April 2013.

3.2 The DWP will retain responsibility for helping claimants with a new advance of benefit facility and for budgeting loans. However local authorities will from April 2013 assume responsibility for discretionary support that will replace the current Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for general living expenses.

3.3 The transfer of this new responsibility to local authorities at the same time as other welfare reform changes are introduced including the introduction of Localised Council Tax Support, Housing Benefit reforms (the Bedroom Tax) and the Benefit Cap (now scheduled for implementation summer 2013) will create significant administrative challenges for the Council and the risk of reputational criticisms if the Council's delivery model is not effective.

- 3.4 Furthermore, the DWP will be providing councils with a fixed cash limited budget for Discretionary Social Fund Awards / Local Welfare Support. The DWP do not currently operate the Discretionary Social Fund with a cash limited budget. The Local Welfare Support grant allocation for the Council for 2013/14 has been confirmed by the DWP and is 11.6% (£70,000) lower than actual DWP spend in Hartlepool in 2011/12. The DWP have not provided details of spend in 2012/13, so there is a risk the funding shortfall may have increased. There is also a significant financial risk that with the wider welfare reforms, demand for help will increase in the future placing further additional pressures on the cash limited budget.
- 3.5 A key objective in developing the Council's administration delivery model has been to secure an arrangement that will generate administration savings from streamlined business processes, the use of latest technology, whilst also providing resilience to deal with a new annual caseload of around 6,700 applications for financial support. Any resulting administration savings can then be applied to supplement the DWP's awards allocation and thereby assist more vulnerable individuals.

4. DWP CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS - COMMUNITY CARE GRANTS AND CRISIS LOANS

- 4.1 Current Community Care Grants are non repayable awards made to people in receipt of means tested income benefits, to move back to or stay in the community, or to ease exceptional pressures or for certain travel expenses. As such, these grants are a form of community financial support rather than community care. These awards can be in the form of goods or services and do not necessarily have to be cash awards.
- 4.2 Current Crisis Loans are interest free loans made to people to meet immediate short term needs in an emergency or as a consequence of a disaster, where they have no other funds and where they would otherwise face serious risk to their health and safety. Crisis loans are technically available to anyone, whether receiving welfare benefits or not, however it is understood that relatively few applications are made by those not on welfare benefits. Crisis Loans are currently recovered by the DWP from future welfare benefit payments over a defined period however the DWP have indicated that this deduction facility will not be available in the future to local authorities and that they are not expecting loans to be a feature of the new Local Welfare Support arrangements.
- 4.3 The Government is not being prescriptive about local delivery arrangements however it is likely that the Secretary of State will write to local authorities setting out the government's policy expectations from the transfer of responsibilities. There is a potential conflict

between the Government's expectations and the ability of council's to design a Local Welfare Support scheme that can adequately reflect local circumstances within the fixed funding levels being transferred by Government.

5. FUNDING

- 5.1 The DWP have confirmed the funding allocations for local authorities for 2013/14 and provisional allocations for 2014/15 covering awards and administration responsibilities and these are set out below.

DWP Funding Allocations

	2013/14	2014/15 Provisional
Awards Funding	£532,270	£532,270
Administration Funding	£112,473	£103,093

In addition in 2012/13, the DWP are providing £5,323 to councils for set up costs.

- 5.2 The grant allocation will be un-ringfenced, albeit local authorities will be asked to provide feedback of their arrangements as part of spread of good practice. Accountability monitoring will therefore be light touch in 2013/14 however it is understood that detailed on site reviews at about 50 councils will take place in 2014/15.
- 5.3 Latest available data from the DWP in relation to Discretionary Social Fund expenditure relates to 2011/12. The DWP have not provided any details on expenditure in 2012/13. As set out in the table below, the DWP were spending 11.6% more in 2011/12 than they are providing to the Council for its scheme in 2013/14.

DWP Actual Discretionary Social Fund Payments Hartlepool 2011/12

	Number of Applications	Number of Awards	Arithmetic Average Award	Total Spend
Crisis Loans	4,780	3,390	£62.35	£211,400
Community Care Grants	1,890	830	£470.48	£390,500
Total	6,670	4,220		£601,900

Source DWP

6 HARTLEPOOL LOCAL WELFARE SUPPORT SCHEME - April 2013

- 6.1 Awards will be made covering crisis and non crisis scenario's (further details are provided in the administration framework at **Appendix A**). This framework for administration and decision making covers:
- qualifying criteria
 - forms of support
 - award values
 - processes for claiming help
 - circumstances for which assistance will not be given
- 6.2 Wherever possible, for Crisis situations the council will seek to avoid making cash payments to applicants, but will instead provide help by:
- Directly "topping up" gas / electricity credit onto prepayment meter keys / cards
 - Organising utilities re-connection via payment direct to the gas / electricity supplier
 - Signposting applicants to foodbanks or providing supermarket vouchers / prepaid cards for emergency food assistance
 - Providing emergency clothing support via a voucher /prepaid card with a nominated supplier ie. Primark.
 - Directly booking travel by coach (on behalf of the applicant)
- 6.3 Where individuals are re- locating back into the community eg. following release from prison, or residential/ hospital care and specific household items eg. beds, furniture, white goods etc are required, the council will order and arrange for delivery and installation (where appropriate) of the items. These scenario's would tend to be of a non crisis nature and can be procured in advance of the required date.
- 6.4 In recognition of the opportunities to secure economies in the cost of Local Welfare Support (LWS) household item purchases, a consortium of Tees Valley councils have completed a joint procurement exercise (co-ordinated by Darlington BC). The items provided will be of a single standard specification, will be durable and meet energy efficiency requirements (where relevant).
- 6.5 The Council's Furniture Solutions project is accessible to any household, allows freedom of choice in terms of available goods and importantly the white goods / furniture are backed by a loan which is repayable at a competitive rate of interest. There is therefore a key distinction between the Furniture Solutions Service and the Local Welfare Support scheme. LWS award recipients will have no choice over the goods supplied and applicants will be assessed to ensure they are not in a position to take a repayable loan via the Furniture Solutions Service. In this respect the LWS scheme and Furniture

Solutions project will operate in a complementary and integrated manner.

7. RISKS

- 7.1 Local Welfare Support creates a number of financial and reputational risks for the Council. Currently funding for Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans within central government is demand led and therefore not cash limited. However the Council will be issued with a cash limited allocation within which to administer its new arrangements. This is potentially a significant additional financial risk and expenditure will need to be managed extremely carefully to avoid any overspend which would transfer to the general fund budget. This risk will be mitigated to some degree by the council's arrangements which will involve the provision of goods wherever possible (which have been procured under best value principles) as opposed to making cash payments for many items which was the model operated by the DWP. We anticipate that the Council's arrangements will enable support to be provided to more vulnerable individuals than the DWP was able to.
- 7.2 A further risk is the lack of certainty regarding on-going funding beyond 2014/15. The provisional 2014/15 awards allocation does not include any inflation uplift from 2013/14 and the provisional administration funding allocation is being cut by 8% to £103,093 for 2014/15. In addition, there is a risk that as part of the next comprehensive spending review and planned changes to the formula grant system, that the Local Welfare Support specific grant could be transferred into the formula grant. This could result in this funding being cut at the same rate as cuts in the core grant, which are likely to continue having a disproportionate impact on deprived councils
- 7.3 Reputationally, Local Welfare Support applicants who are refused help will in future view the refusal as a refusal by the local authority rather than by central government (the current DWP arrangements have been the subject of criticism regarding decision making). The Council's administration framework will ensure that protocols provide for fair and impartial decision making. In contrast to the centralised DWP arrangements, localised decision making under the Council's LWS scheme will permit a holistic and local knowledge informed basis for making awards judgements.

8. HBC DELIVERY MODEL

- 8.1 Administration of this new responsibility will create significant challenges given the high volume of applications, estimated to be about 6,700 per annum. Furthermore it is important that requests for help are dealt with fairly, effectively, professionally and with empathy.

- 8.2 The Council's Benefits and Awards Service currently administers Housing and Council Tax Benefit and Free School Meals. In addition, the Benefits Service also manages a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) budget on behalf of the DWP, to provide additional "top up" support with housing costs.
- 8.3 These responsibilities involve financial evaluations of an individual's circumstances, appropriate challenge and validation checks including accessing DWP systems. There are a number of key synergies between the existing functions of the council's Benefits and Awards service and the administration of the new Local Welfare Support scheme. A government Commons Select Committee that reviewed the issues surrounding the transfer of discretionary social fund responsibilities to local authorities identified that many of the recipients of DWP community care grants and crisis loans were not social services clients and concluded that the new service should be delivered in local authorities by teams that contact the widest possible range of people that may need support.
- 8.4 Given the skill sets, cumulative expertise and knowledge that exist within the Benefits and Awards service and the ability to provide a holistic response to those that are vulnerable, the Corporate Management Team has agreed that the Local Welfare Support administration should be delivered by the Council's Benefits and Awards Service. This arrangement will permit consolidation of decision making on a range of financial support and also offer opportunities to maximise efficiencies in administration and minimise operating costs, in particular in connection with the administration of an enhanced DWP Discretionary Housing Payment fund. (this is covered in section 9. The Corporate Management Team view recognises the potential impact on service delivery of the review of advice and guidance services provided by the Council, which will be completed in the early part of the year.
- 8.5 To facilitate the effective delivery of Local Welfare Support, an in house computer database has been developed with support by Northgate. This system will record details of all applications (successful and unsuccessful) and actual awards made. The DWP have indicated they will endeavour to provide details from their systems of 2012/13 social fund awards within the borough. If available this historical data will be loaded into the council's database and will be utilised as part of future award decision making processes.
- 8.6 To maximise the value of all available resources, protocols are being developed to facilitate sharing of data between those officers administering Local Welfare Support and the Child and Adult Services Department which administer S17 Children's Act responsibilities.

- 8.7 By applying efficient streamlined processes and the latest technology the Council will secure an 18% productivity improvement in terms of volumes of applications processed per officer as compared with indicative current processing information from the DWP. The most efficient and economic delivery model is to operate a generic Discretionary Support team within the Benefits and Awards service dealing with the new Local Welfare Support responsibilities and the additional Discretionary Housing Payment responsibilities set out in section 9. By operating this delivery model it is anticipated that administration costs will be £87,000 covering 4 fte members of staff. This will allow £25,000 of the Local Welfare Support DWP Administration grant allocation to be transferred to top up the LWS Awards allocation to £557,270 from £532,270.
- 8.8 Three options for implementing the necessary staffing structure have been considered to reflect the two year funding allocation provided by the Government and the potential impact of the review of the advice and guidance services provided by the Council, which will be completed in the early part of the year. These options are based on temporary employment contracts of either:
- 24 months – to reflect the period covered by the Government funding allocation;
 - 12 months;
 - 6 months – to reflect the earliest anticipated implementation date of any changes arising from the review of advice and guidance service provided by the Council.
- 8.9 In my professional opinion temporary contracts based on a fixed term of 12 months provide the appropriate operational resources, whilst not committing the Council to a longer contract pending the outcome of the review of advice and guidance services.
- 8.10 Recruitment to these posts will be aligned with the redeployment process for the 2013/14 budget, which will be carried out over the next few weeks. Additionally, where appropriate, training for staff wishing to take up redeployment will be provided and funded from the resources set aside in the 2012/13 budget for this purpose.

9. DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT ADMINISTRATION FRAMEWORK

- 9.1 The DWP currently provides local authorities with an annual cash limited fund to enable councils to provide discretionary “top up” help to housing benefit and council tax benefit claimants. However with the abolition of Council Tax Benefit on 31st March, future allocations of discretionary housing payment funding will from 1st April 2013 only be capable of being applied to help with housing benefit awards.

- 9.2 To help manage the impact of the government's housing and welfare reforms the DWP are increasing the amount of funding provided to local authorities for Discretionary Housing Payment purposes. However this additional funding is insufficient to deal with the breadth and size of housing benefit entitlement cuts. A DWP circular issued in January 2013 confirmed the government's guidance and Hartlepool's allocation which is set out in the following table:

Hartlepool BC DWP Discretionary Housing Payment Allocation 2013/14

	£
General DHP Support (continuing)	38,000
Local Housing Allowance (private rented sector) (continuing)	83,000
<u>NEW</u> Social Sector Size Criteria (Bedroom Tax)	62,000
<u>NEW</u> Welfare Benefit Cap	134,000
Total	317,000

- 9.3 Analysis of the impacts of the welfare reform changes indicates that the Bedroom Tax changes will potentially affect 1666 households in Hartlepool and the annual loss of housing benefit is estimated to be £1.2m. Similarly using DWP data, the Council has identified that 140 households are at risk from the proposed Benefit Cap with a potential annual loss of housing benefit of about £0.48m. In this context, the level of DWP Discretionary Housing Payment funding as set out in the table above will be insufficient to deal with the scale of financial loss within the borough. The loss of welfare support associated with the Bedroom Tax and the Benefit Cap is estimated at £1.68m in Hartlepool however the Council is only being provided with £0.196m of funding for new Discretionary Housing Payment awards, this equates to only 11.6% of the value of the benefits being cut.
- 9.4 For the Social Sector Size Criteria changes, the DWP guidance is that the available funding is aimed at two specific groups, disabled people who live in significantly adapted accommodation and foster carers. Analysis has identified that there are only 6 foster carer households affected by the welfare reforms and that all these households can be fully protected from any loss in housing benefit at a cost of £4,500 pa. In terms of disabilities a measure of need is whether Disability Living Allowance high care component is in pay. There are 97 households affected by the Bedroom Tax that meet this disability criteria and protecting them fully from the changes will cost £69,500 pa.
- 9.5 For those affected by the Benefit Cap the loss of Housing Benefit will be more severe. The average weekly loss is estimated at £66 per week albeit some households may lose £150 a week. The Hartlepool

DHP Administration Framework will provide that tapered Discretionary Support is provided to those subject to the Benefit Cap at the rate of full support for 8 weeks, reducing to 50% support of any loss for 6 weeks and then 4 weeks at 25% loss support.

- 9.6 This Benefit Cap tapered support will provide on an equal basis the greatest period of time for individuals to respond to the changes to move to alternative accommodation or secure employment. This measure will provide some level of support with the housing benefit loss for 18 weeks and will avoid “cliff edges” where households would drop immediately off protection. It is the intention to notify those households at risk from the Benefit Cap of the discretionary support the Council will be providing.
- 9.7 A summary of the proposed level of support and the associated cost is provided in the table below:

Hartlepool DHP Protection Awards - Social Sector Size and Benefit Cap 2013/14

Level of Protection against loss of Housing Benefit	Specific Group	Number of Households protected	Annual Cost
Full Discretionary Support over 52 weeks	Foster carers living in homes provided by Registered Providers (RSLs) and households in receipt of disability allowance high component	103 from 1666 affected	£74 000
Tapered Discretionary Support over 18 weeks, 8 at 100%, 6 at 50% then 4 at 25%	Households affected by the Benefit Cap	140	£111,000

- 9.8 The above table shows that the estimated cost of the Social Sector protection (covering Foster Carers and households in receipt of the disability allowance high component) are £74,000, which is £12,000 more than the funding provided by the Government for this sector. The excess costs will therefore need to be funded from the continuing General DHP allocation of £38,000 as shown at 9.2.
- 9.9 For the Benefit Cap cases the above table shows an estimated cost of £111,000, which is £23,000 less than the Government funding allocation for Welfare Benefit Cap cases of £134,000 as shown at

9.2. The uncommitted 2013/14 DHP allocation will be retained as a contingency as actual weekly levels of housing benefit loss in Summer 2013 may be higher than the current available data and also more households may be affected than have been identified thus far. The commitments against the available funding will be monitored on a monthly basis to enable any necessary corrective action to be taken.

- 9.10 Administering the increased DHP allocation funding will generate administration challenges. However, by applying the support criteria set out in section 9.7, this will assist in administration of the DHP funding and will provide clarity and transparency. However, for the remainder of the annual DWP DHP allocations, detailed applications for discretionary help will continue to be managed and assessed on the same basis as they have been in previous years, which will generate high volumes of enquiries and processing work. The proposed DHP Administration Framework is set out in **Appendix B**.
- 9.11 In recognition of this workload position, the most efficient and economic arrangement is to operate a generic Discretionary Support team within the Benefits and Awards service dealing with the new Local Welfare Support responsibilities and the additional DHP responsibilities as set out in sections 8.7 to 8.10.

10. CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 The Coalition Government has made Welfare Reform a key priority including reform of the Social Fund. The Government have formed a view that localisation of some Discretionary Social Fund responsibilities with local authorities will provide a more timely and better targeted service than the current centralised DWP arrangements. This view is predicated on a recognition that local authorities through their local knowledge, broad responsibilities and experience of benefits administration, better understand their local community and what is required to effectively support local people.
- 10.2 However, transfer of this new responsibility to the Council brings with it substantial financial, operational and reputational risks. In particular, the DWP will be providing councils with a fixed cash limited budget for awards (11.6% less than the amount spent by the DWP in 2011/12). There is a significant risk that with the wider welfare reforms demand for help will increase and these allocations will be insufficient to meet local need. A key element of the Council's management arrangements for delivering Local Welfare Support is the operation of robust approval criteria, sound budgetary control and demand profiling to avoid a potential future general fund budget pressure.
- 10.3 The Council has developed a delivery model which will consolidate Local Welfare Support awards administration with Housing Benefits,

Council Tax Support and Free School Meals activities. This arrangement will minimise operational and reputational risks and facilitate as seamless as possible introduction of the new responsibility and the continued availability of important financial support. Importantly, this delivery model will also deliver economies of scale by the operation of a generic awards team dealing with Local Welfare Support and Discretionary Housing Payments. The resulting saving from this administration model can be applied to increase the awards allocation.

11 RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i) Notes the report;
- ii) Approves the 2013/14 Council's Local Welfare Support Scheme as detailed in section 6.
- iii) Approves the Council's 2013/14 Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme as detailed in section 9, which includes specific financial support for foster carers, households in receipt of Disability Living Allowance high care component and households affected by the Benefit Cap;
- iv) Note that £87,000 of the Administration grant will be allocated to provide 4 fixed term posts for 12 months to reflect the issues detailed in paragraphs 8.9 and 8.10. with the remainder of the DWP Administration grant of £25,000 being used to top up the DWP awards allocation.

12. APPENDICES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST, IN THE MEMBERS LIBRARY AND ONLINE

12.1 **Appendix A** Local Welfare Support Administration Framework

Appendix B Discretionary Housing Payment Administration Framework

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 Cabinet report 25 June 2012.

14. CONTACT OFFICER

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Local Welfare Support Administration Framework

Hartlepool Borough Council

Local Welfare Support Administration Framework

SECTIONS

- 1. Purpose**
- 2. Considerations for an Award**
- 3. Crisis- Forms of Support and Award Values**
- 4. Non Crisis – Forms of Support and Award Values**
- 5. Crisis-Claiming a Local Welfare Support Award**
- 6. Non Crisis-Claiming a Local Welfare Support Award**
- 7. Awarding a Local Welfare Support Payment**
- 8. Method of Payment**
- 9. Notification**
- 10. When Local Welfare Support Applications will not be awarded**
- 11. Review**
- 12. Monitoring arrangements and managing the Local Welfare Support**
- 13. Publicity**
- 14. Fraud**

Local Welfare Support

Section 1 - Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this administration framework is to specify how Hartlepool Borough Council Benefits Service will operate the Local Welfare Support Scheme (LWSS) and outline the framework within which award determinations will be made. Each case will be treated strictly on its merits and all applicants will receive equal and fair treatment within a transparent process taking full account of the Council's responsibilities under all relevant government legislation.

Section 2 - Considerations for an Award

2.1 The Benefits Service will consider making a payment from the LWSS to those applicants that are living in Hartlepool who meet the qualifying criteria as specified in this policy.

2.2 There are two strands to the LWSS that will be considered when assessing applications - awards for those who present to the Council in crisis and awards for those who are residents of Hartlepool, not in crisis but need help for example, to resettle into the community or stay in their own home.

2.3 In Crisis

2.3.1 These awards cover scenarios where, due to a crisis, there is a severe risk to the health and safety of the applicant or an immediate family member or dependent which cannot be dealt with via other support mechanisms e.g. Section 17 Payments, Preventing Homelessness Grant etc. Payments may be made to cover the following risks:

- No access to essential needs
- Imminent deterioration in health

2.3.2 A crisis could also be an event of great or sudden misfortune such as major flooding, gas explosions or a house fire but it is not expected that a minor mishap or damage or failure of a household item would be deemed a crisis in most circumstances.

2.4 Non Crisis

Hartlepool arrangements for Non Crisis awards reflect applicant demand for former DWP Community Care Grants where 76% of awards were made to single applicants.

2.4.1 Applicants may receive a LWSS Award if they are receiving Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income Related Employment Support Allowance or any type of Pension Credit (currently known as

“passported” benefits) and from October 2013 payment of relevant elements of Universal Credit.

2.4.2 Applicants may be able to access a LWSS award if they are leaving accommodation in which they received significant and substantial care and supervision and they expect to be discharged within 6 weeks. These applicants will not have a current tenancy or be a home owner and will need to find somewhere to live in the community. Such applicants must also be expected to receive a “passported” benefit (as set out in 2.4.1) or a relevant element of Universal Credit when they leave the accommodation. Examples of such accommodation that would fit this criterion are:

- Prison or detention centre
- Hospital or other medical establishment
- Care home
- Hostel
- Staff intensive sheltered housing
- Local authority care

2.4.3 A LWSS Award may be made if this will help an individual to stay at home in the community rather than move into residential care or hospital. One of the factors considered is how immediate the likelihood is of going into such accommodation and whether the type of item or service required would prevent this happening. Some examples are:

- Help with expenses to maintain independent living, where no other funds are available to meet this need e.g. moving from a furnished flat to an unfurnished one.
- Help to move to a more suitable place to live or to be nearer someone who will provide care and support (excluding removal expenses)

Applicants will be signposted to other advice providers such as West View Advice and Resource Centre. In addition, details of any other potential sources of funding will be provided to the applicant where appropriate.

2.4.4. LWSS Awards may be made to support a family facing exceptional pressure. Some examples of situations that may give rise to exceptional pressure are:

- Someone in the family suffers from a disability or chronic sickness which gives rise to an exceptional need and where that need cannot be met by another support fund e.g. Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments
- There is, or has been, a breakdown of relationships within the family (including domestic violence)
- There is a serious problem with the accommodation, such as overcrowding or structural problems
- Domestic upheaval because of unforeseen circumstances such as house fire, flooding or other disaster

The above is not an exhaustive list.

2.4.5. What causes exceptional pressure can cover a very wide range of personal circumstances. When considering applications, assessors will look at **all** the factors causing pressures on the family and will decide:

- Whether any of them individually or collectively when looked at as a whole, constitute exceptional pressure, and:
- If so, whether the items applied for will ease that exceptional pressure

2.4.6 LWSS payments will also enable the Council to provide support for vulnerable people in financial crisis. The Benefits Section will treat all applications on an individual basis. When making a decision on any application, consideration will be given to the following priorities:

- Safeguard Hartlepool residents in their homes
- Help those who are trying to help themselves
- Keep families together
- Help provide stability to children
- Support the vulnerable in the local community
- Help applicants through personal crisis and difficult events

2.4.7 Unless there are exceptional circumstances applications from single people (non dependants) living with other family members will not be awarded as they are likely to have access to support from other family members.

Section 3 – CRISIS - Forms of Support and Award Values

3.1 Forms of support

Awards will be made for the provision of:

- Food (voucher/prepaid card/food parcel)
- Clothing and nappies (voucher/prepaid card)
- Heating (payment of credit to a pre-payment meter)
- Reconnection (payment direct to the supplier)
- Access to hospital (bus voucher/ticket) where no reimbursement is available from any other source
- Other forms of support in exceptional circumstances

3.2 Award values

A maximum payment of 60% of the basic personal allowance, as set by the Department for Work and Pensions for a single person or a couple will be payable plus an amount equivalent to the dependent child addition in Child Tax Credit. Awards may be less than the maximum amount. Period of awards will be considered dependant on an applicants individual circumstances

although such awards should not routinely exceed 14 days. In general, applicants will only receive a maximum of two awards relating to similar issues in a rolling financial year.

Applicants making repeat applications for crisis awards will be signposted to relevant advice services, generally at the point of making a second application.

Section 4 – NON CRISIS - Forms of Support and Award Values

4.1. Forms of support

Awards may be made for the provision of:

- Bed
- Bedding
- Utensils (including microwave)
- Chair
- Additional items as necessary (health/age/disability) including:
 - White goods
 - Carpets/curtains

The Council's Furniture Solutions project is accessible to any household, allows freedom of choice in terms of available goods and importantly the white goods / furniture are backed by a loan which is repayable at a competitive rate of interest. LWS non crisis applicants will be assessed to establish if they are in a position to take a repayable loan via the Furniture Solutions Service for some or all of the goods they need, before being considered for a LWS award.

4.2. Award values

Award values will be at the discretion of the Council but will be based on standard prices for items required including the cost of delivery and installation.

Award values will not exceed £500.

The value of a LWSS Award will be reduced, on a pound for pound basis, by any savings an applicant or their partner has over £500 (£1000 if the applicant or their partner is aged 60 or over).

Section 5 – Claiming a LWSS Award – In Crisis

5.1. Applications for a crisis award will normally be by telephone to the Benefits Discretionary Support Team via a dedicated telephone line during normal office hours, supplied through a freephone or call back service.

5.2. A Benefits Discretionary Support Team (DST) officer will complete an application over the phone and will subsequently confirm whether the applicant is eligible for an award and if so, the amount to be awarded. If successful, the applicant will be able to collect the relevant crisis award from Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool as soon as is reasonably practicable, and wherever possible on the same day.

5.3. Where the Benefits DST officer decides that an interview is required to clarify and validate information the applicant will be offered an appointment, arranged as soon as is reasonable practicable, giving due consideration to the reason for the application.

5.4. Telephone application is the preferred route and drop in to the Civic Centre will be signposted to use this facility, wherever possible. However in situations of extreme distress where an individual presents themselves at the Civic Centre, a DST officer will complete an application form with the individual via an interview.

5.5. Where an applicant cannot visit the Civic Centre due to health/mobility issues and cannot use a telephone and has no one else who can act on their behalf, the Benefits DST may make arrangements to visit the applicant in their home.

5.6. A decision letter will be sent by post within 24 hours wherever this is reasonably practicable, explaining the determination made and the review process for both successful and unsuccessful applications. Alternative arrangements will be put in place as necessary for those who do not have a permanent contact address. Where the relevant award is collected personally, the applicant will be given the letter at the same time, wherever practicable. The applicant may be asked to bring supporting documents such as proof of Identity, bank statements to be checked prior to releasing the award.

5.7. The Council will also consider In Crisis applications submitted by Key Service Providers who on behalf of individuals routinely provide support and guidance. Such applications are to be made with the individual's explicit consent. Providers may include the Women's Refuge, Homeless Hostels and Independent Living providers. The Council will take into consideration any information provided by key service providers in support of applications.

Section 6 – Claiming a LWSS Award – Non Crisis

6.1. Application made direct by applicant

- Applicant completes and submits LWSS application form, by post
- DST decision making officer review application
 - If the application is fully complete the Council will aim to write to the applicant within one month with a decision
 - If the application is incomplete the DST team will contact relevant services or the applicant for further information. Once all relevant data has been collected the LWSS team will contact the applicant with a decision by post
 - If successful, awards will be provided in line with the applicants needs

A letter will be sent within 2 working days of the decision date, to explain the decision to both successful and unsuccessful applicants together with the appeals process.

6.2. Application via key services provider

Key service providers are identified in paragraph 5.7. The following provides details of how the referral process will be administered:

- Applicant presents to key service providers
- Service provider identifies that applicant may be eligible for LWSS Award
- Service provider supports applicant to complete LWSS Award application and forwards it to LWSS assessment team together with supporting evidence
- LWSS assessor considers the application and makes a decision within one month
- If successful, awards will be provided in line with the applicants needs.
- A letter will be sent within 2 working days of the decision date to explain the decision to both successful and unsuccessful applicants together with the review process

6.3. General

6.3.1. The Benefits Service may request any reasonable evidence in support of an application for a LWSS payment. Such requests will normally be made in writing although if an urgent application is being considered (such as a applicant potentially being made homeless), this will be requested by phone. The applicant will be asked to provide the evidence within 7 days of a request being made although this will be extended in appropriate circumstances.

6.3.2 The Benefits Service reserves the right to verify any information or evidence provided by the applicant in appropriate circumstances. Any such

request will be essential to the decision making process and will only be used in connection with the LWSS application. If the applicant is unable to provide evidence due to the nature of an In Crisis application the Benefits Service may still consider the application and will take into account any other available information. The Benefits Service also reserves the right to close applications where evidence available to the applicant has been requested and not supplied.

6.3.3 The Benefits Service will also seek to maximise the applicant's income by checking the availability of state benefits and other sources of financial assistance that may be available to the applicant upon application.

Section 7 - Awarding a Local Welfare Support Payment – In Crisis

7.1 The decision maker will consider the full circumstances before deciding whether or not to award a LWSS payment. In deciding whether to award a LWSS payment, the LWSS decision maker will take into account the following as applicable to the application:

- The exceptional nature of the applicant and their circumstances
- The financial, and medical circumstances of the applicant and their household, if they are relevant to the LWSS request
- The income and essential expenditure of the applicant and their household when considering the applicants income. All income will be taken into account, for example Disability Living Allowance or child maintenance. Where appropriate applicants will be signposted to other agencies that may be able to provide support and advice.
- Any savings and investments held by the applicant and their household, which could be used to help their financial situation
- Whether other family members external to the household help in any way towards the applicants financial expenditure
- Whether the applicant and their household are entitled to other welfare benefits but are not claiming them
- Whether the applicant is fleeing domestic abuse
- Any steps taken by the applicant to improve their circumstances
- Financial advice they have sought to alleviate their situation, such as from Citizens Advice Bureau or West View Advice and Resource Centre

The DST decision maker will record the reasons why a decision to award or refuse an application has been made.

7.2 Awarding a Local Welfare Support Payment – Non Crisis

The decision maker will consider the full circumstances before deciding whether or not to award a LWSS payment. In deciding whether to award a LWSS payment, the LWSS decision maker will take into account the following as applicable to the application:

- The applicant meets the criteria set out at 2.4.1 and 2.4.2 of this policy
- Liaison with key service providers to assist with claim validation
- Any reasons which make it necessary or especially desirable for the claimant to occupy the dwelling they live in the DST decision maker's view.
- If the award will help the claimant stay in the community
- If the award will facilitate resettlement into the community

The DST decision maker will record the reasons why a decision to award or refuse an application has been made.

Section 8 - Method of Payment

8.1 The Benefits Service will decide the most appropriate person to pay based upon the circumstances of each case.

8.2 Depending on individual circumstances, awards may be payable to:

- The applicant
- Their partner
- An appointee
- Any third party to whom it might be most appropriate to make payment i.e. directly to the supplier of goods or services

8.3 The Benefits Service will pay a LWSS award usually in the form of a voucher or pre paid card.

Section 9 - Notification

9.1 The Benefits Service will aim to inform the applicant in writing of the outcome of their Crisis award application within 24 hours, wherever practicable of the decision being made and within one month of receipt of a non crisis application for a LWSS Award. Where the application is unsuccessful, the Benefits Service will set out the reasons why this decision was made and explain how to ask for a review. Where the application is successful, the Benefits Section will advise:

- The amount of LWSS payment awarded
- How, when and to whom the award will be paid
- How to ask for a request a review

Section 10 - When Local Welfare Support applications will not be awarded

10.1 .In Crisis Awards will **not** be provided for the following:

- A need which occurs outside the United Kingdom
- Any expense which the Council has a statutory duty to meet
- An educational or training need including clothing and tools
- Travelling expenses to or from school because funding is available from other sources
- Feeding children during school holidays for children who are entitled to free school meals during term time
- Expenses in connection with Court (legal) proceedings such as legal fees, Court fees, fines, costs, damages, subsistence or travelling expenses (other than emergency travelling expenses when stranded away from home)
- Removal or storage charges if you are being re-housed following a compulsory purchase order, a redevelopment or closing order, a compulsory exchange of tenancies, or under a housing authority's statutory duty to the homeless
- The cost of domestic assistance and respite care
- Any repair to property owned by public sector housing bodies including housing associations , housing co-operatives and housing trusts
- A medical, surgical, optical, or dental item or service (these needs can be provided free of charge by the National Health Service, if you are getting Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance (income-related) or Pension Credit (which includes the guarantee credit))
- Work related expenses including fares when seeking work and the cost of work clothes because help is available from other sources
- Debts to Government Departments
- Investments
- Purchase, installation, rental and call charges for a telephone
- Mobility needs
- Holidays
- A television, radio, a TV licence, aerial or rental charges for a television or radio
- Garaging, parking, purchase, and running costs of any motor vehicle except where the payment is being considered for emergency travel expenses
- Housing costs,
- Council tax, water charges
- A applicant (non dependant) living at home with family
- Applicants who have no recourse to public funds in the United Kingdom (
- Maternity and funeral expenses
- Where DWP payment is available

Section 11 - Review

11.1 Reviews of any LWSS decision can be requested using the procedure below.

11.2 An applicant (or their appointee or agent) who disagrees with a LWSS decision may challenge the decision. A request for a review for non crisis applications should be made in writing to the Council within one calendar month of the written LWSS decision being issued to the applicant. A request for review for in crisis applications should be made in writing within two days of the written decision being issued to the applicant.

11.3 When a request is made the Council will conduct a review of the decision and contact the applicant within one month of the review request being received. All reviews will be considered by a Senior Officer not involved in the original decision. The outcome of this review will be notified in writing to the applicant and/or the person submitting the review request.

Section 12 - Monitoring arrangements and managing Local Welfare Support

12.1 The Benefits Service will undertake careful monitoring of the number, amount and period of LWSS awards in relation to the available weekly LWSS budget. The purpose is to ensure the LWSS has sufficient funds to meet demands on the LWSS budget throughout the financial year and to support informed profiling of future year's budgets.

12.2 The Benefits Service will also monitor cases where a LWSS request has been refused to ensure decisions are being made fairly and consistently. The Council is subject to the general equality duty. This means that steps will be taken to monitor implementation of this policy to ensure no one is subject to disproportionate adverse treatment because they had a protected characteristic. The Council will fully comply with general equality duties.

Section 13 - Publicity

13.1 The Benefits Service will work with partner organisations to raise awareness of the Scheme.

Section 14 - Fraud

14.1 Hartlepool Borough Council is committed to the fight against fraud in all its forms. A applicant who tries to fraudulently claim a LWSS Award by falsely declaring their circumstances, providing a false statement or evidence in support of their application, may have committed an offence under the Fraud Act 2006. Where it is alleged or the authority suspects that such a fraud may have been committed, the matter will be investigated and if fraud is found to have occurred, action will be taken including if appropriate criminal proceedings.

February 2013



Discretionary Housing Payment Administration Framework 2013/14

Hartlepool Borough Council

Discretionary Housing Payment Administration Framework

SECTIONS

- 1. Background**
- 2. Funding**
- 3. Main features of the Discretionary Housing Payment Administration Framework**
- 4. Purpose of Discretionary Housing Payment Administration Framework**
- 5. Statement of Objectives**
- 6. Claiming a Discretionary Housing Payment**
- 7. Decision Making**
- 8. Period of Award**
- 9. Awarding a Discretionary Housing Payment**
- 10. Changes in Circumstances**
- 11. Method of Payment**
- 12. Notification**
- 13. The Right of Review**
- 14. Service Standards**
- 15. Examples of where a Discretionary Housing Payment may be considered**
- 16. What a Discretionary Housing Payment cannot cover**
- 17. Overpayments**
- 18. Publicity**
- 19. Fraud**

Hartlepool Borough Council – Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Administration Framework from April 2013

1. Background

- 1.1 The Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme was introduced on 2nd July 2001 and granted Local Authorities new powers to pay a discretionary amount to top up Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit paid under the statutory schemes. Legislation governing Discretionary Housing Payments is found in the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 (SI 001/1167).
- 1.2 The DHP scheme is only available to claimants who are entitled to payment of at least the minimum Housing Benefit allowed and have a shortfall to pay.

2. Funding

- 2.1 The DWP provides local authorities with an annual cash limited fund to enable councils to provide discretionary “top up” help. However with the abolition of Council Tax Benefit on 31st March, the allocations of discretionary housing payment funding from 1st April 2013 can only be applied to help with housing benefit awards.
- 2.2 To help manage the impact of the government's housing and welfare reforms the DWP are increasing the amount of funding provided to local authorities for Discretionary Housing Payment purposes. However this additional funding is insufficient to deal with the breadth and size of housing benefit entitlement cuts. A DWP circular issued in January 2013 confirmed the government's guidance and Hartlepool's allocation for 2013/14 which is set out in the following table:

Hartlepool BC DWP Discretionary Housing Payment Allocation 2013/14

	£
General DHP Support (continuing)	38,000
Local Housing Allowance (private rented sector) (continuing)	83,000
<u>NEW</u> Social Sector Size Criteria (Bedroom Tax)	62,000
<u>NEW</u> Welfare Benefit Cap	134,000
Total	317,000

- 2.3 In Hartlepool an analysis of the impacts of the welfare reform changes indicates that the under-occupancy rules for the Social Rented Sector will potentially affect 1666 households and the annual loss of housing benefit is estimated to be £1.2m. Similarly using DWP data, 140 households have been identified as at risk from the proposed Benefit Cap with a potential annual loss of housing benefit of about £0.48m.

- 2.4 For the Social Sector Size Criteria changes, the DWP guidance is that the available funding should be prioritised at two specific groups, disabled people who live in significantly adapted accommodation and foster carers. Analysis has identified that there are only 6 foster carer households affected by the welfare reforms and that all these households can be fully protected from any loss in housing benefit at a cost of £4,500 in 2013/14. In terms of disabilities a measure of need is whether Disability Living Allowance high care component is in pay. There are 97 households affected by the Bedroom Tax that meet this disability criteria and protecting them fully from the changes will cost £69,500 in 2013/14.
- 2.5 For those affected by the Benefit Cap the loss of Housing Benefit will be more severe. The average weekly loss is estimated at £66 per week albeit some households may lose £150 a week. This Framework sets out that tapered Discretionary Support will be provided to those subject to the Benefit Cap at the rate of full support for 8 weeks, reducing to 50% support of any loss for 6 weeks and then 4 weeks at 25% loss support.
- 2.6 This Benefit Cap tapered discretionary support will provide on an equal basis the greatest period of time for individuals to respond to the changes, to move to alternative accommodation or secure employment. This measure will provide some level of support with the housing benefit loss for 18 weeks and will avoid “cliff edges” where households would drop immediately off protection. It is the intention to notify those households at risk from the Benefit Cap of the discretionary support the Council determines.
- 2.7 Details showing numbers of households affected and estimated cost to the Discretionary Housing Payment Fund are outlined in the following table.

Hartlepool DHP Protection Awards - Social Sector Size and Benefit Cap 2013/14

Level of Protection against loss of Housing Benefit	Specific Group	Number of Households protected	Annual Cost
Full Discretionary Support over 52 weeks	Foster carers living in homes provided by Registered Providers (RSLs) and households in receipt of disability allowance high component	103 from 1666 affected	£74 000
Tapered Discretionary Support over 18 weeks, 8 at 100%, 6 at 50% then 4 at 25%	Households affected by the Benefit Cap	140	£111,000

- 2.8 The estimated cost of the Social Sector protection (covering Foster Carers and households in receipt of the disability allowance high component) are £74,000, which is £12,000 more than the funding provided by the Government for this sector. The excess costs will be funded from the continuing General DHP allocation of £38,000.
- 2.9 For the Benefit Cap cases the protection arrangements have an estimated cost of £111,000, which is £23,000 less than the Government funding allocation for Welfare Benefit Cap cases of £134,000. The uncommitted 2013/14 DHP allocation will be retained as a contingency as actual weekly levels of housing benefit loss in Summer 2013 may be higher than the current available data and also more households may be affected than have been identified thus far. The commitments against the available funding will be monitored on a monthly basis as part of this framework to enable any necessary corrective action to be taken.
- 2.10 These “protected” groups will be fast tracked by being identified from their current housing benefit claims and being invited to claim a Discretionary Payment through a shortened process. Where changes in circumstances occur that affect an eligibility, any award will be brought to an end.
- 2.11 Applications to the Discretionary Housing Payment Fund for those affected by Local Housing Allowance Reform (Private Rented Sector claimants) or those applying through financial or other reasons will be processed and awarded in line with the general framework.
- 2.12 The discretionary fund will be profiled on a monthly basis to ensure that some financial help will be available throughout the year.

3. Main features of the Discretionary Housing Payment Administrative Framework

- The administration of the scheme is determined by the Benefits Service
- The scheme is of a discretionary nature; a claimant has no statutory right to payment,
- The total amount an Authority can pay out in any financial year is cash limited by the Secretary of State,
- The policy is predicated on the assumption that Council policy will not provide any additional funding on top of the DWP annual funding allocation for DHP's
- Discretionary Housing Payments are not payments of Housing Benefit, but at least the minimum amount of Housing Benefit must be in payment for each week a Discretionary Housing Payment is made.
- From April 2013 at least the minimum amount of Housing Benefit must be in pay and from October 2013 the customer must be in receipt of Universal Credit and have a proven rent liability.

4. Purpose of Discretionary Housing Payment Administration Framework

- 4.1 The purpose of this policy is to specify how Hartlepool Borough Council's Benefits Service will operate the DHP scheme and to outline some of the factors to be taken into account when considering awarding a Discretionary Housing Payment.
- 4.2 The Benefits Service is committed to working with Hartlepool Borough Council's Housing Advice Team, The Third Sector, Registered Providers, and other interested parties with a view to maximising entitlement to all available state benefits and this will be reflected when administering the DHP scheme. The scheme will operate in an equitable and fair way. Prior to any award, claimants will be encouraged to take up all other available financial assistance to which they may be entitled and will be signposted to any agencies in the Borough that can assist them to do so.

5. Statement of Objectives

- 5.1 The Benefits Service will consider making a Discretionary Housing Payment to all claimants who meet the qualifying criteria set out in this policy. All applications will be treated on their individual merits and the Benefit Service will seek, through operation of this policy to:
- Help those adversely affected by the government's Welfare Reform programme
 - Reduce homeless
 - Alleviate poverty
 - Help claimants through personal crises and difficult events
 - Support vulnerable residents in the local community
 - Support vulnerable young residents in the local community in the transition to adult life
 - Keep families together
 - Safeguard Hartlepool residents in their own homes
 - Encourage Hartlepool residents to obtain and sustain employment
 - Assist Hartlepool residents to obtain and sustain tenancies
 - Help those who are trying to improve their circumstances
- 5.2 The DHP scheme is seen by the Benefits Service to be a short term emergency fund. It cannot and should not be considered as means of circumventing current or future entitlement restrictions set out in Housing Benefit/ Localised Council Tax Reduction Schemes and Universal Credit legislation.
- 5.3 Careful scrutiny and financial management of the Discretionary Housing Payment Fund will ensure that funds are available throughout the year to support DHP claimants where appropriate and to direct the extra funding towards DHP claimants who have a new or greater shortfall to meet due to the changes from Welfare reforms listed above.

6. Claiming a Discretionary Housing Payment

6.1 A claim must be made in writing and signed by the claimant. A signed letter or statement made at the Civic Centre will be deemed sufficient providing the following conditions are met:

- On request or wherever appropriate, the Benefits Service will issue the claimant an application form specifically for claiming a Discretionary Housing Payment. The form will be date stamped with the issue date and the claimant will have one month to complete and return it and will be encouraged to include any supporting evidence.
- An information leaflet will be issued with applications for Discretionary Housing Payments.
- The Benefits Service may request any reasonable evidence (such as receipts for expenditure, proof of payment of household bills) in support of a DHP application, and requests for such evidence will be made in writing, giving one month or longer where appropriate.
- Applications will be considered where the claimant is unable or fails to provide evidence required. Evidence already held in connection with Housing benefit claims will be taken into account.
- The Benefits Service reserves the right to verify any information or evidence already held,
- The Benefits Service reserves the right to signpost the claimant to Compass (housing options) to seek help to obtain housing in the social sector or cheaper housing within other sectors, especially where the claimant is under 35.
- The Benefits Service reserves the right to signpost the claimant to support and advice appropriate to the individuals circumstances and to seek confirmation that engagement has taken place.

7. Decision Making

7.1 A team of officers will consider requests for Discretionary Housing Payments. Final decisions remain the responsibility of the Benefits Section. The team will consist of some or all of the following:

- Benefits Team Leaders
- Recovery and Money Advice Officer
- Responsible Officers– DHP case preparation
- Benefits Liaison Officer
- Any member of a pool of individuals who may be asked to attend when appropriate to provide supporting evidence eg. Housing Advice, Families Information Service Hub, however the Housing Benefits Section remains responsible for final decision making.

7.2 Referral and signposting to outside agencies (e.g. debt counselling, Compass) where appropriate will be take place, where an award of a DHP will

not resolve underlying financial problems. Workless families may be referred to agencies that can help them to become work ready.

8. Period of Award

8.1 The decision making team will decide on the length of time for an award, based on the evidence supplied and the facts known. For those who meet the criteria set out as per the table at Section 2 awards may be made for 52 weeks or 18 weeks on a tapered scale.

8.2 The start date of an award will normally be:

- The Monday after the written claim for a DHP is received by the Benefits Service or
- The date on which entitlement to Housing/Universal Credit commenced (where the application is received within one calendar month of a claim for Housing/Universal Credit being decided.) whichever is the earlier or most appropriate.

8.3 A Discretionary Housing Payment can only be made for an existing housing benefit/universal credit award and cannot be paid for any other time.

- The minimum period of an award will be one week
- An initial award may be made for between one and 13 weeks
- For cases prioritised in respect of Social Sector Size Criteria awards may be made for up to 52 weeks
- In exceptional circumstances an award may be made for a longer period not exceeding 52 weeks.
- Awards may be made on a sliding scale to assist with budgeting and to avoid “cliff edge” reduction in income when Discretionary Awards end.
- Discretionary Housing Payments may be made to encourage applicants to become accustomed to having something to pay towards their rent.
- Reasonable requests for a backdated award will be considered but will usually be limited to the current financial year.
- Priority may be given to those most adversely affected by Welfare Reforms.
- Priority may be given to those who actively show engagement with other agencies (such as Compass or Familywise) who can demonstrate that they are taking reasonable steps to improve their circumstances.

9. Awarding a Discretionary Housing Payment

9.1 The decision making process will include considering the following:

- All applications will be subject to an income/expenditure assessment. (This will ensure that funds are available to those in severe financial difficulty) with exception of those who met the criteria set out in the table at Section 2.

- The shortfall between Housing Benefit /funds available to pay rent when in receipt of Universal Credit and the gross rental liability.
- Any steps taken by the claimant to reduce these liabilities e.g. negotiating a reduction in gross rent.
- Negative impact of Central Government's Welfare Reforms.
- Compliance with reasonable requests to engage with others to improve circumstances. This means that workless households, who do not already participate in any pathway to work programmes, may be signposted to sources of help to become work ready (e.g. Familywise) and those who would benefit financially from seeking cheaper or smaller housing may be asked to show the steps they have taken to do so. Those who are signposted for debt advice may be asked to show that they have kept appointments and are complying with payment plans.
- The financial and medical circumstances of the claimant and all members of the claimant's household
- The income and expenditure of the claimant and all members of the claimant's household
- Any savings or capital available to the claimant and all the members of the claimant's household
- The level of debt owed by the claimant and all of the claimant's household
- Any exceptional circumstances of the claimant and all of the claimant's household
- The amount available in the Discretionary Housing Payment fund at the time of the application
- The possible impact of not making an award (for example pressure on provision of accommodation for the homeless)
- Any other special circumstances brought to the attention of the Benefits Service

9.2 The Benefits Service will decide on the amount and length of the award and no guarantee can be given that a further award will be made.

10. Changes in Circumstances

10.1 An award may be revised or withdrawn where the claimant's circumstances have materially changed.

11. Method of Payment

11.1 The Benefits Service will decide on whom to pay on an individual case basis. This may include:

- The claimant
- The claimant's partner
- An appointee
- The landlord or agent of the landlord
- Any third party where it is appropriate to do so

11.2 The method of payment may include:

- By BACS or cheque
- By crediting the Rent Account

11.3 The payment frequency may fall in line with the Housing Benefit /Universal Credit payments.

12. Notification

12.1 Once a decision is made, the claimant will be notified in writing, and the Benefits Service will strive to do so within 14 days of receipt of sufficient information to make a decision.

12.2 Where the application is unsuccessful, the notification will include:

- The reason for the decision
- The right to ask for a review, although there is no actual right of appeal

12.3 Where the application is successful, the notification will include:

- The weekly amount of the award
- The period of the award
- Whether it will be paid in arrears or in advance
- The payment method, date of payment and the payee
- The need to report change in circumstances

13. The Right of Review

13.1 Discretionary Housing Payments are not payments of Housing Benefit and are not subject to any statutory appeals mechanism. Councils are expected to set up an appropriate review process.

13.2 Any request for a review will be subject to the following policy:

- The claimant (or the claimant's appointee /agent) who disagrees with a decision about a Discretionary Housing Payment may dispute the decision
- Disputes will be considered where they are received by the Benefits Service in writing within one calendar month of the written decision being issued to the claimant
- Disputes will be considered by the Benefits Awards and Security Manager who is not involved in the first decision and the outcome notified in writing.
- Unless a change in circumstances has occurred, the reviewing officer may not recommend a reduction in a previously notified award.

14. Service Standards

- 14.1 The Benefits Service will endeavour to process 90% of applications for Discretionary Housing Payments within four weeks of the applicant providing full information.
- 15. Examples of where a DHP may be considered:**
- 15.1 A claimant separates from his/her partner and the housing benefit is reduced because the claimant is now a single person under 35 years . The claimant can only obtain Local Housing Allowance based on the shared room rate, instead of the one room rate. For example, the shared room rate in April 2013 is £56.21 weekly and the one room rate £80.55. The claimant now becomes unable to pay the shortfall in their rent. The claimant may ask the Benefits Section to help pay the shortfall in the short term to allow him/her to seek cheaper alternative accommodation.
- 15.2 A 40 year old claimant lives in a two bedroom house rented from a Registered Provider with their sixteen year old dependant daughter. Income is Job Seekers Allowance (income based) and child tax credits and child benefit and all the rent is paid via housing benefit at £90.00 weekly. In May 2013 the daughter decides to go and live with her other parent elsewhere. This means that the claimant will have the eligible rent for housing benefit purposes reduced by 14% because there is one extra bedroom. Housing benefit will change by £12.60 from £90.00 to £77.40. Then the claimant will have a significant income reduction following loss of child benefit and child tax credits. The financial loss for the claimant will be £12.60 plus approximately £82.00 from loss of child benefit and child tax credits. The claimant will have around £71.70 weekly income to use to meet the new shortfall and applies for a DHP while bidding for a one room flat. The claimant also engages with Familywise. The claimant shows that there is financial difficulty by verifying income against expenditure. The claimant may ask the Benefits Section to help pay the shortfall in the short term to while seeking one bed accommodation.
- 15.3 A 45 year claimant and partner live in a two bed adapted property rented from a Registered Provider. The adaptations were for the claimant and it is not possible to the family to move. They get all the rent paid via housing benefit at £85.00 weekly and have Disability living Allowance paid at the higher rate. The eligible rent is reduced by 14% meaning that housing benefit reduces by £11.90 to £73.10. The claimant may ask the Benefits Section to help pay the shortfall in the short term. The claimant meets the criteria set out in the table in Section 2 of the framework.. The claimant is awarded £11.90 Discretionary Housing Payment per week to 31.3.14.
- 15.4 The government has delayed implementation of the proposed benefit cap. The following example shows how it may affect a family in the future. A family receiving Local Housing Allowance at four bed rate of £150.00 is affected by the Benefit Cap and as a result has a reduction in housing benefit of £66.00. The only way the family can avoid the cap is to obtain work. The family engages with a work programme and asks the Benefit Section for help with the shortfall in the short term. The claimant is asked to seek a reduction in the

gross rent from the landlord or the Benefit Section may seek to help by contacting the landlord on the tenant's behalf. The claimant meets the criteria set out in Section 2 . The claimant is awarded a Discretionary Housing Payment, tapered at 8 weeks at £66.00, 6 weeks at £33.00 and 4 weeks at £16.50.

16. What a DHP cannot cover:

16.1 There are certain parts of rent that cannot be included in housing costs for the purposes of a DHP because the law excludes them. These are as follows:

- Ineligible service charges
- Increases in rent due to outstanding arrears
- Sanctions
- From April 2013 the fund cannot be used in respect of Council Tax Support (the local scheme which replaces Council Tax Benefit)
- Overpayments of housing benefit
- Removal costs
- Payments of rent in advance

17. Overpayments

17.1 The Benefits Service will seek to recover any Discretionary Housing Payment found to be overpaid. The method of recovery will generally be by invoice but reduction in weekly housing benefit will be considered where a request is received in writing. Generally any overpayments caused by official error will be treated as not recoverable. Overpayments will be notified in writing and have a right of review.

18. Publicity

18.1 The Benefits Service will publicise the Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme and will work with all interested parties to achieve this. Information relating to the amount spent will be made available at the end of each financial year.

18.2 Customers affected by the proposed Benefit Cap from summer 2013 have been contacted in order to offer advice and relevant signposting to help them prepare in advance for the financial impact.

18.3 Customers affected by under-occupancy due to Social Sector Size Criteria were contacted in January 2013 to help them prepare in advance for the financial impact.

19. Fraud

19.1 The Benefits Service is committed to prevention and detection of fraud. Where false statements or false evidence is used to obtain payment by way of

the Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme then an offence may have been committed. Where fraud is suspected, the matter will be investigated appropriately and this may lead to criminal proceedings being instigated. The Benefits Service has a duty to protect public funds we handle, and so may use information given to prevent and detect fraud and may give some information to other organisations where the law allows.

April 2013

CABINET REPORT

4 March 2013



Report of: Corporate Management Team

Subject: Quarter 3 – Council Overview of Performance and Risk 2012/13

1. TYPE OF DECISION/APPLICABLE CATEGORY

Non Key

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To inform Cabinet of the progress made against the Council's 2012/13 Corporate and Departmental Plans, for the period ending 31 December 2012.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Corporate Plan was agreed by Council on 12 April 2012 and the three Departmental Plans were agreed by Cabinet on 19 March 2012.

3.2 All of the plans contain an action plan setting out how the Council proposes to deliver the Council's priority outcomes. Key Performance Indicators are also included which can then be used to monitor progress throughout the year and at year end. Departmental Plans also contained a section listing the Risks that could prevent the department from delivering the priority outcomes.

3.3 The Council's Performance Management System (Covalent) is used to collect and analyse progress against the actions, performance indicators and risks detailed in the Corporate Plan and the three Departmental Plans. The information in the system was used to prepare this report.

3.4 The structure of the report is:

Paragraphs	Content
4.1 – 4.8	Council Overview of Performance and Risk
5.1 – 5.7	Child and Adult Services Departmental Plan Update
6.1 – 6.9	Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Departmental Plan Update
7.1 – 7.7	Chief Executives Department Update
8.1	Recommendations

4. COUNCIL OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE AND RISK

4.1 In total the three departmental plans for 2012/13 include 187 actions and 175 performance indicators (PIs) to deliver and measure improvements across key priority areas (outcomes) identified in the Community Strategy and Council Corporate Plan.

4.2 Officers have assessed the indicators and actions included in the plans, making judgements based on progress to the 31 December 2012. Progress is categorised as: -

- **PI target achieved or Action completed**
- **PI on track to achieve target or Action on track to be completed**
- **PI/Action having made acceptable progress**
- **PI/Action requiring intervention**
- **PI Target not achieved or Action not completed.**

4.3 The Corporate Plan addresses the key priorities and issues facing the Council, and includes an action plan that draws the key actions and performance indicators from the Council's three Departmental Plans. The 2012/13 Corporate Plan includes 65 actions and 24 performance indicators (that have targets and are monitored quarterly).

4.4 Charts 1 and 2 below summarise officers' assessments of the Corporate Plan actions and indicators (that have targets **and** are measurable throughout the year). As at 31 December 2012, the position was a positive one, with: -

- 63 actions (97%) have already been completed or assessed as being on target to be achieved by their scheduled completion date;
- 16 performance indicators (67%) have been assessed as being on track to achieve their year end target or having already done so;
- One action (2%) and five performance indicators (21%) have been assessed as having made acceptable progress;
- One action (2%) and three indicators (13%) have been assessed as requiring intervention, and further information relating to these can be found later in the report – see paragraphs 5.4, 6.3 and 6.6;

Chart 1: Corporate Plan Action Progress for period to 31 December 2012.

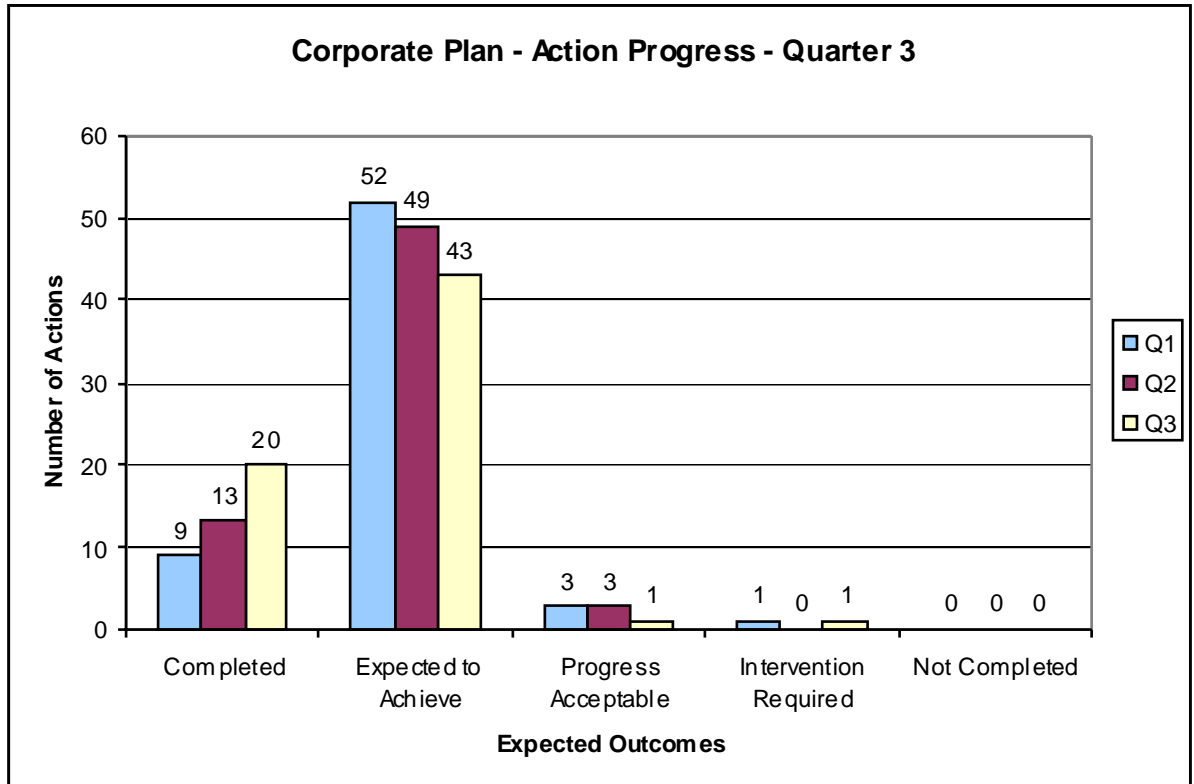
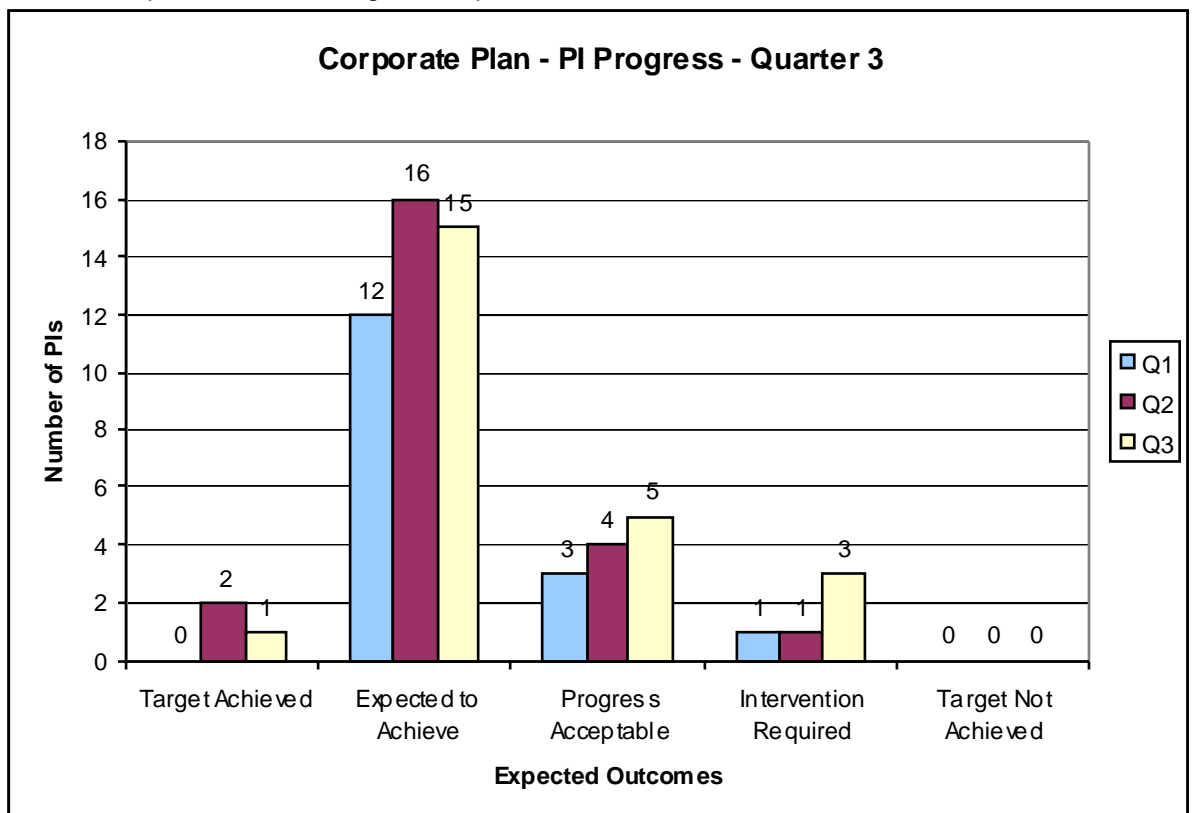


Chart 2: Corporate Plan PI Progress for period to 31 December 2012



4.5 As previously stated (paragraph 4.1) the three Departmental Plans include 181 actions and 175 performance indicators (of which, 67 can be monitored

on a quarterly basis and have had targets set). Progress is illustrated in Charts 3 and 4.

4.6 Across all 3 Departmental Plans progress is good as demonstrated in Charts 3 and 4:

- Almost 96% of actions (179 actions) are on track to be achieved;
- 3% (6 actions) have been assessed as having made acceptable progress;
- The remaining 2 actions (1%) have been flagged as requiring intervention or that it can no longer be completed. Further information relating to these actions can be found later in the report (paragraph 6.3);
- 47 indicators (70%) have been assessed as being on track to achieve their year end target or have already done so;
- 13 indicators (19%) have been assessed as having made acceptable progress;
- The remaining 7 indicators (10%) has been flagged as requiring intervention and more information is included later in the report (see paragraph 5.4 and 6.6);

Chart 3 – Departmental Plans Overall Action Progress for period to 31 December 2012

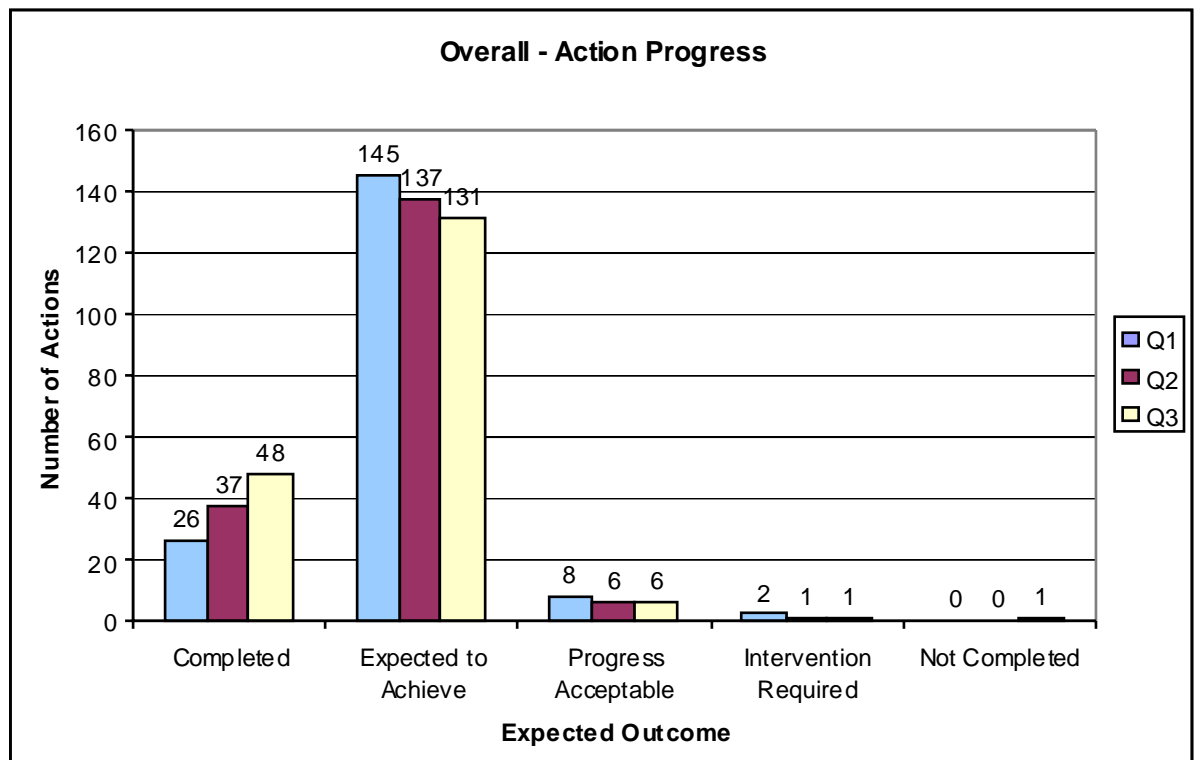
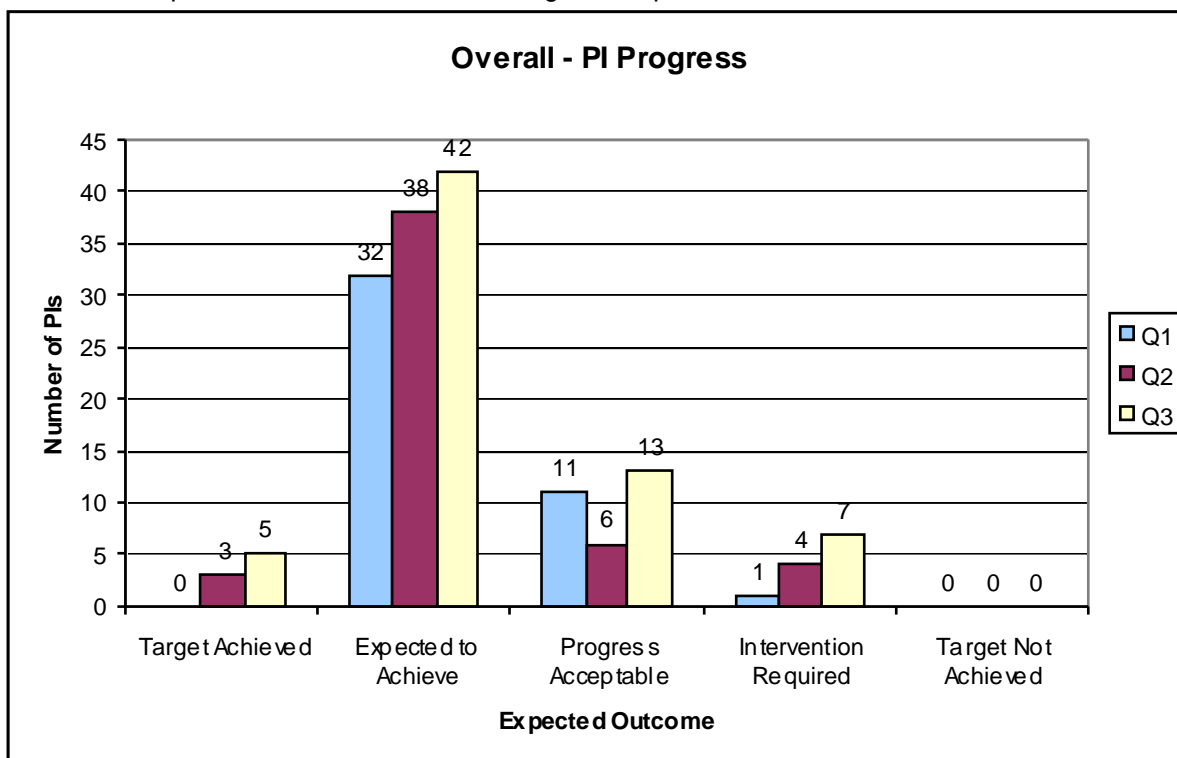


Chart 4 – Departmental Plans Overall PI Progress for period to 31 December 2012



4.7 There are 127 corporate risks have been identified across the Council. These are being managed in accordance with the Council’s Risk Management Framework as agreed by Performance Portfolio Holder on 23 March 2011. This splits risks into two categories:

- Actively Managed Risks: those where additional control measures are being pursued or need highlighting and monitoring through senior managers and elected members; and
- Accepted Risks: those risks that have been identified by departments as under control.

4.8 Accepted risks continue to be monitored by individual departments to ensure the risk is kept at an acceptable level. These risks are assessed at least once a year in accordance with the Risk Management Framework. This reassessment exercise was completed during the quarter 2 updates and ensures that all accepted risks are up to date and reflective of the current environment. A report on the actively managed risks is included in the quarterly monitoring reports and this will continue throughout the year. The new and existing risks have been assessed within this exercise and will continue to be re-evaluated through the year as Risk Management is an on going process. Sections 5.6, 6.8 and 7.6 of this report provide an update on the Actively Managed Risks.

5. CHILD AND ADULT SERVICES DEPARTMENTAL PLAN UPDATE

5.1 The Child and Adult Departmental Plan contributes to 11 outcomes, spread across 6 themes:

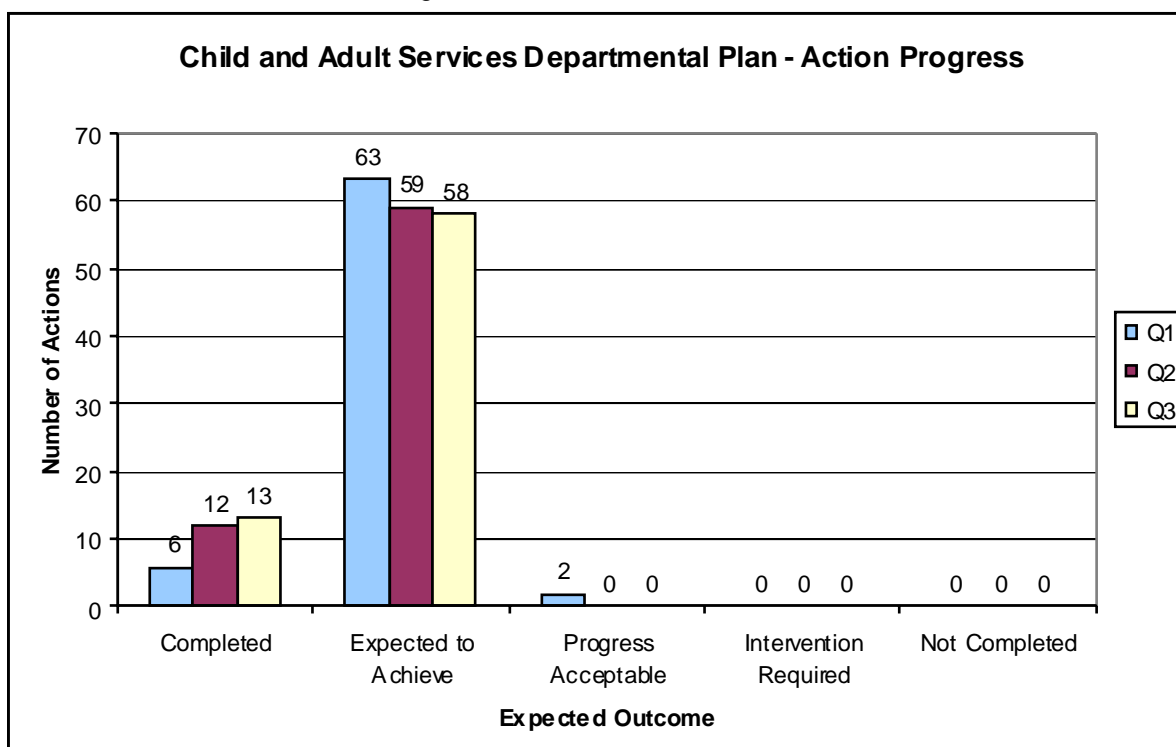
- Jobs and the Economy
- Lifelong Learning and Skills
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Safety
- Culture and Leisure
- Strengthening Communities

5.2 Included in the Departmental Plan are 71 actions and 93 performance indicators. In addition the department has identified 52 corporate risks that are included in the Council’s Risk Registers of which 11 are actively managed and 41 are accepted risks.

5.3 As can be seen in chart 5 overall progress is good with:

- 13 actions have been completed (18%) and a further 58 (82%) assessed as being on target to be achieved by their scheduled completion date;

Chart 5: CAD Overall Action Progress – to 31 December 2012



5.4 Chart 6 summarises officers’ assessments of the 30 Performance Indicators that have targets **and** are measurable throughout the year. As at 31 December 2012, the position was a positive one, with:

- 20 indicators (67%) being assessed as being on track to achieve their year end target or have already done so;
- A further indicator 5 indicators (17%) have been assessed as having made acceptable progress;
- The remaining five indicators (17%) have been flagged up as requiring intervention, and they are included in table 1 below: -

Chart 6: CAD Targeted Performance Indicators – Progress to 31 December 2012

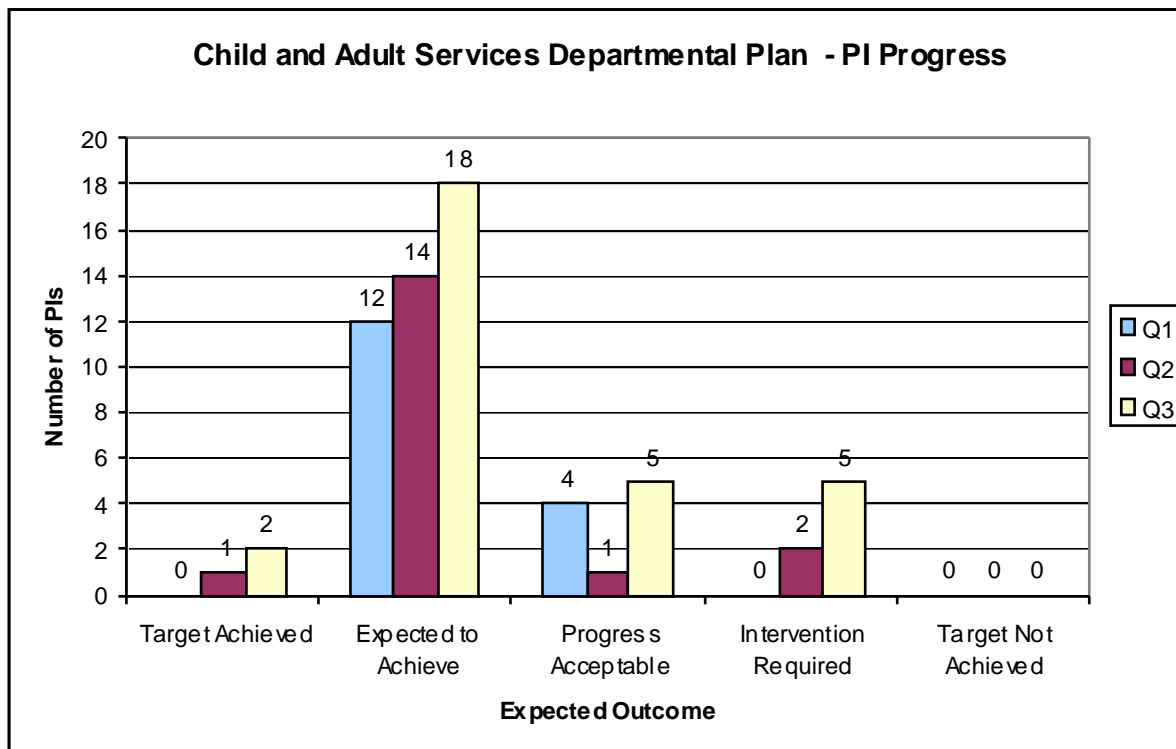


Table 1: CAD Performance Indicators requiring intervention

Outcome: Improve health by reducing inequalities and improving access to services				
Ref	Indicator	Q3 2012/13 Outturn	Year End Target	Note
NI 39	Rate of Hospital Admissions per 100,000 for Alcohol Related Harm	1801	2494	As it stands to date it is unlikely that the Annual Target will be met. However with the work of QIPP in Hartlepool we are working to reduce the overall Alcohol Related Hospital Admissions (ARHA) by focusing on clients who have three or more admissions under the top three diagnosis codes. By targeting these repeat admissions and addressing their issues linking them into treatment services to stop further admissions. QIPP is working well and is reducing ARHA for this client group. By

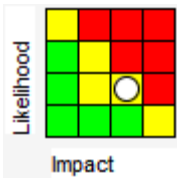
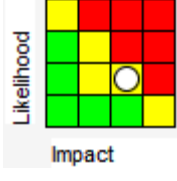
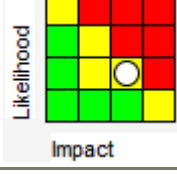
				doing this it will have an impact on overall ARHA.
Outcome: Children and young people are safe				
Ref	Indicator	Q3 2012/13 Outturn	Year End Target	Note
NI 67	Percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales	90%	100%	Child protection conference improvement activity underway which includes improved adherence to quality standards. A revised system of notification for conferences has been introduced from December 2012
NI 65	Percentage of children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time	20.6%	10.0%	There has been an increase in the number of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for the second or subsequent time and as a result a planned audit activity on these cases will take place in mid February.
Outcome: Vulnerable adults are supported and safeguarded and people are able to maintain maximum independence while exercising choice and control about how their outcomes are achieved				
Ref	Indicator	Q3 2012/13 Outturn	Year End Target	Note
ACS P072	Clients receiving a review as a percentage of adults and older clients receiving a service	38.4%	75%	This figure after 9 months is expected to be under the 75% year end target. Work has continued to identify the causes of this low figure and a number of actions have been implemented to improve performance. Detailed lists of those service users who have not yet received a review have been generated and passed on to care management teams to follow up these cases and, where relevant, complete the review and record this in CareFirst. A number of reasons for reviews not being recorded have been highlighted including sickness of key workers, recording issues and implementation of new processes.
Outcome: People enjoy equal access to leisure, culture, sport and libraries which enrich their lives, improve the places where they live, and strengthen communities				
Ref	Indicator	Q3 2012/13 Outturn	Year End Target	Note
ACS P059	Overall attendance at Mill House, Brierton and	81,376	410,000	Total of 81,376 for the 3rd quarter of the year. This is

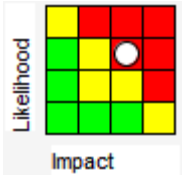
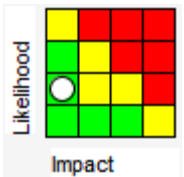
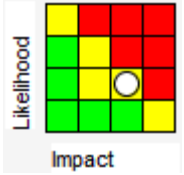
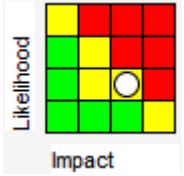
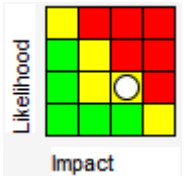
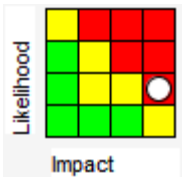
	Headland Leisure Centres		slightly above the target set for the quarter (despite a week's pool closure due to drain down and cleaning) but cumulatively, still down by approximately 50,000 owing to the problems associated with the collection of statistics at Brierton Sports Centre when it was under different management. The Quarter 3 figures show that there was a total of 239,706 attendance against a target of 327,200. Will not achieve target set for the year and this will need to be revised for 2013/14.
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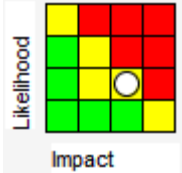

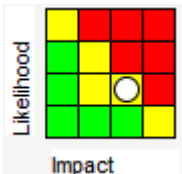
5.5 A further 63 indicators have targets which can only be assessed at the year end or are for monitoring purposes only.

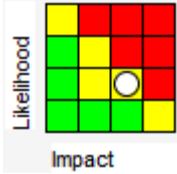
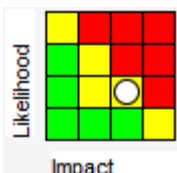
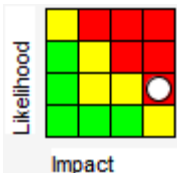
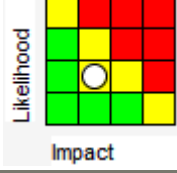
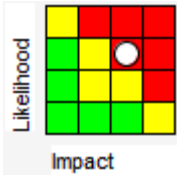
5.6 There are 11 Child and adults risks on the accepted risk register and a further 41 on the actively managed risk. The table below provides a summary of the position of the risks on the Actively Managed Risk Register along with details as to what action is being taken with regard to these risks.

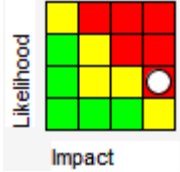
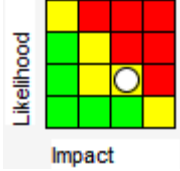
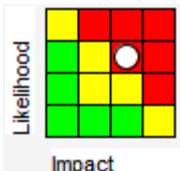
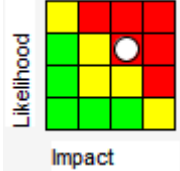
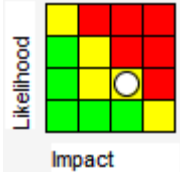
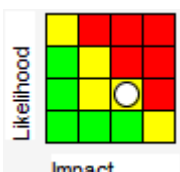
Table 2: CAD Actively Managed Risks 2012/13

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
CAD R001	Service issue as a result of insufficient budget allocation or changes in national funding/grants (Actively Managed)		The LA intends to continue offering to schools a service level agreement that will fund the School Improvement Programme (SIP) and additional literacy & numeracy support. The £100k reduction in the Performance & Achievement budget for 2013/14 has been achieved without any reduction in front line services. (REDUCTION IN RATING)
CAD R004	An increase in the number of schools falling below Performance Achievement Standard (Actively Managed)		1 primary and 1 secondary school fell below the DfE floor target in July 2012 Performance in the secondary school is the greater concern and a number of actions have been put in place to support the school in line with the Hartlepool Schools causing concern protocol. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R005	Failure to meet the statutory duties and requirements vested within the Child and Adult Services department (Actively Managed)		Ofsted review May 2012 of Looked After Children (LAC) provision indicated that all statutory duties were being met. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)



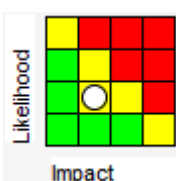
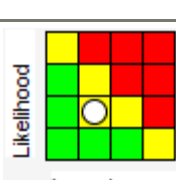
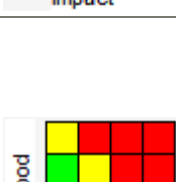
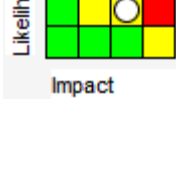
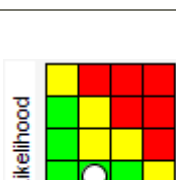
Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
CAD R006	Alcohol investment does not enable the provision of sufficient services to meet the increased level of need. (Actively Managed)		Public Health funding allocations expected December now delayed until January 2013. No new health monies identified. Community Safety grants which have contributed to alcohol offender programmes now transferred to newly appointed Police Crime Commissioner with no confirmation as to whether any allocation will be passported back for local determination. Business and investment cases will be presented during Spring 2013 to a range of funding partnerships as opportunities present (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R007	Adverse publicity and community tension (e.g. in regard to reintegration of drug users,/offenders back into community, drug related deaths, establishing community services/Pharmacist) (Actively Managed)		Variety of promotions held to introduce new services received positively. Meetings held with residents group, neighbourhood policing and community safety in particular area to resolve some tensions. Generally low risks being managed. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R008	Damage / Disruption due to violence to staff, health & safety incidents or poor working conditions (Actively Managed)		Health and Safety risks carefully monitored through regular meetings held internally and involving trade union representation. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R011	Failure to work in effective partnerships with NHS, including risk of cost shunting. (Actively Managed)		No change to risk status. Partnership working with the NHS continues and new working relationships will be developed as the changes within the NHS are implemented and CCGs are fully established from April 2013. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R017	Failure to recruit & retain suitable staff in childrens services (Actively Managed)		Risk rating remains the same. Recruitment activity continues as necessary and authority is successful in recruiting good quality staff to both children and adults services. Staff retention is good. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R019	Failure to plan for future need and ensure sufficient placement provision to meet demand (Actively Managed)		No change to risk rating, no change from position recorded in November, which was: - Sufficiency duty upon the local authority to ensure the provision of sufficient range of accommodation to meet the needs of children looked after. Service continues to regularly recruit foster carers to service which meets the needs of the vast majority of children in care. The department is in process of opening a local authority ran children's home to meet the sufficiency requirements and reduce reliance on external placements. A framework agreement is in place with list of preferred providers from the independent fostering sector which provides additional placement capacity when

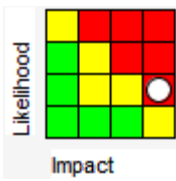


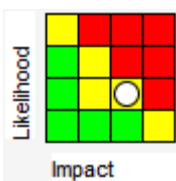
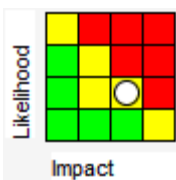

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
			<p>required.</p> <p>(NO CHANGE IN RATING)</p>
CAD R020	Insufficient capacity in the independent sector to meet placement demand (Actively Managed)		<p>Main risk is the availability of appropriate placements for teenagers in Independent Fostering Agencies and Residential Care, those that are available are high cost and a long way from Hartlepool. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)</p>
CAD R021	Increased demand on services due to socio-economic pressures (Actively Managed)		<p>Risk rating remains the same, no change to position as recorded in November, which was: -</p> <p>Increasing demand for services has been noted over the past 2 years with noted increase in numbers of children referred for services, numbers of children receiving a service and increase in number of children in care. Early intervention Strategy aims to reduce the needs of children and their families before they reach a critical point and prevent demand for more specialist services. Early intervention teams are now in place and supporting children and their families. Edge of care team in place to support families in crisis and maintain children within their own families wherever safe to do so rather than becoming looked after. Welfare reforms to be implemented in 2013/14 are likely to have further impact upon demand for services and workforce is being equipped to support families affected by this. Additional capacity has been agreed within children's social care to support assessment of children presenting for services.</p> <p>(NO CHANGE IN RATING)</p>
CAD R022	Failure to provide statutory services to safeguard children and protect their well-being (Actively Managed)		<p>No change to risk score, position remains as recorded in November , which was: -</p> <p>Service meets its statutory requirement in terms of children's safeguarding through the provision of social work teams where children's needs are assessed and plans implemented to ensure their safety and promote their well being. Service is fully compliant with safeguarding requirements as outlined in Working Together to Safeguard Children and this compliance is monitored by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.</p> <p>(NO CHANGE IN RATING)</p>

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
CAD R023	Impact of change to funding arrangements across Children's Services (Actively Managed)		Revised allocation for Early Intervention Grant has been published which indicates a 13% reduction in funding in 2013/14. Report presented to Cabinet to agree one year release of reserve to support service and enable a planned reduction in service. No further information received regarding the Youth Justice Board Grant. Legislative changes are pending regarding funding for young people remanded to custody which passes to local authority, service preparing for these changes. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R024	Failure to meet statutory duties and functions in relation to the Youth Offending Service (Actively Managed)		Performance in relation to the services statutory functions are monitored actively through fortnightly performance management meetings and reported quarterly to the services strategic management board. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R029	Failure to effectively manage risks exhibited by young people and families (Actively Managed)		No change to risk score. Position remains as recorded in November 2012, which was: - Multi agency risk management arrangements are in place for individual children, young people and their families where these are required and actively reviewed. Risk assessments are undertaken on young people who exhibit harmful behaviours and case management systems include flagging arrangements in relation to individuals who present a risk. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R031	Failure to recruit and retain staff in educational support services (Actively Managed)		Latest post advertised, Senior School improvement officer attracted high quality field of 14 candidates, 4 interviewed & successful appointment made. (REDUCTION IN RATING)
CAD R032	Increase in the number of schools falling below national average for pupil attendance (Actively Managed)		Assistant Director is now fully aware of the school attendance issues in the LA, in 2011/12 around 70% of schools in Hartlepool had attendance that was below the National average. Discussions have been held with the Attendance Manager to devise strategies to address this problem. In the spring term 2013, schools SIPs will be questioning Head Teachers about current attendance figures. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
CAD R033	Failure to plan for future need and ensure sufficient placement provision to meet demand within adult social care. (Actively Managed)		No change to risk status. Ongoing data collection & analysis continues and there is no evidence to date that seasonal factors are having a significant impact (this will be reviewed in Q4). (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R034	Insufficient capacity in the independent sector to meet placement demand within adult social care. (Actively Managed)		Winter hospital pressures and discharges are being managed appropriately and independent sector providers capacity, while stretched, is coping. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R035	Increased demand on adult social care services due to demographic pressures. (Actively Managed)		No change to risk status. Demand on adult social care services is increasing due to the ageing population and increased prevalence of dementia, as well as the need to support more younger people with complex needs. The impact of this increase in demand is closely monitored and there is currently a piece of work underway to assess the impact on how quickly assessments are carried out and whether people are receiving an annual review. Operational changes that will enable a Single Point of Access for adult social care to develop are being considered with potential to implement a revised model in February / March 2013. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R037	Failure to achieve targets in relation to assessments within 28 days and annual reviews, due to increased pressures on services. (Actively Managed)		Increasing pressures mean that there are significant issues over our capacity to deal with inappropriate delays. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R038	Failure to provide statutory services to safeguard vulnerable adult. (Actively Managed)		Partner agencies continue to work together through the Hartlepool Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board and the Tees wide Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board to ensure that services are in place to safeguard vulnerable adults. There is no immediate risk to statutory services although increasing demand and decreasing resources give cause for concern. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R039	Impact of change to funding arrangements across adult social care services. (Actively Managed)		The risk and potential impact of changes to funding arrangements continues. It was announced in December 2012 that NHS funding to support social care services in Hartlepool will increase in 2013/14, which is positive, but other funding streams are not yet secured. The impact of any changes to funding arrangements will be closely monitored and reported through appropriate the route. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
CAD R040	Failure to deliver the Reablement Strategy. (Actively Managed)		The delivery of the Reablement Strategy relies on effective partnership working between the Local Authority, CCG and Foundation Trusts and securing NHS funding for services that will help deliver against the reablement agenda. Funding has not yet been agreed for 2013/14 but decisions are expected to be made in January 2013. The aim of reablement services is to promote independence, prevent hospital admissions and maximise independence following an illness or hospital stay. If reablement does not work effectively, there will be an increasing pressure on services for older people, including increased care home admissions. A regional review of reablement services has indicated that Hartlepool's service has a low unit cost and performs well with 73.9% of people referred to the service having no ongoing support needs following a period of reablement. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R041	Failure to recruit & retain suitable staff in adult social care. (Actively Managed)		There are no current issues regarding recruitment and retention of suitable staff in adult social care and no outstanding vacancies. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R043	Delayed transfers of care from hospital due to reduced capacity and changing working arrangements for hospital discharge. (Actively Managed)		Draft remodel introduced that focuses on acute beds in accordance with the legislative requirements. Potential delayed transfers of care from hospital is an increased risk to the Council because of the phased reduction in the number of acute beds; yet demand has increased and is likely to increase further, due to Hartlepool's demographics. Thus the volume of requests for assessments of need will be a pressure as will financial pressures linked to supporting vulnerable people to be discharged safely. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R044	Failure to retain suitably skilled staff in the Museum Service (Actively Managed)		Experienced staff have left for new positions, existing staff currently acting up in a short term capacity in Culture and in Sport pending further efficiency deliberations. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R045	Failure to deliver statutory elements of the Library Service (Actively Managed)		If current efficiency plans are implemented in Feb for 2013/14 then the risk of non delivery of statutory functions is lessened in the immediate future. (REDUCTION IN RATING)

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
CAD R046	Failure to provide statutory service of archaeological planning advice and Historic Environment Record (Actively Managed)		Current future business is indicating the service is well funded for the next financial year. The service remains highly dependent on earned income for over 60% of its revenue costs. (INCREASE IN RATING)
CAD R047	Failure to fulfil the targets for recruitment set by the Skills Funding Agency leading to loss of income (Actively Managed)		Recruitment is by term and therefore outcomes will only be better understood by the end of term 2 in April 2013. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R048	Failure to reach the minimum levels of performance for the Skills Funding Agency or Ofsted (Actively Managed)		Ofsted may be implemented at short notice, meanwhile challenge is encouraged and any area of low performance is currently targeted for immediate support and improvement. Overall the service is on track for retention of current grading. (REDUCION IN RATING)
CAD R049	Failure of Management Information System and IT systems preventing return of electronic data for funding purposes (Actively Managed)		Significant impact on the service leading to non payment of SFA grant if information return of data not handled efficiently and to strict deadlines. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R050	Failure to recruit or retrain sufficient staff in key areas of a changing programme offer (Actively Managed)		The context in which this issue was queried at Scrutiny related I believe, to the ability of internal staff training etc for difficult to fill posts. The risk inherent in this action more specifically relates to the potential need to recruit at short notice, tutors with specialist skill sets to enable new areas of teaching to be satisfactorily delivered. With rapidly changing SFA grant funding this risk is increased. To date this has been managed satisfactorily. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R051	Failure of partnerships resulting in insufficient venues to deliver training (Actively Managed)		This risk factor relates to the identified potential for 'community teaching venues' hired from the 3rd sector / VCS to be unavailable due to severe funding shortages leading to potential closure of such properties. It is reassuring to know that the programme for 2012/13 is satisfactorily in place. (REDUCION IN RISK)
CAD R052	Failure to meet the licensing requirements of the Adventurous Activity Licensing Authority (Actively Managed)		This licence retention is critical to the ability to provide the service. A licence is required to enable adventure activities to be undertaken. Loss of licence means loss of ability to deliver leading to direct job losses. (REDUCION IN RATING)

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
CAD R053	Failure to adhere to the recommended standards regarding pool safety management (Actively Managed)		This remains a high risk area of operation and for wider responsibility of encouragement to increase swim achievement standards. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R054	Failure to ensure awareness and training of staff regarding safeguarding (Actively Managed)		Ensuring staff in all areas of activity and service delivery are suitable trained in safeguarding procedures and general alertness to help assist in the identification of incidents. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R055	Failure to establish new partnerships and meet funding conditions of external partners in relation to grant funding, Memorandum of Understandings or Service Level Agreements (Actively Managed)		New grant initiatives are currently being explored to ensure ongoing provision of services in particular areas - learning and outreach in Museums with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and the National Portrait Gallery, Arts Council North East grants for arts and heritage linked to WW1, sports targeting of grant options for capital work improvements at Brierton Sports Centre etc. Partnerships continue to be essential in all areas of service delivery. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R056	Lack of adequate investment in public buildings affecting ability to income generate (Actively Managed)		The maintenance of quality facilities is essential to safeguard the building and the service which in turn then succeeds in maximising levels of patronage and earned income. Ensuring that maintenance regimes are prioritised for economically important service property. (REDUCTION IN RATING)
CAD R057	Impact of recruitment freeze, gaps in staffing caused by length of time taken in process and use of redeployed staff lacking appropriate skills and experience (Actively Managed)		The ongoing freeze and redeployment is accepted but there are certain posts which will require external appointment in the event of staff departures to safeguard current service stands and professionalism only available via senior experience. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CAD R058	Failure to adhere to recommendations of the Playing Pitch Strategy (Actively Managed)		The PPS was adopted by Cabinet in Dec as scheduled, this will be essential to guide and assist the furtherance of the development proposals at Brierton Sports Centre and elsewhere within the Borough's playing field estate. (REDUCTION IN RATING)

5.7 For the period up to 31 December 2012 the Child and Adult Services Department have identified a number of achievements including: -

- The North Tees Smoking in Pregnancy Steering group continues to meet bi-monthly to implement and monitor actions outlined in the annual action plan. There was a successful bid through the PCT process for non-recurrent funding to develop ideas and purchase materials and resources to support the work. A regionally funded

initiative, developed through consultation with midwifery services, is due to be rolled out in Tees in May 2013.

- The commissioned substance misuse service is now fully operational and will be reviewed as part of the Early Intervention Strategy Reviews. Regular contract monitoring meetings are positive with all targets being met.
- Once again Hartlepool Borough Council & Partners were able to implement another highly successful 11 million take over event which saw children and young people from across the town gaining the opportunity to shadow key decision makers locally and influence their thinking regarding the shaping of public services going forward. This generated positive press coverage on a local, regional and national level.
- The number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) has remained at a similar level to the figures reporting in the previous year which demonstrates strong performance in light of the increasingly challenging economic climate.
- In the 2012 OFSTED Annual Report of the Chief Inspector, Hartlepool primary schools were ranked 25th in the country, out of 161 local authorities, for areas where pupils are most likely to attend a good or outstanding primary school. At the time of the report, 79% of primary schools in Hartlepool were judged by OFSTED to be good or outstanding. One further primary school has since improved from satisfactory to good. In addition, Stranton Primary School was featured in the report as a school that achieves "...extraordinary outcomes given the background and levels of attainment of children on entry".
- The Early Intervention Services is fully operational and work is commencing on Year 1 evaluation. The Strategy remains the long term vision for prevention and early intervention services, however, recent Government settlement indicates a 13% cut in Early Intervention Grant and the strategy will need to be reviewed and scaled back in line with these cuts during 2013/14.
- The percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE passes at grade A*-C including English and maths fell to 48.5% in 2012; against a target of 58%. This year the local authority has put in place funding for schools to provide additional tuition classes for those young people who did not pass English and had a borderline result which was lower than anticipated. The re-sits took place in December 2012 and the results are not yet known. There remains a legal challenge with the examining bodies over 2012/13 results.
- Over 95% of people who are eligible for a personal budget now receive their care and support through this route. Performance is in excess of the 70% target.
- In partnership with Newcastle, Sunderland and Sport England, we have appointed Helmepark to facilitate consultation and workshops with adult social care, Health Watch and NHS commissioners. Work to start 2013 with an end date March 2013. Initial LA scoping meeting has been held to plan for the event.

- As it stands to date it is unlikely that the Annual Target for the rate of hospital admissions per 100,000 for alcohol related harm will be met. However with the work of QIPP in Hartlepool we are working to reduce the overall Alcohol Related Hospital Admissions (ARHA) by focusing on clients who have three or more admissions under the top three diagnosis codes. By targeting these repeat admissions and addressing their issues linking them into treatment services to stop further admissions. QIPP is working well and is reducing ARHA for this client group. By doing this it will have an impact on overall ARHA
- Funding for Men's Inspire project successfully secured from the PCT. Work on this project is due to commence in February.
- Volunteering programme is continuing to expand with links to Walk about Hartlepool programme and Street League in particular

6 REGENERATION AND NEIGHBOURHOODS DEPARTMENTAL PLAN UPDATE

6.1 The Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Departmental Plan contributes to 21 outcomes, spread across 7 themes.

- Jobs and the Economy
- Health and Wellbeing
- Community Safety
- Environment
- Housing
- Strengthening Communities
- Organisational Development

6.2 Included in the departmental plan were 65 actions and 49 performance indicators spread across the 21 outcomes. In addition the department has identified 40 risks that are included in the Council's Risk Registers including 19 actively managed and 21 accepted risks.

6.3 As can be seen in chart 7, overall progress is good with:

- 60 actions (92%) having already been completed or assessed as being on track to be completed by the agreed date;
- Three further actions (5%) has been adjudged to have made acceptable progress;
- The remaining two actions (3%) have been flagged as requiring intervention, or 'not completed' and these actions are shown in tables 3a and 3b, below.

Chart 7: RND Overall Action Progress – to 31 December 2012.

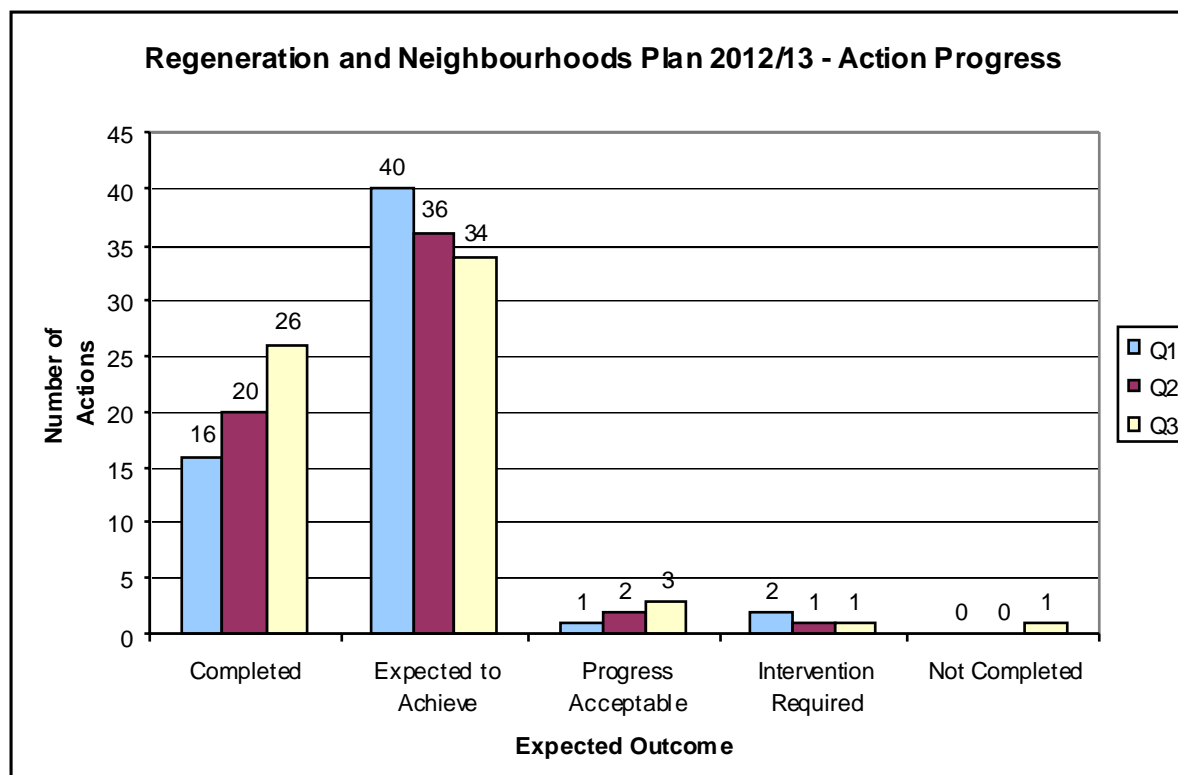


Table 3a: RND Actions requiring intervention

Outcome: Hartlepool has reduced crime and repeat victimisation			
Ref	Action	Due Date	Note
RND12/13-CS01	Deliver in conjunction with partners a strategic assessment which is monitored through the Safer Hartlepool Partnership executive.	31-Dec-2012	The SHP Strategic Assessment will be delivered to the SHP Executive on 7th February 2013. The production of the annual assessment was delayed due to the election of the Police & Crime Commissioner - November 2012.

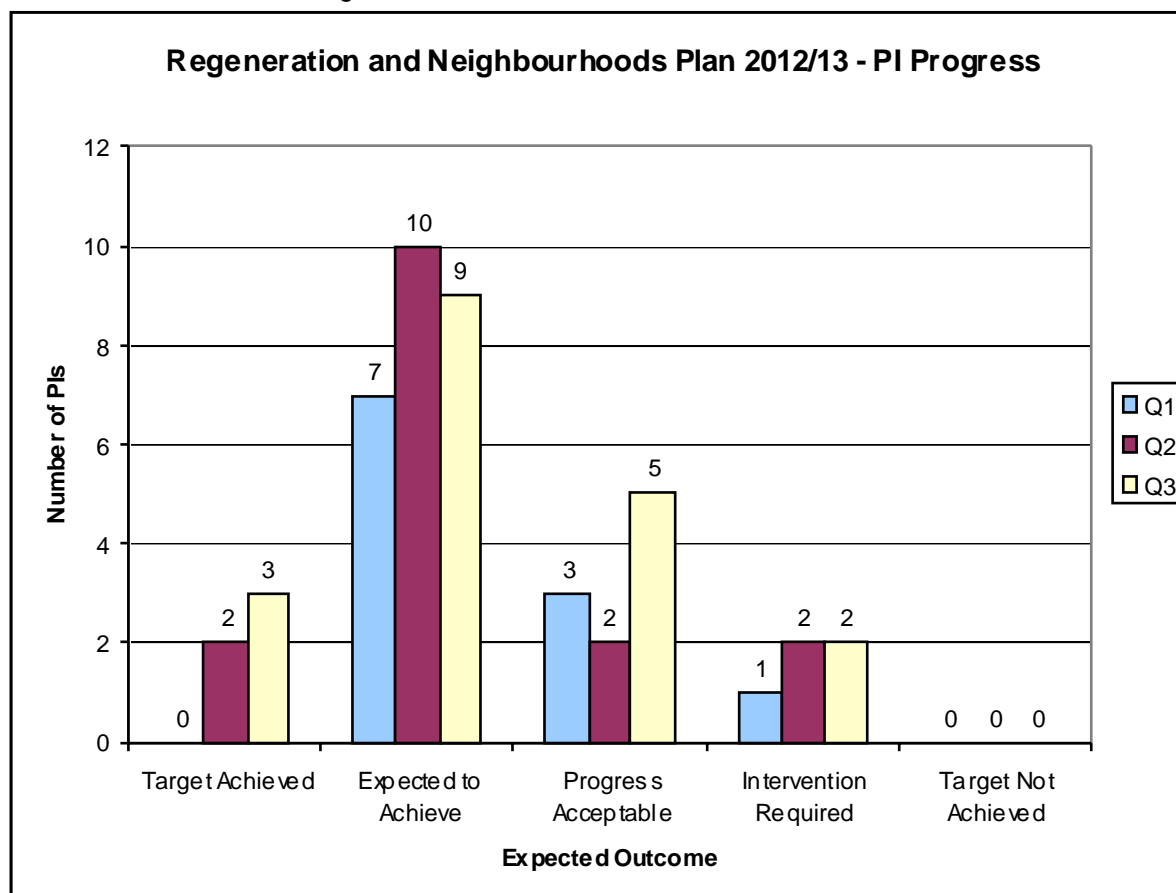
Table 3b: RND Actions assessed as 'not completed'

Outcome: Hartlepool has an improved and more balanced housing offer that meets the needs of residents and is of high quality design			
Ref	Action	Due Date	Note
HS 1B3	Develop a system for monitoring the quality standards of privately developed homes to understand how many homes are being built to lifetime homes and high levels of energy efficiency	30-Mar-2013	The monitoring of private properties built to lifetime home standards and being developed with high levels of energy efficiency has been explored and it has been concluded that there is no mechanism to enable the Council to realistically monitor this. Lifetime home standards are encouraged by planning but not required, nor are they controlled under building regulations, therefore there is no mechanism to monitor the building of new private dwellings for this element. In a similar vein whilst energy efficiency can be conditioned

			as part of a planning approval, this would only relate to large scale developments and not small housing estates or single dwellings, therefore there would be significant gaps in any data collection we would be able to do. A monitoring table has been prepared which has been discussed with our Building Control Manager to see if there is any way to monitor these elements however the conclusion is given the lack of information which can be obtained and put into a monitoring system which would also not be reflective of actual development this would not be a meaningful monitoring process.
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- 6.4 For the reasons stated in the table 3a above it is proposed to change the due date of the action RND12/13 CS01 from 31 December 2012 to 31 March 2013
- 6.5 Chart 8 summarises officers’ assessments of the 19 performance indicators that have targets **and** are measurable throughout they year.

Chart 8: RND Overall PI Progress – to 31 December 2012.



- 6.6 It can be seen that, as at 31 December 2012, the position was a positive one with:

- 12 indicators (63%) having been assessed as being on track to achieve year end target or have achieved target
- 5 (26%) indicators have been assessed as having made acceptable progress.
- The remaining two indicators (11%) have been flagged up as requiring intervention, and further information is provided in Table 4.

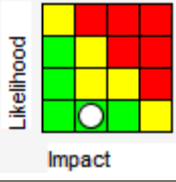
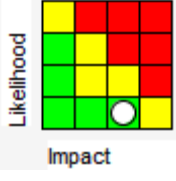
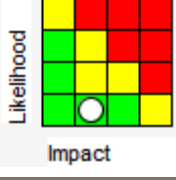
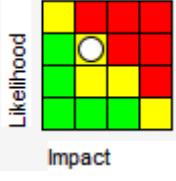
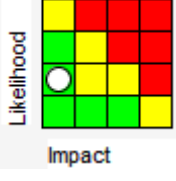
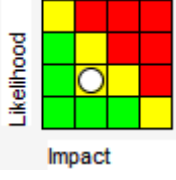
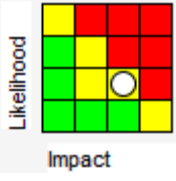
Table 4: RND Performance Indicators requiring intervention


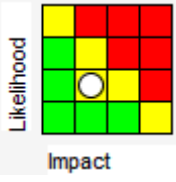
Outcome: Hartlepool is prepared for the impacts of climate change and takes action to mitigate the effects				
Ref	Indicator	Q3 12/13 Outturn	Year End Target	Note
NI 185	Percentage CO2 reduction from local authority operations	4.7%	7%	Work continues to reduce the carbon footprint. Invest to Save Fund projects are nearing completion for 2012/13, and a new schedule is being produced for 2013/14 projects. The 2012/13 carbon footprint will be produced in Q1 of 2013/14, once the whole year's energy use data is available. It is unlikely that the aspirational target of a 7% reduction will be achieved. The Carbon Reduction Strategy is currently under review and will set a more realistic yet still challenging target, which is likely to be in the region of a 2% reduction per year (TBC).
Outcome: Hartlepool is prepared for the impacts of climate change and takes action to mitigate the effects				
Ref	Indicator	Q3 12/13 Outturn	Year End Target	Note
RND P051	Number of households where homelessness has been prevented through Local Authority action	5.57	12.00	At the end of Q3 206 households were prevented from becoming homeless. This equates to 5.57 per thousand households which is still short of our target for this time period but the impact of welfare reforms has significantly reduced alternative housing options for those affected.

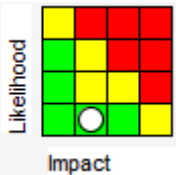
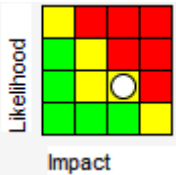
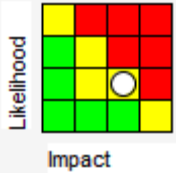
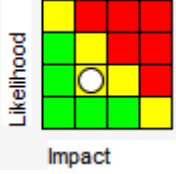
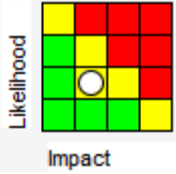
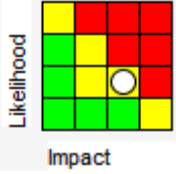
6.7 A further 30 indicators have targets which can only be assessed at the year end or are for monitoring purposes only.


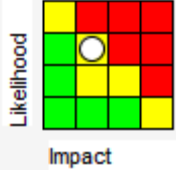


6.8 Today there are 21 risks on the accepted risk register within the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department and a further 19 on the actively managed risk register. The table below provides a summary of the position of the risks on the Actively Managed Risk Registers along with details as to what action is being taken with regards to these risks. The table also details whether the risk has changed since its last review.

Table 5: RND Actively Managed Risks 2012/13

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
RND R051	Failure to comply with DDA legislation in Council buildings (Actively Managed)		Capital bid approved, works being programmed. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
RND R052	Council liability for RTA related accidents resulting from employees driving whilst on council business (Actively Managed)		A policy is currently being written which will ensure that the Council is legally covered should a blameworthy collision occur as a result of an employee driving on official business. As part of this, options are also being explored regarding the introduction of an enhanced professional driver's eyesight tests. This would help ensure all drivers operating Council plant and vehicles are doing so with adequate vision and significantly reduce the associated risk. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
RND R053	Failure to effectively implement selective licensing (Actively Managed)		Status has been reviewed and because the service and selective licensing is well managed and up to date, there is no need to change the current status. All none compliant cases are actively managed and resolved. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
RND R054	Failure to maintain highway infrastructure to acceptable standard resulting in additional cost implications through insurance claims (Actively Managed)		Lack of significant investment in highway maintenance and possible future pressure will maintain this risk at a score of 6. The current severe weather, both in terms of flooding and freezing, is likely to have a significant impact on highway conditions which may require this risk to be increased at some future date. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
RND R055	Failure to provide an effective transport infrastructure for disabled people (Actively Managed)		Provision of low floor bus infrastructure continues on an annual basis funded by Tees Valley Bus Network Improvement capital investment. All new infrastructure and maintenance programme included provision of dropped crossing facilities with appropriate tactile paving (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
RND R057	Reduction in funding for Housing Investment (Actively Managed)		This risk has been reviewed and no status review is necessary. The funding regime for housing has changed and currently the housing programmes are well financed in the Local Authority, for the period 2011/15 (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
RND R059	Failure to provide a 'sound' Planning Policy Framework leading to a lack of clear planning guidance (Actively Managed)		The Local Plan has been submitted to the SoS for examination. The document has been out to consultation extensively. The Local Plan is on track to achieve adoption in 2013, however it is possible that this will be later than Autumn given the Examination in Public (EIP) is to begin 29 January 2013 and anticipated to last 2 weeks.

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
			<p>Meanwhile Local Plan 'saved policies' remain in place, the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) have given local authorities a year to adopt a Core Strategy (until March 2013), then if a LPA's plan is not at an advanced stage the policy position would be reliant only on the NPPF. There is a significant risk if the Local Plan is not found 'sound' or not adopted by the Council as there would be no up to date development plan and therefore no affordable housing policy which secures either affordable housing on site or a contribution to the housing team's projects to deliver affordable housing. There would also be risk that the employment sites could be proposed for housing development and without a robust planning obligations policy it would be very difficult to secure other contributions for regeneration, community facilities etc and there would also be no opportunity to develop CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) which is a way to secure funding to important strategic infrastructure e.g. schools, major highway junctions, etc. Essentially the place shaping of Hartlepool could be progressed outside of the aspirations of the Borough Council as a whole. The risk of not having an up to date development plan is currently amplified as it is anticipated that an application from Wynyard Park for a significant amount of general housing on a site allocated for employment is to be submitted prior to the completion of the EIP. Whilst the policy position is robust to refuse the application if approved the development would render the Local Plan unsound, thus any affordable housing contributions currently committed or which would be have been required from future housing schemes would be nil. (INCREASE IN RISK RATING)</p>
RND R060	Failure to deliver current regeneration programmes (Actively Managed)		Seaton Carew is progressing and is at Heads of Terms stage. The Council continues to influence sub regional policy and is actively involved in the development of City Deal which will respond to some of the economic needs of the area. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
RND R061	Inability to meet very high levels of local housing needs including affordable housing (Actively Managed)		Status has been reviewed and no change is currently required however the welfare benefits changes and changes to housing benefits relating to additional bedroom has started to shift to needs requirements and this will be monitored to assess impact. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
RND R062	Effective delivery of housing market renewal affected by external decisions and funding (Actively Managed)		<p>No Change to previous updates, original CPO sites, either all outstanding claims have been settled or ring fenced funding is in place to mitigate claims. Work is currently taking place to assess risks on the Perth Street Site, to assess the likely hood of breaching the ring fenced funding to cover claims from former owners on this site. Carr/Hopps Street has funding in place and is being actively managed to mitigate risks.</p> <p>(NO CHANGE IN RATING)</p>
RND R063	Lack of resources to maintain building stock (Actively Managed)		<p>13/14 capital bid made for urgent works. Unallocated 12/13 revenue planned projects identified and 13/14 ongoing (NO CHANGE IN RATING)</p>
RND R064	Failure in asset management planning to make best use of assets in terms of acquisition, disposal and occupation (Actively Managed)		<p>Medium and long term accommodation strategy is constantly reviewed through the Council's corporate financial team. Key strategic reports to Cabinet and Scrutiny provide position statements/ proposals to ensure active management of the portfolio. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)</p>
RND R079	Failure to meet the statutory requirements of the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods department (Actively Managed)		<p>Legislation continues to be monitored to identify changes and action where appropriate. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)</p>
RND R080	Failure to monitor and maintain Council owned trees (Actively Managed)		<p>the inspection programme continues, with any remedial work undertaken. Matrix as previous 24/5/12 (NO CHANGE IN RATING)</p>
RND R081	Failure to provide sound planning advice / enforcement in relation to waste sites in the borough (Actively Managed)		<p>Waste sites are complex planning issues, whilst advice is given in good faith, we do not have specialist planning officers who deal with these as their main element of work. Where necessary we do use consultants or Counsel on particular contentious planning issues, as an example Niramax. Monthly meetings to discuss problem sites occur and multi agency visits carried out, group working well albeit some issues can be protracted. We have a Tees Valley Minerals and Waste DPD which was produced jointly with other Tees Valley Authorities this provides us with an up to date policy position. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)</p>

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
RND R083	Loss of personal or sensitive data resulting from a lack of information security (RND)		Information Security policies agreed corporately. A roll out programme to inform staff and to provide training on Information Security will now take place, beginning 4th Quarter of 12/13. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
RND R084	Unsafe or unsatisfactory building conditions occurring due to lack of available maintenance resources (Actively Managed)		13/14 capital bid made for urgent works. Unallocated 12/13 revenue planned projects identified and 13/14 ongoing. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
RND R085	Failure to achieve the Council's Capital Receipts target because of the difficult economic climate and market conditions (Actively Managed)		Despite the economic climate being difficult sales have been agreed, with a number due to complete imminently, these capital receipts that are expected to complete in the coming financial years are expected to far exceed the capital receipts target. Provided that completions are achieved on 50% of the agreed sales then the risk is covered (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
RND R086	Failure to achieve the required level of financial rebate through the NEPO arrangements (Actively Managed)		Close monitoring of NEPO performance is required to flag up any forthcoming shortfalls or increases in costs as early as possible. This risk has been reviewed as 'likely' on the basis that there is a distinct possibility that should NEPO not cover their cost base through income from contracts (and they currently have an £800,000 financial gap) then LA rebates will be reduced to make up any shortfall. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)

6.9 For the period up to 31 December 2012 the Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department have identified a number of achievements including:

- Work is progressing on the Local Plan with extensive consultation already carried out. The plan is subject to an examination in public with the decision as to when to hold with the Secretary of State. The examination is to begin late January and as a result is on track to achieve adoption in 2013. As a result it has not been possible to achieve by the target date of Dec 12. An action has been included in the 2013/14 Departmental Plan with regard to this.
- Work has been undertaken to explore investment opportunities to identify public realm initiatives, with various areas in the town identified. Works are being progressed with funding from ward member budgets to be completed this financial year. Further work is continuing with Friends groups to identify funding streams e.g. Seaton Park, Golden Flatts and North Linear Park.
- Through continued increased contact with owners of empty properties, the Housing Services team have built on the success of

the achievements over first 6 months with a further 54 properties brought back into use, bringing the total for the year so far to 135 against a target of 57

- A £6m grant has recently been confirmed to fund upgrades to the A689 / A19 junction with works scheduled to be completed by 2015.
- The Going Forward Together model has been introduced by the Council, targeting young people classified as the most 'high risk' of becoming Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). As a result 255 young people have registered, with 128 progressing into further education or employment making it one of the best performing projects in the North East.

7 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENTAL PLAN UPDATE

7.1 The Chief Executive's Departmental Plan contributes to 7 outcomes, spread across 2 themes:

- Jobs and the Economy
- Organisational Development

7.2 Included in the departmental plan are 51 actions and 33 performance indicators spread across 7 outcomes. In addition the department has identified 35 risks that are included in the Council's Risk Registers.

7.3 As can be seen in chart 9, overall progress across the department is positive, with:

- Over 94% of actions (48 actions) having already been completed or being on track to be completed by their agreed due date.
- The remaining 3 actions (6%) have been assessed as having made acceptable progress.

7.4 Chart 10 summarises officers' assessments of the 18 performance indicators that have targets **and** are measurable throughout the year. It can be seen that, as at 31 December 2012, the position was also positive, with:

- 15 indicators (83%) either having been assessed as being on track to achieve target ;
- 3 indicators (17%) having had made acceptable progress.

Chart 9: CED Overall Action Progress – to 31 December 2012.

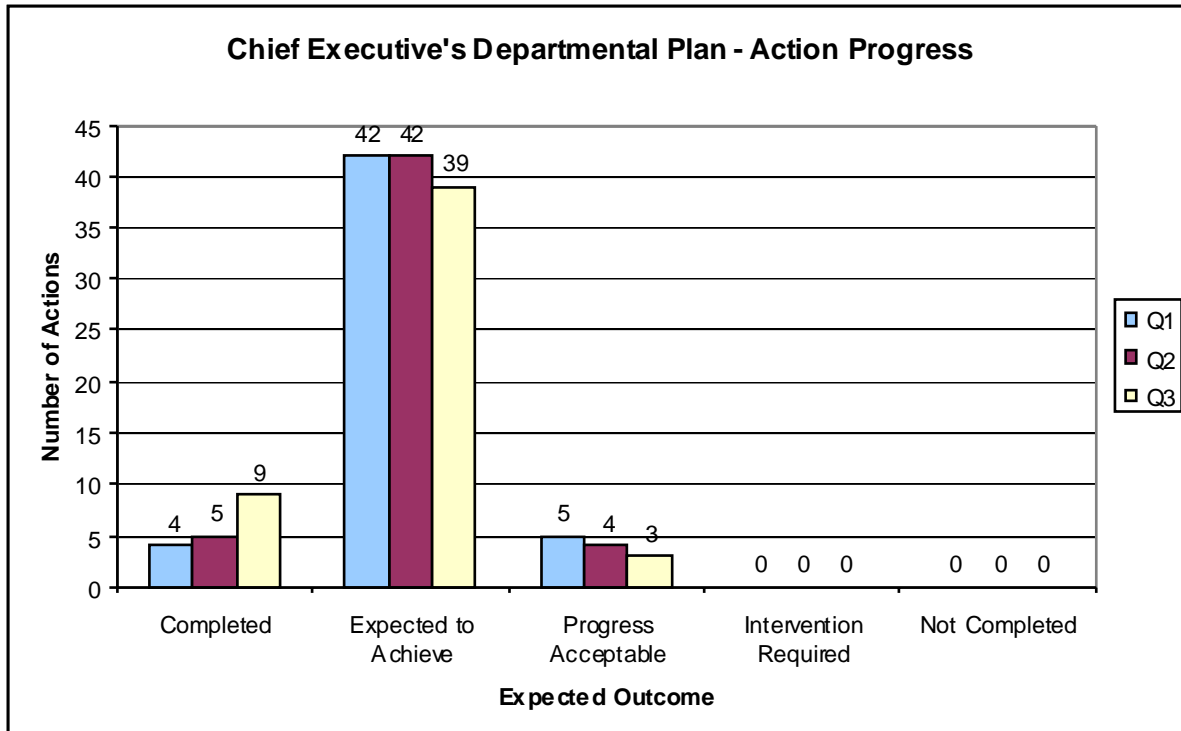
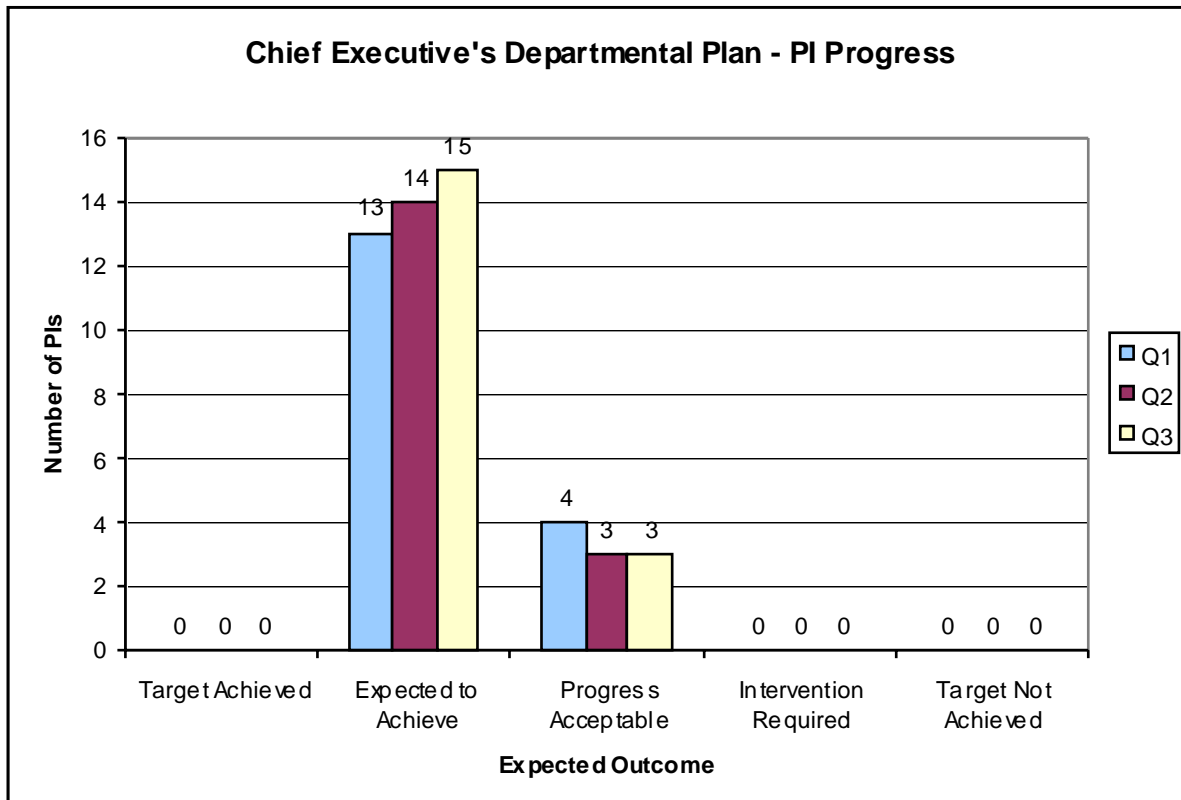


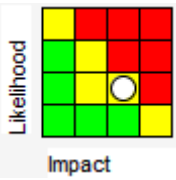

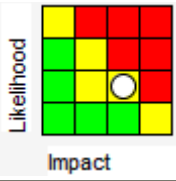

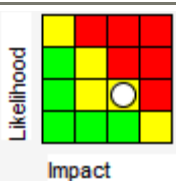
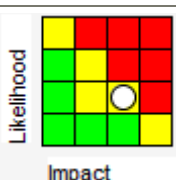
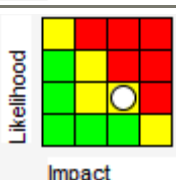
Chart 10: CED Overall PI Progress – to 31 December 2012



7.5 A further 15 indicators have targets which can only be assessed at the year end or are for monitoring purposes only.

7.6 There are 28 risks on the Accepted Risk Register within the Chief Executive’s Department and a further 7 on the Actively Managed Risk Register. The table below provides a summary of the position of the risks on the Actively Manager Risk Register along with details to show what action is being taken with regards to these risks.

Table 6: CED Actively Managed Risks 2012/13

Code	Title	Current Risk Matrix	Latest Note
CED R059	Failure to integrate equality into all aspects of the Council's work leading to non compliance with legislation and Council aims (Actively Managed)		The likelihood of this risk has remained the same. The corporate steering group continues to operate to both support departments in the consideration of and integration of equality issues in the development of policy and plan (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CED R088	Future and Current Equal Pay Claims including settlement of, or adverse findings in Employment Tribunal of existing equal pay claims (Actively Managed)		On-going case right of all Equal Pay claims. Risk assessment of terms and conditions arrangements reported to CMT for action. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CED R089	Experiencing failure or lack of access to Critical ICT systems (Actively Managed)		This remains the same. System availability remains high and is monitored through the monthly service reports. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CED R090	Failure to meet the statutory requirements of the Chief Executive's department (Actively Managed)		This risk remains the same. Arrangements to progress new governance arrangements are in place and issues such as the impact of the localism bill subject to separate reports to Cabinet as required. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CED R091	Failure to have corporately adequate arrangements in place to manage and deliver the budget strategy and the savings programme (Actively Managed)		This risk remains the same. Reports have been submitted to Cabinet and plans in place to progress these through scrutiny with the target being a February decision of council. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CED R094	Failure to deliver a new ICT Contract (Actively Managed)		The project is currently on schedule and progressing as expected, risks are being managed through the programme planning for the project. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)
CED R095	Failure to have in place effective governance arrangements (Actively Managed)		A Governance working group and work plan have been established with timescales set for the completion of the work which is currently on schedule. (NO CHANGE IN RATING)

7.7 For the period up to 31 December 2012 the Chief Executive’s Department have identified a number of achievements including: -

- With in the Money Matters engagement programme 2 Credit Union promotion events were held at HBC Church Street Depot in November. There was also an Illegal money lending week of action in November 2012.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Report was submitted to Cabinet on 17th and 21st December 2012. A further report will be submitted to Cabinet and Council in February 2013.
- Develop framework for new Local Council Tax Rebate Scheme – The New Local Council Tax Rebate Scheme framework was reported to Cabinet 17 December 2012. The Scheme was the approved at Council on 24 January 2013.
- Tenants affected by the changes to Housing benefits have had letters sent out in January 2013. Discretionary housing payment policy framework currently being reviewed and will be reported to Cabinet.
- All households that have been affected by the Benefit cap have been advised. All households affected by Bedroom Tax also received a letter in January 2013. Finally all households affected by new Council Tax Support Scheme are to receive letter in February 2013.
- The review of the Registrars service is complete and has achieved a saving target of £21k that will be used to reduce the income budget that is currently not being achieved.
- Change in governance arrangements were agreed at special meeting of Council held on 6 December 2012, to be effective from 5th May. A Governance Working Group has been established to look at the operation of a Committee based system. Working Group supported with subsequent reports to be brought to an Extraordinary Council meeting on 7th March to consider the governance structure and revised Constitution.
- Work ongoing in relation to the development of the scrutiny function as a result of the mayoral referendum. Required constitutional changes being done to reflect the move to the conduct of statutory scrutiny only.
- Details of the process for statutory crime and disorder and health scrutiny being worked on and detailed regulations being awaited in relation to the implementation of reviewed / new health scrutiny requirements, as a result of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (regulations expected in January).

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Cabinet is asked to: -

- Note the current position with regard to performance.
- agree to the proposed date changes as detailed in paragraph 6.4

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Cabinet and the individual Portfolio Holders have overall responsibility for the monitoring of the Corporate Plan and the three Departmental Plans.

10. APPENDICES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST, IN THE MEMBERS LIBRARY AND ON-LINE

10.1 There are no appendices to the report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 There were no background papers used in the preparation of the report.

12. CONTACT OFFICER

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