

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 17 JANUARY 2012

BUSINESS STRATEGY AND SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING 2012/13 – 2016/17

Report by Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer

Introduction

1. This report is the final report to Cabinet in the series on the Business Strategy and Service & Resource Planning process for 2012/13 to 2016/17, providing councillors with information on budget issues for 2012/13 and the medium term. If any information is outstanding at the time of the Cabinet meeting, it will be reported to Council when it considers the budget on 7 February 2012.
2. The report sets out the latest information on the Council's financial position, includes the Treasury Management Strategy for 2012/13 and considers the capital funding, including an updated Capital Programme.
3. The Cabinet Member for Finance has prepared a separate report, circulated alongside this report, which sets out the basis for the Cabinet's proposals to Council for the 2012/13 budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2016/17. This takes into consideration comments on the draft budget proposals from the individual Scrutiny Committees in December 2011, comments from the public consultation on the budget as well as the latest information on the Council's financial position outlined in this report.
4. The following annexes are attached:

Annex 1:	Draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2012/13 – 2016/17
Annex 2:	Council Tax (draft)
Annex 3:	Changes to Business Strategy & Variations to MTFP 2012/13 – 2014/15
Annex 4:	Local Government Resource Review
Annex 5:	Reserves and Balances
Annex 6:	Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2012/13
Annex 7:	Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2012/13
Annex 8:	Prudential Code for Capital Guidelines
Annex 9:	Draft Revenue Budget Booklet 2012/13
Annex 10:	Virement Rules for 2012/13
Annex 11a:	Corporate Asset Management Plan
Annex 11b:	Transport Asset Management Plan
Annex 12:	Capital Strategy
Annex 13:	Updated Capital Programme 2011/12 – 2016/17
Annex 14:	Cross Cutting Community Impact Assessment

Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/13 to 2016/17

5. The MTFP covers a five-year period. The plan is rolled forward one year each year. This year, there is an additional year added to include 2016/17. Given the changes that are expected in 2013/14 due to the Local Government Resource Review it is proposed that an indicative MTFP is proposed and agreed for the years after 2012/13. A draft MTFP for 2012/13 to 2016/17 is set out in Annex 1. This is based on the latest information on financing available to the Council plus the proposed changes to the savings contained in the Directorate Business Strategies (and set out in Annex 3) and as reflected in the report.

Draft Budget 2012/13

6. The table below sets out the draft Council Tax requirement for 2012/13 as per the Service & Resource Planning report presented to Cabinet in December 2011 and shows the latest position for both financing and expenditure. Changes from the previous report for both 2012/13 and over the medium term are explained in the ensuing paragraphs.

Draft Budget 2012/13	December Report £m	Latest £m	Change £m
Council Tax Precept	284.3	284.3	0
Council Tax Requirement	284.3	284.3	0
Base (2011/12 budget)	408.6	408.6	0
Inflation	6.2	6.2	0
Function & Funding Changes	0.3	7.3	7.0
Previously Agreed Budget Changes and Allowed Variations	-13.2	-13.2	0
Variations to the Existing MTFP	-2.2	0.1	2.3
Contribution from Efficiency Reserve	-1.0	-0.7	0.3
Council Tax Freeze grant	-7.1	-7.1	0
Formula Grant	-105.7	-115.3	-9.6
Council Tax surpluses/deficits	-1.6	-1.6	0
Net Expenditure – Council Tax Requirement	284.3	284.3	0.0

Council Tax Precept

7. The report to Cabinet in December set out the provisional Taxbase¹ figures from the five District Councils, with final figures to be confirmed once their Councils have agreed them. Although final figures are still not confirmed from all districts, several have been. Based on the latest information, Oxfordshire's Taxbase for 2012/13 is now expected to be 244,724, an increase of 0.57% from 2011/12. Compared with the December report, the effect of the Taxbase increase is to increase the amount of funding available by a further £0.04m. Final figures will be reported to members as soon as they are available, and will be updated at the meeting if possible.
8. The MTFP includes growth in the Taxbase beyond 2011/12 of 0.75% per year. These increases are still considered reasonable on the basis that house building is beginning to recover but there is a risk that this may cause a pressure, particularly in 2013/14.
9. Annex 2 provides a draft of the council tax and precept calculations on the basis of the current MTFP proposed 0% increase in council tax for 2012/13.

Council Tax surpluses/deficits

10. Latest information from several of the District Councils indicates that the County Council's share of income from collection fund surpluses and shortfalls could be around £3.7m. The MTFP included an assumption of a £1.6m surplus. On the basis that the District Councils who did not provide indicative information may have deficits on their fund, this report reflects the budgeted position. The amount of surplus or deficit can vary considerably and is affected by assumptions on the percentage of Council Tax which will be collected and also by assumptions on the Taxbase (such as the number of exemptions). Each District Council must formally notify the County Council of its share of any surpluses or shortfalls on the council tax collection funds within seven days of 15 January 2012. An update on the latest position will be provided at the meeting.
11. The current MTFP includes surpluses of £0.8m for each year beyond 2012/13. The future surpluses were revised down in previous MTFP's to reflect an expected increase in the amount of bad debts. Given the current uncertainty in the economy this is still a valid assumption, therefore it is prudent to leave the sum of £0.8m as it stands.

Function and Funding Changes

12. As set out in the addenda to the Cabinet report in December 2011, the second instalment of the 2011/12 Council Tax Freeze Grant has been transferred into Formula Grant. The table above reflects this movement from specific grant to formula grant.

¹ The taxbase is the number of banded properties that the council uses to set the council tax. It is the total number of properties in the county weighted by reference to the council tax bands, which range from A to H.

Variations to the existing MTFP for 2012/13 – 2014/15

Strategic Measures

13. Following the review of the Treasury Management Strategy (detailed in paragraphs 37-39), changes are proposed to the Strategic Measures budget. Areas of the Strategy which impact on the Strategic Measures budget include revised forecasts on the Bank Rate and expected returns from deposits, updated cash flow forecasts and long term borrowing requirements. Following recent projections from Arlingclose, the Council's Treasury advisors, the Bank Rate forecast for the medium term has been revised downwards. This reflects the considerable uncertainty and expansion of risks presented by the crisis in the Eurozone and the knock on impact of those risks along with faltering UK and global growth.
14. The current MTFP assumed a Bank Rate of 0.75% for 2011/12 rising to 1.75% for 2012/13. The market view in December 2010 was that the Bank Rate would remain at 0.50% until August 2011 and gradually increase from September 2011 to June 2013 to 2.75%. The latest forecast from Arlingclose is that Bank Rate will remain at 0.50% until 2016.
15. During 2011/12, the budgeted return for interest receivable on deposits is expected to be achieved. This is due to a higher average cash balances than anticipated which offsets the average Bank Rate and rate of return being lower than forecast. The impact of the revised strategy is a pressure on the Strategic Measures budget of £2.173m in 2012/13, a further £1.092m in 2013/14 and £1.280m in 2014/15.

Changes to Business Strategies

16. The changes to the Business Strategies 2011/12 – 2014/15 approved by Council in February 2011 are set out in Annex 3. There are no changes to the strategies from the position set out in the December 2011 report to Cabinet.

Formula Grant

17. Draft formula grant figures for 2012/13 were set out in the addenda to the Cabinet report in December 2011. The final Local Government Finance Settlement will be announced after the consultation closes on 16 January 2012. The assumed claw back of £2.5m for funding academies from local authority LACSEG funding did not take place and this movement is reflected in the table at paragraph 6 along with the transfer of the Council Tax Freeze grant into formula grant.
18. The final settlement is unlikely to be confirmed before the Cabinet meeting, and the 2012/13 budget cannot be finalised until this is received. It is proposed that authority is delegated to the Leader of the Council, following consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to make appropriate changes to the proposed budget. All Councillors will be notified of the final settlement once it is received.

Council Tax Requirement

19. The Council is required, under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011, to set a council tax requirement rather than a budget requirement. The Localism Act 2011 received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011.
20. The council tax requirement represents the amount of expenditure the Council needs to finance through council tax precept having taken into account any funding from Formula Grant, Specific Grants, other income from fees and charges and collection fund surpluses/deficits. The increased precept from 2011/12 reflects an increase in the taxbase.
21. The table below shows the draft gross expenditure and funding to give the resulting council tax requirement. The council tax requirement cannot be finalised until the taxbase, collection fund position and formula grant figures are confirmed.

	2011/12 Budget	2012/13 Draft Budget
	£m	£m
Gross Expenditure	939.2	1,027.7
Specific Grants	-471.3	-475.5
Other Income	-59.3	-151.0
Formula Grant	-122.1	-115.3
Council Tax Surplus	-3.8	-1.6
Council Tax Requirement	282.7	284.3
Council Tax Precept	-282.7	-284.3
Balanced Budget	0.0	0.0

22. The large increase in the gross expenditure and other income budgets from 2011/12 to 2012/13 is due to a correction of the school's expenditure and income budgets to bring them in line with the actuals for 2010/11 as reported to Cabinet in the Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery report in June 2011.

Dedicated Schools Grant

23. For 2012/13 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) will be allocated using the same pupil number methodology as in 2011/12. This means that allocations for each authority will be at a flat cash per pupil level. Local authorities with falling rolls will not lose more than 2% of their budget compared with 2011/12. The minimum funding guarantee for schools will continue whereby no school will see a reduction of more than 1.5% per pupil compared with 2011/12.

24. Funding for the pupil premium will double in 2012/13 to £1.25bn from £625m in 2011/12 and will rise to £2.5bn by 2014/15. The Government has extended the eligibility for the pupil premium in 2012/13 to include pupils that have been eligible for Free School Meals at any point in the last 6 years. The level of the premium has increased from £488 to £600 per pupil. Children in care who have been looked after for more than six months will continue to be eligible for the pupil premium. Children with parents in the armed services will continue to be eligible for the service child premium. This will increase from £200 per pupil in 2011/12 to £250 per pupil in 2012/13. Up to £50m of the £1.25bn will be used to support a summer school programme to help the most disadvantaged pupils make the transition from Primary to Secondary school.
25. The Schools Forum will meet on 1 February 2012 to propose the use of the DSG allocation for 2012/13. This will form part of the Cabinet's proposed budget to Council on 7 February 2012.

NHS Operating Framework

26. The NHS Operating Framework, published on 24 November 2011, includes £622m in 2012/13 for transfers of funding between PCTs and local authorities for social care services to benefit health. The framework also states that financial support from the health system for social care will continue in 2013/14 and 2014/15. The existing MTFP includes a pressure of £1.5m in 2013/14 on the assumption that this funding would cease after two years and that some ongoing expenditure associated with the funding would remain. As this funding has now been confirmed for the remainder of the Spending Review period, this pressure will be removed.
27. Nationally, funding for re-ablement will double in 2012/13 to £300m from £150m in 2011/12. PCT clusters are expected to work with local authorities to agree jointly on priorities, plans and outcomes for investment of the monies allocated for re-ablement in 2012/13. This could include current services such as tele-care, community directed prevention, community equipment and adaptations, and crisis response services; and new services such as funding the social care aspects of the National Dementia Strategy and actively impacting on Delayed Transfers of Care, using local opportunities to develop the provision of post-discharge care and support services which are the responsibility of social services.
28. The 2012/13 shadow allocations for local authorities' new public health responsibilities are expected in January 2012. Actual allocations for 2013/14 will be made in late 2012.

Local Government Resource Review

29. During the summer, the government consulted on a new local government finance system to replace the existing Formula Grant system. The government considers that local government needs closer connections to local business ratepayers and an incentive to encourage business

development. Thus the new system will 'relocalise' business rates from April 2013.

30. On 19 December 2011, the government responded to the summer consultation, announced some decisions about the new system and introduced a Local Government Finance Bill to implement changes to Parliament. Whilst the exact design of the new system will continue to be developed, Annex 4 sets out a summary of the government's response to the consultation details of the new system confirmed so far.

Balances and Reserves

Balances

31. The Financial Monitoring report (CA6 on the agenda), shows the position on balances at the end of November as £15.7m. The forecast for year-end balance is £13.7m based on the assumption that calls on balances will be £2.0m by the end of the financial year. Although calls on balances to date in 2011/12 have been minimal, further calls are possible if there are inclement weather conditions in the next few months and if the overspend on the council elements of the physical disabilities pooled budget is not able to be addressed in the current year. With a forecast of £13.7m at the end of 2011/12, balances will be £1.0m higher than anticipated.
32. The financial strategy states that balances should be maintained at a level commensurate with risk. An updated risk assessment has been completed which takes into account 2011/12 financial projections and the risks in the 2012/13 budget and the economy generally. The risk assessment confirms that the level of planned balances in the existing MTFP remains commensurate with risk. The projected level of balances over the medium term is set out in Annex 5.
33. Given the uncertainty over the changes arising from the implementation of the Local Government Resource Review in April 2013, it is considered prudent to hold the additional £1.0m in balances until the Service & Resource Planning process next year when the implications of the new system will be known.

Reserves

34. All the Council's reserves which are maintained for specific purposes have been reviewed as part of the Service and Resource planning process. The planned use of the reserves over the medium term is set out in Annex 5.

Efficiency Reserve

35. The Efficiency Reserve was created in 2009/10 to allow for investment to deliver efficiencies, service redesign and to ensure that sufficient resources were available for redundancy costs.
36. The current MTFP includes contributions to the reserve in 2012/13 and 2013/14 totalling £14.478m. The reserve will be used to manage the cash flow

implications of the changes to the MTFP as set out in the Business Strategies and reflected in Annex 3. Use of one-off funding over the period to 2014/15 will utilise £12.277m of the reserve and give rise to a need to replace £5.784m with on-going funding from 2015/16.

Treasury Management Strategy

37. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2012/13 are set out in Annex 6.
38. This document complies with the technical requirement of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. It sets out, amongst other things the investment strategy for the Council's temporary cashflow surpluses. The strategy continues the previous policy of maintaining security of capital, along with the liquidity of its investments, whilst achieving the optimum return on its investments commensurate with risk. Potential maximum exposure to credit risk is reflected in the Statement of Accounts and is taken into account in the assessment of the level of balances required.
39. The Strategy for 2012/13 continues with the principle of prioritising security and liquidity of principal over investment return. As government funding for capital is now by grant rather than approval to borrow, new borrowing for capital only applies to prudential schemes. Where it is in the Council's interest to do so, the use of internal funds instead of external borrowing for these schemes will apply. In addition, it is again proposed that any changes applied to the 2012/13 Treasury Management Strategy can be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance. This is included in the recommendations below.

Minimum Revenue Provision

40. The Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement for 2012/13 is included at Annex 7. Legislation requires Council to approve a statement of their policy annually before the commencement of the financial year.

Prudential Indicators

41. As part of the Service & Resource Planning process for 2012/13 Council will have to approve a set of Prudential Indicators which show that the Council's prudential borrowing is prudent, affordable and in line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy. These indicators will be taken to Council for approval in February 2012. Some of these indicators are about the Treasury Management Strategy itself. The remaining indicators are dependant upon the final agreed budget position and cannot be calculated at this time. Annex 8 shows an overview of the Prudential Code and an explanation of the Prudential Indicators.

Draft Budget 2012/13

42. Annex 9 sets out the draft detailed revenue budget for 2012/13 for directorates. The annex shows the movement in gross expenditure and

income from 2011/12, showing inflation, function and funding changes, previously agreed funding and proposed virements. For illustrative purposes, the annex also includes the effects of the identified pressures and proposed savings as set out in Annex 3. This is not an agreed plan but shows the impact on services if all the proposals are agreed. This will be updated for the Council meeting in February to reflect each proposal made.

Virement Scheme

43. When approving the budget each year the Council is required to agree the virement rules. The existing arrangements have been reviewed and amended. The revised virement rules are set out for approval at Annex 10.

Capital Programme and Asset Management Plans

Asset Management Plans and the Capital Strategy: 2012/13 to 2016/17

44. The Corporate Asset Management Plan (AMP) has been updated and revised and is attached at Annex 11a. The purpose of the AMP is to:
- Give an overview of the Council's strategic direction and objectives and the implications this has for its property and how property needs to change and can be used to help achieve those objectives
 - Describe the objectives for property that arise from this and the strategy for each category of its assets (the asset strategy)
 - Set out the action to be taken, at a high level
 - Provide a clear statement of the Council's approach to its property
45. The Council's property is changing significantly in terms of its size, composition, use and cost so as to contribute positively to meeting the Business Strategy objectives. The AMP provides the strategic context in which to deliver a structured and programmed approach to change in assets.
46. Although this year's review of the plan proposes that the priorities remain largely the same, it also recommends that there should be a shift and clarification in policy, from reducing the size of the non-school estate by 25% to reducing costs by this amount. This also reflects a proposed shift from a priority of holding property to deliver services, to using our property to help deliver broader objectives of the Council. The proposed change would also better reflect the likely provisions of the Localism Bill.
47. The Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) has been revised, and is attached at Annex 11b. It is central to the identification of highway maintenance strategies and the development of the new Transport Services contract. The TAMP contains both asset and financial data that enables more advanced forward planning, improved budget management and improved working practices. The plan recommends additional investment in the highways maintenance, with particular emphasis on major projects.

48. The Capital Strategy attached at Annex 12, sets out the Council's capital investment plans and explains how capital investment contributes to the Council's Vision and Priorities. It shows how the Council prioritises, targets and measures the performance of its capital programme. It also provides the framework for determining capital spending plans and the effective use of the Council's limited capital resources. This Strategy has been reviewed and updated in light of the changing financial and business strategy environments. Although the main policy framework currently remains unchanged, the updated strategy has a stronger emphasis on achieving economic development and business growth. It announces the establishment of the Rolling Fund as a flexible forward funding mechanism in order to unlock future growth by delivering critical infrastructure that support planned developments.

The Capital Programme: 2011/12 to 2016/17

Changes to the Capital Programme & Resource Profile since December 2011

49. The table below shows the movement in the capital programme funding and expenditure from December 2011 to January 2012. The main changes are explained in the ensuing paragraphs.

Changes to Resources and Programme/Project Allocations	Savings & Additional Resources (+) / Pressures (-)
	£m
Estimated Capital Programme Surplus December 2011	0.265
<i><u>Changes to Expenditure</u></i>	
Review of the Fire Equipment Budget	0.600
Savings made in the Heyford Hill Roundabout Project	0.470
Increase in the Basic Need pressure	-0.530
Final Account Pressures	-0.797
Reduction in the Schools Access & Structural Maintenance Programmes (2012/13 – 2016/17)	18.175
<i><u>Changes to Resources</u></i>	
Reduction and further Risk Adjustment to the Education grant allocations (2012/13 – 2016/17)	-21.415
Increase in the Transport grant allocation (2011/12)	0.696
Other small funding adjustments	0.286
Change in the Resources Earmarked for Schemes that remain on Hold & Business Cases under development	2.509
Estimated Capital Programme Surplus January 2012	0.259

50. As set out in the second addenda to the Service & Resource Planning Report to Cabinet in December 2011, the Department for Education announced the

2012/13 capital grant allocations on 14 December 2011. Both the capital maintenance and basic need allocations were reduced by £1.735m and £1.778m respectively.

51. The reduction in the capital maintenance allocation was due to the schools that have converted to academy status or are about to do so. The scale of this reduction and the likely scale of future reductions mean that the assumptions for future years funding in the current capital programme are no longer valid. Therefore, the proposed capital programme (Annex 13), assumes a reduction in the maintenance allocation of 50% over the medium term.
52. This means that the Council will change the level of investment in the Schools Structural Maintenance programme from £7.654m each year. The programme will be reduced in size on an annual basis, with the cumulative impact being £14.270m over the five financial years to 2016/17. This figure is dependent on the number of schools that convert to academy status over the course of the five year period and the level of basic needs pressure in the future.
53. The reduction in the basic need allocation is mainly due to a change in the methodology for allocating the funding. The methodology now includes both numbers on roll and capacity data. In order to reduce the impact of this reduction on the programme, a review of the annual programme allocations in the Children, Education & Families programme has been undertaken. As a result, the Schools Access Initiative programme has been reduced by £3.510m over the medium term.
54. Based on the adjustments set out above, the Council is able to fund all capital investment needs related to statutory requirements and maintenance of essential infrastructure and capital investment proposals supporting the delivery of updated business strategies. Both the size of the programme and the resources estimates are subject to future year's settlements from central government, the realisation of the estimated level of contributions from external parties and the delivery of the disposal programme. Any changes in these parameters will be considered as part of the annual budget setting process and the capital programme will be reviewed accordingly.

Information Outstanding

55. There are several areas where information is still provisional and on which assumptions are included in the budget for 2012/13. Once this information is finalised, any changes could have an impact on the budget. Any changes to the provisional assumptions will be reported to Council in February 2012 by the Chief Finance Officer.

Overview and advice from the Chief Finance Officer

56. Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Chief Finance Officer is required to report on the robustness of the estimates made in determining the budget requirement and on the adequacy of the proposed

financial reserves. This assessment will be included in the report to Council for the Cabinet and the Opposition and other groups' budget proposals in February 2012.

Financial and Legal Implications

57. This report is mostly concerned with finance and the implications are set out in the main body of the report. In previous years the Council was required under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a budget requirement for the authority and an amount of Council Tax. However, the Localism Act 2011 has now passed into law and amended the Local Government Finance Act 1992. As a result, Councils will have to set a 'Council tax requirement' instead of a budget requirement.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

58. The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on local authorities that when making decisions of a strategic nature decision makers must exercise 'due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination... advance equality of opportunity... and foster good relations.'
59. As part of the Service & Resource Planning process for 2012/13, the Council has produced a general assessment of the impact of the budget on customers ahead of the budget being set in February 2012. This document set out the principles that are being followed, identifies the main risks to vulnerable groups and establishes what actions will be taken to prevent these risks. The general assessment of the impact of the budget on customers is attached as Annex 14.
60. All significant saving proposals have undergone at least an initial assessment to identify potential risk in advance of the budget being set, and previously completed assessments have been updated where appropriate to reflect changes in proposals. Further work will then be undertaken on a number of these assessments as the details of how proposals will be implemented becomes clearer and as feedback is received from consultations. These assessments have been renamed Service & Community Impact Assessments to reflect the view that the Council should be aware of all possible risks and not just those that impact on statutory equality groups. The Service and Community Impact Assessments are available on the Council's website: <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/council-budget-proposals-service-and-community-impact-assessments>.

RECOMMENDATION

61. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) **(in respect of revenue) RECOMMEND Council to approve:**
- (1) **a budget for 2012/13 and a medium term plan to 2016/17, based on the proposals set out by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance;**

- (2) a council tax requirement (precept) for 2012/13;
 - (3) a council tax for band D equivalent properties;
 - (4) virement arrangements to operate within the approved budget;
- (b) (in respect of treasury management) **RECOMMEND** Council to approve:
- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement ;
 - (2) Prudential Indicators from April 2012;
 - (3) that in relation to the 2012/13 strategy any further changes required be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance.
- (c) **RECOMMEND** Council to approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement as set out in paragraphs 10 to 13 of Annex 7.
- (d) (in respect of capital) **RECOMMEND** Council to approve:
- (1) the updated Capital Strategy, Corporate Asset Management Plan and Transport Asset Management Plan;
 - (2) a Capital Programme for 2011/12 to 2016/17;
 - (3) Prudential Indicators from April 2012.
- (e) to delegate authority to the Leader of the Council, following consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to make appropriate changes to the proposed budget.

SUE SCANE

Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officers: Lorna Baxter – Acting Head of Corporate Finance
Tel. 01865 323971

Annex 1, 2, 7 & 8: Katy Jurczynsyn – Principal Financial Manager
Tel: 01865 323975

Annex 3, 5, 9 & 10: Kathy Wilcox – Principal Financial Manager
Tel: 01865 323981

Annex 4: David Illingworth – Principal Financial Manager
Tel: 01865 323972

Annex 6: Donna Ross – Principal Financial Manager
Tel. 01865 323976

Annex 11a: Mark Tailby – Assistant Head of Property Strategy
Tel. 01865 816012

Annex 11b: David Husband – Strategic Programme Manager
Tel: 01865 815743

Annex 12 & 13: Arzu Ulusoy-Shipstone – Capital, Strategy and Transformation Manager
Tel: 01865 323108

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Annex 14 & 15:

Ben Threadgold – Senior Policy & Performance Officer
Tel: 01865 328219

4 January 2011