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The following reports are Information Items for the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

- 1. Write-off of Debts - 01/04/18 - 31/03/19.**
- 2. Corporate Services And Miscellaneous Finance Revenue Grants 2019-20.**
- 3. Corporate Services & Miscellaneous Finance Revenue Budgets 2019-20.**



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9TH JULY 2019

SUBJECT: WRITE-OFF OF DEBTS – 01/04/18 – 31/03/19

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION & CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with a summary of outstanding debts which have been written-off during the 2018/19 financial year in accordance with the policy previously agreed by Cabinet.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides details of debts written-off for Council Tax, Business Rates, Council House Rents, Sundry Debtors and Housing Benefits overpayments.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure that Members are informed of the sums written-off during the 2018/19 financial year.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council collects very large sums of money from residents and local businesses each year and inevitably there are instances of non-payment. A 'firm but fair' approach has always been adopted and all legal means are pursued to recover monies owed.
- 5.2 The regular writing-off of uncollectable debts is an important financial discipline. The Council would be criticised by External Audit if debts remained in the accounts when there is little likelihood of recovery. The table below provides a summary of debts written-off for the financial year 01/04/18 to 31/03/19.

	Total Amounts Written Off 2018/19 (£)	Total Budgeted Income/Grant 2018/19 (£m)	% of Total Income/Grant Written-off 2018/19 (%)	% of Total Income/Grant Written-off 2017/18 (%)
Council Tax	172,528	70.3	0.25	0.26
Business Rates	331,406	39.1	0.85	0.93
Council House Rents	283,521	54.0	0.53	0.52
Sundry Debtors	208,698	40.4	0.52	0.73

5.3 Whilst the sums shown above are significant it is important to put them into context. The column entitled "% of Total Income/Grant Written-off 2018/19" shows the write-offs expressed as a percentage of the "Total Budgeted Income/Grant 2018/19", i.e. monies due to the Council. For comparison purposes the full-year percentages for 2017/18 are also included in the table.

5.4 In addition to the table in paragraph 5.2, £30,923.30 has also been written-off in the period 01.04.18 to 31.03.19 in relation to the invoices raised for overpayments of Housing Benefits (total invoices raised during the period £1,416,971.58).

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 There are no assumptions associated with this report.

7. LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES

7.1 To comply with Financial Regulations.

7.2 The writing-off of unrecoverable debts is an important element of prudent financial management. Effective financial management contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015:-

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A globally responsible Wales

8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 Effective financial management is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 are met. The process of writing-off unrecoverable debts ensures that financial liabilities are recognised as they occur and are not deferred as potential future liabilities.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process does not need to be applied.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 As detailed in the report.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no direct personnel implications arising from this report.

12. CONSULTATIONS

12.1 All consultation responses are reflected in the report

13. STATUTORY POWER

13.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2000.

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Consultees: Cllr Barbara Jones, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance & Governance
Cllr J Pritchard, Chair Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee
Cllr G Kirby, Vice-Chair Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education & Corporate Services
John Carpenter, Finance Manager (Revenues)
Sandra Isaacs, Rents Manager
Amanda Main, Housing & Council Tax Benefits Manager
Craig Verrier, Senior Sundry Debtor Officer



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9TH JULY 2019

SUBJECT: CORPORATE SERVICES AND MISCELLANEOUS FINANCE REVENUE GRANTS 2019-20

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION & CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide information to Members relating to revenue grants for 2019/20 for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The report provides details of the 2019/20 revenue grant funding for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance. The report excludes grant funded schemes where CCBC merely acts as banker for Partnership schemes. During the financial year further grants are often made available subject to new funding being identified and successful outcomes to bids.

2.2 The report is provided to ensure that Members are aware of grants and their intended purpose. Further details of individual grants can be made available to Members if requested.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Scrutiny Committee Members are requested to note the contents of the report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To ensure that Members are aware of the revenue grants for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Appendix 1 provides a list of grants known at this point in time, along with a brief description of the use of the grant funding. Grant funding applies in the main to specific schemes and initiatives and is often time limited.

5.2 The current administration arrangements are such that each grant has an agreed set of terms and conditions. The grant funding body at year-end requests information to satisfy itself that the grant monies have been spent in accordance with its terms and conditions and for the majority of grants an external audit is required.

5.3 Where required, Auditors will assess expenditure against the terms and conditions of the grant. This assessment would normally comprise a random sample of spend, followed by an in-depth scrutiny of the sampled items. This could involve ensuring proper procurement processes have been adhered to and confirming spend complies with the conditions of the grant. Any issues identified will be investigated; this could lead to a need to review a larger sample of expenditure. The External Auditors produce a report annually summarising any issues that have come to light during their audit of the Authority's grants.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 As identified throughout this report.

7. LINKS TO STRATEGY

7.1 The effective utilisation of grant funding will support the Authority in delivering its stated aims and objectives.

7.2 Effective financial planning and financial control contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: -

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
- A globally responsible Wales.

8 WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

8.1 Effective financial management including the effective utilisation of external grant funding is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-Being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are met.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EqLA) process does not need to be applied.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Grant funding levels can change leading to uncertainty of funding. The majority of grants are subject to external audit and the expenditure must comply with the grant terms and conditions. Failure to comply may result in a qualification of the grant by the External Auditors, which could result in the clawback of the grant funding.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Grant funded posts may be at risk if the funding is withdrawn. Wherever possible this risk is mitigated through fixed-term appointments to grant funded posts.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2003 and the Council's Financial Regulations.

Author: D. Roberts - Principal Group Accountant (Financial Advice and Support).
roberda@caerphilly.gov.uk Tel: 01443 863342

Consultees: R. Edmunds – Corporate Director for Education & Corporate Services.
S. Harris – Interim Head of Business Improvement Services & Deputy S151 Officer.
M. Eedy – Finance Manager.
R Tranter – Head of Legal Services
L Donovan – Head of Peoples Services
L Lucas – Head of Customer & Digital Services
C Harrhy, Interim Chief Executive
Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant, Housing.
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer.
D Street, Corporate Director Social Services
Mark S Williams, Interim Corporate Director Communities
Mark Williams, Interim Head of Property
A. Southcombe, Finance Manager Corporate Services.
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager, Education, Lifelong Learning and Schools
Cllr B. Jones, Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance & Governance.
Cllr C. Gordon, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.
Cllr L. Phipps, Cabinet Member for Homes & Places.
Cllr J Pritchard, Chair of P&R Scrutiny.
Cllr G Kirby, Vice Chair of P&R Scrutiny.

Background Papers:
Grant Allocation Reports 2019/20

Appendices:
Appendix 1- Schedule of Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance Grants 2019-20

Appendix 1 - Schedule of Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance Revenue Grant Funding for 2019-20

Grant	Funding Body	Grant Funding	Matched Funding	Division	Lead Officer	Purpose of Grant	Subject to Audit
Housing Benefits	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)	£602,219		Housing Benefits	Benefits Manager	Funds housing benefit staff who process housing benefit claims.	Yes
New Burdens Funding	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)	£69,601		Housing Benefits	Benefits Manager	Funds housing benefit staff who process housing benefit claims.	Yes
Universal Credits	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)	£91,227		Housing Benefits	Benefits Manager	Funds housing benefit staff who process housing benefit claims.	Yes
Housing Benefit Subsidy	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)	£50,435,645		Housing Benefits	Benefits Manager	Funds the housing benefits payments	Yes
Discretionary Housing Payments	Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)	£493,012		Housing Benefits	Benefits Manager	Funds the discretionary housing benefits payments	Yes
Police & Crime Panel	Home Office	TBC approx. £71895		Legal & Governance	Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer	Funds the panel members and associated costs in running the panel.	Yes
Community Safety Grant	Police & Crime Commissioner	£31,822		Corporate Policy	Community Safety Officer	Funds a full-time member of staff based in the Community Safety Partnership team.	No
Community Safety Grant	Police and Crime Commissioner via Torfaen CBC	£14,822		Corporate Policy	Community Safety Officer	Part funds staff involved in anti-social behaviour case management	No
Children & Communities Grant	Welsh Government	£248,230		Corporate Policy	Community Safety Officer	Formerly Promoting Positive Engagement. Funds programmes of support for young people and families, and diversionary activities to reduce crime (including posts.)	No
Domestic Abuse	Welsh Government via Newport CC	£45,834		Corporate Policy	Community Safety Officer	Funds Independent Domestic Violence Advocate.	No
Area Planning Board	Welsh Government via Newport CC	£16,638		Corporate Policy	Community Safety Officer	Funds Admin Officer	No
Strengthening Local Government Delivery of the Covenant	Ministry Of Defence	£30,667		Corporate Policy	Corporate Policy Manager	To fund a regional post to support the Armed Forces. Only 6 months of the two year fixed term post	No
Housing Support Grant	Welsh Government	£167,406		Housing	Housing Advice Manager	Fund Homeless Prevention Services/Initiatives	No
Total: -		£52,247,123					



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 9TH JULY 2019

SUBJECT: CORPORATE SERVICES & MISCELLANEOUS FINANCE REVENUE BUDGETS 2019-20

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION & CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide Members with details of the 2019/20 revenue budgets for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance.

2. SUMMARY

2.1 The report provides details of the 2019/20 revenue budgets for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance and briefly outlines the next steps to progress the budget strategy moving forward.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Scrutiny Committee Members note the content of this report.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To ensure that the Scrutiny Committee is provided with full details of the 2019/20 revenue budgets for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 2019/20 Revenue Budget

5.1.1 The Welsh Government's Revenue Support Grant (RSG) for Caerphilly CBC for the 2019/20 financial year is a net cash increase of £1.37m. However after adjusting for the transfer in of specific grants and new responsibilities this equated to a net cash increase of £0.549m compared to 2018-19 financial year.

5.1.2 Members will recall that as a consequence of the financial settlement a revised package of savings totalling £13.921m was agreed to enable the Council to deliver a balanced budget for the 2019/20 financial year. Savings for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance amount to £3.093m.

5.1.3 The approved 2019/20 budgets for Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance total £68.657m and full details are provided in Appendix 1.

5.2 Corporate Services

5.2.1 The 2019/20 budget for Corporate Services is £21.721m, which is net of agreed savings totalling £2.066m.

5.2.2 In line with the budget strategy agreed at Council on the 21st February 2019 the Corporate Services base budget has been uplifted for inflation. An allowance of 2.2% has been made for pay (£466k), allowance for the new agreed Pay and Grading structure (£58k), a 1.0% allowance for Superannuation costs (£166k), living Wage (£1.5K) and 2.4% for non-pay (£204k).

5.2.3 The main budget increases due to new responsibilities/budget-virements are:-

- People Services £20.5k
- Legal & Governance £16k

5.2.4 The budget also includes the agreed use of reserves to fund staff, mainly apprentices, in the following areas:-

- Legal Services
- People Services
- Corporate Finance
- Digital Services
- Corporate Estates

5.3 Miscellaneous Finance

5.3.1 The 2019/20 budget for Miscellaneous Finance is £46.936m, which is net of agreed savings totalling £1.027m.

5.3.2 The main budget increases/reductions, in line with the budget strategy agreed at Council on the 21st February 2019 are:-

- £277k for non-pay budgets headings (2.4%)
- £67k for City Deal.
- £203k for Fire Service Levy
- £26k for other Levies.
- £142.6k Targeted Business Relief.
- £302k Free School Meals Grant
- £-202k Private Finance Initiative in line with the agreed grant profiling.
- £27k Trade Union Facilities – transferred from Corporate Services.

5.3.3 The budget for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme has been increased by £958.3k.

5.3.4 The budget also includes £475.29k MTFP savings in advance, as per the budget strategy.

5.4 Budget Strategy for 2020/2021 to 2021/2022

5.4.1 At its meeting on the 21st February 2019 Council was presented with an updated Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which showed an indicative savings requirement of £44m for the 4 year period 2020/21 to 2023/24, with £15.7m required for 2020/21.

5.4.2 Further detailed work is currently being carried out to identify a range of savings proposals to meet the significant financial challenges that lie ahead.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 Assumptions linked to this report were detailed in the budget report to Council on 21st February 2019.

7. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 7.1 The contents of this report reflect the budget strategy agreed by Council at its meeting on the 21st February 2019.

- 7.2 Effective financial planning and financial control contribute to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: -

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8. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 8.1 Effective financial management including the effective utilisation of external grant funding is a key element in ensuring that the Well-being Goals within the Well-Being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 are met.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This report is for information purposes so the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) process does not need to be applied.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As identified throughout the report.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The personnel implications of agreed savings will be carefully managed and where possible staff will be fully supported to identify appropriate redeployment opportunities.

12. CONSULTATIONS

- 12.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

13. STATUTORY POWER

- 13.1 Local Government Acts 1972 and 2003 and the Council's Financial Regulations.

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L Lucas – Head of Customer & Digital Services
C Harrhy, Interim Chief Executive
Lesley Allen, Principal Accountant, Housing
Shaun Couzens, Chief Housing Officer
D Street, Corporate Director Social Services
Mark S Williams, Interim Corporate Director Communities
Mark Williams, Interim Head of Property
A. Southcombe, Finance Manager Corporate Services
Jane Southcombe, Finance Manager, Education, Lifelong Learning and Schools
Cllr B. Jones, Deputy Leader/Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance & Governance
Cllr C. Gordon, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Cllr L. Phipps, Cabinet Member for Homes & Places
Cllr J Pritchard, Chair of P&R Scrutiny
Cllr G Kirby, Vice Chair of P&R Scrutiny

Background Papers:

- Report to Council 21/2/19 – Budget Proposals 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/2023
- Budget working papers – Accountancy Section

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – 2019/20 Revenue Budgets (Corporate Services and Miscellaneous Finance)

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE & OTHER	Estimate 2018/19	Revised Estimate 2018/19	Revised Estimate 2019/20
SUMMARY			
CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND SECRETARIAT	255,465	196,967	202,343
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE/DIRECTOR CORPORATE SERVICES & EDUCATION	204,620	170,210	168,129
CORPORATE FINANCE			
Financial services & Internal Audit	2,124,090	2,112,065	2,079,893
	2,124,090	2,112,065	2,079,893
LEGAL & GOVERNANCE SUPPORT			
Legal & Democratic Services	1,090,282	1,090,282	1,140,124
Members Allowances	1,681,273	1,683,880	1,724,937
Electoral Services	323,524	323,524	333,543
	3,095,079	3,097,686	3,198,604
DIGITAL SERVICES			
IT Services	4,085,463	4,042,389	3,786,891
Central Services	403,398	400,791	382,239
Procurement	314,726	314,726	289,665
Customer First	1,187,491	1,187,491	1,263,132
	5,991,078	5,945,397	5,721,927
PEOPLE SERVICES			
Human Resources	1,505,946	1,505,946	1,471,511
Health & Safety	902,518	902,518	945,331
Communications Unit	308,953	308,953	360,572
CMT Support	0	108,135	131,823
Trade Union Facilities	88,151	88,151	0
	2,805,568	2,913,703	2,909,237
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT SERVICES			0
Management		124,160	127,611
Policy	648,395	691,472	558,024
Equalities	384,562	384,562	413,128
Performance Management Unit	223,534	226,888	221,127
Community Safety	82,093	82,093	45,653
	1,338,584	1,509,175	1,365,543
TOTAL CORPORATE SERVICES	15,814,484	15,945,203	15,645,676
CORPORATE PROPERTY SERVICES			
Management	312,809	312,809	320,073
Energy	135,870	135,870	140,325
Estates	57,357	100,434	133,058
Non Operational Properties	130,051	130,051	114,856
Facilities	2,746,018	2,772,722	2,263,151
Maintenance	2,176,038	2,176,038	1,984,349
Building Consultancy	(201,931)	(201,931)	(198,506)
	5,356,212	5,425,993	4,757,306
HOUSING SERVICES			
General Fund Housing	1,317,617	1,317,617	1,289,212
Private Housing	326,020	326,020	323,376
	1,643,637	1,643,637	1,612,588
TOTAL NON-CORPORATE SERVICES	6,999,849	7,069,630	6,369,894
RESERVES			
Social Services	(29,514)	(29,514)	
Corporate Services	(91,492)	(91,492)	(294,230)
TOTAL RESERVES	(121,006)	(121,006)	(294,230)
TOTAL SERVICES	22,693,327	22,893,827	21,721,340

<i>MISCELLANEOUS FINANCE</i>	Estimate 2018/19	Revised Estimate 2018/19	Revised Estimate 2019/20
<i>MISCELLANEOUS FINANCE</i>			
<i>Staff Related Costs</i>			
Pension Contribution - Former Authorities Ongoing	1,215,689	1,215,689	1,155,689
Recharge to Education - Former Authorities	(189,629)	(189,629)	(179,629)
	1,026,060	1,026,060	976,060
<i>Catering</i>			
Subsidy	0	0	
	0	0	0
<i>Statutory Benefit Schemes</i>			
Council Tax Benefits	13,788,308	13,788,308	14,746,611
DHP Rent allowances	56,808	56,808	49,301
DHP Rent Rebates	511,276	511,276	443,711
DHP Income	(568,084)	(568,084)	(493,012)
General Rent Allowances	28,543,432	28,543,432	23,156,581
Rent Rebates	27,456,591	27,456,591	27,279,064
Rent Allowance War Widow Concessions	35,000	35,000	25,000
Housing Benefit Subsidy	(56,000,023)	(56,000,023)	(50,435,645)
	13,823,308	13,823,308	14,771,611
<i>Levies Upon the Council</i>			
Coroner	200,946	200,946	236,487
Archives	209,092	209,092	209,092
Fire Service Authority	8,475,706	8,475,706	8,882,264
	8,885,744	8,885,744	9,327,843
<i>Capital Financing</i>			
Debt Charges (Principal Repaid)	2,383,236	2,383,236	2,492,141
Debt Charges (Interest Payments)	8,977,172	8,977,172	8,342,451
Debt Charges (Debt Management Exp's)	42,285	42,285	45,563
Income from External Investments:	(600,000)	(600,000)	(800,000)
Rescheduling Discounts	(110,369)	(110,369)	0
Earmarked for specific funds/balances	846,498	846,498	734,912
CERA (Capital Expenditure funded from Revenue Account)	2,604,319	2,604,319	3,330,436
	14,143,141	14,143,141	14,145,503
<i>Corporate and Democratic Core Costs</i>			
Bank Charges	189,698	189,698	194,251
Income from HRA	(31,907)	(31,907)	(32,673)
Income from DLO/DSO	(13,620)	(13,620)	(13,947)
External Audit Fees	484,076	484,076	429,903
Income from HRA	(81,422)	(81,422)	(72,308)
Income from DLO/DSO	(34,755)	(34,755)	(30,866)
Subscriptions	110,736	110,736	110,736
	622,806	622,806	585,096

<i>MISCELLANEOUS FINANCE</i>	Estimate 2018/19	Revised Estimate 2018/19	Revised Estimate 2019/20
Grants to Voluntary sector			
Assistance to Voluntary sector	179,333	179,333	183,637
	179,333	179,333	183,637
Private Finance Initiative			
PFI Schools	2,340,304	2,376,255	2,293,465
PFI SEW	3,960,234	3,924,283	3,805,550
	6,300,538	6,300,538	6,099,015
Other			
Free School Meals Grant	0	0	302,409
Counsel Fees	330,720	330,720	314,720
Careline	35,900	35,900	15,900
Carbon Management Scheme	28,170	28,170	3,846
Carbon Energy Tax	229,884	229,884	239,711
IT Replacement Strategy	131,842	131,842	6,006
PV Panels Income	(40,600)	(40,600)	(55,552)
Risk Management Contribution	(456,511)	(456,511)	(456,511)
Class 1A NI	(60,000)	(60,000)	(100,000)
City Deal	239,200	239,200	306,200
Matched Funding for Community Schemes	15,908	3,908	15,000
Targeted Rate Relief Scheme	77,000	77,000	221,425
Miscellaneous Items	4,631	4,630	6,208
Trade Union Facilities	0	0	27,728
NNDR - Authority Empty Properties	130,608	130,608	0
Welsh Language	53,157	53,157	0
	719,909	707,908	847,090
TOTAL MISCELLANEOUS FINANCE	45,700,839	45,688,838	46,935,855
EXPENDITURE TO DIRECTORATE SUMMARY	68,394,166	68,582,665	68,657,195