

## Using Our Resources to Deliver Our Priorities

In order to deliver the projects identified elsewhere in this plan and continue to deliver our core services we need to ensure that we use all the various resources at our disposal and focus them on the Council's priorities.

The resources we have are:

- Money
- People (our staff)
- Our buildings and land
- Our vehicles
- Our information and IT systems

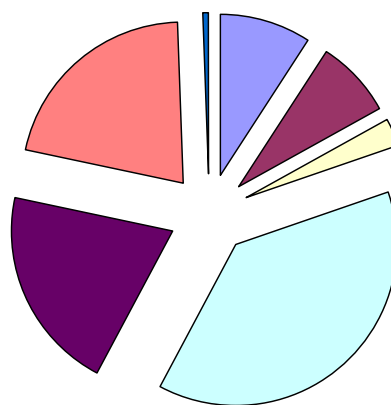
This section of the Corporate Plan explains the resources we have at our disposal and how we use them to address the Council's priorities.

### **Money**

The Council spends money in two ways:

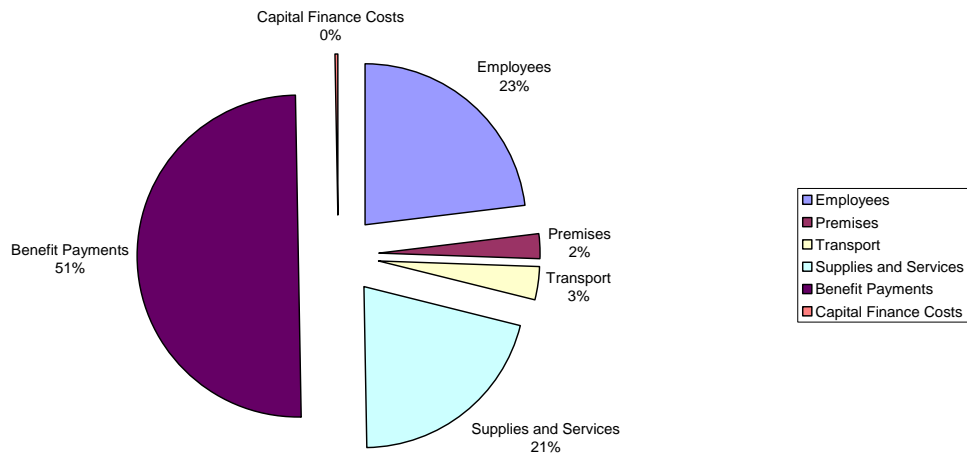
- On day-to-day spending including things such as paying our staff, which is called revenue spending.
- On improving or buying assets which have longer term uses such as new buildings or IT systems. This is called capital spending.

The Council has set a revenue budget for 2007/08 of £11.3m, which is allocated to our priorities as shown in the graph below:



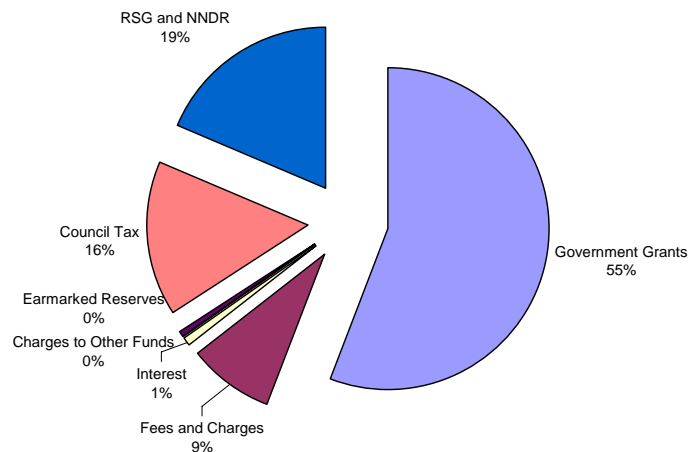
The largest part of the spending is to pay housing and council tax benefits which are fully funded by specific government grants

### How We Spend the Money



We pay for this spending in a number of ways: from grants for specific activities such as benefit payments, to charges for services such as building regulations inspections, together with government funding through the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and a share of non-domestic rates (NDR) which the government allocates us. In addition, there is the income we get from the Council Tax:

### How We Pay for Our Spending



The Council is very committed to becoming more efficient and has made a commitment through its Value-for-Money Strategy to make a minimum of £385,000 of cash-releasing savings each year for the next three years. This is in addition to the £1.1m achieved over the last three years.

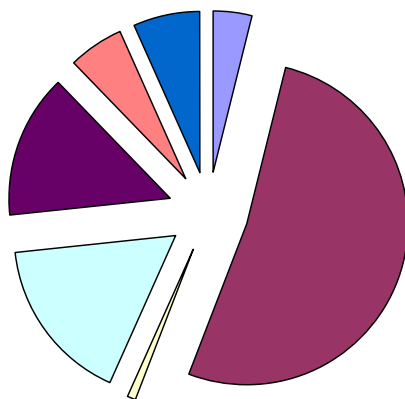
Improving our efficiency in this way will help us achieve the central objective in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy which is to bring the Borough Council's share of the Council Tax bill (compared to other precepting authorities such as Lancashire County Council and Lancashire Fire and Rescue) closer to the average of other East Lancashire district councils.

This will be done over time by Rossendale Council limiting its share of the Council Tax increase to a maximum of 3% per year and by not using the Council's reserves to artificially reduce the level of Council Tax.

Over the last two years this approach has led to a reduction, after taking into account inflation, of 1.5% in Rossendale's share of the Council Tax.

Looking to the future, considerable financial pressures remain and we forecast that savings of at least £200,000 per year are required simply to maintain services at current levels. Hence, our efficiency target is set at a level that will allow us to continue modest investment in service improvement.

Looking at investment in assets and the infrastructure of the Borough, the chart below shows how our current programme addresses the priorities we have set:

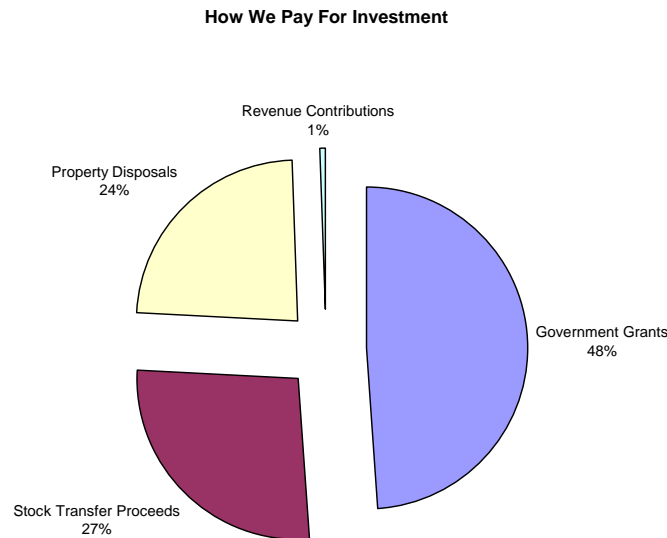


While this clearly shows our current focus, the Council is also consulting on, or developing plans for significant investment in a number of areas, including:

- Improvements to leisure facilities where a £1.2m privately-financed investment at Haslingden Leisure Centre is under negotiation and where plans for further investment, including a replacement for Haslingden Swimming Pool are being developed.

- A long-term accommodation strategy which aims to bring all the Council's office-based staff together on one site.
- Strategies for Play and Open Spaces which identify significant long term investment requirements.

There are a number of ways in which the Council can pay for capital investment and the funding of the current programme is illustrated in the next chart:

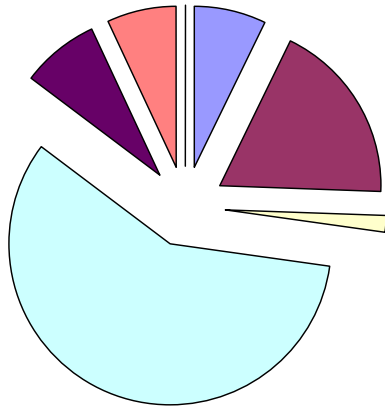


In addition to these sources of finance, the Council can borrow money in the same way as people take out a mortgage to buy a house. However, having been able to repay all £28m of previous external borrowing as a result of the transfer of the Housing Stock to Green Vale Homes, the Council has agreed only to borrow money if the borrowing generates savings or new income which more than meet the costs of borrowing.

This reduces the pressure to increase Council Tax. However, looking to the future, it does mean that in order to sustain investment at current levels we will need to actively identify opportunities to dispose of assets which are not contributing to the achievement of our priorities. A process to identify assets for disposal is a key task included in this Corporate Plan.

### **People**

We employ just over 240 full-time equivalent staff (a full-time equivalent equates to 37 hours per week) to deliver our services. However, we also indirectly employ a large number of staff delivering, for example, leisure services (through Rossendale Leisure Trust and CLAW in Whitworth), Revenues, Benefits and Customer Contact (through Capita), and homelessness services (through Green Vale Homes). Our staff are deployed against our priorities as shown below:



Our staff are important to us because they are the element of our resources that most directly impacts on the quality of service which customers receive, and we have taken steps to ensure that we manage this precious resource as well as possible, including:

- Achieving Investors in People accreditation for the whole Council which validates the systems we have in place to ensure that the organisation's values run through the whole Council.
- Adopting a reward and recognition strategy which helps to maintain staff morale by recognising where our people go the extra mile to deliver high quality services.
- Developing a Pay and Workforce Strategy supported by a job evaluation exercise which will ensure that our people are paid fairly for the work they do.
- Implementing effective policies to address key issues such as sickness absence which ensure that we are getting the best possible results from our workforce.

The key issues in relation to our people, over the period of this plan, relate to:

- The impact of the job evaluation exercise
- The need to continue to support change in the organisation

The Council is obliged to comply with the legislation that relates to the transfer of staff to other employers and to make a statement that it has done so in this plan.

The Council complies with the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters when letting service contracts which involve a transfer of staff under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (“TUPE”) from the Council to the Service Provider, or where staff originally transferred out from the Council under out sourcing and are subsequently transferred to a new provider under a re-tender of a service contract.

The Code recognises that there is no conflict between value-for-money and quality of service and it is intended to prevent the emergence of a “two tier workforce”.

In September 2006, the Council complied with the Code in relation to the transfer of 34 Rossendale Council employees transferred under “TUPE” to Capita Local Government Services, equating to 32 full time equivalents.

### ***Other Resources***

The Council has been making significant improvements in the way it manages its other resources in particular:

- Completing condition surveys for all our buildings, incorporating the results into a comprehensive Asset Management Plan which is rated as “Good” by the Government and allocating resources to address the identified condition issues.
- Adopting and implementing an IT Strategy which as well as delivering significant cash savings also underpins many of the improvements that we have already made or plan to make in the way we interact with our customers.
- Putting in place new contractual arrangements for the core of our vehicle fleet, which have generated revenue savings and more environmentally-friendly working practices. In the coming year, we will prepare a long-term vehicle and plant replacement plan which will be taken into account in the next revision of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Over the next few years, this plan indicates significantly changed demands in these resource areas, in particular:

- The need to establish and reduce our carbon footprint and operate in more environmentally-friendly and energy-efficient ways.
- The need to re-engineer the way we do things supported by more effective IT systems, so that we can both provide more effective customer service and free up resources for investment in our priorities.