

Summary Statement of Accounts

31st March 2012

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this explanatory paper is to provide Council stakeholders with a guide to the full Statement of Accounts and to give clear answers to the following key questions:

- What did our services cost in the year?
- Where did the money come from?
- What are our assets and liabilities?

It is both a summary and an interpretation of the accounts, highlighting the key issues that have arisen during the financial year. The full set of accounts and this summary are also available on the Council's website at www.merton.gov.uk/council/finance.

THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Statement of Accounts, which has been prepared in accordance with the Local Authority Code of Accounting Practice, is the source of information for this paper, which focuses on the following key areas:

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement - Shows the net cost of Council services and the income received from fees and charges and specific grants from Central Government.

Balance Sheet - Shows the Council's assets and how they have been financed.

Housing Revenue Account - Reflects the statutory obligation to account separately for the provision of Local Authority housing.

Pension Fund - Shows member contributions to the fund and the benefits paid from it, together with details of investment activity during the year. It excludes Pension Fund liabilities.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS 2011/12

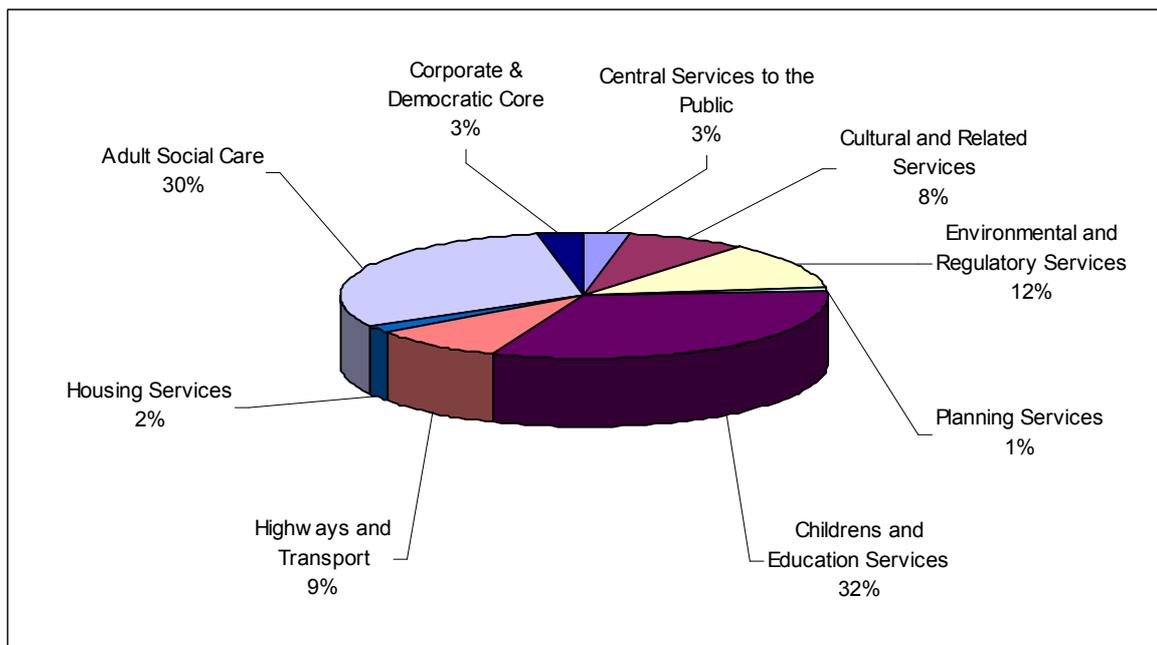
- The Council spent £42m on capital schemes, a reduction of 10% from 2010/11.
- Total net assets decreased by £56m, with usable reserves increasing by £15m.
- Long Term borrowings stayed at around £117m.
- The HRA has been closed and the balance transferred to General Fund.
- The pension fund deficit on an IAS19 basis increased by £87m.
- The Council had an underspend of £11m in 2011/12.

REVENUE SPENDING

Merton's net cost of services was £173m, attributable to services as shown:

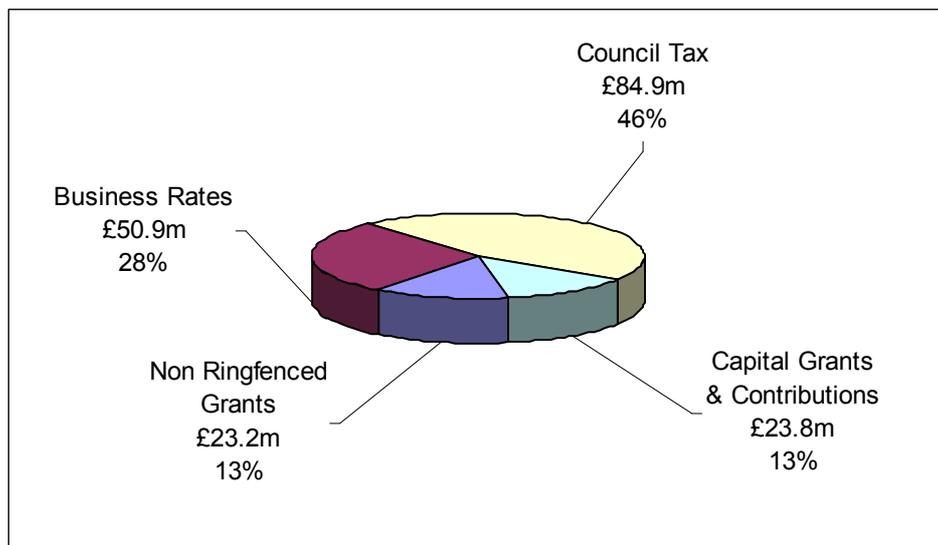
Service Areas	Gross Expenditure £000	Gross Income £000	Net Expenditure £000
Central Services to the Public	21,861	(17,007)	4,854
Cultural and Related Services	16,458	(2,531)	13,927
Environmental & Regulatory Services	25,499	(4,889)	20,610
Planning Services	4,913	(2,552)	2,361
Education and Children's Services	212,342	(157,558)	54,784
Highways and Transport	26,232	(11,691)	14,541
Housing GF Services (Note 1)	87,474	(84,530)	2,944
Adult Social Care	75,830	(25,610)	50,220
Corporate & Democratic Core	4,995	0	4,995
Non Distributed Costs	6,849	(3,069)	3,780
Net Cost of Services	482,453	(309,437)	173,016

Note 1 - Includes Housing Benefits, Homelessness and Supporting People.



How was expenditure funded?

Other than income collected by departments from fees, charges and specific government grants, services are paid for from revenue support grant, which is money from Central Government, contributions from the business rates pool and Council Tax and special grants for specific purposes. The following chart shows the actual funding for 2011/12:

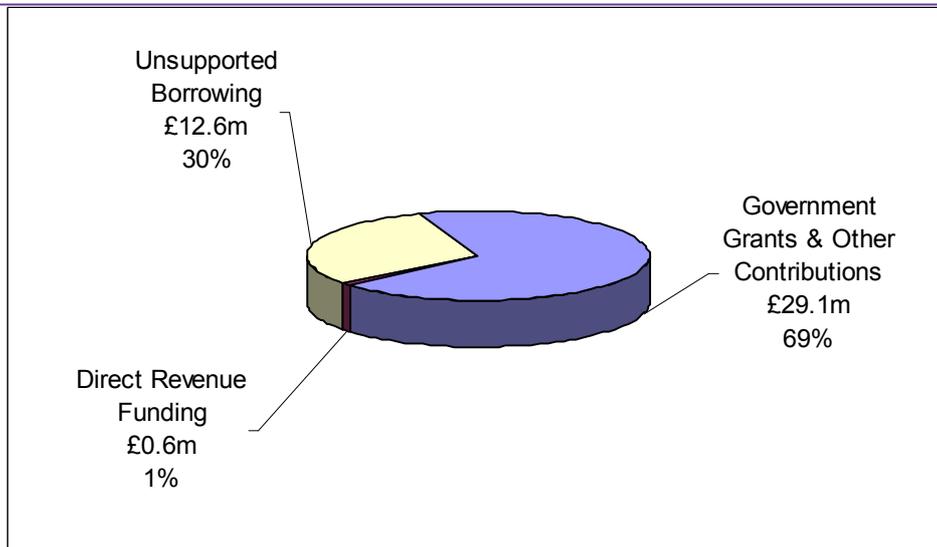


In 2011/12, Merton's Council Tax is the 9th lowest Council Tax (Band D) of the twenty outer London boroughs.

CAPITAL SPENDING

Capital expenditure relates to spending on fixed assets such as buildings and equipment where the benefits to the authority last for more than one year. The Council spent £42.3m in 2011/12, which was financed from a variety of resources as shown below:

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
Summary Accounts 2011/12



FINANCIAL HEALTH

The Council's Balance Sheet gives a snapshot of the Council's financial position at the year-end (i.e. 31st March 2012). It shows what the Council owns (its assets) and what it owes (its liabilities) and the funds which support them.

Summary Balance Sheet at 31st March 2012

Assets	£m
Fixed and Other Long Term Assets	437
Current Assets including investments, cash and debtors	105
Current Liabilities including creditors and short term borrowing	(58)
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	484
Long term borrowings	(117)
Other liabilities and provisions	(54)
Pension Fund Liability	(190)
Total Long Term Liabilities	(361)
Total Net Assets	123
Represented by:	
Reserves and balances which can be spent	(87)
Reserves and balances which cannot be spent	(36)
Total Net Worth	(123)

The main changes in the Balance Sheet compared to 2010/11 are as follows: -

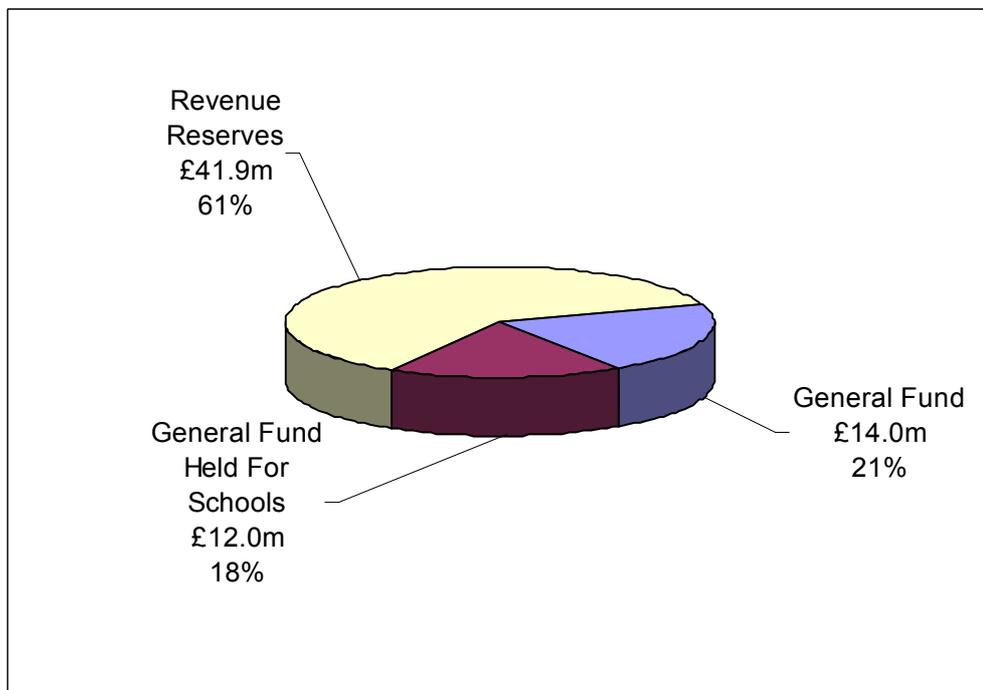
LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
Summary Accounts 2011/12

Account category	£m
An increase in Long Term assets mainly due to an increase in Property, Plant & Equipment	19
A reduction in net current assets due mainly to a decrease short term investments	(13)
A reduction in net current liabilities mainly due to a fall in temporary borrowing	21
An increase in long term liabilities mainly due to an increase in the net pension fund liability	(83)
Change in Net Assets	(56)

RESERVES AND FUND BALANCES

In total, the Council now has usable reserves and fund balances, amounting to £67.9m, which are broken down overleaf.

Breakdown of Fund Balances and Revenue Reserves



HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)

This account is concerned with transactions involving the management of the Council's housing stock and the key financial highlights are summarised below:

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

Summary Accounts 2011/12

The Council transferred its housing stock to Merton Priory Homes on 22 March 2010 and now has no homes or garages in the HRA. The HRA was closed on the 31st March 2011 and the balance transferred to the General Fund. There were no HRA transactions in 2011/12.

PENSION FUND

The pension scheme is financed by contributions from employees and the employer, together with income and proceeds from investments administered by the Council. The Council is required to report the assets and liabilities on a commitment basis (IAS19), on this basis the assets in the scheme, measured at fair value, increased by £12m during the year to £363m. The estimated pension liability increased by £99m to £553m, leading to a £87m increase in the pension deficit, which stands at £190m. Although this is a significant liability the Council does have a long term plan to reduce this deficit and does not foresee problems meeting its current and future pension liabilities.

Disclaimer: - All of the figures in this summary have been compiled having due regard to proper accounting practice. In order to provide simplified and meaningful summary information, some figures have been combined.

