

# Wigan Council Annual Report 2008 - 2009



*Market Street Grand Arcade*

Building the future  
**together**



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## Wigan Borough Today

With a population of about 300,000 across an area of 77 square miles, Wigan is the largest of ten boroughs in Greater Manchester. It is a green place as over three quarters of the Borough is open country.

Wigan borough is at the heart of the North West region, mid-way between Manchester and Liverpool. It is a key stop on the West Coast main line railway and at the hub of four major motorways.

The borough is based around the two main towns of Wigan and Leigh, and several smaller towns and villages of the former Lancashire coalfield. There's a great range of affordable private housing, as well as a large number of council homes, which are benefiting from massive investment.

We have excellent public services. We have been rated as a 'four star' authority for the last seven years by the Government. We also provide good health services.

A more diverse economy is now emerging in Wigan. Considerable new housing developments, and recreational and retail opportunities provide proof that Wigan is increasingly becoming a more attractive and prosperous place.

We have a number of exciting projects underway that are beginning the process of transforming the borough and we continue to improve the every day lives of our residents; crime levels are lower than the regional average, and qualifications for young people leaving school are good.

But we also know that we still face high levels of need and significant challenges:

- Improving life expectancy and health
- Raising aspirations by improving skills and employment
- Responding to the credit crunch and recession
- Enabling our communities to participate in making decisions
- Reducing congestion, so that people can move safely around the borough
- Increasing the supply of affordable housing
- Tackling the inequalities that exist between our more deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the borough

We need to think carefully about how we reach our diverse communities and how we transform our services to meet need in efficient and effective ways. We therefore need to work with all our partners and the community to really improve what it's like to live, work in and visit Wigan.

# Wigan Council

Wigan Council is a Metropolitan Borough Council. We deliver all local council services within the borough except Fire and Police, which are delivered by separate single purpose authorities across Greater Manchester.

In 2008-09 our services cost just under £239 million net.

Management of the council and our services is through elected Councillors working in various constituencies, committees, and partnerships, together with directors and people in departments who are employed by the Council.

## Services Provided by Wigan Council

### Adult Services

- Supporting People
- Learning Disabilities
- Community Care
- Direct Payments
- Older People
- Occupational Therapy
- Sensory Disabilities
- Carers Support
- Home Care
- Adult and Community Learning

### Environmental Services

- Urban Renewal
- Trading Standards
- Environmental Improvements
- Licensing
- Community Safety
- Highways/Traffic/Bridges
- Drainage
- Refuse
- Street Lighting
- Street Cleansing
- Development Control
- Economic Regeneration
- Building Control
- Land Reclamation
- Environmental Planning

### Chief Executive Services

- Policy and Partnerships
- Programme and Project Management
- Performance Management
- Media and Communications
- Strategic Commissioning
- Organisational Development
- Customer Services
- Metrofresh

### Children and Young People's Service

- Education
- Children's Health
- Schools & Children's Centres
- Children's Social Care
- Learning and Behaviour Support
- Connexions
- Youth Service
- Youth Offending
- School Governors
- Outdoor Education

### Business Support Services

- Legal
- Human Resources
- Finance
- Information Communication Technology
- Facilities Management
- Property Services
- Council Tax and Benefits
- Governance and Member Services
- Registrars

## Our Vision and Priorities

**“Building the future together. A place where people matter and you can afford to live the life you want”.**

This is the council’s vision and describes where we want to be in the future. We have also set ourselves 4 key priorities that are taken from the Community Strategy: Vision 2026.



**We want our communities to have good jobs, decent affordable homes and safe streets.**

**We want people to make the right decisions about living healthy lives. In Wigan, people from our more deprived communities do not live as long as others. We want to help them to make healthy lifestyle choices.**



**We want everyone to have the right skills and opportunities to fulfill their potential.**

**We want everyone in our communities to get on together and respect difference.**



We also have an internal priority to keep ourselves focused on being **responsive, responsible, efficient and effective** in the way we deliver public services.

## **Our Values**

Everything we do is based on our values. These summarise the way we want to go about our work and we will always do our best to live up to them.

- ✓ **Working for the community to enhance lives**
- ✓ **Treating everybody fairly and with respect**
- ✓ **Working together to achieve results**
- ✓ **Delivering on our promises**
- ✓ **Challenging what and how we do things to improve**
- ✓ **Providing value for money through use of resources**

# Our Achievements during 2008/09

## Ambitious Communities

*We want our communities to have good jobs, decent affordable homes and safe streets.*

### ► Employment and Skills

Local research has helped us to understand the skills base we need to enable us to attract the right businesses to Wigan. We have put in place skills shops and specialist schools that develop skills in those areas with identified needs and we are working with our partners to tackle worklessness in our more deprived communities.

Developments, such as the Grand Arcade shopping centre in Wigan and Leigh Sports Village, have helped to encourage new businesses to locate within the area and the supported the expansion of our local economy.

#### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- There has been a steady increase in the new business registration rate.
- The percentage of the population in employment has increased from 71.5% in June 2008 to 75.7% in June 2009.
- There has been a slight increase in the average weekly wage from £427.20 to £431.50.

### ► Waste management

The council continues to care for the environment and during 2008/09 we put more money into recycling. Dry recyclables – glass, cans, plastic bottles and containers, along with garden waste and paper, are now collected from households across the borough.

#### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- In 2008/9 Wigan has reduced the amount of residual household waste produced per household from 854kg to 784kg.
- The percentage of household waste that was reused or recycled increased from 27% to 28%.

### ► Transport

The council has placed great importance on reducing congestion and improving air quality through a number of developments. It is vital that our roads are of good quality to help people to get around the borough and to work.

### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- £3.5m has been allocated for Saddle Junction developments, and £80m allocated for the Leigh-Salford Manchester Busway.
- Bus usage on journeys between Leigh and Bolton have increased by 15%.
- The number of people killed or seriously injured during the calendar year has reduced.

### **► Climate change**

We understand the role we play in reducing our carbon footprint. Wigan Council produces 41,023 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, 85% of this is from our buildings and street lighting. The rest is from transport including business travel. The council has in place a Carbon Management Programme to reduce its carbon emissions by 15% by 2011 and is on course to achieve this.

We have an Energy Management Team, which works on saving energy bills and reducing carbon emissions. In the last year, activity to improve air quality and reduce our carbon emissions as focused on:

- encouraging staff to use public transport;
- advising schools on energy efficiency;
- implementing energy efficient light fittings and controls;
- installing smart meters across council buildings;
- extending the use of building management systems to remotely control the heating and hot water, and to monitor gas, water and electricity consumption;
- joint working with other public services within the borough to produce a climate change strategy; and,
- developing a robust way to measure the impact that we have on the environment.

### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- The installation of two voltage optimisation units has resulted in savings of £35,000 per year.

### **► Housing**

Since the mid 1990s the council has worked with our housing partners to deliver dramatic improvements in decent / well insulated homes, through a major refurbishment programme of all council housing stock. We are also improving the supply of decent, affordable homes for local people.

### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- 69 new homes have been built, which have been classed as affordable, with 71 more planned.
- 780 new private homes were built during 2008/09, which exceeds our target of 650.
- In June 2009, just 3.9% of council homes did not meet the decent homes standard, a reduction from 5% in 2008.

## Living Healthier and Longer

*We want people to make the right decisions about living healthy lives. In Wigan, people from our more deprived communities do not live as long as others. We want to help them to make healthy lifestyle choices.*

### ► Personalising services and increasing choice

The authority is currently engaged in a significant programme of work to transform adult social care services. The changes will improve the experience of service users by providing them with more choice and control over the services that they receive and tailoring services to meet their personal needs.

We are promoting self directed support, such as direct payments, which means that individuals are given money so that they can decide which service that they would like to receive. The council cannot meet every need, but we can be more creative in helping people to come up with solutions that work for them.

#### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- The number of people receiving direct payments / personal budgets has risen significantly during the year (393.8 against a target of 184.0) , giving individuals greater choice in services provided.
- The number of carers receiving support has grown (68 carers have accessed the hospital discharge scheme, 17 have accessed the loss and bereavement scheme and 107 have received a benefits check).
- The council has increased the availability of supported housing for people with mental health needs, which is helping to reduce dependence on residential care.

### ► Preventative and early intervention services

In Adult Services there has been significant investment in high level prevention services in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust. This has included investment in intermediate care, re-ablement services, telecare services, night support and the Hospital at Home service.

The Council has launched a new reablement service, which is a short-term service lasting up to six weeks, for people 18 and over living in the borough who need support to live in their own homes independently. Reablement workers encourage and support people to do as much as they can for themselves. For some, it could be supporting them with personal care or making meals, while for others it could be helping them to get out of the house and taking part in social activities.

### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- The availability of our Hospital at Home service has increased, therefore patients do not have to stay in hospital longer than necessary.
- Referrals for telecare equipment have increased, averaging 100 per month, with high levels of satisfaction reported.
- Over the past year the council has continued to support a group of younger adults with physical disabilities to work with them to develop a Centre for Independent Living, which is based at the new Leigh Sports Village (LSV).

### **► Tackling health inequalities**

We need to tackle the causes of poor health and we are working hard to reduce those areas of concern, such as obesity, low physical activity, helping people to stop smoking and cutting down on alcohol intake.

Over the past year the council has continued to actively promote health and well-being strategies and initiatives, including the use of neighbourhood based Health Improvement Workers and Health Trainers and introduction of free swimming for all.

### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- Cardiovascular Disorder risk registers are now in place in all practices in the borough, which has led to a decrease in mortality from Cardiovascular Disease, particularly in older people.
- Working in partnership, we have been successful in reducing the numbers of people in the borough who smoke.
- Free swimming for all has been introduced. Between April and June 2009, there were a total of 54,946 free swim visits to our pools.

## Raising Aspirations

*We want everyone to have the right skills and opportunities to fulfill their potential.*

### ► Making a positive contribution

The council continues to provide opportunities for children and young people to make a positive contribution to their local communities. Our youth service continues to improve the range and accessibility of activities for young people, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights.

#### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- A 'Children in Care' Council has been established and they have devised a "pledge", which has been endorsed by the full Council. As a result of the Children in Care Council, a designated Youth Club has been developed.
- Youth Capital Fund and Youth Opportunities Fund has enabled young people to bid for funding to support and develop activities of their choice, and to pay for improvements and alterations to buildings to improve facilities.
- The Youth Task Force has allocated Wigan £452k for the development of a youth facility in the borough. The development of the Meadows has involved young people from the area in the design of the building and how the budget might be used, and the type and range of activities that would take place.

### ► Being healthy and staying safe

We recognise that being and staying healthy affects every aspect of our lives and we work hard to ensure that all children and young people are happy, safe and healthy.

The council has good arrangements to safeguard children and we work hard to ensure that children who are looked after by the local authority have the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

We are working with our partners in health to reduce the levels of obesity amongst children, limit alcohol use and improve emotional wellbeing.

A particular challenge in Wigan is to reduce the number of teenage girls getting pregnant. The council has made changes to services resulting in increased access to sexual health and contraceptive advice.

### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- Wigan has exceeded the 17% target for Chlamydia screening, achieving 17.9% (2008/09).
- There has been a reduction in repeat under 19 abortion rates from 9.8% (2005) to 6.3% (2008), which is lower than the England and Northwest averages.
- Less teenage mums are having a second pregnancy. Repeat births to teenage mothers in Wigan are significantly lower than the national average.
- 97% of schools have achieved National Healthy Schools Status.
- The proportion of children's social care core assessments completed on time has grown from 70% to 83%.
- Obesity amongst children in reception year at primary school has reduced from 9.8% to 9.2%.
- There are no waiting times for drug treatment services for young people in Wigan.

### **► Improving attainment and skills**

Although the results our children attain in school are good and compare well, the results are not so good in some of our most deprived areas. We need to narrow the attainment gap between our most vulnerable children and those that already get the best chances in life.

The council has in place a wide range of projects which have been successful in reducing the levels of 16 to 18 year olds not in employment, education or training. We have also developed close working with the Learning and Skills Council to make sure that we are tailoring education and training courses to meet the needs of local people and local employers.

We are changing the way we offer education through our Building Schools for the Future Programme. However, this won't just be about the buildings from which services are delivered. Children and Young People's Services and partner agencies are joining up their services within our neighbourhoods. Our Building Schools for the Future programme will provide the resources to enable integrated working to become a reality.

### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- The number of young people not in education, employment or training has reduced during 2009 from 8.5% to 6.8%.
- The number of vulnerable young people in education, employment or training has risen (for example, the number of care leavers in education, training or employment has grown from 69.7% in 2008 to 79.4% in 2009).
- Truancy levels in Wigan's secondary schools are low. The proportion of pupils missing 20% or more of the school year has reduced from 4.9% to 4.3%.
- The percentage of children achieving 5 or more GCSE's at grades A\*-C (including English and Maths) has risen from 45.8% to 48.7%.
- £80 million funding for phase one of our Building Schools for the Future programme has been secured.

## Strong Communities

*We want everyone in our communities to get on together and respect difference.*

### ► Engagement with communities

To become a stronger community Wigan has a duty to involve local people, to improve public service provision and to provide community leadership. We continue to find out what local people think about our services through our Citizen's Panel and other consultation exercises, but we recognize that there is more that we can do to involve local people in decision making.

During 2008/09 we implemented the PACT (Partners and Communities Together) process across the borough. PACT is a mechanism that enables us to talk to local people on their street to identify what their needs are. This information, along with other local data, enables us to respond to local concerns in a targeted way. The PACT process uses a ward level newsletter to feedback what communities have said are their priorities and what elected members, service providers and communities have done to address them.

#### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- There are some very practical examples of the way we have responded to issues raised by local communities through the PACT process. For example, the council have altered the approach to the delivery of the alley gating programme to ensure local communities influence where gates are installed.

### ► Neighbourhood Working

We know that street cleaning, waste collection, and feeling safe are priorities for local people. In response, the council has established neighbourhood teams in each of our local areas across the borough. The teams deal with the issues from prevention, education and enforcement perspectives.

Other public services, including Greater Manchester Police, Wigan and Leigh Homes and the Primary Care Trust, are now working to the same neighbourhood boundaries to join up service delivery within local areas.

This approach, combined with the PACT process noted above, is helping us to respond to local issues, particularly environmental, cleanliness and safety concerns.

### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

- Improvements have been made to the borough's parks. This includes a major redevelopment of Alexandra Park, including landscaping and the development of facilities for children, young people and teenagers. Facility improvements have also taken place at Jubilee and Pennington Hall Park.
- Anti-social behaviour incidents involving young people dropped from 3879 between April and June 2008 to 3236 between April and June 2009.
- Wigan has witnessed some significant drops in crime rates, particularly in relation to violent crime. We have the most sustained reduction of domestic burglary offences in Greater Manchester and the lowest burglary rate.
- Street cleanliness performance has improved. For example, the proportion of land with unacceptable levels of graffiti reduced from 4% to 2%.

### **► Community Cohesion**

There are lots of changes taking place in our borough. We know that the diversity of our population is changing. We are working to reduce inequality and understand the needs and aspirations of all our communities. We are being proactive, so that all sections of our local communities can feel confident, welcomed and can have their say, wherever they live.

### **In the last year - What difference has it made?**

The council is working with other public services in Wigan to take forward the following pieces of work to improve community cohesion:

- **Involving local communities** – testing out our plans with local people and finding out what work is already happening in local areas.
- **Community Mapping** – developing our understanding of local areas.
- **Media Campaign** – to celebrate and value diversity.
- **Wigan Asylum Seeker, Refugee and Migrant Worker strategy (WARM)** – to enable all groups to feel welcomed in our borough.

## Being Responsive, Responsible, Efficient and Effective

As a local authority we are committed to keeping ourselves focused on being **responsive, responsible, efficient and effective** in the way we deliver public services.

To deliver good public services we know that we must have a good understanding of local needs. We must encourage and provide community leadership and provide value for money in all that we do. We must also ensure that as an organisation we have the skills and resources to enable us to deliver first class public services.

### In the last year - What difference has it made?

- Our approach to the operation of Township Forums has been revised and strengthened.
- We have restructured our Overview and Scrutiny Committees, so that our political structure mirrors our local strategic partnership.
- We have introduced the Apprenticeship Scheme, which targets our most deprived areas. In our first year we had 1990 applicants for 25 posts.
- Our Joint Service Centre is now in development in the town centre and will be supported by a number of local one stop shops in our Townships, which start opening during 2009/10.
- Efficiency savings are being identified and delivered as part of our fundamental review of services, which will also enable us to identify where service improvements can be made.

## Finances

### Director's Statement and Financial Review for 2008/09

**The following statement by the Executive Director of Business Support Services describes some of the key points from the Council's stewardship of public funds.**

The Council has an excellent record over many years of bringing in aggregate expenditure below budget and the Council, as a result, has been able to use the flexibility of balances to help maintain low Council Tax rises, enhance services and provide valuable additional funding to the capital programme when necessary. If the level of balances held fall too low then this can place stress on the financial framework and potentially create instability and difficulties for the medium term forecast.

The Council remains committed to sound financial management. This has been demonstrated by the operational efficiencies and effective budget management by departments during the year.

The national and international climate is currently undergoing significant change and this will need to be factored into any forward planning to ensure financial stability is in place to safeguard the continuing delivery of service priorities.

The table below shows the surplus for 2008/09.

	£'m
<b>Cost of Services</b>	<b>238.9</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>256.1</b>
<b>Surplus for the Year</b>	<b>17.2</b>

The savings identified during 2008/09 provide the opportunity to address some of the major pressures and issues facing the Council, particularly on Residual Waste Treatment, Wigan Schools for the Future, the Joint Service Centre, Pay and Rewards and Affordable Housing.

## Information from Statement and Summary of Accounts 2008-09

### What did we spend? - The cost of Council Services

The cost of running our services between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009 is shown in our Income and Expenditure Account. The account also shows where the money came from to finance those costs, along with any surplus at the year end. The major items included within Effective Governance are those associated with the democratic process together with the cost of local tax administration.

	2008/09	2008/09	2008/09
	Gross	Gross	Net
	Expenditure	Income	Expenditure
	£'000m	£'000m	£'000m
<b>Expenditure On Services</b>			
Adult Social Care	121.2	49.0	72.2
Children's & Education Services	321.8	247.5	74.3
Cultural, Environmental, Regulatory & Planning Services	76.3	20.1	56.2
Effective Governance & Central Services	58.6	29.3	29.3
Highways & Transport Services	44.6	10.1	34.5
Housing Services	177.1	147.7	29.4
<b>Net Cost Of Services</b>	<b>799.6</b>	<b>503.7</b>	<b>295.9</b>
<b>Other Operating Income &amp; Expenditure</b>			<b>-57.0</b>
<b>Total Net Cost of Services</b>			<b>238.9</b>

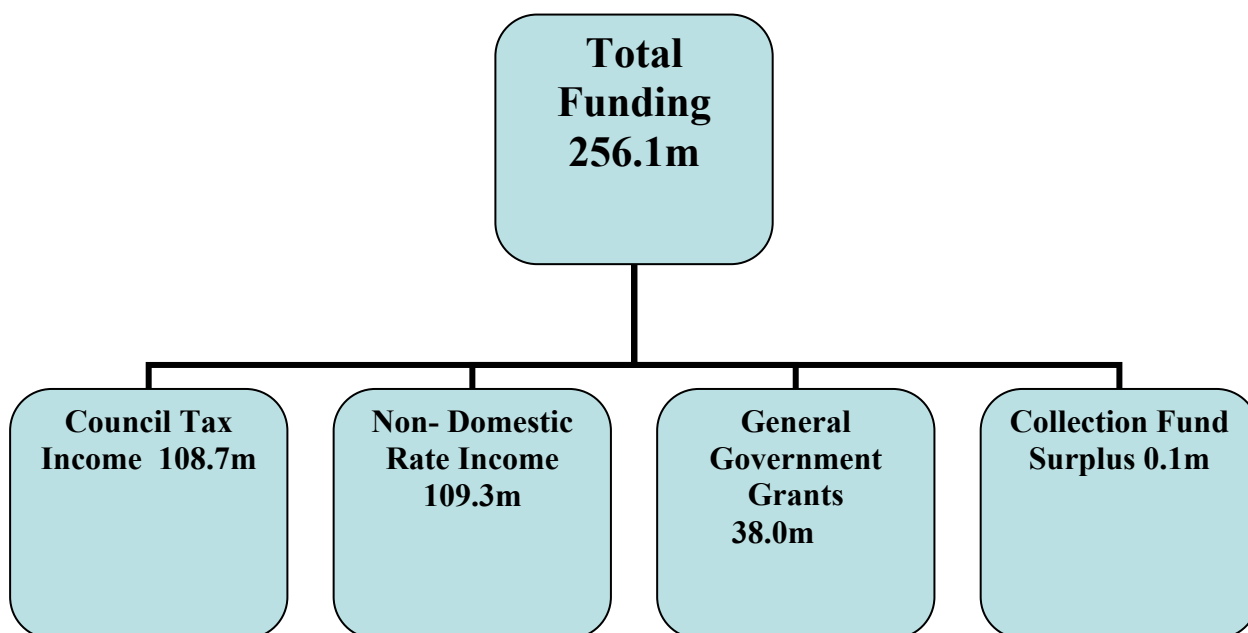
### Where did the money come from?

Wigan Council received funding from a number of different sources in 2008/09. The main ones being:

**Council Tax**—money paid by residents as a local taxation.

**National Non-Domestic Rates**—business rates set by and paid to the government. An amount based on population is then paid back to Wigan.

**Revenue Support Grant**—a government grant paid to councils from national taxation to provide funding to operate local services.



### The Balance Sheet - What we owe and own

<b>As at 31st March 2009</b>	<b>£m's</b>
Land, Buildings, Equipment & Other Assets owned by the Council	1,437.2
Stock	1.2
Money Owed to the Council	89.2
Cash at Bank	12.2
Money Owed by the Council within the next year	-79.9
Money Owed by the Council after one year	-741.2
	<b>718.7</b>
<b>Supported by:</b>	
Non Useable Reserves distribution	638.9
Useable Reserves	79.8
	<b>718.7</b>

## **The Balance Sheet**

This shows what the Council owns, is owed, what it owes and the Capital funding as at 31st March 2009.

Money owed by the Council after 1 year includes the estimated value of future pension payments to staff, which is matched elsewhere in the balance sheet and does not impact upon the level of Council Tax.

The net worth of the Council as at 31 March 2009 was £718.7 million.

Reserves are amounts set aside for a specific purpose in one year and carried forward to meet expenditure in future years. The Council maintains a prudent level of reserves to meet legislative duties.

## **Capital Spending**

### **What is Capital Spending?**

Capital spending (expenditure) represents money spent by the Council to purchase, upgrade or improve assets such as buildings and roads. The distinction from revenue expenditure is that the Council and its residents essentially receive the benefit from capital expenditure over a longer period of time.

### **How much did we spend?**

The Council spent over £88 million on its capital programme in 2008/09. The programme underpins the Council's overall vision and objectives, providing for investment in long term assets which are used to deliver the Council's services.

The largest spending areas were:

- The continuing Wigan and Leigh Housing (WALH) Programme of (£15.5m) to renovate the Council's housing stock to the Government's decency standard.
- The Children and Young Persons programme of expenditure (£29.7m) on school buildings including the pre school Surestart projects.
- The Leigh Sports Village project (£6.5m)

The Council's other major investment areas were highways improvements and maintenance (£8.4m), aids and adaptations for disabled persons (£3.3m), Bickershaw Colliery reclamation (£1.4m) and a programme of capital repairs to maintain the fabric of Council buildings (£2.2m).

### Where did the capital income come from?

The majority of the money £88.4m spent on capital came from Government grants and contributions £65.7m. Other sources of funding include Capital Receipts £6m, £14.3m borrowing and operating leases £2.4m.

### Financial Forecast -3 Year Budget Plan

The Council has an excellent reputation for the management of its funds and is regarded as a high performing low spending Authority. The Council operates a 3 year budget planning process and details of the proposed budgets for the financial years 2009/10 - 2011/12 are shown below.

The Council considers control of the budgets to be critical to the management of the overall finances of the Council and this process is underpinned by the submission of regular monitoring reports which allows for the early recognition of budgetary problems and corrective action to mitigate any identified overspends.

The Council spends most of its money maintaining services, premises, transport, benefits to residents and the payment of salaries and wages to staff. The tables below show where the council money comes from and where the money goes:

<b>Where the money comes from</b>	<b>2009/10 £'m</b>	<b>2010/11 £'m</b>	<b>2011/12 £'m</b>
Council Tax Income	110.9	113.1	115.3
Non-Domestic Rate and Revenue Support Grant Income	129.0	133.1	136.4
Precept Income for Fire and Police Services	17.9	19.1	20.1
Collection Fund Surplus	0.0	0.0	0.0
	<b>257.8</b>	<b>265.3</b>	<b>271.8</b>

<b>Where the money goes</b>	<b>2009/10 £'m</b>	<b>2010/11 £'m</b>	<b>2011/12 £'m</b>
Council Services	220.1	225.6	230.2
GM Passenger Transport	19.6	20.4	21.3
GM Fire & Rescue Authority	5.0	5.2	5.5
GM Police Authority	12.9	13.9	14.6
Shevington Parish and Haigh Parish	0.1	0.1	0.1
Environment Agency Flood Defence	0.1	0.1	0.1
	<b>257.8</b>	<b>265.3</b>	<b>271.8</b>

## What you get for £895 - Band A Council Tax 2009/10

- **£245** - Day centres, support for disabled and vulnerable adults such as home helps
  - **£193\*** - Schools, teachers, caring for children and youth services
  - **£147** - Roads and pavements, bins, street lights, recycling, countryside improvements
  - **£45** - Police
  - **£76** - Libraries, sports centres, swimming, parks, play areas, cemeteries, economic development
  - **£68** - Buses and local trains
- 
- **£57** - Support services such as legal and financial
  - **£17** - Fire service
  - **£28** - CCTV, tackling anti social behaviour
  - **£19** - Financing major projects, interest charges, debt management

\*Please note - this figure doesn't include the money we get from government grant.