



Acton Community Council Annual Report 2023/24

This Report has been prepared to comply with the requirements of Section 52 of The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, which requires community councils to prepare and publish an annual report (as soon as is reasonably practicable after the end of each financial year), detailing the council's priorities, activities and achievements over the previous year. As the Council's Expenditure levels over the last two years has been over the £200,000 threshold, the Council is also combining and incorporating its duty under the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 into this Report to demonstrate how the Council contributes to the objectives of this legislation.

1 INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNCIL

1.1 The administration of Acton Community Council is carried out by the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer assisted by an Administrative Assistant, both of whom work on a part-time basis.

The Council consists of six wards and has three standing Committees. The table below, as of the Annual General Meeting held on 16 May 2023, details the elected representatives and their Role within the Council and membership of those Committees.

WARD	COUNCILLOR	ROLE	MEMBERS			REPRESENTATIVES	
			Planning Committee	Staffing Committee	Youth Committee	Little Acton Centre	Acton Park Playground
Acton Central	Corin Jarvis	Member	Y		Y		
Acton Central	Vacancy	Member					
Acton Park	Phil Lloyd	Member	Y		Y		
Acton Park	Becca Martin	Member		Y			
Borras Park	Caroline Bettley	Member		Y	Y		
Borras Park	Karen Speirs	Member					
Borras Park	Debbie Wallice	Member					
Little Acton	Bill Baldwin	Member				Y	
Little Acton	Andy Gallanders	Member			Y	Y	
Little Acton	Kevin Roberts	Chair	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Maesydre	Salli Edwards	Member	Y				
Maesydre	Holly Hewitt	Member	Y		Y		
Rhosnesni	Mike Davies	Member		Y			
Rhosnesni	Anne Evans	Member	Y	Y	Y		
Rhosnesni	Ralph Hardy	Vice Chair	Y	Y	Y		
Rhosnesni	Liz Painter	Member					
Staff	Carole Roberts	Clerk & RFO					
Staff	Michelle Williams	Admin Asst.					

1.2 FINANCE

Information from the Annual Return submitted for Audit for the year end account balances for 2023/24 are summarised below:

The amount of £'s reserves brought forward from 2022/23 is	£247,196
Reserve balances carried forward at the end of 2023/24 is	£204,208
Balance for 2023/24 produced a decrease in the General fund balances of	-£42,988
Income - Precept Level (The Council kept the Precept at £169,000 for the fourth year using general fund balance reserves to meet the shortfall)	£169,000
Income – Other	£11,589
Total income	£180,589
Expenditure – Staffing Costs	£49,715
Expenditure – Other	£174,042
Total expenditure	£223,757

1.3 POLICIES AND GOVERNANCE PROTOCOLS

The Council is required to have adequate Governance and Policy arrangements in place. It has published its Standing orders, Financial Regulations and Code of Conduct on its website. They can be viewed by following this hyperlink: [Policies and other Governance documents](#).

During the year, the Council continued to review its principal Governance documents and re-adopted them at its meetings in May 2023, July 2023 and September 2023:-

ADOPTED JANUARY 2019:

1. Document Retention Policy and Schedule
2. Data Protection and Information Security Policy
3. Privacy Notices – General, Website and Member/Officer
4. Internet, email and social media policy
5. Model Publication Scheme (FOI)
6. Data Breach Notification Policy
7. Subject access policy and template response letters.
8. Member Officer Protocol
9. Grievance Procedure

ADOPTED APRIL 2021

10. Disciplinary and Grievance Arrangements
11. Disciplinary Policy
12. Local Resolution Protocol for Community and Town Councils- Complaints Procedure

ADOPTED MARCH 2023

13. Annual Leave Policy
14. Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy
15. Data Protection Policy
16. Equality Diversity Policy
17. Flexible Working Policy
18. Lone Working Policy

19. Maternity Leave and Pay Policy
20. Paternity Leave and Pay Policy
21. Performance Improvement Policy and Procedure
22. Sickness Absence Policy
23. Whistleblowing Policy

STAFFING RELATED POLICIES ADOPTED JULY 2023

24. Adoption and Paternity Policy
25. Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy
26. Appraisal Scheme & Performance review Policy
27. Health and Safety at Work Policy
28. Recruitment and selection Policy
29. Shared Parental Leave Policy
30. Stress Management Policy
31. Time off in Lieu Policy.

ADOPTED SEPTEMBER 2023

32. Revised Standing Orders

2 TRAINING PLANS

All Community Councillors attend an induction Training Course at the beginning of their service. They have access to all Planning Aid Wales training and a broad range of training options delivered by One Voice Wales. The Council undertakes annual assessment of Councillors' training attended and will adapt and develop its formal Training Plan going forwards.

A copy of the 2022-27 Training Plan is attached at Appendix 1 to this Annual Report.

3 Activities and Achievements

3.1 Objectives

Guidance tells us that it will be good practice for the Council's Annual Report to show how the work undertaken, in the past year and going forward, incorporates the five elements or principles set out in the "Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015". These are; Long Term, Integration, Involvement, Collaboration and Prevention.

In its "Annual Report 2022/23", the Council published a list of "Priorities Going Forward". The following details progress made, and other specific achievements made within the 2023/24 financial year. Section 3.2 sets out that review.

Section 3.3 lists Council Priorities for the coming financial year 2024/25. These priorities embrace the "Well-being Principles" and "Power of Wellbeing"

The Welsh Government recognised the current challenges facing Welsh communities that will impact on the future generations and established, legally binding goals for all public bodies to work towards. In the Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 it sets out seven key objectives to work towards.

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

The Act sets out how Local Authorities, the Public Health Board and a range of other public sector bodies must work to contribute to achieving the seven goals. The local Council then develops a five year plan with their top six priorities that they are working towards over a five year period.

Because Acton Community Council is a larger Community Council with income and expenditure over £200,000 it must contribute to the Objectives of Wrexham County Borough Council Well Being Plan 2023-28.

WCBC well-being priorities are:

- Delivering efficient Streetscene services and decarbonising our environment.
- Developing our economy.
- Ensuring Wrexham is a fair and safe place.
- Improving education and learning.
- Promoting health and well-being (with a focus on social services and good mental health).
- Supporting a highly skilled and engaged workforce, focussed on delivering services.

This report sets out how Acton Community Council has, and continues to work towards the Wales wide and Wrexham objectives in their work.

Acton Community Council Activities matrix 2023 - 2024

The following table maps the activities of Acton Community Council against the well-being which often overlap.

Prosperous 1	Resilient 2	Healthier 3	More Equal 4	Cohesive 5	Culture 6	Globally Responsive 7
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		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Play provision							
2.	Advice Service- Outreach							
3.	Maintenance and repair of public play provision							
4.	Youth Outreach work							
5.	Ranger Acton Park							
6.	Events Acton Park							
7.	Financial Assistance							
8.	Community Agent							
9.	Little Acton Community Centre							
10.	Power House							
11.	School Crossing Patrols							
11.	Bio Diversity / Conservation S6 duty							
12.	Crime Prevention							
13.	Provision of Defibrillators							
14.	Jeffreys Road Fencing							
15.	Electronic Speed Boards							

3.2 UPDATE AND REVIEW OF 2023/24 PRIORITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

3.2.1 – Jeffreys Road Fencing

This project had long been reported as the existing section of dilapidated metal fencing on Jeffreys Road was in need to repair and repainting. Local residents with the support of the Local Member were keen to have this brought to a conclusion.

After consultation with Officers of Wrexham County Borough Council (Wcbc) (the owners), they agreed to facilitate the renovation of the fencing by providing their list of approved providers which Acton CC were able to draw upon. Following a tender process a suitable contractor was appointed and the work was undertaken. Wcbc Officers provided an element of project management including

health and safety work protocols. The renovation works were successfully and satisfactorily completed in the Autumn of 2023.

3.2.2 – Section 137 Grants

The Chair is keen to develop the Section 137 grants element of our budget to provide annual support to local groups who are within the Acton Community Council area and who struggle for financial support. There are several groups that without Council support would not be in existence.

The Council continues to encourage local groups to apply for grant support, but more work needs to be undertaken in this area to encourage groups to make regular applications. During 2023/24 the following organisations applied for and received grants:

Organisation	Grant Amount
1. Wrexham Allotments and Leisure Gardeners Association	£200.00
2. Wrexham Futsal Club	£500.00
3. Wrexham Sounds Ltd	£250.00
4. SSAFA Wales	£200.00
5. Nightingale House Hospice	£500.00
6. Gate Hangs High Bowling Club	£500.00
7. Cerebral Palsy Cymru	£200.00
8. Wrexham Boxing Club	£500.00
9. KWDF Academy	£2000.00
10. Royal British Legion	£100.00
11. NW Nappy Collective CIC	£100.00
12. Acton Rainbows	£500.00
13. Urdd Fund for all	£200.00
14. Miners Rescue Project	£500.00
15. Wrexham National Eisteddfod 2025	£500.00
Total for 2023/24	£6,750.00

3.2.3 – Acton Park Playground

The Council provides funding to ensure the continued existence of three play areas owned and managed by Wrexham CBC within the Acton Community.

Acton CC has established a Member Task and Finish Group which amongst other tasks such as looking at the three existing play areas, has also considered and is progressing the concept of providing a new playground within Acton Park.

Members of the group held initial site meetings with Wcbc Officers to discuss proposals and seek their views about the practicality of Council looking to build a new playground in a different area of the park and enquire as to whether those proposals might be acceptable to Wcbc.



Figure 1: Acton Park Play area



The Group's initial proposals received a good hearing with Wcbc Officers who gave a positive response to the enquiry. The Task group have yet to present a full report to the Council but the New Playground will be a central project for 2024/25 going forward.

3.2.4 – Little Acton Community Centre

Some time ago initial discussions were held with Wrexham CBC about the future ownership, costing and sustainability of the Centre. The Council should seek to progress those discussions to a point whereby the future of the Centre can be determined going forward. The Community Council continues to fund the running costs of the Centre and is setting money aside in earmarked reserves to be able to carry out refurbishment to the Centre once a Heads of Terms agreement is reached.



Little progress has been made, but this topic will be carried forward into the 2024/25 as a priority.

3.2.5 – Christmas Celebrations

A number of Members have suggested that in order to support resident's wellbeing and in common with some other local Community Councils, Acton Council give consideration to the placing and funding of Christmas Trees and Lighting at various places within the area.

Limited progress has been made on this item; however Council has liaised with neighbouring Rhosddu Community Council and agreed a mutual way forward planning for some limited Xmas decorations on Chester Road. This will be progressed in 2024/25.

3.2.6 – To monitor and reduce Speeding within the Community

To enhance the safety of residents, consider the installation of further Electronic Speed Boards at strategic locations within the area. Suggestions include Jeffery's Road.

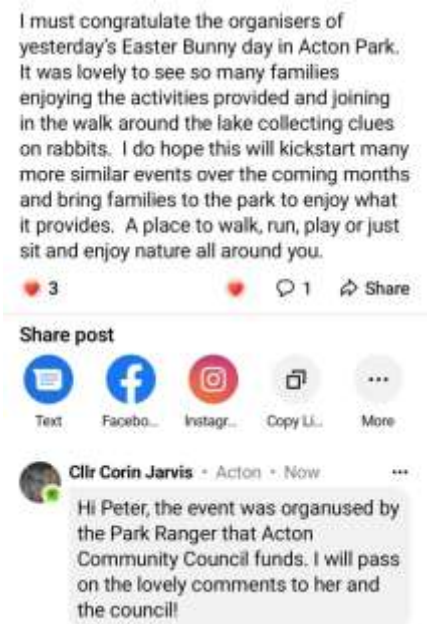
The Council liaised with neighbouring Rhosddu Community Council about vehicles' speeding on Chester Road, the main road into Wrexham centre. The Chester Road is in effect the boundary between our two Councils so working in partnership, both Councils committed to and agreed to the installation of solar powered, radar signs on the main road. Whilst it is difficult to constantly monitor without Police speed enforcement, it is felt that the signs have resulted in a general reduction in vehicle speed on the road.

The outcomes on average speed following the introduction of a 20mph speed limit is being assessed before progressing this priority further.

3.2.7 – Park Ranger

The Council continues to fund the Park Ranger role. In 2023/24 Council further recognised the great work undertaken by the Ranger and her volunteers and decided to extend its funding of the Park Ranger to an annual full time working basis.

In addition to her regular work, the Ranger has established a regular volunteer group who meet on a weekly basis to undertake aspects of park maintenance. It should also be noted that the Ranger has increased the number of special events to include Halloween and Christmas trails, a Dog Show and other activities. All these events have been very well attended. In the case of the recent dog show, there were 600+ attendees and some 275 entrants to the various categories. The 2024 Easter event was very well received and had very positive feedback from attendees.



The Ranger has also produced several reports on her activities in the Park which have been published on the Council's website. The latest Report can be viewed by clicking this hyperlink here: <https://www.actoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk/UserFiles/Files/Other/181292-10.1 Seasonal Report - Acton Park Oct 23 - March 24..pdf>

3.2.8 – Maesydre Power House



The Council purchased this unusual building in 1993 to prevent the then Manweb from removing the mock Tudor second floor. This is the only building the Council owns. It is structurally sound and the Council must keep the building in a good state of repair. Work is planned to carry out repairs and repainting to protect the external façade from wind and weather damage.

In 2023/24 the Council engaged Chambers Conversation to provide it with professional advice about the condition of the building and the works that were required to keep it wind and water tight and safe given its location at the junction of Plas Gwyn. The Consultant was then engaged to prepare a schedule of works and manage tender submissions (providing quality and price assessments) for the external repairs and redecoration work and in collaboration with the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer, appoint a Contractor. The Consultant was further engaged to project manage and inspect the works to completion.

The work was satisfactorily completed in the autumn of 2023. The Maesydre Powerhouse was used a location for the Christmas Give to shine and residents were invited to view the refurbished internal first floor of the building.

3.3 PRIORITIES FOR 2024/25 GOING FORWARD

The following sections detail those topics that Council regards as priorities for 2024/25. They are not listed in any priority order.

The Council has taken these priorities into consideration when setting its 2024/25 precept. For openness and transparency a copy of the Council's budget for 2023/24 and 2024/25 is set out in Appendix 2 below:

3.3.1 – Acton Park Playground/ Aran Road Play area

The Council at its April 2024 meeting agreed that the new Acton Park Playground and Aran Road play area refurbishment should be combined into one project.

In respect of the Acton Play Playground and building upon the meetings held with Wcbc Officers during 2023/24, it is proposed to actively pursue the necessary formal permissions from Wcbc to proceed with establishing a new playground at Acton Park.

Wcbc as the owner of Acton Park, has notified the Council of the process that will have to be adhered to in order to achieve this priority. The Council will as part of the process look at a number of Playground designers / Contractors with a view to establishing "bold park cost estimates". Wcbc have indicated that they will facilitate the tender process through its procurement framework and carry out the Statutory Play requirement consultation. This research by the Council will inform how much monies will be required and assist when researching and / or applying for external grant monies

In respect of the Aran Road Play area, it is now coming to the end of its useful life and whilst still receiving satisfactory safety inspections, the Council wishes to commence the process of preparing for its replacement.

There are monies amounting to £76,869.58 within the Council's earmarked reserves for playground equipment and replacement. However the Council recognises that it will need to investigate possible grant funding streams, e.g. National Lottery, Welsh Assembly grants, to bring this combined project about. This project is a key objective with measurable achievements going forward.

3.3.2 – Little Acton Community Centre

It is believed that Wcbc will, at a point in time, look to dispose of the Centre as part of its asset transfer and cost reductions. This implies that the Centre will either be closed and possibly be demolished or possibly asset transferred to the Community Council, as has happened previously with other Community Centres.

The Council funds the running costs of the Centre to ensure it remains open. It is currently run by a voluntary Group. There is £9,210 provision in the budget for this and any savings are added annually to the £ 38,125.89 earmarked reserve to refurbish the Centre



Acton CC has a Member task and finish group to look at options for retaining and improving the Community Centre and Grant funding options. The task group have previously arranged a building condition survey and need to complete a public consultation exercise and compile revenue and capital cost estimates and a business plan with proposed refurbishment for the successful retention and running of the Centre as a community facility.

Investigation work will be undertaken to establish whether Asset Transfer to Acton Community Council would be viable. It will be necessary to seek appropriate independent legal advice. Assuming that the Centre would be viable and asset transfer is possible, The Council will after receipt of updated heads of Terms and long-term agreement look to conclude discussions with Wcbc to establish a positive way forward.

3.3.3 – Christmas Celebrations

The Council will continue to liaise with neighbouring Rhosddu Community Council (and other Community Councils) upon providing Christmas lighting. There is a potential saving to be made by having a joint Council approach to progressing this topic. It has been agreed in principle that, for a minimal cost, both Councils will undertake lamppost condition surveys on Chester Road. This will inform Council about the scope and cost of works and equipment before further decisions can be sanctioned.

Acton Council will also give consideration to the placing and funding of Christmas Trees and Lighting at various places within the area. Expenditure for this provision would be from the Council's

3.3.4 – Service level agreement commitments

The Council has a number of long term agreements to meet some of its commitment to provide local Services to its residents. They are listed below

1.Young persons projects - £48,230

to include a free weekly Acton Youth Club at Acton Community Resource Centre; a play sufficiency project at Little Acton and £5,000 provision for funding Grants to Youth organisations through the Youth Committee

2.Seasonal Ranger at Acton Park - £38,573

To include a range of events throughout the year provided by a Park Ranger that is now funded by the Council on an annual full time basis

3.Citizens Advice Bureau Outreach Worker - £10,099

This provides for outreach work at the Acton community Resource Centre each Wednesday morning and provision for additional/follow up casework

4. School Crossing Patrols - £ 25,800

This provides for patrols at Acton Park, Barkers Lane, Borrass Park, Schools and at Dean Road. Without the Council's funding these patrols would cease. The Council in view of the surveys and high volume of Traffic is funding these posts.

3.3.5 Other projects

The Council has set aside three £5,000 budget provisions for:

- Community Streetscene expenditure,
- Crime prevention projects (which include the funding of the CCTV camera on Penymaes Avenue)
- Community initiatives fund. (which include spending for replacement pads for the Council's six Defibrillators). For information the defibrillators the Council has provided are located at :
 - Acton Community Resource Centre
 - Barkers Lane School
 - Cunliffe Arms
 - Little Acton Community Centre
 - Maesydre Power House
 - Vic Fit Gym Borrass Shops



ACTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

TRAINING PLAN FOR 2022-27

This training plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 67 of the 2021 Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

Introduction

- This training plan has been prepared based on the guidance issued by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks.
- Councillor roles and employee roles have been assessed by reference to a set of core competencies for each role. This assessment has enabled the Council to prioritise its resources to enable all roles within the Council to be supported by a well thought approach to its training and development needs.
- The commitment contained in this training plan will assist the Council to enhance its approach to the delivery of high-quality services to its community.
- The plan will be reviewed at least on an annual basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and accounts for the changing needs of councillors and employees as well as any turnover of councillors or employees.

The Training Plan

- One Voice Wales (OVW) provides a monthly training programme which the Clerk forwards via email to all Councillors. Councillors are asked to identify their training needs and to contact the Clerk to book the training event(s)
- The Clerk will also forward other training opportunities as they become available for Councillors. However, Councillors may identify other training opportunities which will be considered carefully by the Council based on relevance and cost.
- Councils should ensure that Councillors and Staff have sufficient skills and understanding in all key areas. These include Induction for Councillors; the Code of Conduct for Members of Local Authorities in Wales; Financial Management and Governance for Councillors and the Society of Local Council Clerk (SLCC) Certificate in Local Council Administration (CILCA) for the Clerk

Course	Required	Timescale
Code of Conduct	All Councillors/Clerk	Within 6 months of being elected
Understanding the Law	All Councillors	Within 6 months of being elected
Chairing Skills	All Chairs/Vice Chairs	Within 6 months of being elected
The Council Meeting	All Councillors/Clerk/Admin Asst	Within 6 months of being elected
The Council	All Councillors/Clerk/Admin Asst	Once in the Council Term
The Councillor	All Councillors/Clerk/Admin Asst	Once in the Council Term
Effective Staff Management	All Members of the Staffing Committee	Within 6 months of being elected
The Council as an Employer	All Members of the Staffing Committee	Within 6 months of being elected
Introduction to Community Engagement	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Community Engagement Part 2	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Health & Safety	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Creating a Community Plan	Two Councillors	Once during the Council Term
Information Management	Two Councillors/Clerk/Admin Asst	Once during the Council term
Equality & Diversity	Two Councillors	Once during the Council term
Mediation and Conciliation	Two Councillors/Clerk	Once during the Council term
Planning	Two Councillors	Once during the Council term
Respect & Civility	All Councillors/Clerk/Admin Asst	Once during the Council term

Include below any specific comments about how the training will be arranged or how other development needs will be addressed through other methods;

- Code of Conduct is to meet requirements of Council's Code of Conduct whereby each Councillor is to attend one training session on the Code in each electoral term.
- A Survey has been completed in respect of past and future training needs.
- The Clerk, and the Administration Assistant where appropriate, to attend SLCC branch meetings, SLCC conferences and SLCC/OVW Training (Wales) to ensure their knowledge remains up to date and as part of their Continuing Professional Development.
- The Clerk and the Administration Assistant to complete the ILCA qualification.
- Cyber Security online courses to be arranged for all Councillors who wish to attend, and the Clerk and Administration Assistant.
- Where appropriate and more cost effective, group training to be organised on a face to face basis, rather than individual online training.

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Acton Community Council

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Forward Budget Detail - By Centre

	Current Year Budget	Next Year Budget	Year 2 Budget	Year 3 Budget	Year 4 Budget	Year 5 Budget
100 General Administration						
4000 Bank Charges & Fees	120	130	0	0	0	0
4100 Employer's Costs	50,000	53,350	0	0	0	0
4103 Payroll Admin Charge	480	480	0	0	0	0
4105 Clerk's Expenses	2,370	2,370	0	0	0	0
4110 Equipment	2,000	2,000	0	0	0	0
4111 Legal / Translation	3,880	3,880	0	0	0	0
4115 Chain Plaque	25	25	0	0	0	0
4116 Replenish Chairs Charity A/c	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0
4120 Annual Subscriptions	2,545	2,715	0	0	0	0
4125 Insurance	1,980	2,113	0	0	0	0
4130 Elections	2,000	2,000	0	0	0	0
4135 Audit Fees	1,500	2,850	0	0	0	0
4140 Donations (S137)	10,000	12,500	0	0	0	0
4145 Conference fees/expenses	1,500	1,500	0	0	0	0
4150 Advertising	500	500	0	0	0	0
4155 Training - Staff	1,500	1,500	0	0	0	0
4160 Training - Members	3,840	3,840	0	0	0	0
4161 Members Remuneration	3,400	3,400	0	0	0	0
4165 Website/Data Protection	1,500	1,500	0	0	0	0
Total Overhead Expenditure	90,140	97,653	0	0	0	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(90,140)	(97,653)	0	0	0	0
200 Service level & Licence Agreem						
4205 Young Person Projects	35,898	48,230	0	0	0	0
4210 Seasonal Ranger Acton Park	36,609	38,573	0	0	0	0
4215 CAB Outreach Worker-ACAS	7,480	10,099	0	0	0	0
4220 Maesydre Power House	1,600	1,600	0	0	0	0
4225 Acton Playground Provision	16,515	16,515	0	0	0	0
4230 School Crossing Patrols	24,178	25,800	0	0	0	0
Total Overhead Expenditure	122,280	140,817	0	0	0	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(122,280)	(140,817)	0	0	0	0
300 Other Projects						
4300 Little Acton Community Centre	8,630	9,210	0	0	0	0
4305 Community Streetscene	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	0
4310 Crime Prevention Projects	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	0
4320 Community Initiatives Fund	5,000	5,000	0	0	0	0
Total Overhead Expenditure	23,630	24,210	0	0	0	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(23,630)	(24,210)	0	0	0	0
Total Budget Income	0	0	0	0	0	0
Expenditure	236,050	262,880	0	0	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(236,050)	(262,680)	0	0	0	0

