

**To: Community and Leisure Committee – 8 January 2002**

**Agenda Item:**

**Title: Budgets and Service Plans 2002-03**

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### **Summary**

1. This report presents the draft revenue estimates for final consideration by this Committee. The detailed figures attached now include saving approved at the last meeting on 30 October, internal charges and developments since 30 October. The figures are subject to final checks for consistency and accuracy and do not include any new growth or savings items, the implications of any new capital programme items or the impact on internal charges of any growth or savings. The Committee is asked to reconsider these estimates including identifying further savings before their inclusion in the overall budget report to the meeting of the Resources Committee on 24 January 2002. Also included are the key points of the Service Plan for 2002-03.

### **Background**

2. At its meeting on 30 October 2001 this Committee considered its draft revenue estimates for the first time. The detailed figures provided at that stage included all direct costs and were presented in the context of the target cash limits and Policy Priorities approved by the Council on 16 October 2001.
3. The Committee resolved:

that the Administration's proposals for savings (except that related to savings under Emergency Planning - Staffing Changes) be approved with the draft net direct cost budgets, and that officers be instructed to prepare service plans and full budgets for 2002-03 in the light of these decisions for consideration at the next cycle of committee meetings.

A full list of the Administration's savings proposals is attached at Appendix 1

### **Developments Since 30 October**

4. On 11 December, the Council resolved that further savings be sought from Committees to assist in achieving the 2½% target for the 2002-03 Council Tax Increase.
5. The Resources Committee on 15 November approved the use of £41,000 from Reserves to fund PFI consultancy costs. This is reflected in detailed 2001-02 Revised Estimates attached. Also the early retirement of the Council's Community Safety and Emergency Planning Officer was confirmed. This reinstated into the budget the £12,000 savings.
6. The Council was not successful with its tender to continue providing a Meals on Wheels service within the District. The net costs in the 2002-03 estimates

for this Committee will increase by £25,030 as a result and are reflected in the detailed figures attached.

7. A report elsewhere on this agenda on the Best Value Review of Community Safety and Emergency Planning proposes a staffing structure that produces a small saving subject to job evaluations for two posts. Therefore most of the £12,000 savings previously identified and included in the savings proposals will not now be achieved. The Council resolution expects that the Committee should therefore consider alternative savings proposals to ensure that its overall direct costs budget remains within the target level.
8. No additional savings or growth items, other than additional unquantified income from the use of the day centre kitchens by the WRVS (see agenda item 5 on this agenda), have been identified at this stage.

### **Summary of the Current 2002-03 Budget Position**

9. The last budget report to this Committee demonstrated that total direct costs were some £8,000 less than the target cash limit. The loss of the Meals on Wheels contract (£25,000) and the proposals regarding the Emergency Planning service (£12,000) will move this position to a direct cost total that is £29,000 above the target cash limit. Therefore the Committee is requested to identify further savings to cover this shortfall.

### **Service Plan**

10. The key work areas during 2002-03 result from a number of agreed Council strategies, e.g. Leisure and Cultural Strategy, the Community Safety Policy, the Parking Strategy and the Museum Service Policy. In addition, the Council has some statutory undertakings in relation to the Crime and Disorder Act and the Disability Discrimination Act. The following objectives will be pursued in relation to the strategies and policies:
  - Undertake a Best Value Review of Leisure and the Museum Services
  - Implement the actions associated with the Community Safety, Emergency Planning and Drug Prevention Best Value Review.
  - Manage the implementation of the PFI Leisure Centres project.
  - Address disability issues at key facilities, including the TIC and Lord Butler Leisure Centre.
  - Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of CCTV, including the use of mobile cameras.
  - Monitor and evaluate the progress of the first tranche of Essex local authorities introducing Decriminalisation.
  - Encourage the Development of the Sports, Arts, People with Disabilities and Tourism Forums.
  - Utilise a variety of venues and facilities in the District to provide a programme of arts activities, e.g. Audley End House, daycentres etc.

## **The Next Step**

11. The budgets approved by this Committee will be summarised with the budgets of the other Committees in a report to the Resources Committee. This report will include "below the line" items such as investment income and pension backdating costs. It will also make recommendations to the Council regarding the Council Tax. However, an indicative estimate is that even with a 6% Council Tax increase there would still be an overall budget shortfall of £59,000 not including any growth items or the additional items in paragraph 9.

## **Conclusion**

12. This is the final opportunity for this Committee to consider these draft revenue estimates that now include everything identified to date. It is

RECOMMENDED that the Committee reconsider the draft revenue estimates including identifying further savings before recommending them for inclusion in the overall budget report to the Resources Committee meeting on 24 January 2002.