

**Committee:** Community and Leisure  
**Date:** 7 January 2003  
**Agenda Item No:** 6  
**Title:** Budgets and Service Plans 2003-04  
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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 internal charges, savings and growth items approved at the previous meeting on 5 November 2002, and developments since 5 November. The figures are subject to final checks for consistency and accuracy and do not include any further growth or savings, 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 Resources Committee on 23 January 2003. Also included are the key points of the Service Plan for 2003-04

### **Background**

- 2 At its meeting on 5 November 2002 this Committee considered its draft 2003-04 revenue estimates for the first time. The detailed figures provided at that stage included direct costs only i.e. excluding internal charges. The Committee was requested to consider its budgets in the light of the projected direct cost total that it approved at its meeting on 3 September 2002 together with a further savings target of £120,000 approved by Council on 22 October 2002.
- 3 The figures presented to the Committee on 5 November exceeded the total projected in September by some £23,000 – a margin that increased to £143,000 when the £120,000 savings target was taken into account. Appendix BS09 included a list of possible savings totalling £131,200 leaving a shortfall of about £12,000.
- 4 After considering the report and the possible savings it was resolved that:
  - The committee notes that its target had not yet been met

- The possible savings in Appendix BS09 be approved with the exception of grants. In addition it was agreed that annual grants totalling £3,250 be available as requested, for a further three years for Great Dunmow Museum and Maltings Preservation Trust and that the £30,000 sponsorship savings being built into projections should be reduced to £10,000.
  - In the light of these decisions, service plans for 2003/04 and full budgets be prepared by officers for consideration at the next cycle of meetings.
  - The feasibility of partnership arrangements with Social Services and the Primary Care Trust as well as other proposals for changes to the various grants schemes be considered by Scrutiny Committee in March 2003 and any recommendations be made to this Committee.
5. These decisions left the Committee's 2003/04 direct cost budget at £1,180,000 – some £160,000 above the targeted £1,020,000.

#### **Developments Since 5 November**

6. At its meeting on 21 November the Resources Committee recommended that further savings and additional income be sought from the Environment and Transport and Community and Leisure Committees in order to meet their cash savings targets agreed at the meeting of the Council on 22 October 2002, to help to achieve the Council's agreed priority of keeping the increase of Council Tax at a sustainable level. The Resources Committee also recommended that before the next Community and Leisure Committee meeting officers continue to review the financial implications of the Community and Leisure Best Value Review and information on countryside leisure. Members will consider these items in the context of the separate report on the Best Value Review elsewhere on the agenda.
7. These decisions were endorsed by the Council meeting on 17 December following consideration of the Director of Resources report.
8. The Council's overall 2003-04 budget position reported to the Resources Committee on 21 November identified just £29,000 as room for manoeuvre in the Council Tax setting process subject to the Local Government grant settlement. On 5 December the provisional settlement was announced and increased the sum available for manoeuvre to £74,000. This is however, still a shortfall of £144,000 compared with the overall total target to achieve a Council Tax increase of 2.5% approved by Council on 22 October
9. Essential work on a diseased tree will cost £5,000 in the current year and this sum has been added to the Revised Estimates previously approved.
10. As reported to the Resources Committee on 21 November an adjustment to the previously presented projections needed for Bridge End Gardens whilst neutral in its overall effect on the Council's budgets has amended this Committee's target by £44,000 to £1,064,000. The £44,000 added to the

base projection for this Committee will almost entirely be offset by reduced internal charges from the HRA.

### **Summary of the Current 2003-04 Budget Position**

11. No additional savings items have been identified and the Committee's direct cost budget remains at £1,180,000 or £116,000 above the Council approved target of £1,064,000.
12. Although at its meeting on 5 November the Committee did not recommend the adoption of possible savings in respect of grants, Members may wish to revisit this item in the light of the outstanding savings target approved by Council on 17 December. For information Appendix BS09 from the 5 November report is attached to this report – it includes fee increases in respect of Sports Development, Arts Development and Day Centres approved by this Committee on 5 November but also savings in Grants suggested by officers that were not approved. Alternatively, Members will need to examine other means of achieving the budget target. It is the officer's view that in order to get anywhere near the target savings of over £100,000 will require service cuts with the inevitable consequences.
13. Members are advised that the Leisure Officer is leaving the Council in January. Key responsibilities of the post relate to funding and grant advice to voluntary organisations, Leisure Centre monitoring and youth related work. In the context of the Best Value Review of Leisure and Cultural Services elsewhere on this agenda, officers will examine the structure of Community and Leisure in accordance with the specific recommendation in that report.

### **Service Plan**

14. The key work areas during 2003-04 result from a number of agreed Council strategies, Council Policy Priorities, the Best Value Performance Plan and statutory requirements.

The following objectives will be pursued in relation to the strategies and policies:

- Implementation of the Improvement Plan and Museum Action Plan resulting from the Best Value Review of Leisure and Cultural Services.
- Undertake a Best Value Review of Day Centre Services.
- Monitor the performance of the Leisure Centre Contractor to ensure the continued provision of quality leisure facilities and activities.
- Consider opportunities to combine relevant grants from partner organisations e.g. Primary Care Trust, Essex County Council to offer one scheme.
- Seek grants, sponsorship and partnership funding/resources towards/for projects and initiatives.
- Use the arts and events programme to promote short stay visits to the District.

- Progress the project to find a new off site Museum Resource Centre and investigate sources of funding.

### **The Next Step**

15. 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.

### **Conclusion**

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

RECOMMENDED that the Committee reconsider the draft revenue estimates including identifying the further savings required by the Council before recommending them for inclusion in the overall budget to the Resources Committee on 23 January 2003.

Background Papers: none