

**To: Environment and Transport Committee – 22 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 savings approved at the last meeting on 13 November, internal charges and developments since 13 November. 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 Plans for 2002-03.

### **Background**

2. At its meeting on 13 November 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, and the draft net direct cost budgets as presented at this meeting be approved.

Officers provide further information on the proposal to cut the budget for Travel Tokens for the next meeting.

Consideration be given to an additional growth item of up to £30,000 for possible measures to minimise flood risk and a report on this be requested for the next meeting.

Officers be directed to prepare service plans and full budgets for 2002-03 for consideration during the next cycle of committee meetings.

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

4. A separate report on the Close Gardens was also considered at this meeting. The Committee resolved that subject to a letter of intent being obtained from Saffron Walden Town Council regarding the future ownership and maintenance of the Gardens, works of £8,500 be funded in 2001-02 as a one off growth item from reserves. Saffron Walden Town Council's response is expected by this meeting.
5. As a background paper to the budget report the Committee was presented with a report to the Bridge End Gardens Working Party on the extension of the contract of the Gardener/Environmental Task Force Supervisor at Bridge End Gardens.

The report recommended that the post of Gardener/Environmental Task Force Supervisor be added to the draft estimates for 2002-03 for consideration by this Committee. Further information on this matter is provided at Appendix 2.

### **Developments Since 13 November**

6. 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.
7. The 2001-02 Revised Estimates now include £8,500 in respect of the Close Gardens.
8. Information on the Gardener/Environmental Task Force Supervisor's contract extension and Heritage Lottery funding is provided at Appendix 2. The additional net cost of £12,190 in 2002-03 is not included in the detailed figures and the Committee is requested to consider it as a growth item.
9. Further information on Travel Tokens and minimising flood risk is also provided at Appendix 2. The detailed figures attached retain the savings arising from discontinuing the Travel Token scheme and do not include any growth in respect of flood risk measures.
10. The Committee should note that the budgets for vehicle fuel were prepared on the basis of little or no price increase for next year, 2002-03. This was based on the prevailing situation at the time. Since then, indications are that significant price increases are a distinct possibility. Given the level of uncertainty, however, no change has been made to the budget figures previously presented.
11. No further savings or growth items have been identified at this stage.

### **Car Parking Charges**

12. The draft estimates include increased income from car parking charges of £81,000 as one of the Administration's savings proposals. It is proposed that the charges detailed in the table attached at Appendix 3 be implemented with effect from 1 April 2002. Members are requested to determine the revised charges.

### **Local Plan Inquiry**

13. It is anticipated that a public inquiry will be held in late 2002-03. The 2002-03 base budget includes provision of £25,000 and the remaining cost currently estimated at £95,000 is expected to be met from reserves. The projected costs and timings will be taken into account in a summary report to the Resources Committee.

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

14. The last budget report to this Committee demonstrated that total direct costs were some £20,000 more than the target cash limit; the position taking into account the Gardener's contract extension, if approved, will leave the net direct costs for this Committee in 2002-03 exceeding the target by £32,000 without including any other possible growth items of expenditure.

## Service Plan

15. The following are the main points from the 2002-03 Service Plans:

### Environmental Services

- Progress the contaminated land inspection strategy.
- Undertake a review of air quality in the district including work with others in respect of Stansted Airport and the Highways Agency.
- Review Street Cleansing standards as part of the Best Value Review.
- Participate in PSA, Challenge Fund and Essex En.Trust bids to expand recycling services and trial a green/kitchen waste kerbside scheme.

### Local Plans and Conservation

- Contribute towards the preparation of a Best Value Improvement Plan for the whole Planning Service.
- Prepare or and undertake the Local Plan Inquiry.
- Continue and enhance contributions to corporate initiatives and “cross cutting” issues, such as the Bridge End Gardens project and Community Planning.
- Provision of advice to the Development Control Service and the public.

### Amenities

- Manage the reintroduction of parking charges in Great Dunmow.
- Monitor and evaluate the progress of the first tranche of Essex local authorities introducing Decriminalisation.
- Advise on and consider the introduction of Residents Parking Schemes in other towns in the district.
- Monitor and evaluate the progress made by Uttlesford Community travel to provide the Hospital transport Scheme.
- Develop and manage, in partnership with Essex Transport Police, the “Responsible (motor cyclist) Rider” campaign.

## The Next Step

16. 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. Further growth and savings items approved by other Committees are as follows:

Community and Leisure Committee	
Impact of loss of Meals on Wheels Contract	£24,000
Restructuring of the Emergency Planning function	£12,000
Development Control and Licensing	
Increased Building Control Income	£12,000

## **Conclusion**

17. 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.

The Committee approves the car parking charges detailed in Appendix 3 for implementation with effect from 1 April 2002.

A growth item of £12,190 in respect of the extension of the Bridge End Gardens Gardener/Environmental Task Force Supervisor's contract be approved.