

Committee: Health and Housing Committee
Date: 4 November 2004
Agenda Item No: 4
Title: Under Occupation and Incentives – Progress Report
Author: Elizabeth Petrie (01799) 510362

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee on the progress made with regard to the Quality of Life Plan, on the issue of Under occupation of Council houses together with what incentives would help make tenants transfer to smaller more suitable accommodation.

Background

- 2 It is a target within the Quality of Life Corporate Plan that a survey be undertaken of under occupied Council houses to ascertain if the tenants in question wish to move and what incentives need to be considered.
- 3 Both Officers and Members agreed that this exercise should be handled very sensitively, as the Council did not wish to make elderly tenants feel that they were under pressure from the Council to move.
- 4 A total of five parishes were chosen, those being, Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Stebbing and Barnston. A total of 216 questionnaires were sent out to family homes where records showed they were being under occupied by people of 60 years and above. There was a response rate over approximately 75% which is generally regarded as an excellent outcome.
- 5 The breakdown of forms sent out are as follows:

Parish	Total sent	Like to move	Not move	Maybe in future
S/W	125	15	77	7
Dunmow	47	4	30	2
Stansted	30	5	21	0
Stebbing	9	1	5	0
Barnston	5	0	2	0

- 6 Of the 25 who expressed an interest in moving, 4 were already on the transfer List, 8 were sent housing application forms and 13 requested an informal visit from a Housing Officer to discuss their options in more detail.

- 7 Of these 13, 8 have now decided they do not want to move, whilst the remainder, Housing Officers are still endeavouring to make contact to carry out an interview.
- 8 Of those who responded only 10 made any comments which is a little disappointing. Some suggestions regarding cash incentives to move were made and others thought a mixture of a cash and help in paying for removal costs, carpets and curtains would be appropriate.

The Way Forward

- 9 From the research undertaken it appears the number of tenants in under occupied dwellings who may wish to move is not as great as first thought. However, In order to continue to make the best possible use of the Council's housing stock this issue may need further research. It should be noted that the Council had a scheme costing £30,000 which was abandoned some years ago as it was felt no new transfers were generated.
- 10 If the Committee wishes to ultimately introduce a policy of incentives to encourage tenants to move to more suitable accommodation in view of the information supplied in the report the matter will be progressed by officers, i.e. a scheme submitted to a future meeting of the Committee after careful research and costings have been undertaken.

RECOMMENDATION that the Committee note the report and indicates if it wishes further work undertaken on this issue.

Background Papers: Survey data.

Committee: Health & Housing Committee

Date: 4 November, 2004

Agenda Item No: 5

Title: Homelessness Activity

Author: Elizabeth Petrie (01799) 510362

Summary

- 1 This report provides the Committee with information relating to Homelessness activity for the first half of the financial year.

Background

- 2 At the last meeting of the Committee in September, 2004 Members requested information on the homeless cases, dealt with between April – September,

2004.

- 3 Appended to this is a chart showing the situation at the half way mark of the financial year.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the report

Background Papers: Homeless Stats 2001 onwards.

**HOMELESS CASES PRESENTING TO THE COUNCIL IN CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR
PERIOD COVERED IN THIS REPORT 01.04.04 – 30.09.04**

REASON FOR HOMELESSNESS	TOTAL PRESENTING AS HOMELESS	% OF TOTAL (APPROX)	REHOUSED OFF HOUSING REGISTER	MADE OWN ARRANGEMENTS/ REJECTED/ ADVICE/ ONLY/ IN & OUT/ PREVENTION	HOUSED INTO TEMP TENANCY *	CASES IN B/B As at 1.10.04
1 Parents no longer able/willing to accommodate	11	26%	2	4	4	1
2 Other relatives/friends no longer able/willing to accommodate	6	14%		4	2	
3 Partnership breakdown/violent	2	5%	1		1	
4 Partnership breakdown/non-violent	5	12%		2	2	1
5 Fleeing violence						
6 16/17 year olds	3	7%	1	2		
7 18/20 year olds formally in care						
8 Racial/Homophobic						
9 Mortgage foreclosure	2	5%		1		1
10 Termination of shorthold tenancies, other loss of private accommodation	4	10%	1	3		
11 Termination of shorthold tenancies, other loss of private accommodation, because of Arrears.	5	12%		4	1	
12 H M Forces						
13 Asylum Seekers						
14 Health						
15 Mental Health						
16 Drug/Alcohol						
17 Having been in care	1	2%		1		

REASON FOR HOMELESSNESS	TOTAL PRESENTING AS HOMELESS	% OF TOTAL (APPROX)	REHOUSED OFF HOUSING REGISTER	MADE OWN ARRANGEMENTS/ REJECTED/ ADVICE/ ONLY/ IN & OUT/ PREVENTION	HOUSED INTO TEMP TENANCY	CASES IN B/B As at 1.10.04
18 On remand or been in custody	2	5%		1		1
19 Other	1	2%			1	
TOTALS	42	100%	5	22	11	4

* Includes cases rehoused into bungalows (for elderly) and Temporary Housing Association Accommodation. A number of these cases previously spent time in bed and breakfast accommodation.

Report

42 cases have presented as homeless to Uttlesford since 01.04.04: -

Of these:-

- 2 were elderly
- 6 were single parents
- 8 were a family
- 22 were single
- 4 were a couple

20 cases were either rejected as intentionally homeless, were not homeless, or were owed a duty of advice only.

7 cases were prevented from becoming actually homeless. (These may be cases rejected or accepted)

Of the 20 cases rejected:-

- 2 were elderly
- 1 were single parents
- 3 were a family
- 12 were single
- 2 were a couple

Of the 7 cases prevented:-

- 0 were elderly
- 2 were single parents
- 2 were a family
- 3 were single
- 0 were a couple

The total number of cases accepted as homeless since 01.04.04 = 20

Of these:-

- 0 were elderly
- 4 were single parents
- 6 were a family
- 10 were single
- 0 were a couple

There are 2 cases where a decision is still pending.

Total 2003 - 04 = 121 (accepted as homeless 62)

Total 2002 - 03 = 112 (accepted as homeless 62)

Total 2001 - 02 = 86 (accepted as homeless 46)

Cases currently in temporary accommodation as at 01.09.04 = 35

There has been 1 referral from another local authority and 0 referrals to other local authorities.

Origin of the 42 cases who have presented as homeless since 1 April 2004

39 cases were made homeless from addresses within Uttlesford

3 cases were made homeless from addresses outside Uttlesford but all had either lived in Uttlesford previously or had close family living within Uttlesford.

As well as the 7 cases prevented from becoming actually homeless who presented to the Council another 9 cases threatened with homelessness were assisted without having to make a homeless presentation. These cases were all living within Uttlesford.

The one case who has been referred from another Authority (Harlow) was previously resident within Uttlesford.

Committee: Health and Housing Committee
Date: 4 November 2004
Agenda Item No: 6
Title: Private Sector House Condition Survey
Author: Will Cockerell (01799) 510581

Summary

- 1 This report seeks the views of Members on the commissioning of a Private Sector House Condition Survey

Background

- 2 The last survey was carried out in 1993 and for the past few years GO-EAST has been commenting on the lack of up to date information about the private sector when reviewing the Council's Housing Strategy.
- 3 The Quality of Life plan includes the carrying out of such a survey and provision of £70 000 has been made in the Service Plan as an estimate of the likely cost.
- 4 The survey would also present an opportunity to assess privately owned property against the 'decent homes' standard, and information on energy efficiency could also be obtained.
- 5 It is envisaged that an external specialist company would carry out the survey.

RECOMMENDED that a private sector house condition survey be carried out during the financial year 2005/06.

Background Papers: None

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 4 November 2004
Agenda Item No: 7
Title: Environmental Health Best Value Review
Author: Will Cockerell (01799) 510581
Geoff Smith (01799) 510582

Summary

- 1 This report contains details of the progress in delivering the Best Value Review of Environmental Health, some aspects of which are relevant to this Committee.
- 2 Attached as Appendix 1 is the draft Service Improvement Plan which has already been considered by the Scrutiny 2 Committee, the Executive Management Team and has been the subject of a Members' Workshop.

Background

- 3 The scoping documents for the Best Value Review of Environmental Health were agreed by the Scrutiny 2 Committee on the 7th July 2004, and the draft Service Improvement Plan has been developed over a series of Officer and Member meetings and associated visits to other Local Authorities.
- 4 The proposals in respect to Health Promotion, Imported Food Control at Stansted Airport, Food Safety and Health and Safety Training and Awards, and action on Empty Homes, will be of particular interest to this Committee.

RECOMMENDED that those aspects of the draft Improvement Plan relevant to the Committee be approved for inclusion in the Service Plan.

Background Papers: Draft Service Improvement Plan (Appendix 1)

The Environmental Health Service Improvement Plan

Statement of objectives

- 1 The role of the Environmental Health Service is to protect the environment, promote public health and to contribute to the Maintenance and improvement of the quality of life of residents of the District. Comparison with other authorities and external assessments of functions of the Environmental Health Service (1) show that performance is good, in relation to statutory functions and the enforcement of legislation.

The objective of the Service Improvement Plan is to further improve performance generally and to take a more proactive role in promoting environmental improvements and implementation of measures detailed in the Quality of Life Corporate Plan. (1) FSA report.

Critical Success Area 1
Operational issues

Operational issues	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
1.1.1. Improve clerical support to field officers; The level of clerical support staff in relation to field officers is low in comparison to other similar authorities. Improved clerical support will allow more time for the Environmental Health Officers to deliver and improve the range of services and will provide a more cost effective use of their time. It is proposed to increase the establishment by the appointment of a further full time clerical officer attached directly to the EH section.	A	New appointment	2004/5	£16,000 pa plus 15%
1.1.2. Home working; Pilot the introduction of home working to reduce travelling times and costs and improve efficiency.	B	W Cockerell G Smith	2005	NA
1.1.3. Information technology; Provide inspection team members with laptop computers and home connections to the Councils computer system to reduce the need for office based working, reduce travelling times and costs and improve efficiency.	A	W Cockerell G Smith + Adrian Webb	2005	£ 10.000?
1.1.4 IT review. Carry out a review of IT software, systems and support in use in the Environmental Health Service.	C	W Cockerell G Smith		£?
1.1.5 Out of Hours service; Examine the necessity for and possible ways of providing a proportionate 'out of hours', primarily to deal with noise complaints, possibly in conjunction with duties under the new Licensing Act .	C	W Cockerell G Smith		£16,000 per annum
1.1.6 Keeping Members involved. Provide induction sessions on the Environmental Health Service for new Members of the appropriate committees.	C	W Cockerell G Smith	2005	NA

Critical Success Area 2
Health Promotion

Health promotion is an important public health function that many forward looking local authorities are now actively working in close partnership with PCT's

	Health Promotion	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
2.1 Appointment of new Health Promotion Officer;	The officer appointed will work closely with the PCT to develop and provide educational and promotional activities. Liaison with schools, GP's, community groups, businesses etc. Become more engaged with the local Health Improvement Plan and other health issues in the Quality of Life Corporate Plan and provide increased support for LA 21 activities.	A	W.Cockerill G Smith	31/3/04	£20,000 per annum plus 15%

Critical Success Area 3
Stansted Airport

The FSA Report on the Food Law Enforcement Service for Controls of Imported Food Not of Animal Origin (dated 9-11 September 2004) at Stansted identified shortcomings with the inspection system relying on cargo handlers notifying when food consignments are received at the airport. This is a highly specialised, and rapidly growing area of work. Recently obtained data on throughput and a comparison with Gatwick airport confirm that the way forward is to have a dedicated officer to be based at the airport. It is proposed initially to arrange for an EHO to spend three months full time at the Airport. Hours of work will need to be very flexible in order to assess the out of hour's demands. It is hoped that during this time a better liaison can be built with the Customs and Excise team and a better notification system can be developed with the importing agents.

Stansted Airport	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
3.1 An EHO be assigned to the airport for three months on a full time basis. His work to be covered by consultant.	A	??	2005	£1000 plus FSA grant of £5000
3.2 It seems certain that the medium term need, after the three-month assessment, will be for a full time technical officer to be appointed to be based at the airport.	A	New appointment	2005/2006	£22,000 per annum plus 15%
3.3 The line manager will be the EHO mentioned in 3.1.	A	District EHO	2005/6	£1,000 pa

3.4 Increase the sampling of imported foods not covered by existing HPA budget allocation. Provide a sampling surveillance programme for imported foods, testing for pathogens and pesticide residues in accordance with Food Standards Agency requirements. Investigate and recommend any charging for discretionary functions	C	G Smith	2005/6	£ 2,000 pa
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Critical Success Area 4 Food Safety

Taking a more proactive role in Food safety.

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
4.1 Improve training by extending Food Hygiene Courses and Health and Safety at Work courses. Provide new courses in ethnic minority languages. Provide subsidised courses at Intermediate and Advanced levels.	B	G. Smith	2005/6	£2,000 pa
4.2 Introduce a new award scheme for catering premises promoting competition and higher standards.	C	G. Smith	2005/6	£1000

Critical Success Area 5 Housing Initiatives

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
5.1 To take steps to reduce the number of long term vacant dwellings in the District	B	W Cockerell	2005 and ongoing	NA
5.2 To promote the use of above the shop vacant space for living accommodation, initially in the Dunmow area.	C	W Cockerell	2005/6	NA
5.3 Assess effectiveness of Uttlesford Housing Renewal Assistance.	C	W Cockerell	Ongoing	NA

Critical Success Area 6
Pollution Control

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
6.1 Air Quality; Purchase a non-methane hydrocarbon analyser for installation in the mobile air quality monitoring station. This will enable measurements to be made of fuel residues.	C	W Cockerell	2005	Cost approximately £15000, annual running costs £2500 per annum
6.2 Noise; Purchase an additional noise monitor so that more measurements can be made in areas affected by aircraft noise	B	W Cockerell	2005	Mobile unit approximately £6000

Critical Success Area 7
General

Individual / Team Initiatives & Action Programmes	Importance	Who	When	Resource (£)
7.1 Improve liaison with the Community Tasking Group and with local police and others.	C	W Cockerell	Ongoing	NA

Committee: Health and Housing Committee

Date: 4 November 2004

Agenda Item No: 8

Title: Rent Deposit Scheme

Author: Judith Snares (01799) 510671

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee on the progress made to date regarding the feasibility of introducing a Rent Deposit Scheme (RDS) in Uttlesford and recommends that further work be undertaken in order for a scheme to be operative in 2005/6.

Background

- 2 In 2003 the Council adopted its Homelessness strategy. One of the key objectives is to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families and to ensure there is sufficient accommodation available for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. In this context the Government now measures Councils' performance against the target introduced in new legislation of limiting the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families only in emergencies and then for a maximum of six weeks.
- 3 Local Authorities are now expected to provide comprehensive housing advice and appropriate assistance not only to those who are statutorily homeless but also to those who are either intentionally or non statutorily homeless. Preventing homelessness is a high priority.
- 4 As part of the ongoing work by officers to consider different ways of assisting this client group the reintroduction of a Rent Deposit Scheme has been investigated. The Committee should note that a scheme of this type was operated in the District by the Cambridge based charity Wintercomfort but for various reasons this failed 3 to 4 years ago.
- 5 In order to show the Committee how a reintroduced RDS might operate a model of how it would enhance the current homelessness service is appended to this report. It shows a clear progression, for the client, from initial advice to being given real housing options.
- 6 This model would help meet the Council's duty regarding the provision of advice and assistance to all categories of clients who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and in some cases prevent the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

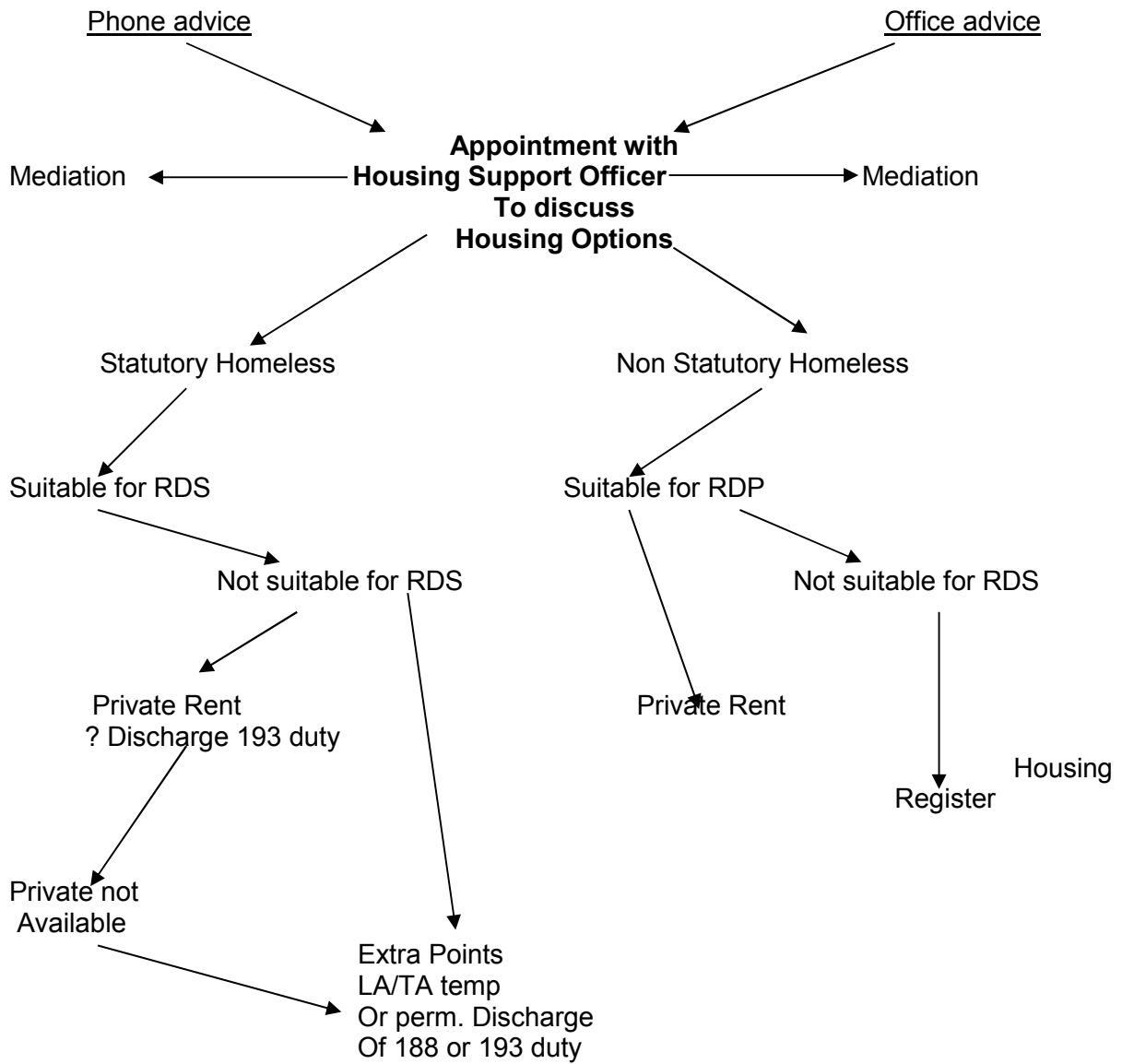
- 7 Through a RDS a number of people only previously supplied with advice could be helped to obtain accommodation within the private sector. Currently any advice given on housing options within the private sector is limited by the client's ability to pay rent deposits which can be of 4 – 6 weeks rent in advance. For many of the client groups that approach the Council this amount of money is not achievable and therefore a RDS would create housing options that may otherwise be unaffordable.
- 8 Research has been carried out to ascertain how Rent Deposit Schemes assist Councils in this Region and what type of scheme may be appropriate for Uttlesford District Council. This research has shown that Uttlesford is one of the few Authorities within the region that does not have a scheme. It appears that the various schemes currently operated have the same objectives but individual Councils tailor schemes to best fit their local situation.

The Way Forward

- 9 Discussions have taken place with local agents and landlords within the District and it is felt that there could be some prepared to commit to such a scheme. Should a scheme be agreed a great deal of promotion would be required and success could not be guaranteed. In an area like Uttlesford market conditions and the type of accommodation available for rent are very major factors.
- 10 Officers have initially looked at two models for running a scheme. One would be to pay a fee to an outside agent to run the scheme for the Council, with the Council making referrals of suitable candidates and providing the rent deposit guarantee but with the agent working with the clients and landlords to arrange the actual lettings.
- 11 The other option would be to run the scheme in house, this could initially be done within existing staff resources but there could be a staffing resource issue should it prove to be successful.
- 12 Either model relies on the careful vetting of clients to ensure that they are suitable for this type of scheme and the active engagement of landlords and agents through careful marketing and advertising of the scheme.
- 13 If the Committee is minded to agree that Uttlesford should look to introduce such a scheme then the Council would need to make provision of £25k from the General Fund for 2005/6. It should be noted that this issue has been inserted in the draft Housing Services Plan 2005/6. A further report on a possible scheme for Uttlesford would then be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee recommends to the Resources Committee that £25k be budgeted for a Rent Deposit Scheme in 2005/6 subject to a scheme being approved at a future meeting of this Committee.

Threatened With Homelessness



Committee: Health & Housing Committee
Date: 4 November, 2004
Agenda Item No: 9
Title: Flat at Leaden Roding
Author: Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of a possible vacancy of a three bedroom flat at Leaden Roding and seeks the Committee's views on whether it should be sold.

Background

- 2 It is likely that a three bedroom General Needs flat could become vacant in the near future. The flat is in a block of four. The other occupants of the block are two leaseholders and one Housing Association tenant.
- 3 Although there are a number of applicants in housing need who could be rehoused into the flat there are significant day to day management issues relating to the Council retaining this unit and it may be more appropriate for the Council to sell the dwelling and generate a capital receipt.
- 4 Further more detailed information will be available at the meeting.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee decide whether the flat referred to in the report be sold or retained.

Background Papers: None

Committee **Health and Housing**

Date **4 November 2004**

Agenda Item No: **10**

Title: **Service Plans, Budget and Council Priorities 2005/06**

Author: **Philip O'Dell (01799) 510670, Diane Burridge (01799) 510580, Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508**

Summary

- 1 This report outlines the Committee's initial draft General Fund revised estimates of direct costs and income for 2004/05 and estimates for next year, 2005/06, prepared on the basis of existing approved levels of service. Also included in the report are draft Service Plans, including spending pressures, prepared by those Executive Managers whose services are controlled by this Committee. The report also contains a full set of results from the Prioritisation Working Group set up by the Resources Committee to look at the contribution that services make to the Council's objectives. The Appendices to this report are as follows:

Appendix 1 Base Budget-Committee summary and detailed pages
Appendix 2 Draft Service Plans
Appendix 3 Table of High/Medium and Low Priority Services
Appendix 4 Summary of staff briefing note on Prioritisation Exercise

Background

- 2 The Resources Committee meeting on 24 June 2004 targeted a council tax increase of no more than 5% per annum over each of the next four years, the timescale of the Council's Financial Strategy. In practice, due to both potential capping by central government, and the Council's own policy decisions, an increase of no more than 3% may be necessary for 2005/06. Based on existing budgets and anticipated government funding, this would necessitate budget reductions and/or increased income from charging for services totalling approximately £150,000. This figure assumes no provision for new spending pressures, including known increases in statutory costs. Although the overall position will not be clear until the Resources Committee meet in 18 November, it could be that the Council will need to make budget reductions and additional income in the £300,000-£500,000 range.
- 3 Resources Committee on 24 June also set up a joint Member and officer working group to consider the Council's priorities against the light of tightening financial constraints and Comprehensive Performance Assessment comments on prioritisation.

- 4 Executive Managers, in consultation with their staff, have now drafted Service Plans covering the period 2005-2008, including new spending pressures which will need to compete for scarce Council resources.
- 5 Co-ordinated external consultation is planned on the Council's budget, possible council tax levels, budget prioritisation exercise and the draft Corporate Plan.

Revised 2004/05 Budgets

- 6 The process of revising budgets undertaken in this cycle takes the place of more routine budgetary control reports, with the summarised position being:

	£	£	£
BASE DIRECT COSTS			1,072,290
<u>Less:</u> Internal Charges			314,190
BASE DIRECT COSTS			758,100
Transferred to Licensing Committee Administration Assistant			-7,460
Adjusted Base Direct Costs			750,640
<u>Plus:</u> Other Variations:-			
EM – Environment and Culture (part year cost)	46,890		
<u>Plus:</u> BV Review Consultants	4,520		
<u>Plus:</u> Border Inspection Net (1)	14,000		
<u>Less:</u> Other Net	-2,160		
Total Variation from Adjusted Base			63,250
Draft Estimate 2004/05 – Direct Costs			813,890

Notes on the key variations:

1. Border Inspection net reduction in income – Customs and Excise now have responsibility for dealing with consignments.

Draft Budgets 2005/06

- 7 The detailed budgets have been prepared at estimated outturn prices and therefore include provision for agreed future pay awards and other price increases. Prior to any further spending pressures being funded or savings proposals being approved by the Council, the detailed figures have been

prepared at the existing approved levels of service. The summarised position for this Committee is as follows:

	£	£	£
BASE DIRECT COSTS			758,100
Transferred to Licensing Committee Administration Assistant			-10,100
Adjusted Base Direct Costs			748,000
Previously Projected Items:-			
Inflation:-			
<u>Plus:</u> Pay Award	17,450		
<u>Plus:</u> Other	4,080	21,530	
Other Variations:-			
<u>Plus:</u> Staffing – Annual Increments	3,390		
<u>Less:</u> Staffing – Other (Net)	-10,360		
<u>Plus:</u> Border Inspection Net	14,000		
<u>Plus:</u> Other (Net)	3,590	10,620	
Total Variation from Adjusted Base			32,150
Draft Estimate 2005/06 – Direct Costs			780,150

- 8 Apart from inflation, also included are amounts to cover other unavoidable variations such as those arising from contractual commitments, any projections for 2004-2005 identified last year, and variations in the planned property maintenance programme. Excluded are any items related to service changes, which would require specific Committee approval. Internal charges will be added to committee budgets when they are re-presented in the January meeting cycle.
- 9 Fees and charges for this Committee will be examined prior to the next meeting, as part of any budget reduction exercise.

Service Plans and Spending Pressures

- 10 Appendix 2 contains the full draft Service Plans relating to this Committee's responsibilities. The Service Plans have been prepared by Executive Managers, meaning that there is not a complete fit to the Council's committee structure. The relevant Executive Managers will highlight those parts of their Service Plans relevant to this Committee at the meeting. These Plans will

need to be reviewed based on decisions taken during the budget process and revised Service Plans will be brought back to this Committee in January 2005 for final agreement.

- 11 A summary of the spending pressures for this Committee is given below:

	Ongoing From 2005/06	one-off	capital
	£000	£000	£000
Rent Deposit Scheme	25	0	0
Private Sector Stock Condition Survey	0	70	0
Health Promotion Officer	28	0	0
Airport Noise Monitoring Scheme for compulsory letting of empty homes	3	0	21
	Cost unknown		0

- 12 This Committee will be asked to consider whether it accepts that the spending pressures need to be met, either through new or re-directed resources, and to propose a priority order to Resources Committee. The Resources Committee will need to consider these spending pressures in the light of the Council's overall financial position for the next financial year and beyond.
- 13 A report elsewhere on this agenda gives details of any capital schemes relating to this committee. The revenue consequences of these schemes will be incorporated into the budget summary submitted to the Resources Committee.
- 14 The Corporate Plan is currently being revised for presentation in draft to the full Council on 14 December. Any revenue budgets relevant to this Committee will be included in the overall budget position reported to the Resources Committee on 18 November, and will then be added to this Committee's budget in the next cycle of meetings if approved by the full Council.

Prioritisation Process

- 15 Paragraph 3 of this report reminded Members that the Resources Committee set up a Member/officer working group to look at prioritisation. This group has now met several times and have compiled an analysis of front line services based on their contribution to the nine themes in the Council's Quality of Life Corporate Plan. A summary of these themes is given below:

Providing strong community leadership and openness
 Protecting and enhancing the environment and character of the district
 Improving rural transport
 Encouraging appropriate economic development
 Improving the supply of good affordable homes

Promoting tourism, culture and leisure opportunities
Improving access to value for money services
Improving community safety and the health of the population
Supporting lifelong learning and developing better opportunities for young people

- 16 The nine themes outlined in paragraph 15 relate to specific outcomes, and dovetail with the five themes of Excellence, People, Customers, Community and Communication, which provide a more internally focussed framework for improvement.
- 17 The outcome of the working group's activities is the prioritisation table, structured by High, Medium and Low contributions to the nine themes. The table, in alphabetical order within each category, is shown in Appendix 3.
- 18 Support services do not contribute directly to the themes contained within the Corporate Plan and because of this, and the need to focus resources on front line services, have been included in the Low category of the prioritisation exercise.
- 19 Members who attended the Council Away Day on 9 October will be aware that an exercise was undertaken there aimed at validating or checking the conclusions of the working group. Similarly, an exercise involving the Joint Management Team (JMT) of middle managers was worked through during September. The outcomes of all three exercises have now been compared and there is a consensus on most of the results. Where differences do exist it is felt that the working group's views should prevail, as they went through a much more detailed process and had considerable time and officer support in coming to their conclusions.
- 20 Resources Committee on 18 November will use the prioritisation process outcomes to steer the budget process for the next financial year and beyond. With a shortfall on the budget already identified, as explained in paragraph 2 of this report and many spending pressures being brought to committees, this is likely to involve Resources Committee setting savings and additional income targets to be considered by committees in the January committee cycle, based on officer proposals. To get the full benefit of the prioritisation process being undertaken, these targets will also need to consider the current cost and quality of services, and the Council's future aspirations for each service's cost and quality, based on the priority of each service. This information on current cost and quality is currently being compiled and will be brought to this committee in the January committee cycle to put any savings required from individual services into context.
- 21 It is important to point out that any savings targets or funded spending pressures proposed by the Resources Committee will be on an individual service basis, as this, rather than whole committee budgets, has been the basis of the prioritisation approach adopted. This means that, unlike previous years, committees will not have flexibility across services in how they make budget reductions, or how they spend additional resources.

- 22 A potential key implication of the prioritisation process is the effect on staff morale and motivation for those whose services are not shown as a High priority. Concern over this has prompted the Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team to hold a briefing for staff across the Council, and to prepare a note for staff to receive detailed briefing from their Executive Manager. A summary of the briefing note is contained at Appendix 4. The key point being stressed to staff is that the placing of their service into the Medium or Low categories, rather than the high category, is no reflection on their individual abilities, commitment or efforts, but is a reflection of the Council's policy priorities and, at a time of limited resources, necessary financial strategy.

RECOMMENDED that this Committee

- 1 Approves and comments as appropriate on the revised 2004/05 budget and draft 2005/06 budget, and submits them to the Resources Committee
- 2 Approves and comments as appropriate to the Resources Committee on the elements of the draft Service Plans relating to this Committee's activities, and in particular the new spending pressures identified and to put those spending pressures into priority order to Resources Committee
- 3 Notes the prioritisation analysis contained in Appendix 3 and submits any comments on this to the Resources Committee

Background Papers: Base Budget Working Papers, Service Plan notes of guidance, Prioritisation meetings files, reports to Resources Committee on 24 June and 23 September 2004

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 4 November 2004
Agenda Item No: 11
Title: Draft Capital Programme 2005-06
Author: Nick Harris (01799) 510313

Summary

- 1 In previous years it has been the practice to report the capital programme and funding details only to the Resources Committee. This year, individual Policy Committees have the opportunity to comment on and propose changes to the draft programme.
- 2 This approach is consistent with resolution of the Resources Committee at its meeting on 23 September 2004 that a review of the Capital Programme takes place and a report be taken to all relevant Committees in the November cycle of meetings.

Capital Strategy

- 3 Members will be aware that the Council is required to prepare a Capital Strategy setting out the framework within which the use of capital resources – both financial and physical assets – can be co-ordinated and allocated in accordance with the Council's key objectives. Council approved the Strategy for submission to the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East) in July 2003. GO-East assessed the Strategy as "Good" meaning that the Council will not have to submit a Strategy in the future.

Prioritisation

- 4 The Capital Strategy requires all capital bids to be evaluated by a Capital Strategy Officer Group. Proposed capital schemes and projects are assessed by the Group against
 - The Council's key objectives and priorities.
 - Service Plans and Best Value Reviews.
 - The Prudential Code for Capital Finance.
 - Public Consultation Responses.

The Group are also required to consider:

- Whether the scheme is affordable.
- Whether the capital investment is prudent.
- Whether the project outcome is sustainable.

- 5 The prioritisation described above has not yet been applied to the bids identified in this report but it is considered that seeking input from Members at a relatively early stage will inform the process and help to minimise late submissions.

Asset Management Plan

- 6 Items relating to the acquisition of or improvement to Council buildings and other facilities are also included in the Asset Management Plan, a preliminary draft of which has been submitted to Go-East for initial appraisal.

Proposed Draft Programme

- 7 The detailed figures are attached at Appendix CP1.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee considers its 2005-06 draft capital programme as set out in this report and indicates any further schemes and projects that it wishes the Capital Strategy Officer Group to evaluate.

Background Papers: Service Plans, Draft Asset Management Plan

Health and Housing Committee

Appendix CP1

Draft Capital Programme 2005-06

<u>Project/Scheme</u>	2004-05 Estimate	2004-05 Revised	2005-06 Estimate	2006-07 Estimate	2007-08 Estimate	2008-09 Estimate
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Private Sector Renewal Grants	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
Disabled Facilities Grants	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
Airport Noise Monitoring Equipment			21,000			