

Committee **Health and Housing Committee**

Date **6 January 2005**

Agenda Item No: **4**

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

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Summary

- 1 This report provides the basis for finalisation of the Committee's General Fund budget for 2005/06 subject to final considerations by the Resources Committee and Full Council. It contains full details of the base budget, prepared on the basis of current levels of service provision, a refined list of spending pressures previously considered, and proposals to achieve the budget reductions required following the resolution made by the Council on 14 December 2004. The report contains the following appendices:

Appendix 1 Base Budget-Committee summary and detailed pages
Appendix 2 Options for achieving budget reductions

Background

- 2 The previous meeting of this committee considered draft 2005/06 budgets at direct cost level, along with spending pressures and draft service plans.
- 3 Resources Committee on 18 November considered the overall position on the General Fund, ahead of the announcement of external funding from central government, and agreed a strategy for spending pressures and savings based on the service prioritisation approach developed by the Member Prioritisation Working Group.
- 4 Following a further resolution of the 18 November Resources Committee, the Council meeting on 14 December considered and endorsed savings or additional income targets for individual services. The Council also referred the list of spending pressures back to policy committees, asking them to re-consider them in the light of the savings targets set for services. On this basis, committees are free to delete spending pressures so as to help achieve their savings targets for services, if that is their preferred option.
- 5 Council on 14 December agreed the proposal that, subject to the results of public consultation, further news on potential council tax capping, and the effects of savings/additional income targets on services, a revised targeted council tax increase of 4.5% be agreed for 2005/06.

- 6 In total, policy committee meetings in this committee cycle will be considering savings/additional income targets of over £400,000 and spending pressures of approximately £750,000.

Base Budget

- 7 This Committee's draft base budget for 2005/06 is attached at Appendix 1. This has been updated since the previous meeting as follows:

	£
Direct costs as previously presented	780,150
Other changes;	
<u>Transferred from Resources Committee</u>	
Quality of Life Plan;	
P.16.5 Private sector housing stock condition	
survey (to be funded from reserves)	<u>80,000</u>
Total Direct Costs	860,150
Internal Charges added	<u>252,880</u>
Draft 2005/06 base budget	1,113,030

Spending Pressures

- 8 Following the previous meeting of this Committee, and against the background of the Council's difficult budget position, the Executive Management Team have re-examined the spending pressures for all Council committees. The Council meeting on 14 December was provided with the views of the Executive Management Team on which spending pressures should be agreed, and which were recommended for reduction, deferment or deletion. In making these recommendations, the Executive Management Team took account of the prioritisation process, the need to improve corporate capacity, and the fact that any increased spending will put further pressure on existing services and budgets. For this Committee, the proposals regarding spending pressures are as follows:

Spending pressures proposed for approval:

	£
Rent Deposit Scheme	25,000
Health Promotion Officer Post	28,000
Airport noise monitoring and air quality equipment	
running costs	3,000
Clerical support for Environmental Health Officers	19,000
Increased sampling of imported food	<u>2,000</u>
Total spending pressures proposed for approval	77,000

Spending pressures proposed for deferment:

	£
Food Safety/Health and Safety courses	3,000
Environmental Health Out of Hours Service	16,000
New Environmental Health Officer post at airport	<u>26,000</u>
Total spending pressures proposed for deferment	45,000

- 9 There are only two one-off spending pressure identified for this Committee. One is for the purchase of additional airport noise monitoring and air quality equipment, costing £21,000, with the ongoing costs included in the annual spending pressures shown in paragraph 8 above. The other one-off is £70,000 for a private sector stock condition survey.
- 10 No guidance has yet been issued regarding one-off spending pressures, pending review of the overall position regarding the Council's reserves. It is recommended that at this stage the Committee support the need for the one-off spending pressures as described and submit a request for funding to the Resources Committee.

Savings targets

- 11 The Council meeting on 14 December 2004 agreed the following savings/additional income targets for this Committee's services, based on the prioritisation approach and the Council's overall financial position:

Service	Savings target
	£
Homelessness	1,000
Public Conveniences	4,500
Public Health	17,000
Animal Warden	2,000
Pest Control	<u>3,000</u>
Total	27,500

- 12 Options to achieve these targets are contained in Appendix 2 and the Committee will be recommended to indicate which options they wish to approve to meet the targets set. The Committee are reminded that the savings targets set are for individual services, rather than for all its services combined, although any proposals which cause particular concern can be highlighted so that the Resources Committee can consider any adjustments that may be possible when the Council's overall budget position becomes clearer. The Committee is reminded that spending pressures can be put forward as budget reductions in lieu of savings in the same service.

Service plans

- 13 Although Service Plans previously considered by committees should not change fundamentally as the budget is finalised, they will need refining to take account of spending pressures approved and savings agreed, if these were not previously allowed for. It is proposed to bring revised and finalised Service

Plans to committees in the next committee cycle so that there is clarity over the direction of services prior to the start of the new financial year in April.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee:

Approves the base budget for 2005/06 and submits it to the Resources Committee

Approves the proposed approach to spending pressures, submitting those recommended for retention to the Resources Committee with a request that they be agreed

Proposes budget reductions/additional income from the options given, sufficient to achieve the individual savings targets for services, and submits these to the Resources Committee

Indicates to the Resources Committee which budget reduction/additional income options it would wish to be disregarded if the council's overall finances permit, and makes any other comments it wishes to pass on regarding the desirability of the budget decisions it has had to make

Background Papers: Budget Working Papers, draft Service Plans, reports to committees, November 2004.