

**Subject:** Policy and Budget Review Panel Outcomes

**Status:** For Publication

**Report to:** The Cabinet

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> September 2006

**Report of:** Executive Director of Resources

**Portfolio Holder:** Finance and Risk Management

**Key Decision:**

NO

Forward Plan  
*Relevant Box*

General Exception

Special Urgency

"X" In

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform members of the outcome of the Policy and Budget Review Panels held over the summer and seek endorsement of the actions flowing from the Panel meetings..

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report, do not specifically impact on any one corporate priority. However, a successful Policy and Budget Review process will result in the identification of free resources which can be allocated to address the Council's priorities.

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report, although the actions required as a result of the Panels will raise a range of risks which will need to be considered as and when formal decisions are required.

**4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS**

- 4.1 At its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2006 the Cabinet approved a process of Policy and Budget Review Panels to take place over the summer to report back to this meeting. The intention of these panels was to allow the Cabinet to gain greater understanding of the key elements of the budget and identify areas where the direction of spending priorities should be changed. The Panels are not decision making bodies and any views arising from them need to be considered in the Council's formal processes, and ultimately the budget process which leads up to Full Council.

- 4.2 Members will recall that it was intended to have independent input within the Panels> However, it proved impossible to secure such input from the East Lancashire Chamber. While this is a disappointment it will be possible when the process is re run in future years to secure such input from the Council's various strategic business partners.
- 4.3 Attached to this report are the minutes of the various panels which identify actions to be taken by officers in the coming months. It has to be said that most of the actions identified would impact in 2008/09 and beyond if members ultimately decide to pursue them. While this means that the search for savings must continue for the coming financial year it does mean that any of the more complex proposals arising from the Panels can be fully evaluated prior to implementation.
- 4.4 The table below sets out a summary of the more specific pieces of work required following the Panel meetings.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Major Issues Identified</b>
Community and Partnerships	Leisure – major issues to be dealt with within the Strategic Review. Grants – Work required to compare spending levels and return on investment with other Councils. Cost benefit analyses required on support provided for specific organizations. Council Tax Discounts – Review of the options for charging full Council Tax on second Homes and Empty Properties in order to generate additional resources and support wider policy objectives to be undertaken.
Customer Services and e-Government	ICT – Issues around the cost of the service identified and to be reported. Back on in the iCT Strategy at the next Cabinet. Other Transport – This area is wholly discretionary and will be reviewed in this budget cycle with a report before the end of the calendar year.
Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing	Examination of alternative means of service delivery, which might lever in external resources, in various areas to be undertaken as a task within the 2007/08 business plan.
Finance	Major issues already reported within budget monitoring reports
Human Resources	No major issues
Legal and Democratic Services	Review of corporate subscriptions to be undertaken in the coming budget cycle Examination of policy options around use of licensing powers not currently fully used to be undertaken and reported back to members.
Policy and Change Management	No major issues
Spatial Development	Building Control – Examination to be undertaken of the options available for generating contract income through work either with specific developers or other organizations to offset some core cots. Development Control – As part of the ongoing review of the service consideration to be given to the ability to flex costs in line with the levels of activity.

Streetscene and Liveability	<p>Markets – Examination of commercial issues surrounding the markets to be undertaken in the context of ongoing regeneration etc proposals</p> <p>Refuse – Assessment of the viability of the Trade Waste Service to be concluded and steps undertaken to increase recycling participation in order to guarantee income from LCC.</p> <p>Corporate – Review of scale of mobile phone provision to be undertaken</p> <p>General – Noted requirements for capital expenditure provision in a number of areas.</p>
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4.5 One of the key factors which came out in the review work was the issue of critical mass. There are a number of key areas, particularly in the central services where it is not possible for the Council to carry out the function with any fewer staff, the areas of Legal Services and the exchequer functions within Finance are examples where this situation either exists or is close to existing. In these circumstances it is important that the Council retain sufficient flexibility and discretion elsewhere in the budget to ensure that it is able to adequately resource key functions. These issues will need to be addressed in future corporate strategies.

## 5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

5.1 The Policy and Budget Review Panels have provided a useful first step in the next stages of implementing the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and their work will inform preparation of the budgets for the coming two years during which process the detailed financial implications of any proposals will be identified..

## 6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

## 7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

7.1 There are no specific Human Resources implications arising from this report.

## 8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The Policy and Budget Reviews have provided a valuable opportunity for members and officers to consider the various elements of the budget at a detailed level and it will be important that the issues identified are addressed in the forthcoming budget processes.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Cabinet are recommended to:

- a) Note the outcomes of the Policy and Budget Review Panels
- b) Endorse the work programme flowing from the Panels.

c) Indicate whether they would wish any further work to be undertaken.

## 10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 Members of the Cabinet, Executive Team and Heads of Service through the Panel meetings. The tasks indicated as flowing from the Panel meetings will where appropriate result in specific consultation processes.

<b>Contact Officer</b>	
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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Policy and Budget Review Panel Reports	Futures Park Offices.

**Minutes of: Policy and Budget Review Panel – Community and Partnerships**

Date of Meeting: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006

**PRESENT:**

Cllr J Farquharson – Portfolio Holder for Customer Services  
Cllr M Ormerod – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management  
Carolyn Williams – Chief Executive  
George Graham – Executive Director of Resources  
Ilona Snow-Miller – Head of Community and Partnerships  
Mike Roberts – Accounts Manager (Operational)

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	<b>Action</b>
1. The Head of Community and Partnerships indicated in a brief overview that the bulk of the budget was concerned with the buying in of services from various sources.	
<b>Leisure</b>	
2. In relation to Leisure which covers the services provided both by Rossendale Leisure Trust and CLAW in Whitworth it was noted that the Strategic Review being conducted by PMP would report in the autumn and provide members with a framework within which to consider the future nature and scale of provision across the Borough. Separately it was agreed that following completion of the Civic Hall a clearer SLA was needed with CLAW to ensure that similar standards are being expected of the two providers.	Hd C&P
<b>Museum</b>	
3. The costs of the Museum, it was agreed, are effectively fixed. Significant improvement would only be possible with significant investment. The Council needs to explore the opportunities to work with the Museum Service to exploit external leverage of funds for this facility. However, capacity constraints mean this should be looked at in terms of the 2008/09 business plan.	Deputy CX
<b>Grants</b>	
4. This budget covers a very wide range of activities in 4 categories	
a) Service agreements (organisations such as CAB)	
b) Genuine grants (organisations like the Whitworth Twinning Committee)	
c) Subscriptions or similar payments which result in a seat at the table (eg North West Arts)	
d) Discretionary Rate Relief (largely paid to the Leisure Trust)	
5. It was agreed that each grant should be looked at both in terms of the relationship to priorities, but also in terms of the leverage of funds which it brings into the Valley.	H of C & P
6. The following actions were agreed:	

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| a) A review of core funding for Groundwork in the light of the cessation of certain currently funded activities following the forthcoming merger into Groundwork East Lancs. | CX                     |
| b) A need to identify the comparative scale of support for the voluntary sector in Rossendale with that in other Council's.  | EDR & Accts<br>Mgr (O) |
| c) An analysis of the return on the investment in the voluntary sector to be reported to members.  | Hd C&P                 |
| d) A review of the current policy on discretionary rate relief is required as a result of recent changes in the mandatory scheme.  | Deputy<br>CX/EDR       |

**Tourism**

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| 7. The largest individual items remaining in this budget (following the review of visitor information) are subscriptions to bodies such as Pennine Prospects and Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board, together with the costs of the Visitor Guide. These are matters of choice. It was agreed to: |           |
| a) Conduct a cost benefit analysis in relation to the Council's support for rural regeneration activities   | Hd of C&P |
| b) Consider alternative means of providing community as opposed to visitor information through engaging the community in this activity.   | Hd of C&P |

**Christmas Lights**

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| 8. It was noted that part of this budget was provided for one off improvements in light displays etc. There was a general consensus that there was benefit in securing greater community involvement in this activity. | Deputy CX |
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**Town Twinning**

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| 9. It was agreed that a technical measure of converting the budget of £12k over two years into a rolling fund of £6k per year would free £4k on a recurrent basis which could be reinvested in priority areas within the service, subject to appropriate member agreement.. | Hd of<br>Finance |
| 10. It was agreed that a report on the Council's overall approach to international links should be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny within the next 18 months.  | Hd of C&P        |

**East Lancashire Railway**

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|---|-----------|
| 11. The current costs of this are relatively fixed, although there are recent indications of pressures for increased contributions. It is also the case that the current ownership structure potentially exposes the Council to a range of liabilities. It was agreed that officers would consider the implications of the current ownership structure consult partners and report back to members in due course but not before June 2007 | Hd of C&P |
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**Irwell Sculpture Trail**

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| 12. There is a potential liability of £8k plus maintenance in relation to the Bacup Culvert piece if it goes ahead. The £8k has previously been set aside. Whether this project progresses or not is still to be decided through the new mechanism for managing the IST. A number fo the projects will be decommissioned and there may be a liability for the Council in relation to this which needs to be determined as soon as practical. | Hd of C&P |
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**Community Cohesion**

13. It is not clear what benefit the Council and the Borough more generally receive from current spending of £15k in this area. An analysis of the options available and benefits realisable from a £15k investment in this area of activity needs to be undertaken by the end of September. 2006

Hd of C&P

**Other Issues**

14. It was noted that work was ongoing with other authorities in relation to Migrant Workers.

15. It was agreed to review the benefits of charging full council tax on second homes and empty properties in order to generate additional resource to the LSP through the County Council's undertaking to reinvest their share of any income generated with a report to Members in October 2006

Hd of Finance

**Minutes of: Policy and Budget Review Panel – Customer Services and e Government**

Date of Meeting: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006

**PRESENT:**

Cllr J Farquharson – Portfolio Holder for Customer Services  
Cllr M Ormerod – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management  
Carolyn Williams – Chief Executive  
Helen Lockwood – Deputy Chief Executive  
George Graham – Executive Director of Resources

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	<b>Action</b>
1 In providing an overview of the budget it was noted that the larger functions, revenues, benefits, and customer services form part of the Capita contract while items such as benefit payments are not susceptible to influence by the Council in that they are demand led and funded through the subsidy system.	
<b>Information and Communications Technology</b>	
2 This area had been subject to a review of the contract with Sungard Vivista and a strategy aiming to take the Council through the remaining five years of the contract up to re-tendering in approximately 3 years time would come to members in September. The key issues here are stabilisation of the current situation using the investment proposed from the proceeds of stock transfer.	Deputy CX / EDR
<b>Communications</b>	
3 Significant investment has been made in this area in the last two budgets and it will be important to review how effective that has been towards the end of the 2007/08 financial year.	Deputy CX
<b>Land Charges</b>	
4 This area is a significant income generator and a high performing service. Charges are discretionary, although the market for searches is very competitive. The scope for increasing income is reviewed each year. However, income in this area is subject to the state of the housing market and therefore potentially volatile.	
<b>Concessionary Travel</b>	
5 Major statutory changes came in from April this year, with further changes from April 2008. At this stage it is too early to judge the effect of these changes and the situation will be kept under review.	
<b>Other Transport</b>	
6 This is a wholly discretionary area of spending involving subsidies to a range of bus services. It was agreed that a review of each payment would be undertaken and discussed with the portfolio holder before being presented to the Cabinet before Christmas 2006.	Deputy CX / H of Finance

**Minutes of: Policy and Budget Review Panel – Economic  
Regeneration and Strategic Housing**

Date of Meeting: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2006

**PRESENT:**

Cllr D Ruddick – Leader of the Council

Cllr W Challinor – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration

Cllr M Ormerod – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management

Carolyn Williams – Chief Executive

George Graham – Executive Director of Resources

Janice Crawford – Finance Manager

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	<b>Action</b>
1 The Chief Executive outlined the areas covered by this budget and the fact that temporarily the Parking Service and an engineering post with short term funding are included. As parking is subject to a separate scrutiny review it was not examined in detail.	
<b>Regeneration Projects</b>	
2 The projects covered are:  a) Brownfields programme which is ongoing, but is slow to get off the ground. b) SRB in Bacup and Stacksteads which is in its last stages c) Futures Park, where the various plots are nearing commercial completion.	
3 There are a range of issues around whether both SRB and ERDF outputs will be delivered which raises a risk of clawback against grant for specific projects, particularly those delivered by Business Link. This has been added into the risk register.	Ec Regen Mgr / Hd Finance
<b>Regeneration</b>	
4 This budget includes a £12k discretionary grant to PEER. This will not be paid until a satisfactory SLA is concluded.	Ec Regen Mgr
<b>Strategic Housing Functions</b>	
5 The Chief Executive outlined the areas covered in this budget and noted that decisions on the final structure would be made by the new Head of Service once in post (from end of August). In the interim the resources provided for additional staffing are being used to deliver a number of specific pieces of work identified as being required in the “friendly inspection” carried out by the Audit Commission. The following specific issues were identified:  a) Disabled Facility Grants – Resources are allocated in part based upon the numbers of people in the Borough claiming Disability Living Allowance. Rossendale seems (not uncommonly) to have a relatively low number of claimants relative to need in terms of the number of cases coming forward. Agreed that it would pay dividends to ask CAB and the County Welfare Rights Service to target some work to increase DLA take up in the Borough.	CX

b) There are alternative means of delivering a range of services within this budget and it was agreed that an option appraisal should be carried out in relation to the Private Sector Renewal function as part of the 2007/08 Business Plan, with a view to any change being implemented in 2008/09

Hd ER & SH

c) It was also agreed that in terms of specialist activity such as delivering the Elevate programme there might be economies to be made through joint working with others. This would also be investigated within the 2007/08 business plan.

Hd ER &  
SH

**Minutes of: Policy and Budget Review Panel – Finance**

Date of Meeting: 18<sup>th</sup> July 2006

**PRESENT:**

Cllr D Ruddick – Leader of the Council

Cllr W Challinor – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration

Cllr M Ormerod – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management

Carolyn Williams – Chief Executive

George Graham – Executive Director of Resources

Phil Seddon – Head of Finance

Janice Crawford – Finance Manager

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**Action**

1. The Head of Finance gave a brief overview of the areas of activity covered by this review which included a number of corporate budgets including capital financing and interest and non distributed costs.
2. In terms of the operational activity of the Finance team it was noted that the team had already reduced in size following Stock Transfer and would be expected to further reduce in the event of a Street Scene partnership. However, there are issues about the degree to which the team can reduce in size if the required workload in terms of budget accounts, and levels of division of duties are to be delivered.
3. In relation to this the Head of Finance would keep under review opportunities for providing increased economies of scale through working with others.
4. There was discussion about the level of external audit fees and the degree of choice the Council has as to its auditor. There is no choice in terms of auditor. However elements of the fee can be negotiated and it may be possible to negotiate some change in the event of a CPA reclassification.
5. In relation to specific budgets
  - d) An over provision of c£43k in relation to external audit fees had been identified which represents a permanent saving going forward. This would be removed from the budget.
  - e) An underspend on capital financing and interest of more than £270k had been identified following the changes arising from being debt free following stock transfer. This would be accommodated in the monitoring position and there would be a permanent change as a result of this, although the figure will depend upon analysis of cash flows.

Hd of  
Finance

Hd of  
Finance

**Minutes of: Policy and Budget Review Panel – Human Resources**

Date of Meeting: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006

**PRESENT:**

Cllr J Graham – Portfolio Holder for Human Resources and Member Development

Cllr M Ormerod – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management

Carolyn Williams – Chief Executive

George Graham – Executive Director of Resources

Liz Murphy – Head of Human Resources

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	<b>Action</b>
<p>1. The Head of HR outlined the key areas of activity for the team around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>f) The change agenda, and associated staff consultation;</li><li>g) Individual performance management;</li><li>h) Equalities issues, in particular the equalities standard and the new legislation in relation to age disability and gender.</li><li>i) Engagement with staff;</li><li>j) Organisational development.</li></ul>	
<p><b>Payroll</b></p> <p>2. The changing scale of the organisation means that at some point it will be necessary to review whether this function continues to be carried out in house. In the short term, however, there are key issues about ensuring all data are fit for purpose and that the HR module of the system is fully and properly implemented. It was agreed that the best point in time for any review would be following any transfer of Street Scene services.</p>	Head of HR
<p><b>Training</b></p> <p>3. The change in the nature of training from one off courses to programmes of development activity was discussed. It was accepted that to some extent the budget could reduce with the size of the workforce, However, there are risks to doing this and there needs to be a balance with a need to skill the organisation to deliver to the new agenda, for example around commissioning and community leadership. The position will be kept under review as the change programme progresses.</p>	CX/ Head of HR
<p><b>Risks</b></p> <p>4. Two key risk areas were identified, firstly sickness absence where although there were some areas of real improvement such as Street Scene it was an area that required constant input from HR in order to deliver improvement. Given the overall scale of the HR agenda this constant input could impact elsewhere.</p> <p>5. Job evaluation where the agreement of the Trades Unions to the process was necessary to make effective progress and time is pressing. Further reports will be made to members on these issues as necessary.</p>	

**Minutes of: Policy and Budget Review Panel – Legal and Democratic Services**

Date of Meeting: 9<sup>th</sup> August 2006

**PRESENT:**

Cllr D Ruddick – Leader of the Council  
Cllr W Challinor – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration  
Cllr J Graham – Portfolio Holder for Human Resources and Member Development  
Carolyn Williams – Chief Executive  
George Graham – Executive Director of Resources  
Linda Fisher – Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
Janice Crawford – Finance Manager

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	<b>Action</b>
1. The nature of the budget, which contains a range of costs covering a wide range of areas was outlined in introducing the panel to the subject area.	
<b>Electoral Services</b>	
2. This area is increasingly driven by new standards being issued by the Electoral Commission, which are creating cost pressures, although some of these may be addressed through specific grant funding.	
3. It was noted that the intended review of Polling Stations which could possibly affect costs in this area is likely to have to be postponed due to the need to await new regulations.	
4. It was agreed to examine the options for moving the elections budget on to a “rolling fund” basis at the point of the next County Council elections which is the appropriate opportunity in the cycle to make such a change.	EDR
<b>Members Services</b>	
5. This area covers the costs of members themselves and the servicing of meetings etc.	
6. There is some scope for minor running cost reductions through either better buying or better use of technology. However, the key cost driver is the number of meetings which drives the number of staff. Depending on the options flowing from the Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy there may be a requirement for additional staff. Some staffing resources have already been reallocated to strengthen direct support for individual members.	
7. There was discussion around the need to strengthen the role of the mayoralty, particularly in promoting the Borough and the resource implications which might arise from this. These will be fed through the relevant channels, such as the Remuneration Panel prior to the budget.	HL&DS

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### **Corporate Support**

8. This area principally comprises the costs of the Executive Team and their support together with residual costs of the printing and courier functions which will fall out in future years. Noted that some staff savings have been generated by downgrading a post. In addition it was agreed to review the list of subscriptions to organisations such as the LGA in order to ensure that all are still relevant.

CX and  
EDR

### **Legal Services**

9. Some staffing savings have been identified through regarding vacant posts. More significant running cost savings are expected through replacing paper publications with subscriptions or on line information services.

HL&DS

10. It was noted that this is a particularly small team and the issue of professional viability needs to be kept under review as the Change Programme develops.

EDR and  
HL&DS

### **Property Services**

11. It was explained that there is a significant improvement agenda in this area and that there is significant cross over between the revenue budget and capital programme in this area.

12. Part of the developing approach in this area will be to look at each property and determine what its contribution to the corporate priorities is and then make recommendations to members. This will need to be done on a phased basis.

HL&DS

13. Members asked that in any examination of the Industrial Units consideration be given to whether the Council's relationship with LCDL might be of use in either better management or marketing.

HL&DS and  
HER&SH

14. It was agreed that the strict division of responsibilities between the Council and the County Council in relation to bus shelter should be identified and reported back to members.

HL&DS

### **Licensing Services**

15. This is an area where there is a significant degree of discretion over fees and it was agreed that discretionary fees should be examined in relation to the Council's costs in line with statutory guidance on discretionary charges. In addition it was agreed to examine areas where the Council currently chooses not to implement licensing regimes (e.g. second hand goods dealers) to determine the cost/benefit of improving enforcement. Such a review would probably impact on other areas such as Environmental Health.

HL&DS and  
Licensing  
Mgr

**Minutes of: Policy and Budget Review Panel – Policy and Change Management**

Date of Meeting: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2006

**PRESENT:**

Cllr D Ruddick – Leader of the Council

Cllr W Challinor – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration

Cllr M Ormerod – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management

Carolyn Williams – Chief Executive

George Graham – Executive Director of Resources

Janice Crawford – Finance Manager

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**Action**

1. Apologies were received from the Head of Policy and Change Management who was unexpectedly away from work for family reasons.
2. The Executive Director of Resources explained that other than the cost of two posts and associated running costs this budget contained provision for the production of the Best Value Performance Plan and the annual licence fee for the Covalent Performance Management system. There was thus limited scope for economies and it was suggested that given the small scale of any saving that it would be acceptable to reinvest them within the service.
3. The Chief Executive explained that this service area will be central to the work on preparing the Council for CPA and that therefore there would probably be a need to reprioritise work within the business plan in order to meet the CPA timescales. In the longer term there was overlap in functions across a number of service areas and this would be examined after any CPA process in order to direct resources to key aspects of the continuing improvement journey.

CX

**Minutes of: Policy and Budget Review Panel – Spatial Development**

Date of Meeting: 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006

**PRESENT:**

Cllr D Ruddick – Leader of the Council

Cllr W Challinor – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration

Cllr M Ormerod – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management

Carolyn Williams – Chief Executive

George Graham – Executive Director of Resources

Janice Crawford – Finance Manager

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**Action**

1. The Chief Executive gave an overview of the main issues in this service area, in particular the use of Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) to facilitate the delivery of major pieces of work such as the Core Strategy and Area Action Plans. This approach was both ensuring delivery of the work and minimising risk resulting from the uncertain future of PDG. Utilising this grant within planning although there are no technical restrictions on its use is also desirable with regard to the Council's designation as a Planning Standards Authority.
2. Noted that performance in some areas is hampered by the time expired local plan which supports the emphasis that has been placed upon completing the new planning framework through the LDF process.
3. A report is to be produced for members in October covering the overall options for change in this service area and identifying a clear way forward.

**Building Control**

4. Building Control, as well as being a high performing service is a significant income generator, with fees determined locally. Steps are already taken to maximise the fee chargeable although this has to be balanced against the risk of loss of market share.
5. Work is ongoing to secure a contract for delivery of all BC services to at least one major developer who operates beyond the Borough, which would generate an additional income stream.
6. Other than staff the running costs of the service are quite small. There is, however, a surplus of c£100k retained in the balance sheet from trading activity the future use of which will be examined in the context of the development and investment needs of the service as a whole.
7. Agreed that
  - a) Local performance indicators for the service should be developed and published.

Deputy Cx

b) Opportunities for contract income streams both from local developers and from Green Vale Homes in relation to Out of Hours Services should be maximised as quickly as possible

BC Mgr

c) A briefing document should be provided for members on what the borough functions relating to Building Control are, their cost and the degree of discretion which exist with regard to these functions.

BC Mgr

### **Forward Planning**

8. Identified that this was a lightly staffed function given the scale of the agenda for the service and in particular the areas of activity where currently no activity is undertaken, for instance supplementary planning documents such as design guides. This is an inevitable consequence of the need to concentrate effort on the core of the LDF.

9. In terms of potential additional income streams one does exist in relation to pre-application advice. However, it was felt that overall quality of service should be improved before such a charge is considered.

10. An area of concern is the level of continuing professional development available to staff across this service area.

11. Noted that annual contributions are made from this budget to a “fighting fund” for the inquiry on what is now the LDF, which mitigates the risk around needing to meet lumpy items of expenditure in one year.

### **Development Control**

12. .Noted that the overall service review due in October would deal with the most significant issues in this area.

13. It was suggested that the service review should look at the links between enforcement activity in this service area and others to identify whether there are potential economies of scale being lost.

14. Noted the volatility of the income budget in this area which had been addressed in the 2006/07 budget process, although actual income is now running somewhat ahead of budget. Clearly volumes of activity can vary significantly from year to year and the options for future service delivery need to look at whether it is possible to “flex” some element of costs in line with activity.

Deputy Cx

**Minutes of: POLICY AND BUDGET REVIEW PANEL – STREET SCENE AND LIVEABILITY**

**Date of Meeting: 13 September 2006**

**PRESENT:** Cllr Duncan Ruddick, Leader of the Council  
 Cllr Judith Driver, Portfolio Holder for Street Scene & Liveability  
 Cllr Michael Ormerod, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management  
 Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive  
 George Graham, Executive Director of Resources  
 Carole Todd, Head of Street Scene and Liveability  
 David Heyes, Account Manager (Operational)

<p><b>1. OVERVIEW</b></p> <p>1.1 Cllr Ormerod outlined a range of key overarching considerations for the panel in terms of identifying efficiencies through the creation of 'fit for purpose' services prior to implementation of any potential partnership proposals</p>	
<p><b>2. CLIENT SERVICES</b></p> <p>2.1 Noted that significant elements of cost in this area relate to one off costs and projects</p> <p>2.2 Agreed that purpose and nature of the Environmental Initiatives budget needs to be fully explained and potentially rehomed.</p> <p>2.3 Agreed to carry out a corporate review of the numbers of mobile phones issued and associated contract costs</p>	<p><b>Accts Mgr (O)</b></p> <p><b>ICT Mgr</b></p>
<p><b>3. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</b></p> <p>3.1 Identified shortfall in resources for education and awareness programmes (eg Climate Change, Smoke Free etc). Funding requirement possibly in the region of the 10K to be considered in budget process</p>	<p><b>H of SS&amp; L to prepare bid</b></p>

<p><b>4. COMMUNITY SAFETY</b></p> <p>4.1 Noted the risks to successful performance in this area from the changes in the way funding is channelled to District CDRP's with resources coming via the County Council. Agreed that Rossendale Borough Council should raise concerns with the Home Office in the same way as other Districts</p>	<p><b>Comm Safety Mgr to draft letter for CX</b></p>
<p><b>5. HIGHWAYS</b></p> <p>5.1 Noted this is a residual budget of which c. £12k is required to deal with costs shunted from the County Council (weed spraying and leaf clearance). The balance relating to dealing with various minor repair and pothole issues needs to be found an appropriate home</p>	<p><b>ED (R)</b></p>
<p><b>6. NEAT TEAMS</b></p> <p>6.1 Similar issue to Environmental Health in relation to Education and Awareness Budget of c. £10k</p> <p>6.2 Discussed initiative to address empty properties using s.215 powers. Outside the Elevate area there will need to be a contingency budget for works in default which can be recovered through charges on properties.</p> <p>6.3 Identified need for bin stores and collection points will need to be reflected in a multi year capital programme.</p> <p>6.4 Noted the various issues around the markets and agreed to carry out a piece of work to examine their commercial viability and means of levering in investment in the context of the AAP's etc.</p>	<p><b>H of SS &amp; L to prepare bid</b></p> <p><b>H of SS &amp; L to prepare a bid</b></p> <p><b>H of SS &amp; L to prepare a bid</b></p> <p><b>ED(R) to scope</b></p>

<p><b>7. REFUSE AND RECYCLING</b></p> <p>7.1 Identified that there are risks to the income stream from 'cost sharing' arising from the need to increase the participation in recycling. Agreed that an action plan should be developed and implemented to address this issue involving targeted education and awareness raising</p> <p>7.2 Identified risk around the Trade Waste Service as a result of LCC increasing disposal costs for the Trade Waste Stream. This may fundamentally affect the viability of the service, despite mitigation measures including the promotion of Trade Waste recycling. Agreed that during the budget process the viability of the service, which should at least break even, should be assessed.</p> <p>7.3 Noted that ongoing costs of initial improvements at the Henrietta St Depot to ensure environmental compliance can be met by reordering current Budgets</p> <p>7.4 Noted the need to incorporate the programme for new and replacement bins within the Capital Programme, freeing up revenue resources</p> <p>7.5 Noted a gradual reduction in dependency on agency staff within current budgets is planned in line with previous agreements with TU's.</p>	<p><b>H of SS &amp; L to prepare action plan</b></p> <p><b>Accts Mgr (O) and H of SS &amp; L</b></p> <p><b>H of SS &amp; L + Accts Mgr (O)</b></p> <p><b>H of SS &amp; L to prepare a bid</b></p> <p><b>H of SS &amp; L and Accts Mgr (O) to circulate costed plan</b></p>
<p><b>8 STREET CLEANSING</b></p> <p>8.1 Agreed that options for permanently funding the temporary additional handsweepers should be presented within the 2007/8 budget.</p> <p>8.2 Noted issues around weekend and bank holiday cover and a suggestion that income generation options should be examined. These to be followed up in future budget round.</p>	<p><b>H of SS &amp; L and Accts Mgr (O)</b></p> <p><b>H of SS &amp; L to present in 2008/9 budget round</b></p>
<p><b>9 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES</b></p> <p>9.1 Agreed that previous work in this area should be followed up with a policy options paper looking at both the community safety and asset management issue and liabilities as well as potential community partnership options.</p>	<p><b>ED (R) and H of SS&amp; L</b></p>

<b>10 OPEN SPACES</b>	
10.1 Agreed to undertake a piece of work comparing pitch hire and cemetery charges with other authorities to feed into the setting of changes for 2007 /8	<b>Accts Mgr (O)</b>
10.2 The lack of horticultural displays outside the parks was noted as an issue where some work with the wider community could impact positively	<b>H of SS &amp; L to produce discussion paper</b>
10.3 Various issues and risks around Bereavement Services were identified. Agreed that the policy option for a Bereavement Services Officer should be reconsidered; this budget round	<b>ED (R) to ensure option included in the process</b>