

BUDGET PROPOSALS REPORT FOR PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES 2010/11

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REASON FOR ITEM

To comply with the Budget and Policy Framework procedure rules as part of the agreed consultation process for the General Fund revenue budget and capital programme for 2010/11, this report sets out the draft revenue budget and capital programme of the Planning and Community Services / Group for 2010/11, along with indicative projections for the following three years. Following consideration by Cabinet on 17 December 2009, these proposals are now under consultation, and the proposals for each Group are being discussed at the January cycle of Policy Overview Committees.

Cabinet will next consider the budget proposals on 18 February 2010, and the report will include comments received from Policy Overview Committees. At the meeting on 18 February 2010 Cabinet will make recommendations to full Council regarding the budget and Council Tax levels for 2010/11. Full Council will meet to agree the budgets and Council Tax for 2010/11 on 25 February 2010.

The Committee needs to consider the budget proposals as they relate to Planning and Community Services / Group, but within the corporate context and the constraints applying as a result of the aggregate financial position of the authority.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE COMMITTEE

It is recommended that the Committee notes the budget projections contained in the report, and comments as appropriate on the combined budget proposals put forward by the Planning and Community Services / Group, within the context of the corporate budgetary position.

INFORMATION

Background

1. This is the second opportunity within the planning cycle for the Policy Overview Committee to consider issues relating to budget planning for 2010/11. The budget report to Council for Council Tax setting for 2009/10 contained savings of £7.5 million rising to a cumulative total savings of £20.1 million required for 2010/11. Cabinet have since provided a budget strategy to address this savings requirement by breaking down the overall target into thematic groupings consisting of specific savings targets. Progress towards the achievement of these targets has been monitored monthly by CMT and reported to the Leader of the Council. In addition, all Groups have been involved in a three stage budget planning and challenge process, and it is the output of this process that forms the basis of the budget proposals set out in this report.

2. At its meeting in July 2009, the Committee considered the overall budget planning context, pressures and constraints faced by the Group. The report outlines the Group's draft revenue budget and capital programme for 2010/11, with indicative projections for the following three years.
3. The structure of the report reflects the budget proposals reported to Cabinet on 17 December 2009, and sets out the aggregate corporate position, followed by Planning and Community Services / Group's proposals extracted from the corporate budget.

The Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules

4. The consultation on the budget proposals commenced on 30 December 2009, and reflects the recommendations and decisions taken by Cabinet on 17 December 2009.
5. There will be a further consideration by Cabinet of the budget proposals on 18 February 2010, including comments from Policy Overview Committees. These will be collated and reported back to Cabinet by the Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy Overview Committee. Council will be requested to approve the Cabinet's proposals on 25 February 2010, and if approved without further amendment they will be effective immediately.

Corporate Summary

6. While the focus of the discussion for the Policy Overview Committee should be the specific services within its remit, it is important that this discussion is conducted in the context of the overall corporate financial position.
7. The revenue budget proposals have been developed to deliver a zero increase in Council Tax for 2010/11 whilst maintaining balances and reserves at £12 million over the medium term. This means that Cabinet will have achieved the following budget parameters:
 8. zero increase for Hillingdon's element of the Council Tax for the second successive year
 9. zero increases on discretionary fees and charges for Hillingdon's residents for the second successive year
 10. priority growth available for new initiatives averaging over £1 million in each of the last four years
11. The budget strategy has been delivered through a rigorous focus on identifying savings and efficiencies across the Council through a flexible thematic approach to setting savings targets that has been monitored in conjunction with the Leader of the Council through the budget process.

12. This has led to the identification of £9.8 million of savings for 2010/11, and has allowed the draft budget proposals to absorb £8.1 million of service budget pressures.
13. Outstanding issues remain over the level of funding for services to unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Previous assumptions of an improved funding regime based on a move towards specialist authority status have not materialised thus far, although work is continuing to influence the approach to asylum funding being developed by the UK Border Agency. Accordingly additional funding for asylum risks of over £0.7 million has been added back into the contingency for 2010/11, to bring the funding in the draft budget to £1.2 million. This means that the budget proposals only provide a part of the £3 million budget pressure being reported on asylum services in the current year, pending the outcome of lobbying over special funding with Ministers in the Home Office. Consequently a further review of the funding of financial risks in the Development and Risk Contingency will be conducted prior to the recommendation of the final budget proposals for 2010/11 to Cabinet and Council in February 2010.
14. Provision has been made in the budget strategy for £1.4 million of priority growth. A range of items have already been included against this provision based on Cabinet's known expenditure commitments, which to date account for £0.4 million of the provision for 2010/11. These items are set out in the following table. Out of the total £1.4 million priority growth a sum of £1 million remains unallocated for further initiatives during the financial year.

Table 1: Priority Growth

Proposal Title	Growth 2010/1 1 (£000s)	Growth 2011/1 2 (£000s)
<u>Existing Commitments / New Proposals</u>		
Running Costs of Additional Young People's Centres	239	370
Investment in Support for Carers	70	70
Hillingdon Improvement Programme Officer	53	53
Voluntary Sector Grant Programme	50	50
Sub-total	412	543
Unallocated Priority Growth	1,000	2,000
Total	1,412	2,543

15. The draft capital programme over four years is worth £236.2 million with £83.0 million of capital expenditure in 2010/11. This includes funding for new General Fund projects of £16.7 million such as the development of new library, adult education and youth service facilities adjacent to the existing South Ruislip Library, the upgrade and enhancement of Highgrove Pool, the refurbishment or redevelopment of seven other libraries over three years, the completion of the upgrade of recycling facilities at New Years Green Lane Civic Amenity Site and the improvement of environmental assets such as Ruislip Lido and Little Britain Lake.
16. In addition, the capital programme provides almost £10 million of funding for key ongoing programmes including the Chrysalis programme, the Leader's Initiative and the upgrade of local town centres.

Planning and Community Services / Group Budget Proposals

Summary of Key Financial Issues

17. The various Planning income streams continue to be a key area for the group given the economic conditions over the last 18 months, and the impact this is having on the housing market.
18. The most significant area of income pressure is in Development Control, and within that area the fees for Major applications. This is a volatile area given the scale of fees, which can be significant, and the limited volume of applications. Major applications normally account for two thirds of the Development Control Income. The income from Minor and Other applications also continues to be depressed, and are down by 26% and 19% respectively from the 3 year average levels. This is being managed by use of the contingent budgets see below para 27 and 28.

Group Revenue Budget 201011

19. The movement between the current year's budget and the draft budget requirement for 2010/11 is summarised in Table 2 below. An explanation of each of the lines in Table 2 is set out in the following sections and in Appendix A.

Table 2: Group Revenue Budget 2010/11

	Budget (£000s)
Budget 2009/10	13,519
Inflation	0
Corporate Items	(80)
Service Pressures	61
Priority Growth	53
Savings	(400)
Other Adjustments	0
Draft Group Revenue Budget 2010/11	13,153

Service Pressures

20. The identification of all service pressures, thereby reducing the likelihood of unexpected overspends within the financial year, is one of the key objectives of the strategic budget process. Failure to identify a pressure over which there is no control is likely to result in an overspend in the year, and a need to take corrective action that may have an impact on services elsewhere in the authority.

21. Table 2 above includes service pressures of £61k, the most significant of which relates to the full year effect from offsetting the Adult Education real terms reduction in LSC funding, an item that was agreed in 2009/10. This figure also contains the impact from Supplementary Business rates on Council premises and the Business Rates Revaluation.

Savings

22. There are six key strategic themes that cut across all service areas and provide a framework against which savings proposals in this report have been grouped, which are:

- Procurement
- Process Efficiency
- Effectiveness / Preventative Services
- Maximising Funding Opportunities
- Income Generation
- Service Prioritisation

23. The savings included in the draft budget for Planning and Community Services / Group total £0.4 million and are included in Appendix A. and are summarised in the table below.

<i>Savings Proposals</i>	Saving 2010/11 (£000s)	Saving 2011/12 (£000s)
Procurement	20	20
Process Efficiency	262	280
Maximising Funding Opportunities	60	60
Income Generation	58	58
Total Savings Proposals	400	418

24. Of the savings for 2010/11, £262k are to be achieved through process efficiency. This consists of £155k in planning and transportation, where the savings are being achieved through a combination of a reduction in posts, or a minor restructure that replaces higher graded posts with lower graded. A sum of £73k from Arts Culture and Libraries, where the savings are a mix of staff and non pay, such as changing the external contractors used by the Arts service. With £34k from Leisure services, through a restructuring of the Sports and Leisure team.

25. The balance of the savings of £138k, come from the 3 other themes. £20k from procurement measures for the libraries material fund; £60k from maximising funding opportunities, achieved through the recharge from the Community Safety Reward Grant for common assault and fire targets; £58k from a mix of new planning fees, income targets for the Minet site and charging non-residents a higher fee for non-LSC adult education courses.

Priority Growth

26. Growth for Hillingdon Improvement Programme Officer for Planning and Community Services / Group has been included in the draft budget for consultation. This is based on Cabinet's known expenditure commitments, and is drawn from the items included in Table 1 above. A sum of £1 million remains unallocated for further priority growth initiatives during the financial year.

Development and Risk Contingency

27. The Development and Risk Contingency provides for resources within the revenue budget that are unallocated at the beginning of the year, but that can be applied to issues as they arise during the year. The contingency is therefore used to budget for items where the probability or value of items is uncertain at the beginning of the year. The current draft Development and Risk Contingency

includes items totalling £1.281 million for 2010/11 for the Planning and Community Services / Group.

28. Key items within this are the provisions for the planning income streams of Land Charges, Development Control and Building Control, along with a contingent sum for the running of the Golf courses.

Fees and Charges

29. The Council is empowered to seek income from fees and charges to service users across a wide range of activities. Some of these fees and charges are set by the Government or other stakeholders, but many others are set at the discretion of the Council, based on Cabinet's recommendations.

30. Cabinet agreed a fees and charges policy for the Council in February 2009 that sets out the overarching approach and objectives for setting fees and charges in Hillingdon. These objectives are summarised as:

- putting residents first, through the Hillingdon First residents' card;
 - delivery of the strategic objectives of each service area and its contribution to the overall strategy of the Council as set out in the Council Plan;
 - delivery of the Council's objectives for older people;
 - delivery of the Council's objectives for children and young people;
 - delivery of the Council's objectives for families;
 - recognising the particular contribution of certain groups and use charges flexibly, for example in respect of older people, ex-military service personnel, local economically active young people, and other groups;
 - taking into account the Council's approach to delivering value for money and continuous improvement in all of its services.
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- Schedules detailing the proposals relating to fees and charges for 2010/11 for the Planning and Community Services / Group are attached at Appendix B.

Capital Programme

31. The capital programme for 2009/10 was approved by Cabinet and Council as a one-year capital budget that completes the ambitious capital strategy dating back to the start of the current Administration, the centrepiece of which has been the major investment in leisure and cultural facilities funded by a targeted disposal of high value surplus sites.

32. The ability also to continue such a strategy in the future has been severely affected by the impact of the recession on property prices and consequent reduction in capital receipts over the last 18 months.

33. The process of developing the capital programme has therefore focused on maximising the use of identified funding, and sustaining key ongoing programmes through a closer alignment of resources including revenue funding streams to capital expenditure, in order to minimise the level of new borrowing that ultimately impact on the budget requirement funded through Council Tax.
34. A summary of the draft capital programme for the Planning and Community Services / Group is shown in Appendix C. Key items within the draft capital programme are the refurbishment of Highgrove Pool, which is estimated to cost £4.1m, and the continuation of the Library refurbishment programme. The proposed programme includes the replacement of South Ruislip Library with a mixed development that incorporates a new Library and Youth Centre alongside residential units. The proceeds from the sales of these units will fund the rest of the development. A similar proposal is being developed to replace Hayes End library. It is proposed that the new-build library will be funded by the development of residential units.

SUGGESTED COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

To consider the report and make comments on the detail. Comments will then be considered by Corporate Services and Partnership Policy Overview Committee who will then submit composite POC comments to Cabinet.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Medium Term Financial Forecast 2010/11 – 2013/14 – report to Cabinet 17 December 2009