

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)11th January 2007**PRESENT:-****Labour Group**

Councillor Southern (Chair), Councillor Richards (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Carroll, Dunn, Jones, Shepherd, Tilley and Whyman, M.B.E.

Conservative Group

Councillors Harrison, Mrs. Hood (substitute for Councillor Hood), Shaw and Mrs. Wheeler (substitute for Councillor Mrs. Littlejohn).

Independent Member

Councillor Mrs. Walton.

In Attendance

Councillor Bell (Labour Group) and Councillor Atkin (Conservative Group).

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the Meeting were received from Councillors Hood and Mrs. Littlejohn (Conservative Group).

MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEEHCS/71. **SERVICE BUDGETS 2006/2007 AND 2007/2008**

The Committee considered a report on the probable outturn for 2006/07 and the estimate of net revenue expenditure for 2007/08. The report detailed proposals for the level of the Committee's fees and charges for the next financial year. In addition the report set out an analysis of the Committee's proposed service development bids. The Committee's net revenue expenditure was summarised in Appendix 1 of the report which set out the budgets for each main cost centre and aggregated several of the main service areas. A summary of this information was provided in the table set out below:-

Analysis of Net Revenue Expenditure 2006/07 to 2007/08	Approved Budget 2006/07 £'000	Probable Out-turn 2006/07 £'000	Original Estimate 2007/08 £'000
Public Health Services	64,800	50,030	50,150
General Fund (Private Sector) Housing	526,100	620,040	659,320
Parks and Open Spaces	883,350	883,710	929,700
Leisure Centres	219,330	238,780	250,510
Crime Prevention	600,920	584,600	374,910
Community Development	471,130	477,890	564,560
Capital Charges	501,500	1,679,650	975,100
Committee Total	3,267,130	4,534,700	3,804,250

Members were advised that although there may not have been any major change in costs, the allocation of central charges had changed between years. Further analysis of the Committee's budgets were set out in the following table:

SERVICE AREA RECHARGED	Original Estimate 2006/07 £	Probable Out-Turn 2006/07 £	Original Estimate 2007/08 £
Highways and Streets	67,940	78,730	83,160
Gypsy Sites	1,060	1,230	1,300
Cemeteries	131,230	154,750	163,930
Parks	179,860	213,600	226,530
Maurice Lea Park	102,360	0	0
Open Spaces	34,930	41,190	43,630
Housing – Sheltered Accommodation	106,250	125,300	132,730
Total Cost of DSO	623,630	614,800	651,280

The details of the Committee's services by cost type were detailed in the following table:-

Analysis of Net Revenue Expenditure 2006/07 to 2007/08	Approved Budget 2006/07 £'000	Probable Out-turn 2006/07 £'000	Original Estimate 2007/08 £'000
Employee Costs	1,124,410	1,122,570	1,162,750
Premises Costs	901,470	1,047,710	1,064,190
Transport and Plant Costs	109,830	119,890	116,450
Supplies and Services	1,015,990	1,047,900	812,270
Costs under Agency Agreements	284,290	292,960	294,700
Departmental and Central Recharges	1,221,820	1,302,560	1,517,840
Capital Charges	553,420	2,556,930	1,292,450
Total Expenditure	5,211,230	7,490,520	6,260,650
Grants and Reimbursements	501,570	1,526,810	813,280
Fees and Charges	460,440	549,890	652,930
Internal Recharges	982,090	879,120	990,190
Total Income	1,944,100	2,955,820	2,546,400
Net Committee Total	3,267,130	4,534,700	3,804,250

Capital Charges

In accordance with Accounting regulations, all Council services were required to show the capital cost of using assets that were used in providing services. These came in the form of internal recharges from the Council's Finance and Management Committee and consisted of three elements depending on the type of asset/expenditure incurred:-

- Interest Charge
- Depreciation
- Deferred Charge

Members were informed that capital charges varied from year to year, especially deferred charges, as they were dependent on the level of capital grants and contributions in the year. Accounting adjustments for the Committee were reversed out in the consolidated accounts of the Council as reported to the Finance and Management Committee.

The budget for 2007/08 had been compiled initially in November 2006 and an allowance had been made for inflation, which had been added to cover price increases to March 2008. Inflation measures were based on data available from HM Treasury for various categories of income and expenditure. The following assumptions had been built into the estimates:-

- Employee Costs – 3%
- Responsive Repairs and Maintenance – 2.9%
- Planned Maintenance – 3.25%
- Utilities – various, as per re-tendered contracts
- Business Rates – 3.2%
- Fuel – (minus 3%)
- Insurance Premiums – 2.9%
- Other Supplies and Services – 2.7%
- Office Expenses (equipment, stationery, etc.) – cash limited
- Income from Fees and Charges (excluding rents) - 2.5%

The estimates were also based on service levels in 2006/07 continuing and included any full year effects of previous growth and capital expenditure. However, any non-recurring items had been removed.

Capital Investment

The report outlined the current schemes (non-housing) in the Council’s approved capital investment programme for 2006/07. These were as follows:-

SCHEME	COST £'000	NOTE
Renovation of Cemeteries	47	2006/07 is the final year of a 3-year programme.
Improvements to Swadlincote Woodlands Forest Park	72	Funded from Section 106 monies.
Crime Prevention	100	£60,000 per year included in the programme to 2010.
Provision of Youth Facilities	200	Further investment of £1/2m has been planned for the following 2 years to 2009. Around 50% being funded externally.
Replacement of Christmas Lights	25	Completed.
Restoration of Maurice Lea Memorial Park	103	Works now all completed.
Modernisation of Play Areas and Safety Surfacing	100	Money carried over from 2005/06. Works being undertaken in partnership around the District.

Improvement Works at Midway Fishponds	10	Feasibility study and some priority work undertaken.
Contribution to Artificial Sports Pitch	99	Scheme now complete.
Community Partnership Scheme	343	Unlikely to be totally allocated by the year-end. £100,000 per year also included in the programme to 2010.
Rosliston Forestry Centre	70	Contribution to final phase of works.
Various Football Pitch and Car Park Improvements	28	This will be utilised in 2006/07.
Etwall Leisure Centre	250	Provision set-aside as contribution to upgrading/developing facility. Full partnership funding still to be secured.
Greenbank Leisure Centre – Plant Upgrade	5	Still to be committed.

Proposed Fees and Charges 2007/08

Appendix 2 of the report provided a schedule of the Committee's proposed fees and charges that would operate from 1st April 2007. It also included a comparison to the existing charges. No major changes were proposed for 2007/08 and generally, the increase would be 2.5%.

Proposed Service Developments 2007/08

The Service and Financial Planning Working Panel had met on 12th December 2006 and discussed the bids submitted in the light of the Council's overall financial position. The revenue bids totalled over £3m and the proposed new capital investment bids were £1.9m. The revenue proposals relevant to this Committee were summarised as follows:-

- Contribution to the Domestic Violence Outreach Service
- Further Promotion of Rosliston Forestry Centre
- Fear of Crime Project
- Continuation of Get Active in the Forest Physical Activity
- Young People's Cultural Development Project
- Team Assistant – Disabled Adaptations Services
- Derbyshire Sports Awards Project
- Swadfest
- Support for procuring Greenbank Leisure Centre contract

Councillor Harrison asked questions about the calculation of capital charges, the recharging of central costs and requested further financial information on the homelessness service. The Head of Finance and Property Services provided appropriate information in response to the questions.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the budgeted revenue income and expenditure for 2006/07 and 2007/08 for the Committee's services be recommended to the Finance and Management Committee for approval.**

(2) That the Committee's proposed fees and charges for 2007/08 as set out in the report now submitted be approved.

HCS/72. **FORMER SITE OF NOS. 22-28 ASKEW GROVE, REPTON**

The Committee considered a report on a request for the relaxation of the restrictive covenants on the site of land at Nos. 22-28 Askew Grove, Repton to allow for the construction of eleven properties on that site. Between February 1988 and August 2000 the Council had sold four council houses at 22-28 Askew Grove, Repton under the Right to Buy procedure. A standard covenant was contained within the deeds of each sale. The covenant was imposed with the intention of preserving the general amenity of the Council's remaining properties in the vicinity.

In March 2006 the original developer sold that site and a new developer obtained planning permission for the erection of eleven houses. The new developer had requested a further relaxation of the restrictive covenant.

Repton Parish Council had initially given its backing to the proposed eleven houses on the site during the planning process. On 25th September 2006, it wrote to the District Council requesting that the relaxation of the covenant be withheld if a planning appeal for thirteen houses was successful. Subsequent to this, on 10th October 2006 the Parish Council wrote to the District Council asking that the relaxation be withheld for any development on the site. Due to the complexity of the case and a number of questions relating to the enforceability of the covenant, Counsel's Opinion had been obtained.

Counsel advised that in the circumstances of the case and based upon case law, the covenant restricted only the future use of the site, but not the number of dwelling houses that might be built upon it. The Council could not prevent the building of eleven properties on the site as there had been no breach of the covenant.

RESOLVED:-

That following the receipt of Counsel's opinion, the Committee grants the request for the relaxation of the restrictive covenants on the site of Nos. 22-28 Askew Grove, Repton to allow for the construction of eleven properties at that site.

HCS/73. **AUDIT COMMISSION BEST VALUE REVIEW OF CULTURAL SERVICES**

The Committee considered a report on the Best Value Review of Cultural Services and the programme of appraisal and Audit Commission inspection. The Audit Commission Best Value Review of Cultural Services would commence in March 2007. Under the theme of Cultural Services, the Audit Commission would be looking at Value for Money, Human Resources Strategies, Heritage, Information Technology, Tourism, Economic Development and the impact of Crime and Disorder and Leisure provision throughout the district. The initiatives that impacted on the health of the population would also be examined. A number of key lines of enquiry questions would be asked by the Audit Commission to assist in the examination of services. A judgement would be formed on where the service was and its likely prospects for improvement.

The Best Value Review would be led by Mr. Mark Alflat, Director of Community Services.

RESOLVED:-

- (1) That the Committee notes the implications and the timeframe for the Best Value Review of Cultural Services.***
- (2) That all Members of the Council be invited to attend a seminar on the findings of the Best Value Review of the Cultural Services Action Plan in February 2007.***

R.W. SOUTHERN

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 6.30 p.m.