

Report of	Meeting	Date
Leader of the Council	Executive Cabinet	22 February 2007

GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2007/2008 - UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT`

1. To seek approval of the Executive Cabinet's budget and Council Tax proposals for 2007/2008 following the budget consultation, for consideration by the Council on 27 February 2007.
2. This paper focussed purely on the current situation regarding expenditure, other details relating to the general financial position of the Council will be included in the papers at the budget setting meeting.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3. The proposals set out in the Executive Cabinet's proposal feed directly into the Council's key objectives, targets and actions for 2007/2008 and beyond.

PRIORITY	2007/2008 BUDGET
Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the central Lancashire sub-region	The 2007/08 proposal incorporates additional revenue and capital budgets to contribute towards the targets contained in the Corporate Plan.
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances	The 2007/08 draft budget identifies the rural dimension and allocates funding towards supporting rural areas.
Involving people in their communities	The extension of the Forums requires additional resources to deliver, which in the main will be met from existing budgets. However cash is identified to devolve some budget decision making to local neighbourhoods.
Improved access to public services	The Council's Plan for implementing the customer access and design strategy is in progress. The building blocks in terms of the technology are now in place and no further resources are required at this stage.
Develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	The Streetscene, Neighbourhoods and Environment restructure is designed to give more focus to community safety and neighbourhood working.
Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organisation	The focus of the budget for 2007/08 is on developing the local strategic partnership. Resources both in terms of staffing and cash are now available to pump prime the partnership and to ensure Council's role as a community leader is enhanced.

4. The Council's priorities address the key issues identified in the Community Strategy. The Corporate Strategy represents the Council's commitments to achieving the objectives and outcomes specified in that document.

RISK ISSUES

5. The issues raised and recommendations made in this report involve risk considerations in the following categories:

Strategy	√	Information	
Reputation		Regulatory/Legal	√
Financial	√	Operational	
People		Other	

6. The budget is concerned with managing the financial risks facing the Council and ensuring that the relevant regulations are complied with. Failure to use the Council's resources in the most appropriate way may result ultimately in a strategic failure as the objectives, targets and measures contained in the Council's Corporate Strategy will not be achieved. Reference to risk is made throughout this report and a specific analysis is set out in my S25 report contained in the budget papers.

BACKGROUND

7. The Executive Cabinet published a draft budget at the beginning of December 2006, setting out its broad intentions for spending and investment in the Borough for the coming financial year. Some revisions to these proposals have now been made taking account of developments and feedback in the intervening period. Throughout this period we have been keen to receive the comments and input from as many people as possible. The responses to our invitation to comment are set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

BUDGET CONSULTATION

8. The draft budget was approved for consultation in December 2006. The responses received, including the result of Scrutiny undertaken by the Panels are shown in Appendices 1, 2 and 3.
9. Executive Cabinet need to consider these responses and decide if it proposes to make any further amendments to its draft budget. A formal response to Scrutiny will also be required.
10. In general whilst responses were limited, they welcomed the freezing of Council Tax. In summary however, key concerns raised through the consultation relate to the following areas:
- Concerns regarding the Police Community Support Officer proposals
 - Issues raised in relation to the Urban vs Rural divide
 - A desire to see more resources put into Streetscene services, particularly cleansing and grounds maintenance
 - Concerns about the quality of developments following the deletion of the Urban design post

- Concerns regarding the impact of charging for rodent control services
- Concerns regarding the public realm in the town centre

BUDGET PROPOSALS

11. Since the budget consultation document was published a number of adjustments have been made to the continuation budget, based upon updated information. Set out in the table below is a summary of the movements.

Draft net budget requirement as per consultation		14,110
Budget adjustments	Net expenditure	69
	Net financing	(130)
		<hr/> 14,049
Net change in external financing		22
		<hr/> 14,071
Updated net budget requirement		<hr/> 14,071
Additional funds available		(39)

12. The table shows that whilst there have been movements in expenditure and income projections, the overall impact is that further headroom exists in the budget. In terms of policy choices Members should note the following:
13. Of the amendments made to the draft budget one further policy choice has been made. This involves a proposal to no longer provide the annual Civic Dinner. Not all the saving from not undertaking the event will be taken and a civic function will be provided at the Mayoral Civic Sunday Event.
14. An explanation of all the budgets adjustment is included at Appendix 5.
15. The detailed summary of variations incorporating the changes and showing the movement from the draft budget to the latest position is set out in Appendix 6. The analysis shows that whilst inflation continues to have a significant effect on the Council, a continuing review of the budget and the strategic decisions made with regard to savings means the Council should it so wish will be able to freeze its element of the Council Tax for 2007/08.
16. Pressure continues to be placed on the Council's budget from the cost of recycling and the cost of benefits. In addition it has been necessary to manage carefully the impact on the Council of stock transfer. The Council's objective was always to ensure that the transfer had at the very least a cost neutral effect on the taxpayer. I am pleased to report that this has broadly been achieved, but is subject to the DCLG confirming that they are willing to pay off the Council's Housing Revenue Account Debt. The DCLG agreed to debt repayment at a meeting held on 8 February 2007.
17. The biggest key financial risk facing the Council remains to the outcome of job evaluation. Suffice to say that the outcome of the process in my view will determine the financial strength or otherwise of the Council going forward and will be the one single event that determines whether or not the Council can continue to direct resources into priority areas.

18. In terms of the draft budget the Council has maintained its record of directing resources into key priorities. The growth areas represent the Council's contribution to improving service in the following areas:
- The Town Centre regeneration
 - Community Safety
 - Improving the Local Strategic Partnership
 - Supporting rural communities
19. The savings generated are the result of the administration strategy of:
- Continuing to focus on savings in the back office
 - Using procurement and Partnership working to deliver Value for Money
 - Making best use of the Council's asset base
20. In particular the back office changes have focussed on some of the high performing areas of the Council where it is now felt that resources can be redirected to other priorities. Examples of this include the changes proposed to the Revenues and Benefits Sections of the Council.
21. With regard to the headroom now available in the budget and as a result of the feedback from the budget consultation, the following amendments are proposed:
- The re-instatement of the Urban Designer post, recognising that the quality of planning development is an important issue. This will cost neutral as further departmental budget savings have been identified.
 - The proposed changes for rodent control services will not be implemented as the Executive recognise that corporate information regarding infestation is important (+£10K).
 - As many organisations and individuals find the diaries of use, particularly in relation to the information contained therein, a diary will be produced but which is less costly to produce (+£2K).
 - The proposal to reduce the Council's contribution for the Welfare Rights Officer will not be implemented. This will be for one year only and the funding will be removed from 2008/09. This change is to recognise that time is required to ensure that where possible adequate coverage is maintained within the borough, but given the uncertainty regarding the County Council plans, a period of notice to the County Council as appropriate (+£5K).
 - With regard to the Customer, Democratic and Legal Directorate restructure the cost of the restructuring is to be provided for in the 2007/08 base budget (£22K).

THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME

22. The Executive again issued its draft Capital Programme in December 2006. The programme reflected a change in emphasis from previous programmes whilst also building on previous strategies with more cash for:
- Rural Communities

- Supporting the Local Strategic Partners
- The Town Centre Development

23. No consultation responses were received in relation to Capital and the programme will remain unchanged unless the Cabinet has any further alternatives to propose.

CONCLUSION

24. This budget continues to direct resources into key Corporate Priorities and address concerns identified by the Borough citizens. Particular focus in this year's budget in terms of investment is given to the Town Centre where the Administration are determined to build on the town's strengths.

25. The objective to achieve a freeze in the Chorley Borough Council's element of the Council Tax, together with the impact of the Stock Transfer has meant that significant savings/efficiencies have had to be made. This update includes some scope for further amendments to the draft forecast but does not change the overall expected position for 2007/08, where a balanced budget is being proposed.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES

26. There are no Human Resources related issues associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

27. The Executive/Council are recommended to:

- Consider the Consultation responses received and determine whether any further budget adjustments are required; and
- Approve the proposed budget amendments set out in paragraph 21.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) (If the recommendations are accepted)

28. To agree final recommendations for the 2007/08 General Fund Revenue Budget.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

29. None.

GARY HALL
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Gary Hall	5480	5 February 2007	ADMINREP/REPORT

Brindle Parish Council – by email 16th January 2007 at 3.20 p.m.

CHORLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL - BUDGET CONSULTATION 2007/2008

Thank you for consulting on the draft council tax and spending plans for next year. We are grateful for the additional time given to consider your proposals as part of the consultation. It is good to see that Chorley Borough Council has listened to previous comments by the Parish Council and local residents as part of the 'you said, we did' strapline.

The Parish Council would like to make the following comments on your council tax proposals for next year:

Level of Council Tax

We welcome the fact that council tax for the Chorley Borough Council element will remain the same. Over recent years the ever-increasing levels of council tax has had a detrimental impact on vulnerable residents and those on fixed incomes.

Investment/Re-direction of resources

Existing resources should be re-directed to streetscene services, such as more cleansing and better maintenance of green areas, which has a major impact on the quality of life of local people. This is a major priority area for the residents of Brindle.

We are disappointed that there is relatively small amount of investment and re-direction of resources to the rural areas of Chorley. Whilst Chorley town centre is important to the Borough, there are small shopping areas and local facilities, which play an important part in thriving local communities. Most Brindle residents do not naturally look to Chorley as a centre, but to other towns and villages. More should be done to strengthen local communities.

Chorley Borough Council should also look at the needs of rural communities when planning and developing services, with many residents classed as deprived because of the social isolation and lack of facilities. The grants that the Borough Council once provided to establish and develop community groups was successful in contributing positively to this issue and should be re-introduced. At least one group was established in Brindle using one of these small grants and has contributed a great deal to parish life, with almost sixty members and built into a thriving network, which wasn't previously there. More should be done to support recreational activities in local communities for all ages and in particular young people.

The next stage in developing the customer contact centre should be to provide more outreach services and deliver customer services locally in communities. Whilst the investment in new technology and providing services via the internet is welcomed, it should be remembered that not all parts of Chorley are able to receive broadband and do not have IT facilities. The Borough Council should also look to 'rural proof' its policies and services to ensure they are accessible and fully considers the characteristics of rural communities.

We welcome closer working of public, private, voluntary and community organisations in Chorley. The additional investment will help to implement key projects in the Community Strategy. Hopefully this will encourage partners to 'pool' and make the most of existing resources through efficiencies, joining-up services and avoiding duplication.

We hope that more can be done to improve public transport and accessibility to services through partnership working. One issue which has been brought to our attention is concessionary travel/bus passes for elderly people. The few buses that do travel through Brindle only go to Leyland, Blackburn and Preston. This means that those with bus passes having to pay for their travel because they are going out of the Chorley boundary. In some cases, particularly in the Bournes Row part of the parish, they have to pay double. This does not seem to be fair for those

who rely on buses, which don't run to Chorley and is not in the spirit of free travel for elderly residents. We would like to ask that alternative arrangements are made.

The proposed contribution to the funding of Lancashire Constabulary's police community support officers should not be funded from Borough council tax. The amount spent on environmental wardens should also be reduced. Even though residents identify community safety in the consultation carried out for the community strategy and local strategic partnership – it does not state who should fund these activities. The community strategy and partnership is made up of many partner organisations. Most people would say Lancashire Police and the Government should fund community safety activities like this through their own tax levying powers. Two years ago the Borough Council was keen to reduce 'double taxation' with parish/town councils, this is an example of the Borough council tax subsidising the Police Authority's council tax levy or even the Government.

We hope that these comments are helpful. We should also like to suggest that next year's consultation is carried out in a more robust manner as written consultation exercises such as this are always difficult. Perhaps the Lancashire Association of Parish Councils Chorley Area Committee might be used or other workshops where discussions could take place in a more detailed and effective way.

Hoghton Parish Council – by email 16th January 2007 at 3.31 p.m.

CHORLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL - BUDGET CONSULTATION 2007/2008

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Investment/Re-direction of resources

Existing resources should be re-directed to streetscene services, such as more cleansing and better maintenance of green areas, which has a major impact on the quality of life of local people. This is a major priority area for the residents of Hoghton.

We are disappointed that there is relatively small amount of investment and re-direction of resources to the rural areas of Chorley. Whilst Chorley town centre is important to the Borough, there are small shopping areas and local facilities, which play an important part in thriving local communities. Most Hoghton residents do not naturally look to Chorley as a centre, but to other towns and villages. More should be done to strengthen local communities.

Chorley Borough Council should also look at the needs of rural communities when planning and developing services, with many residents classed as deprived because of the social isolation and lack of facilities. The grants that the Borough Council once provided to establish and develop community groups was successful in contributing positively to this issue and should be re-

introduced. More should be done to support recreational activities in local communities for all ages and in particular young people.

The next stage in developing the customer contact centre should be to provide more outreach services and deliver customer services locally in communities. Whilst the investment in new technology and providing services via the internet is welcomed, it should be remembered that not all parts of Chorley are able to receive broadband and do not have IT facilities. The Borough Council should also look to 'rural proof' its policies and services to ensure they are accessible and fully considers the characteristics of rural communities.

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Anonymous letter received on 17th January 2007

To Budget Finance

It's the same at Astley Village Chorley. We don't see any Warden service. Specially at the Broadfields area.

Fed up residents found at Buckshaw also.

Letter received from Mrs J Platt, 16 The Elms, Whittle-le-Woods, PR6 7TU

Dear Sir

I am writing regarding the end of the Neighbourhood Wardens, they will very much be missed as they provide a positive link with the council, they never get you bad press like others do. They have good links with elderly and young children, in December 06 they escorted a local school on their walk to church ensuring the whole school aged 3 – 11 years arrived safely especially when crossing Preston Road. My parents live on Greenside, Euxton they are highly very concerned about what will happen when there are no wardens as their area is now becoming a safer place due to the wardens presence and the relationship they have built with elderly and teenagers alike.

I also know of animals abandoned whose lives have been saved due to the wardens work.

I think you should seriously think about the consequences of not having the wardens. Why can't people have a say in how their money is spent, many I am sure would elect to keep the wardens even if they do need to pay extra. It's o.k. to say there will be more special police but there is no comparison, some people who have been brought up to regard police as an enemy actually do relate to the wardens who they see as less threatening.

Thank you for reading this.
Mrs. J. Platt

Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council – letter received 19th January 2007

Dear Mr Hall

Re: Chorley Borough Council – Draft Budget Consultation 2007/8

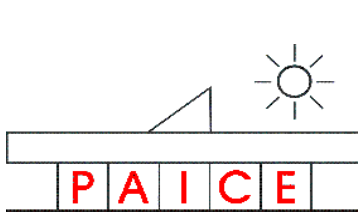
I refer to the Draft Budget Consultation Documentation, which the Parish Council discussed at their meeting on the 15th January 2007.

Firstly, the Parish Council welcome the proposal to pay for the CCTV Camera at Clayton Brook.

Secondly, regarding the Neighbourhood Warden Scheme, the Parish Council feel that this scheme has worked so well over the years and has greatly expanded and, therefore, we would like to see the present arrangements retained.

However, should any changes take place, could there be an assurance that the present level of services will apply.

Yours sincerely
Eileen Whiteford
Clerk to the Council



To: Councillor Peter Goldsworthy (Leader of the Council)
Councillor Dennis Edgerley (Leader of the Labour Party)
Donna Hall (Chief Executive)

Chorley Borough Council 2007-08 Budget response

We have been asked by our respective groups to write in response to the Borough Council's budget proposals for 2007-08.

PAiCE (Positive Action Chorley East), SWITCH (South West Chorley Community Safety Group) and Clayton Brook Together are the Target Area Groups for three of the four areas covered by the Borough's Community Safety Strategy. Between them, our groups represent and communicate with more than 12,000 households.

On behalf of the people that we represent, we need to make certain points.

- In September 2006, when we expressed concerns at “rumours” that the Wardens Service was to be disbanded, we were told that our concerns were entirely unfounded.
- We made sure that our concerns were channelled appropriately through the Community Safety Partnership.
- In December 2006, we were informed that the Wardens Serviced was, in fact, to be disbanded. We again voiced our serious concerns, and were told that information passed on to us was wrong, when it was, in fact, clearly correct.
- At no point have we been consulted about the future of the Wardens Service.
- The budget proposals tell us on page 11 that the plans to get rid of the Neighbourhood Wardens (for that is exactly what you are planning to do) are down to “partnership working in the form of a public partnership...with the Police”. This really does beg the question – are the residents in the Target Areas partners in any way at all, with either the Council OR the Police? As neither have included us in any consultation, it seems not.

You tell us, within the budget proposals, that you plan to allocate a (whopping) £50,000 to the four newly-proposed Area Forums across the whole Borough (something else we weren't consulted about).

Is the Council aware that the Target Area groups brought more than £20,000 into just two of the Target Areas in 2006-07 alone? Does it care?

We understand that there will be six Environmental Wardens covering the whole Borough, which we gather, is just a slight increase to an existing, re-branded service.

Neither they, nor the Police Community Support Officers will be doing the work that has been absolutely key to progress made – in partnership – with the local communities in the Target Areas, or anywhere else in Chorley.

It seems to us that our input is useful when we raise funds or support Council or Police initiatives, such as the voluntary management of Council assets – but that we are not considered to be important enough to sit round a table and make a real contribution to important decisions about our own areas.

You said – we must all work together to address problems within the Target Areas.

We believed that was what we were doing. We feel that we have been treated with contempt and badly let down.

As one resident pointed out to us recently – everyone living in the Borough seems to want to keep the Wardens. So who is it that doesn't – and why?

On behalf of the three Community Safety Target Area Groups

Tom Watson
Chairperson, PAiCE, Tatton Community Centre, Silverdale Rd, Chorley.

David Beadle
Chairperson, SWITCH, 16 Blackhorse Street, Chorley.

Jean Cronshaw, Clayton Brook Together, 37 Brown Hey, Clayton Brook, Nr Chorley.

Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council – by email 29th January 2007 at 6.07 p.m.

Dear Sir / Madam

I write as a member of Clayton-le-Woods Parish Council, and also secretary of Clayton Brook Police & Community Together (PACT) group. The latter group has been working closely with the Chorley Borough Council Neighbourhood Wardens who send representatives to our monthly meetings. We have found them to be responsive to local needs and excellent ambassadors for the council.

The budget proposal to reduce the number of wardens to 7, and to replace them with increased numbers of Community Support Officers has caused great concern to residents, who have greatly appreciated the work of the existing NW personnel. The local area has been improved by their activities in all the aspects which cause concern to (and potentially generate frequent complaints from) the majority of residents, viz, litter, control of dogs and dog-fouling, and general nuisances such as abandoned cars. The wardens were even able to satisfactorily resolve a long-standing nuisance caused to a group of our residents by the operation of a business from neighbouring residential premises. This diffused strong feelings, avoided trouble between neighbours, and was much appreciated by all concerned.

The swift response by wardens to residents' reports has been one of the highlights of this service, and it is feared the proposed changes will destroy, or at least disable, an asset that has proved to work splendidly.

Whilst CB Cllr Baker attended our January PACT meeting and gave us assurances the changes would ultimately result in improvements to the service, this has not wholly dispelled our misgivings. Those of us with experience of working in the public sector have often seen good intentions end in disappointment.

We do hope that this matter can be given the most careful consideration before a decision is made - many council services affect a relatively small percentage of residents, but neighbourhood wardens deal with front-line matters which have an impact on everyone who lives here.

Yours faithfully

Parish councillor E Anne Smith

MINUTES OF ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Thursday, 25 January 2007

07.ECS.04 BUDGET SCRUTINY FOR 2007/2008

The Director of Finance submitted a report on the way forward for the budget scrutiny for 2007/08 that had been suggested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2006.

The report set out the background to the recommendations made by the Panels during the 2006/07 budget consultation, resulting in some value being received from the process. This year was a significant year in terms of the Council introducing the new Community Strategy and any work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must be undertaken in this context.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 4 December 2006 (Minute 06.0S.71 refers) agreed to focus its attention for the 2007/08 budget on the following:

- To receive an update on the high cost areas identified during the 2006/2007 scrutiny relating to Planning Services and Environmental Services.
- To review the 2006 cost profiles prepared by the Audit Commission as compared to those in 2005 for the Planning Services and Environmental Services.
- To review the likely impact of the efficiencies and savings on the Council's ability to deliver the promises in the Corporate Plan and the mitigation being put in place.
- A review of the low cost areas where a small increase in cost may bring a relatively bigger improvement.

The report indicated that the Council had recently been the subject to its annual Value for Money assessment undertaken by the Audit Commission as part of its Use of Resources review.

The Audit Commission had undertaken some benchmarking of costs compared with the Council's family group which exhibited the same attributes as ourselves in terms of demograph, population etc.

The Panel received in the report comparative costs with the previous years data to provide analysis for the scrutiny review.

The report also provided a summary of the impact of the budget savings/efficiency proposals for 2007/08 relating to Planning Services and Environmental Services. The report indicated that the cost profiles for 2006 had shown a very positive picture when compared with the 2005 figures with the Council's relative cost ranking improving in almost all areas. In those areas showing no improvement the budget proposals included action to reduce their costs. Balanced against the efficiencies and budget savings was the need to deliver the Council's Corporate Plan.

It was **AGREED** that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to submit the following comments to the Executive Cabinet as part of this year's budget consultation exercise.

1. That the Executive Cabinet be requested to examine the calculation of secondary charge (recharges) as in the case of Planning Services they have resulted in a distorted view of the Directorate's budget.
2. That the Executive Cabinet be asked if it is content with a decrease in design quality leading to a reduction in customer satisfaction as a result of the proposal to delete the post of Urban Designer in the Development and Regeneration Directorate.
3. That the Executive Cabinet be asked if the reduction in the cost of the Neighbourhood Wardens Team of £228,000 will have an impact on the service and provide a lower level of service delivery.
4. That the Executive Cabinet be asked if the savings made and the introduction of charges for all pest control services will have a benefit to rodent control.

Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel**Tuesday, 30 January 2007****07.CCS.04 BUDGET SCRUTINY FOR 2007/2008**

Members received the report of the Director of Finance entitled "Budget Scrutiny for 2007/2008. The Chair explained that the objective of the item was to consider the aspects relating to Corporate and Customer starting at paragraph 27 of the report and to formulate any questions on the report to the Executive Cabinet. The report also contained information for consideration by the Environment and Community Panel.

The Director of Finance highlighted that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had determined that the budget scrutiny exercise should concentrate on Value For Money (VFM) and the provision of quality services.

The Panel examined Table 7 that updated the information considered by the Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel last year on Revenues and Benefits compared with the Council's family group (similar Council's in terms of demographics and population). This area had been considered high cost although on further analysis showed that the way costs were recorded included recharges for other services, such as ICT and Human Resources affected the overall costs significantly. It was noted that benchmarking information on the basic cost of the services was not available for comparison from other Local Authorities, although it was hoped that comparative information of this nature would be available in the future.

The Panel considered Table 8 showing the relative performance indicators within the 2004 and 2005 VFM profiles, relative to our nearest neighbours. It was noted that performance had, in the main improved.

Table 9, set out the budget savings and efficiency proposals and the Panel considered the impact of these on service delivery and the Council's ability to deliver the Corporate Plan. It was noted that some efficiencies arose due to the Housing Stock Transfer and the closure of the Gillibrand Street offices.

There would be a restructure in local tax and benefits. Officers explained that the Contact Centre had reduced the volumes of work in the back office, that a new procedure for Council Tax recovery could produce efficiencies and supervision would be reduced to an industry average.

It was noted that the Finance Unit would be restructured, creating a central team to concentrate on efficiency. Previously the focus had been eGovernment.

Members queried the reduction of Helpdesk support. Officers outlined a new, selfservice approach with a more technical Helpdesk. The Housing Stock Transfer and current Thin Client testing and implementation enabled this reallocation of resources. A further discussion on replacement technology for Members would be subject of further discussion.

Questions to the Executive Cabinet:

What will be the impact of the disestablishment of one of the Executive Director posts, in particular, relating to the important work on Equality and Diversity?

How will the reduction of ICT Helpdesk support affect Members? How and what will be different?

A number of the proposals include outsourcing functions (Health and Safety and Property). How will these arrangements work and what will be the impact on the day-to-day operation of services?

Satisfaction with some services appears low. Is this being measured regularly and if not, how can we monitor this and take appropriate action?

What can be done to collect information on the costs of the Central and Democratic Core and Revenues administration to enable comparison in the future?

How will the impact on Members of the removal of the Yearbook and Diary be mitigated?

Budget Scrutiny 2007/2008 (Citizens Panel)

A citizen's panel event was held on Monday, February 12, during which local residents were invited to make comments and observations regarding the Council's draft budget. The key messages from the consultation were:

Overall there is still a great deal of confusion regarding two-tier government. The majority of the panel believed Chorley was responsible for all the Local Government services.

Following the presentation, people felt clearer about which services were delivered by Chorley and expressed surprise at how little of the total bill we received. Many said they found the event helpful and would be interested in attending something similar organised by Lancashire County Council. They also expressed an interest in attending more meetings like this.

Some of the younger members of the group were generally happy with the day to day running of services in Chorley and agreed with the Council's priorities, particularly around improving the Town Centre and neighbourhoods.

The panel thought that whilst communication had improved, there was still room to improve. A specific example was given regarding the Astley Park scheme where the surgeries are in the week rather than at the weekend when people are visiting the park.

Many of the attendees were of a pensionable age and whilst there was a general acceptance that Chorley's element of the bill and any subsequent increase would be small, those on fixed incomes welcomed any freeze on council tax rises across the board.

In terms of specific services, the following observations were made:

Concerns were raised regarding the impact the creation of the PCSOs would have on the Council's ability to respond to environmental issues. Again whilst there was a general acceptance that more PCSOs would be welcomed, the panel would not like to see a reduction in the environmental element of their work where the responsive nature of the service is welcomed.

Street cleanliness performance is inconsistent with some areas being better than others. Of particular concern were the dog waste bins which people observed were not emptied regularly enough.

Many people were happy with the waste/recycling service and accepted that to move to weekly waste collection would be extremely costly.

With regard to the town centre the general view was that the town had lost its identity and that investment was welcome. They would like to see fewer charity shops and more done to improve the public realm. People were keen on the Market Walk development and extra shops it would bring, but did not want to see a decline in the market itself or the area around the other end of Market Street near QS Fashions. Members of the panel felt quite strongly that the market should be moved to Market Street.

They would also like to see more encouragement/support from the Council for fledgling businesses in the town centre. An aspiration would also be to have a park and ride scheme, similar to that provided in other nearby towns. One member of the panel commented that the park and ride scheme from Chorley train station was good but it was difficult to find a place to park.

The rural/urban divide was also discussed with some of the group expressing concern that not enough play facilities exist in rural areas. Some of the older members of the panel expressed anger at a lack of community facilities on their doorstep together with a lack of public transport to access nearby facilities. The feeling was that facilities are too spread out and it could become costly to access them.

On the whole, people were surprised at the level of investment required to keep Brinscall Baths open and discussed how the money could be spent on services elsewhere, but the consensus was that the facility was well used and historically important and should be retained.

Panel members would like to see more arts and cultural events in the town.

Members are asked to consider the information provided, along with other consultation responses.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE 2007/08 DRAFT BUDGETS		
Description	Change £	Notes
Chief Executive's Office		
Mayors Civic Dinner	(4,000)	Delete budget provision for Civic Dinner.
Customer, Democratic & Legal		
Legal Services/Licensing	4,100	Publications/Computer Software Licences & Maintenance
Licensing Income	(13,990)	Additional Taxi Licences & Gambling Licences
Members Allowances/Subs.	(14,800)	Reduced number of members additional allowances.
Customer/Democratic - Other	3,360	Various minor changes
Gillibrand St. Cleaning	(23,000)	SLA with Chorley Community Housing for cleaning of Gill St
Gillibrand St. Cleaning	18,080	Cost of 3 cleaners for SLA with CCH.
Town Hall Cleaning	6,030	Cost of 1 additional cleaner.
Gillibrand St. Security	(9,000)	SLA with Chorley Community Housing for security of Gill St
Gillibrand St. Annexe Security	(2,500)	SLA with Liberata for security of Gill St Annexe
One Stop Shop	(4,000)	Additional income from SLA with CCH.
Development & Regeneration		
New Urban Designer post	36,000	Cost to be offset by deletion of post & car lease savings.
Delete Planning Assistant post	(24,000)	Savings to fund above post.
Car Leasing	(12,000)	Savings identified from the car leasing scheme.
Internal Recharges	15,780	Adjustment to Development & Regen. recharges.
Housing		
Cotswold House	7,000	Transfer to General Fund. Unsubsidised Housing Benefit.
ICT Services		
Thin Client Implementation	(16,440)	Increase saving from £3,560 to £20,000
IT Maintenance/Support	18,840	SLA with CCH reduced from £24,840 to £6,000
IT Maintenance/Support	4,680	No SLA with Liberata. Delete saving in draft budget.
Telephony Contract	(20,000)	Savings on rentals/calls under new contract.
Internet Charges	11,380	No saving from LSVT. Delete saving in draft budget.
Leisure & Culture		
CLS Contract	24,620	Increased requirement to cover additional contract costs.
Community Management Assist.	9,650	Additional resource requirement.
Streetscene		
Refuse Target bonus	14,000	Increased provision in Streetscene
Recycling vehicles	17,000	Contribution to hire of two Cleanaway vehicles
Civica Software licence/maint.	9,000	Civica APP software licensing & maintenance
Additional savings identified.	(10,000)	Further misc. savings identified within Directorate.
Benefit Payments	23,040	Reduction in forecast for overpayments recovered.
NET EXPENDITURE		
	68,830	
Reduction in MRP	(70,000)	Reduce level from £100k to £30k as a result of reduced borrowing.
Net Interest	(60,000)	Increase level from £(173,900) to £(233,900) as a result of reduced interest on borrowing & increased interest on cash balances.
NET FINANCING		
	(130,000)	
Aggregate External Finance	41,420	Revised Formula Grant figures received 18/01/07.
Collection Fund Surplus	(19,250)	Revised figure received.
EXTERNAL FINANCING		
	22,170	
NET CHANGE IN BUDGET		
	(39,000)	

Analysis of Budget Variations 2006/07 - 2009/10

	2006/07 £000	2007/08 £000	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Base Budget Requirement	15,330	16,231	16,332	17,556
Less				
Recharges	-	3	20	20
Capital Charges	(2,581)	(2,581)	(1,998)	(1,984)
Cash Base Budget Requirement	12,750	13,654	14,355	15,592
Inflation				
Pay	352	325	334	355
Pensions	110	112	83	-
Non-Pay	90	62	34	23
Contractual	52	126	42	16
Income	91	13	(32)	(33)
Increments	118	96	85	61
Revenue Effects of the Capital Programme	(1)	10	50	-
Volume - Income	-	158	189	-
Volume - Expenditure	521	405	(77)	(20)
Investment	141	246	54	-
Savings - Star Chamber	-	(1,265)	74	(4)
Savings - Other	(580)	(416)	-	-
Senior Management Review		(114)	-	-
Growth Proposals	245	-	-	-
Recharges Adjustments	-	34	-	-
Effects of stock transfer - To HRA	-	766	-	-
Effects of stock transfer - From HRA	-	(50)	-	-
Effects of stock transfer - Non Recharge Income	-	84	-	-
Effects of stock transfer - Reduction in cost TUPE	-	(105)	-	-
Effects of stock transfer - Reduction in cost - Other	-	55	-	-
Effects of stock transfer - Service Level Agreements	-	(76)	160	-
Contingency:		-	-	-
- Genuine	100	-	-	-
- Salary Related Savings	(278)	10	-	-
- Procurement Savings	(35)	-	-	-
- Gershon Savings	(25)	-	-	-
- Headroom for Capital Investment	-	40	-	-
- Job Evaluation	-	256	241	248
- Housing Stock Transfer	-	-	-	-
Directorate & Corporate Cash Budgets	13,651	14,424	15,592	16,238
Base Recharges	-	(3)	(20)	(20)
In year transfer of recharges to cash budgets	-	(17)	-	-
Capital:	2,581	1,684	1,998	1,984
In year transfer of capital	-	314	(14)	-
Total Recharges	2,581	1,978	1,964	1,964
Total Directorate & Corporate Budgets	16,231	16,402	17,556	18,202
Reversal of Capital Charges	(1,412)	(1,678)	(1,678)	(1,678)
Net Financing Transactions:				
- Net Interest/Premiums/Discounts	148	(234)	(174)	(174)
- Recharged Interest to HRA	(88)	-	-	-
- MRP less Commutation Adjustment	159	30	100	100
Net Operating Expenditure	15,039	14,520	15,804	16,450
Revenue Contribution to Capital	54	-	-	-
Use of Earmarked Reserves				
- e-Workforce Reserve	(34)	-	-	-
- Capital Financing Reserve re: Def Chge w/os	(1,168)	(320)	(320)	(320)
- Units Earmarked Reserves	(140)	(151)	(55)	(55)
Use of General Balances	-	-	-	-
Total Expenditure	13,751	14,049	15,429	16,075
Financed By				
Council Tax - Borough	(5,960)	(6,019)	(6,262)	(6,514)
Parish Precepts	535	535	535	535
Council Tax Parishes	(535)	(535)	(535)	(535)
Aggregate External Finance	(7,743)	(8,009)	(8,250)	(8,450)
Collection Fund Surplus	(49)	(60)	-	-
Total Financing	(13,751)	(14,088)	(14,512)	(14,964)
Net Expenditure	(0)	(39)	917	1,111
Analysis of Net Expenditure (Budget Gap)				
Net Expenditure Brought Forward	-	-	(0)	917
Net Expenditure in Year	-	(39)	917	194
Net Expenditure Carried Forward	-	(39)	917	1,111

ANALYSIS OF MAJOR VARIANCES BETWEEN 2006/07 AND 2007/08 ESTIMATES

	DRAFT BUDGET	BUDGET CHANGES	TOTAL VARIANCES
	£	£	£
<u>INFLATION NON-PAY</u>			
Car Leases/NNDR/Insurances/Utilities/Subscriptions/Other	62,570		62,570
	62,570	0	62,570
<u>CONTRACTUAL</u>			
CLS contract	(21,970)	24,620	2,650
Refuse Collection - Market Walk	11,530		11,530
Rental Income	(21,270)		(21,270)
Refuse Contract	118,600	14,000	132,600
	86,890	38,620	125,510
<u>REVENUE EFFECTS OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME</u>			
Astley Park Grounds Maintenance	10,000		10,000
	10,000	0	10,000
<u>VOLUME - INCOME</u>			
Housing Benefit Grants/Subsidy	100,670	23,040	123,710
Licensing Income	(22,360)	(13,990)	(36,350)
Planning Delivery Grant - reduction in anticipated grant for 2007/08	67,400		67,400
Private Lifeline Alarms	(24,530)		(24,530)
NNDR Collection Allowance	3,850		3,850
Housing Benefits Admin. Grant	15,190		15,190
Duxbury Golf Course	(10,860)		(10,860)
Parking fees 1% increase - car parks	(7,720)		(7,720)
DPE Penalty Charge Notice net loss of income	32,580		32,580
Members Allowances - Special Allowances		(14,800)	(14,800)
Cotswold House - Unsubsidised Housing Benefit		7,000	7,000
Other	3,000		3,000
	157,220	1,250	158,470
<u>VOLUME - EXPENDITURE</u>			
Increase in LCC Search Fees	8,360		8,360
Contact Centre restructure	47,400		47,400
Elections	9,960		9,960
Legal - Publications	6,000	2,000	8,000
Director of CUDL salary	9,650		9,650
External Audit	14,680		14,680
Bank Charges	7,000		7,000
External Contractors (Payroll)	6,270		6,270
Bus Passes - Concessionary Travel	39,040		39,040
External Funding Officer - no funding contributions to salary	19,950		19,950
Computer Software Licences/Maintenance Agreements	7,280	11,100	18,380
Roses Marketplace Licence	5,300		5,300
Allpay Cards	5,000		5,000
Community Management - Tatton	34,260		34,260
Corporate Training - Member Development Programme	5,000		5,000
Support services Officer Sc3 post SNED restructure phase 1	15,450		15,450
Increase in hours for Funding Officer	8,880		8,880
Miscellaneous Employee costs - Eng. Mngt. And Support Services	16,640		16,640
NNDR assessments - various sites	15,840		15,840
Survey expenses residents parking permits TRO's	5,000		5,000

APPENDIX 6

Crime & Disorder Partnership - transfer of Sc4 post 18.125hrs	11,100		11,100
Bringsites recycling charges	12,000		12,000
Urban Designer post		12,000	12,000
Additional cleaning costs - Town Hall		6,030	6,030
Adjustment to Development & Regen. recharges.		15,780	15,780
Community Management Assistant		9,650	9,650
Recycling vehicles		17,000	17,000
Other	17,900	3,360	21,260
	327,960	76,920	404,880

INVESTMENT

Town Centre Management Post	40,000		40,000
LSP Consultancy	30,000		30,000
Contribution for 6 PCSO's per 2005/06 Growth year 2	66,000		66,000
Market Walk Phase 2 Development (Agenda Item)	95,000		95,000
CCTV in Remote Areas	15,000		15,000
	246,000	0	246,000

STAR CHAMBER SAVINGS

See Appendix 2 for further analysis.	(1,265,010)	0	(1,265,010)
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OTHER SAVINGS

Council Insurances Renewal	(72,000)		(72,000)
Job Evaluation Project (Non-recurrent expenditure)	(95,770)		(95,770)
Human Resources Staffing Savings	(67,940)		(67,940)
Corporate Training HR Approved per 2005/06 Savings year 2	(10,000)		(10,000)
LHP, PSS, GM & SNED Phase 1 Restructure	(78,840)		(78,840)
Temp. Waste & Envir. Management post deleted	(30,390)		(30,390)
Removal of revenue effects of capitalised redundancy payments	(6,000)		(6,000)
Hospitality	(7,480)		(7,480)
Delete budget provision for Mayors Civic Dinner.		(4,000)	(4,000)
Savings identified from the car leasing scheme.		(12,000)	(12,000)
SLA with Chorley Community Housing for cleaning of Gill St		(4,920)	(4,920)
SLA with Chorley Community Housing for security of Gill St		(9,000)	(9,000)
SLA with Liberata for security of Gill St Annexe		(2,500)	(2,500)
Additional income from SLA with CCH.		(4,000)	(4,000)
Increase saving from £3,560 to £20,000		(16,440)	(16,440)
SLA with CCH reduced from £24,840 to £6,000		18,840	18,840
No SLA with Liberata. Delete saving in draft budget.		4,680	4,680
Savings on rentals/calls under new contract.		(20,000)	(20,000)
No saving from LSVT. Delete saving in draft budget.		11,380	11,380
Further misc. savings identified within Streetscene Directorate.		(10,000)	(10,000)
	(368,420)	(47,960)	(416,380)

OTHER CHANGES

Net Financing		(130,000)	(130,000)
External Financing		22,170	22,170
	0	(107,830)	(107,830)