

## Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 24 January 2008

### 08.ECS.6 BUDGET SCRUTINY FOR 2008/2009

The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) submitted a report setting out the spending and performance context for key spending areas at the Council, details of the rationale between the Executive draft budget proposals and the details of the key budget prospects for 2008/09.

The analysis of comparative data had shown that in the main the Council continued to drive down costs as measured by our relative performance against our nearest neighbours whilst continuing to improve both performance and in the main satisfaction with services.

The budget proposals aimed to achieve the key targets and increase in terms of the Council's Corporate Strategy with some of those requiring additional resources whilst others required working in a different way. New targets included climate change and older and younger people activities.

The Council continued to demonstrate good value for money resulting in maximum scores for both the use of its resources and value for money in the annual use of resources assessment.

The report set out an analysis of service costs against our nearest neighbours using the value for money profile tool for the following services within this Panel's remit, planning, waste management, street cleansing, Economic and Community Development, parking, community safety and sport and recreation.

Members of the Panel were requested to consider the Executive's draft budget proposals in the context of current spending and the Council's corporate priorities and make appropriate representations to the Executive for consideration during the finalising of the budget proposals.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) reported that the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 22 January 2008 had put forward several suggestions for the Executive Cabinet to consider and Members noted that a majority of them related to this Panel.

Members also considered the Capital Programme 2008/09 to 2010/11 and noted that the priorities were town centre investment, affordable housing, sustainability and climate change and investing in the Green Corridor. These priorities were based upon the key objectives contained in the Council's refreshed Corporate Strategy and upon a measure of our performance to date against that plan.

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

1. To increase the number of Environmental Wardens.
2. To provide another vehicle for the Environmental Wardens.
3. That the hours of the Environmental Wardens be made flexible as currently they work to a restrictive core time pattern.

4. To improve the process of requesting the cleaning of footpaths, clearing of hedgerows and ditches outside the urban core and reporting of faulty street lights. Currently there can be confusion as to where the responsibility for this lies and how best to deal with Lancashire County Council when the responsibility lies with them.
5. To increase the use of the machine that removes chewing gum throughout the Borough.
6. To distribute to Members the schedule of work for street cleaning and grass cutting for their information and comment.
7. To identify areas where there is a lack of recreational facilities and either provide additional facilities or improve transport links to existing facilities nearby.
8. To explore concessionary arrangements with South Ribble where residents would be entitled to concessions within Chorley but South Ribble recreational facilities are closer.
9. That the proposed increase for grant of right of burial fees be phased.