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**TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE  
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

10 November 2010

Dear Councillor

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – TUESDAY,  
16 NOVEMBER 2010**

Further to the Agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached additional information for Item 10 below. The information takes the form of an amended **Appendix B(v)** arising from the Corporate Budget Strategy item considered by the Executive on 2 November 2010.

**10. Corporate Budget Strategy - Savings Proposals**

To assess savings proposals for financial robustness and to consider the viability of the specific proposals for the Sustainable Communities Directorate.

Should you have any queries regarding the above please contact me.

Yours sincerely

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Committee Services Officer

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## APPENDIX B(v)

*Appendix amended as per the decision of the Executive on 2 November 2010 where it was agreed "to move the following proposals, OCE1, HT1, CSS2 and CSS9, from Appendix A (efficiencies for consultation) to Appendix B (service reconfigurations and reductions for consultations)"*

### **SAVING PROPOSALS**

#### **SERVICE RECONFIGURATION AND REDUCTIONS**

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

##### **Sustainable Communities – Reductions**

##### **EG,S&R1 Reduce External Enterprise and Marketing Activity – Service Reduction**

###### **Background**

Enterprise and Marketing activity is delivered through a number of contracts as part of the Business Growth and Marketing team. A review proposes three areas of service reduction. They are as follows:-

Innovation activity has been provided by our University partners. The innovation facilitation enables ideas to be commercialised and support business creation and growth. The proposal reduces the funding available by £30,000 leaving £50,000 to be contracted.

Rural Enterprise and Research has been provided by BRCC (Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charities), this agreement for £20,000 would be stopped from April 2011. The funding supports rural enterprise activity and research. Inward Investment and Marketing by a number of specific commissions totalling a reduction of £50,000 leaving a similar sum to support this activity in the area in 2011/12.

###### **Rationale for Service Change**

During 2010/11 new ways to deliver enterprise and encourage business start ups are being introduced by strengthening joint working with the private sector, colleges and Universities.

The Council will strengthen business engagement and encourage business ambassadors to champion our area to new investors at low cost and high return to the community. The economic development rural support activities will be delivered directly by the Council.

BRCC has been successful in securing European Rural Development Funding to promote rural enterprise and diversification replacing in part the need for additional grant funding until 2013.

###### **Financial Savings**

£100,000 in total

### **Service Implications and Impact**

The reduction of innovation and enterprise funding could be mitigated by closer delivery with our neighbouring authorities, the private sector and University and Enterprise activities.

Removal of the grant may affect the availability of the European funds match funding to draw on the Rural Development Programme of England (RDPE) Leader Greensand Ridge Programme.

A marketing activity reduction may have an impact on jobs attracted to the area and a reduced profile with investors, if the alternative provision cannot be achieved.

There are no staff reductions.

### **EG,S&R2 Stop Grant to Luton Gateway Local Delivery Vehicle (LDV) – Service Reduction**

#### **Background**

Luton Gateway, currently part of our delivery structure supported by a grant towards the core costs of the company. The decision has been taken by the company board to wind down following the withdrawal of the major part of the funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) from March 2011.

#### **Rationale for Service Change**

The grant is no longer required given the intended company closure following the withdrawal of funding from the Homes and Communities Agency.

#### **Financial Savings**

£50,000

#### **Service Implications and Impact**

Local capacity supporting the delivery of growth will be reduced and the lobbying and independent developer facilitation role may be reduced. Some aspects may be superseded by the proposed South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership.

Contact with key stakeholders, developers, house builders is likely to be weakened.

Inward investment activity carried out by Luton Gateway will be picked up internally with re-profiling of work streams within the service.

This does not affect staff employed directly by the council.

### **EG,S&R3 Town and Parish Planning Support Activity Stopped – Service Reduction**

#### **Background**

Currently, Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charities facilitate the production and review of Town and Parish Plans. Small grants are also available from CBC to support some of the costs of this activity to prepare and review Parish/Town Plans. The work is managed by one Community Development Officer.

#### **Rationale for Service Change**

Town and Parish plans will only continue where the Town or Parish Council supports this from their own resources. The use of the community based parish plans will continue to be a valued reference tool within the Council.

#### **Financial Savings**

£45,000

#### **Service Implications and Impact**

Number of parish and town plans completed each year will be reduced. One full time employee post will be deleted.

#### **EG,S&R4 Mobile library Service to be stopped. However, Library Link will continue to be provided – Service Reduction**

##### **Background**

The mobile library visits 54 locations over a two week period and is based at Biggleswade Library. This service supplements the 12 fixed libraries located across the district with a focus on village communities. There is a separate Library Link service, based at Flitwick Library, supported in part by volunteers visiting homebound users and sheltered housing schemes.

##### **Rationale for Service Change**

This is a discretionary service area. The cessation of the mobile library contributes to corporate savings target, whilst maintenance of the Library Link protects service to the most vulnerable and builds on principle of volunteerism.

##### **Financial Savings**

An estimated saving of £55,000 can be achieved by ceasing the Mobile Library Service.

##### **Service Implications and Impact**

Distance to library services will increase for a number of communities. Library Link will continue.

#### **EG,S&R5 Libraries Homework Centres for five areas to be discontinued from 1/7/11 – Service Reduction**

##### **Background**

There are five homework centres operated from libraries in Biggleswade, Dunstable, Houghton Regis, Flitwick and Leighton Buzzard. They are free of charge to 8-13 year olds who receive homework support, access to computers

and free print-outs and photocopying. Dedicated staff are available to support the children. The reduction will be mainly in respect of savings on staff costs.

**Rationale for Service Change**

It is a discretionary service and not a statutory requirement. Schools and colleges may be able to support the users of this service.

**Financial Savings**

£30,000

**Service Implications and Impact**

Dedicated homework support-(children will still have free PC access), and free access to photocopying and print-outs will cease. However, schools and colleges may provide these services.

The service is delivered on a part time basis of 2 staff at each of the 5 homework centres each operating on 4 hours per week basis.

**EG,S &R6 European Development Programme Fund Stopped – Service Reduction**

**Background**

The European Revenue Programme supports the development of new European funding opportunities for the area. It is used to fund basic research and capacity to identify, raise awareness and support access to European funds.

**Rationale for Service Change**

The ending of the regional bodies engaged in European programmes will be from March 2011. The facilitation and operation of European programmes will be at national level only. The local capacity to continue is limited and the potential to recover full costs from available programmes and European Interventions is increasingly challenging and is likely to be at additional cost to the Council. This local development activity will therefore cease.

**Financial Savings**

£20,000

**Service Implications and Impact**

Potential reduced access to European funds to support economic development could reduce opportunities for business enterprise and growth. No staff reduction is proposed.

**EG,S&R7 Reduction in Arts Development Service and refocus to support the most vulnerable – Service Reduction**

**Background**

This is a discretionary service that seeks to use the arts to increase participation of many vulnerable people in our community. This aspect will

remain but the wider use an arts development and grant giving in the community will stop.

### **Rationale for Service Change**

Arts Development will be refocused to four priority work areas supporting vulnerable people in 2011/12 with a saving of £65,000.

### **Financial Savings**

£65,000

### **Service Implications and Impact**

Funds to annual Orchestras Live and Arts Aloud cancelled. Arts development work with the wider community will cease. Work will be focussed on vulnerable people. One full time employee post to be deleted.

### **HT1 Replace illuminated bollards with reflective ones and turn off street lighting between 2400 and 0600 daily - Efficiency**

#### **Background**

The Council is responsible for the maintenance of 21,000 street lights and 2,000 illuminated bollards.

#### **Rationale for Service Change**

Replacing illuminated bollards with high reflective versions will reduce energy consumption and maintenance costs. Approximately one third could be replaced per year as part of the routine lamp change and cleaning process.

Turning off or dimming street lights between 24:00 and 06:00 will reduce the Council's energy costs.

#### **Financial Savings**

An estimated saving of £55,000 can be achieved each year by this proposal. There will be implementation costs of approximately £135k per annum for 3 years associated with this saving – which would come from the existing capital allocation budget.

#### **Service Implications and Impact**

If illuminated bollard replacements are made they would comply with Department Transport standards to maintain road safety. Switching off street lighting would need community support. There may be issues around fear of crime in some locations.

There are no staffing implications.

### **HT4 Cease support for the provision of school crossing patrols – Service Reduction**

#### **Background**

The Council provides 28 school crossing patrols to a minority of schools across the district.

**Rationale for Service Change**

This is a discretionary service area. Those schools benefitting from this service will be asked to take on the responsibility for them from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011.

**Financial Savings**

An estimated saving of £95,000 can be achieved by this proposal.

**Service Implications and Impact**

Schools and community volunteers would have the option to take up this service.

There are 36 individuals (part time Council staff) that will be affected – equivalent to 4 full time employees.

**CSPPWL3 Community Safety Team – Service Reductions**

**Background**

Community Safety and Public Protection provide a range of services that help to support safer communities and protect the environment and public. This includes responding to environmental crime eg fly tipping, fly posting, noise and a rapid response on 'no cold calling' and rogue trader enquiries.

**Rationale for Service Change**

There will be a change in existing practices so as to provide an increased visible presence in communities through the improved co-ordination of teams undertaking statutory duties under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 and associated legislation, across Central Bedfordshire. The proposal is a reduction of 3 posts in this area of work.

To contribute to the corporate savings target.

**Financial Savings**

An estimated saving of £90,000 can be achieved.

**Service Implications and Impact**

Reduced capacity will mean a greater need to target available resources. Reduction in one full-time employee.

The deletion of 2 enforcement officer posts will mean there is no dedicated resource to provide an immediate response and to deal with incidents linked to 'no cold calling'.

Reduction in 3 full-time employees.



**CSPPW4 Closed Circuit Television Surveillance System (CCTV)–  
Reduced Monitoring, Reduction of CCTV Operator Posts and Changes to  
Terms and Conditions. – Service Reduction**

**Background**

CCTV supports the Council priority to create safer communities with regard to detecting crime, disorder and anti social behaviour and by supporting the prevention and detection of crime and disorder and support the prosecution of offences through the provision of evidence. The CCTV service is under review with a report considered by the Council Executive in September.

**Rationale for Service Change**

To contribute to corporate savings target.

**Financial Savings**

An estimated saving of £95,000 can be achieved.

**Service Implications and Impact**

CCTV Operator posts would reduce from 7.5 full time employees to 4.

Proactive CCTV monitoring by CCTV Operators would stop during periods when demand is low. Cameras would switch to a recording only operation during these times.

Existing terms and conditions for the CCTV Team will be reviewed and amended in line with the changes to the operation of the service.

**CSPPW5 Waste and Street Cleansing: Rationalise a range of Waste  
Services – Efficiency**

**Background**

The Council provides high performing waste and street cleansing services through a range of contracts provided by the private sector including refuse and recycling collection, street cleansing, household waste recycling centres and food waste collection.

**Rationale for Service Change**

In a time of austerity, reducing performance to a lower level is proposed to contribute to the corporate savings target.

**Financial Savings**

Estimated saving from a range of measures will be £400K.

**Service Implications and Impact**

Rationalise fly tip resource - there are two resources for fly tipping clearance, covering the north and south, this proposal would mean having a single resource for the whole area.

There will be an increased response time for clearance of large fly tips. Response rates for smaller fly tips should be maintained.

Street Cleansing in the south - reductions in frequency of street cleansing in the south area by moving higher frequency roads/areas in to lower frequency brackets.

We are currently a high-performing service, the reduction in street cleansing standards may impact on this. There may be an increase in complaints and reduced flexibility to be reactive.

Household Waste Recycling Area - There are currently 4 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) operating 7 days (9am-5pm winter, 9am -7pm summer). This proposal would see the reduction of opening hours of HWRCs depending on discussions with contractor regarding busy periods.

Communication and publicity regarding revised opening times is essential.

Food Waste Collection - There is currently a weekly food waste collection from the kerbside in the north, introduced to improve recycling rates and avoid waste going to landfill. Residents are currently supplied with biodegradable bags for use with the scheme. The resupply of biodegradable bags will cease, but collections continue.

This change may result in some reduced participation in the food waste scheme and will impact on recycling performance, which has been factored into the savings estimates.

All the proposals above do not directly affect staff employed by the Council.

### **CSPPWL6 Biggleswade Recreation Centre - Service Reduction**

#### **Background**

CBC has a leisure management contract that includes a joint use facility at Stratton Upper School called Biggleswade recreation centre. The contract cost for Biggleswade recreation centre costs £65,000.

#### **Rationale for Service Change**

The contract for this centre ends on 31 March 2012, negotiations will include bringing this forward to October 2011.

#### **Financial Savings**

On current contract costs, an estimated saving of £65,000 can be made - £35,000 in 2011/12, £30,000 in 2012/13.

#### **Service Implications and Impact**

The facility may be replaced by an extension to Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre in Biggleswade via developer contributions and CBC funds. Developer contributions have been agreed but are not anticipated to be received before March 2012. The school or town council may determine the future continuation of the service.

This does not affect staff employed directly by the Council.

### **CSPWL7 Closure of leisure centre - Houghton Regis Leisure Centre – Efficiency**

#### **Background**

The contract for Houghton Regis Leisure Centre costs £172,000. It is a small, former joint use facility attached to a former school which was closed a number of years ago and requires significant investment in its infrastructure.

#### **Rationale for Service Change**

The contract comes to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011.

#### **Financial Implications**

An estimated saving of £42,000 in 2011/12 can be made by the proposals at Houghton Regis Leisure Centre. £130k further savings would be made in 2012/13

#### **Service Implications and Impact**

Closure of the centre may have an impact on the users and local community, but the facility at Dunstable is being maintained

At Houghton Regis a leisure centre could be re-provided through S106 developer contributions in the future.

This does not directly affect staff employed by the Council.

### **P1 Housing Strategy and support for new affordable housing provision - Reduction**

#### **Background**

The Housing Strategy function works to identify local housing needs, better understand housing related issues such as fuel poverty and grant fund the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) to identify local housing needs in rural areas. It prepares the Council's Housing Strategy and enables the delivery of new affordable housing locally through direct negotiation and advice to developers and partners to ensure new affordable housing is built.

#### **Rationale for Service Change**

To contribute to the corporate savings target.

This budget currently funds the carbon action network £5,000 per year to carry out national survey to inform NI 187. In future, this will be done in house. The BRCC is currently funded to £11,000 which partly funds a post to

undertake localised affordable housing needs surveys. In future, this will be carried out by in-house support, advice and a toolkit approach which helps local communities undertake local surveys.

### **Financial Savings**

£52,000 through removal of 3 posts;  
£15,000 through service budget reduction.  
£67,000 in total.

### **Service Implications and Impact**

The effect of this proposal will be mitigated by the efficiencies gained by the co-location of teams and a reprioritisation of activity. However, the level of resource will limit the number of housing needs surveys which can be delivered at a time and the number of developer negotiations. The resource level will have to be kept under review should the housing market significantly increase.

This proposal will lead to the deletion of 3 FTE posts.

## **P2 - Sustainable Growth advice and support - Reduction**

### **Background**

The Housing Strategy Team promotes and advises on the delivery of sustainable growth. Working on the Council's Climate Change Strategy and carbon reduction commitment.

### **Rationale for Service Change**

The development industry and the public have become more familiar with the national commitment to reduce carbon emissions and deliver more sustainable forms of growth. Pending changes to the Building Regulations in particular will bring increasingly tight regulations to help deliver on that commitment and therefore will reduce the need for support. However, there remains the need for a level of advisory resource moving forward along with the delivery of new initiatives.

### **Financial Savings**

£35,000

### **Service Implications and Impact**

The loss of 1 FTE will reduce the number of new projects we will be able to initiate and the level of support/advice we are able to offer on certain issues.

## **P6 Reduction in small grants/commissions - Reduction**

### **Background**

The Marston Vale Trust is a successful organisation with many partners in both public and private sector whose purpose is to repair damaged and degraded landscape in the Marston Vale. Approximately 2 thirds of trust's area is in CBC the rest in BBC. CBC currently contributes £25,000 towards the core resource costs of the Trust.

### **Rationale for Service Change**

The Trust has established a very strong partner and financial base and continues to achieve a great deal in improving the environment of the vale. Much of that work is funded from a variety of sources, including developers whose contributions through S106 agreements are helping to deliver a number of key projects in the vale. Given the strength of the financial base of the Trust, it is considered that the Council's historic annual contribution to project core costs can cease without undue detriment to the Trust's work. Bedford Borough Council is similarly reviewing its contribution towards these core costs. The Council's strong support for the project, including that through negotiation of S106 contributions on behalf of the project will continue.

### **Financial Savings**

£25,000

### **Service Implications and Impact**

The Trust will need to assess, but it is considered unlikely that the cessation of grant will lead to a reduction in what the Trust is able to achieve in the area.

## **P10 - Countryside Services Restructure - Reduction**

### **Background**

The Countryside Service team undertake statutory work, such as rights of way duties, the definitive map, rights of way orders and determining new commons and village greens applications.

### **Rationale for Service Change**

Evidence indicates that site maintenance can be delivered more cost effectively through a more flexible management approach. Since much of this work is carried out in partnership with the voluntary sector, in practice this will mean either a reduction in payments to the voluntary sector or bringing some of the service in-house, where it can be delivered more efficiently. It is anticipated that this will result in a saving up to £35,000.

It is also proposed to reduce the level of work carried out on the definitive map, GIS support, rights of way orders, commons and village greens as well as that for marketing and promotion. This will result in a net reduction of 3.5 FTE posts and a further saving of £110,000.

### **Financial Savings**

£145,000,

### **Service Implications and Impact**

A reduction in resource will reduce the number of new greenspace projects which this team will be able to lead and deliver. The value for money of existing partnership arrangements will be reviewed and new partnerships may need to be considered to deliver on some of those projects. Reduced promotion of activities and service will affect the level of visits to some greenspace assets.

Deletion of core funding to any partner may impact on the resources of that partner and the programme of greenspace work that they themselves can pursue.

Reduced working budgets will affect the delivery of outputs in the Outdoor Access Improvement Plan. The only remaining funding available will be that used for the provision of core services.

3.5 FTE Reduction

### **P11 Reduction in Transport Strategy Team resource and transport surveys reduced from six monthly to annual - Reduction**

#### **Background**

The Transport Strategy Team provides support to the Transport Strategy function, taking account of the need to deliver ongoing Local Transport Plan work etc. The team also commission traffic surveys and traffic counts

#### **Rationale for Service Change**

The team re-prioritised or put on hold its support relating to some non-statutory areas of transport strategy and delivery work. However, delivery work on the Local Transport Plan will increase next year and it is important that there is sufficient resource to undertake that work. The removal of one post will maintain a reasonable level of support and momentum for that work.

Carrying out traffic surveys once per annum instead of in the spring and autumn will continue to give the council annually updated information as regards meeting its transport targets.

#### **Financial Savings**

£60,000

#### **Service Implications and Impact**

The removal of a full time role in providing support to public transport will mean that the council will have to scale down its involvement on rail issues. Specifically, this will mean a reduced input into the East West Rail scheme and no input into supporting community rail groups or bespoke rail partnerships.

The reduction in traffic survey frequency will mean that the council's ability to recognise and respond to changes in traffic patterns will be reduced.

1 FTE Reduction