

Central
Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



**TO EACH MEMBER OF THE
EXECUTIVE**

06 January 2011

Dear Councillor

EXECUTIVE - TUESDAY 11 JANUARY 2011

Further to the Agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached the following report which was marked as 'to follow' on the main Agenda:

- 15. Response from Overview and Scrutiny to the Supplementary Savings Proposals contained in the Corporate Budget Strategy**

To consider comments made by Overview and Scrutiny.

Should you have any queries regarding the above please contact Devina Lester, Democratic Services Officer on Tel: 0300 300 6258.

Yours sincerely

Devina Lester
Senior Democratic Services Officer
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Meeting: Executive

Date: 11 January 2011

Subject: Response from Overview & Scrutiny to the Supplementary Savings Proposals Contained within the Corporate Budget Strategy

Report of: The Chairmen of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees

Summary: The report provides the Executive with comments made by the Council's four Overview & Scrutiny Committees during their examination of the supplementary savings proposals outlined in the Executive's Corporate Budget Strategy update dated 7 December 2010.

Advising Officer: Ian Porter, Assistant Director of Strategy & Performance

Contact Officer: Jonathon Partridge, Overview and Scrutiny Officer

Public/Exempt: Public

Wards Affected: All

Function of: Executive

Key Decision No

**Reason for urgency/
exemption from call-in
(if appropriate)** n/a

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

The report sets out comments designed to help the Council respond to the financial challenges facing the public sector as a whole but, at the same time, enable it to deliver on its priorities.

Financial:

The supplementary savings proposals contribute to the Council's overall approach to ensuring a balanced budget for 2011/12.

Legal:

n/a

Risk Management:

In order to achieve a balanced budget for 2011/12 compensatory savings proposals may be required should any of the initial or supplementary proposals not be agreed.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

A number of the savings proposals impact on the staffing structures of the Council.

Equalities/Human Rights:

n/a

Community Safety:

n/a

Sustainability:

n/a

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **that the Executive considers and responds to the comments and recommendations of Overview & Scrutiny regarding the supplementary savings proposals contained within the Corporate Budget Strategy update, as set out in Appendices A to D of this report**

<i>Reason for Recommendation(s):</i>	<i>So that the Executive can take account of the comments and recommendations made by Overview & Scrutiny before it makes final recommendations to Council regarding the supplementary savings proposals outlined within its Corporate Budget Strategy report.</i>
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1. As Members will be aware, at its meeting of 2 November 2010, the Executive considered the report of its Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance & People regarding the Council's Corporate Budget Strategy. The report set out the Council's response to the Coalition Government's emerging policies and put forward proposals for managing expenditure to address the expected funding reductions.
2. The Executive endorsed the strategic response, proposed outcomes and direction of travel contained within the report and noted the efficiency proposals outlined in Appendix A. It also invited Overview & Scrutiny to comment on the service reconfiguration and reduction savings proposals detailed in Appendix B (as amended).
3. At its meeting on 7 December 2010 the Executive received an update on the Corporate Budget Strategy that outlined the overall funding gap for 2011/12 had increased by £6.2m than that reported in November. This increase in the overall funding gap reflected the announcements of the Government's spending review and the expected reduction in funding for local authorities.

4. On 7 December 2010 the Executive acknowledged the additional challenges facing the Council and considered additional savings that amounted to a further £8.3m for 2011/12. The Executive invited the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and other stakeholders to comment on these supplementary savings proposals.
5. This report captures those comments and associated recommendations (at appendices A to D), all of which were made and agreed during the December cycle of Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings.
6. The Executive is therefore invited to consider and respond to these comments and recommendations before making final recommendations to Council regarding the savings proposed.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Customer & Central Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee Comments

Appendix B – Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee Comments

Appendix C – Social Care, Health & Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee Comments

Appendix D – Children’s Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee Comments

Background Papers: (open to public inspection)

- Corporate Budget Strategy report presented to the Executive at its meeting on 2 November 2010
- Corporate Budget Strategy Update presented to the Executive at its meeting on 7 December 2010

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands

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Appendix A

Customer & Central Services Committee: 13 December 2010

Comments Regarding Supplementary Savings Proposals contained within the Corporate Budget Strategy Update presented to Executive on 7 December 2010

At its meeting of 13 December 2010, the Customer & Central Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee assessed the viability and suitability of a number of cross cutting and supplementary savings proposals, together with those relating to the Customer & Shared Services Directorate and the Office of the Chief Executive. Detailed below are the outcomes flowing from this assessment.

1. Comments and recommendations regarding the Customer & Shared Services Directorate and the Office of the Chief Executive:

a. C&SS16 Reduce Number of Print Rooms to One

When Members were provided with further context regarding this proposal, they were content to endorse it.

RECOMMENDATION: That the proposal to amalgamate the 2 print rooms and seek competitive bids to provide the service be endorsed.

b. C&SS19 Transfer of Provision of Public Conveniences

Members debated this proposal at length and expressed concerns over the apparent high cost of cleaning each facility, the existing contract implications and the lack of adequate and timely consultation with relevant town councils with regard to transfer. Members also expressed concern over the possibility of any closures should transfer not be managed effectively.

RECOMMENDATION: That, whilst the Committee supports the transfer of these facilities in principle, due to the concerns expressed above, it calls upon the Executive to instigate full and meaningful consultation with relevant town councils, ensuring any transfer occurring as a consequence, does so within a mutually agreed timeframe.

c. C&SS20 Capital Financing Charges

d. OCE9 Review Provision of Performance Management

e. OCE10 Internal Communications

f. OCE11 Customer Relations/FoI

- g. OCE12 Programme Management – Analysts
- h. OCE13 Risk Management

Members were provided with further context regarding the above proposals and were content to endorse them.

RECOMMENDATION: That the above proposals be endorsed.

2. Comments and recommendations regarding cross cutting proposals:

- a. CC6a Passenger Transport Review Increased Target

The Chairman of the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee confirmed that his Committee agreed with the approach proposed and also confirmed that the potential existed to explore further savings opportunities regarding this particular review.

RECOMMENDATION: That the proposal be endorsed and that the Executive seek to explore the potential to realise further savings from this review.

- b. CC30a Employee Terms & Conditions of Service

Members were provided with further context regarding this issue and were informed that specific proposals were a matter of negotiation with the trades unions.

RECOMMENDATION: That this proposal be endorsed.

Appendix B

Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 14 December 2010

Comments regarding the supplementary savings proposals contained within the Corporate Budget Strategy report presented to Executive on 7 December 2010

At its meeting of 14 December 2010, the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the viability and suitability of the specific supplementary savings proposals relating to the Sustainable Communities directorate. Detailed below are the outcomes of this meeting.

Sustainable Communities Directorate

a. EGRS1 Merge the Community Involvement and Community Engagement teams

The Committee queried the number of staff currently employed in the Community Involvement and Community Engagement teams and discussed the roles that these teams fulfilled. It was noted that where the support provided by these teams was proposed to be removed the Town and Parish Councils could seek to continue that support as encouraged under the Community Engagement Strategy

Following questions from the Committee it was clarified that this proposal was a cessation in service provision by the Sustainable Communities Directorate rather than a merger of two teams.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal relating to the Community Involvement and Community Engagement Teams in order to achieve a full year saving of £300k.

b. EGRS4 Remodelling of the Library Service

The Committee noted that a full review of the operation of the library service was planned and would commence after 1 January 2011. The Committee emphasised the importance of this review as a means of identifying further potential savings.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to remodel the Library Service in order to achieve a full year saving of £350k.

c. CSPPW4 Closure of household waste recycling centres (2 days per week)

Members raised concerns regarding fly-tipping outside of household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) if hours were reduced. Concerns were also raised that the publicity required to notify residents of the change in hours would outweigh the savings that could be achieved by implementing this proposal. Members also requested that further advertising be made available at the HWRCs of furniture banks that promote the reuse and reallocation of household furniture.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to close the household waste recycling centres on 2 days per week in order to achieve a full year saving of £60k.

- d. CSPPWL1 Remodelling of the Community Safety Team

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to reconfigure the community safety team in order to achieve a full year saving of £30k.

- e. CSPPWL5 Remodelling of Waste Services teams

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to remodel waste services teams in order to achieve a full year saving of £30k.

- f. CSPPWL6 Sports Development and Play Service

The Committee were informed that this proposal was complex as some of the funding for this team was received from external sources such as the NHS. The Committee commented that without a full understanding of the implications on Central Bedfordshire of the comprehensive spending review it was difficult to agree to this proposal. As a result the Committee felt that it was under informed and was unable to provide a constructive response.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to delete the Sport Development and Play Service in order to achieve a minimum of a full year saving of £200k.

- g. CSPPWL7 Review provision of Outdoor Education Service with a view to increased efficiency

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal to review the provision of the outdoor education service in order to achieve a further full year saving of £123k.

- h. CSPPWL8 Sandy Leisure Centre

The Committee discussed the importance of seeking an alternative provider to deliver the facilities at Sandy Leisure Centre. In reaching its recommendation Members were mindful of the petition received on this matter, which asked the Council to ensure that Sandy Leisure Centre remained open and accessible.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive adopt the proposal regarding Sandy Leisure Centre in order to achieve a saving of £143k in a full year. The Executive were requested to proactively seek alternative providers such as the school or the voluntary community sector to run the facility so that the proposals did not result in the closure of the leisure centre.

Cross Cutting Proposals

i. CC6a Passenger transport review increased target

The Committee noted that this proposal had been approved by the Executive at their meeting on 7 December 2010 during consideration of a report on the local bus services and community transport interim support strategy.

j. CC35 Delay Harmonisation of Council Tax

The Committee were aware that this proposal was not within the remit of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee but felt it was appropriate for them to express a view on the proposal. Members commented they felt that residents would be amenable to the Council retaining the £1.6million that would be lost as a result of harmonising council tax if it was invested to retain services that would otherwise be lost.

RECOMMENDED that the Executive take account of the view of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the proposal to delay harmonisation of council tax should be adopted in order to achieve additional income of £1.595 million in 2011/12.

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Appendix C

Social Care, Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee 20 December 2010

Comments regarding Supplementary Savings Proposals contained within the Corporate Budget Strategy Update presented to Executive on 7 December 2010

At its meeting of 20 December 2010, the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Committee assessed the viability and suitability of a number of supplementary savings proposals relating to the Social Care, Health and Housing Directorate.

Detailed below are the outcomes following the Committee's assessment and discussion of the Directorate's Supplementary Savings Proposals:

1. Comments and recommendations regarding the Social Care, Health and Housing Directorate:

- a. SCHH19 - Supplementary - Remodelling of the Assessment and Care Management Teams - Efficiency

Members were informed that the Directorate aims to provide existing and potential service users with access to personal budgets, allowing officers to tailor their skills to cases requiring complex assessment. In this instance the Directorate's workforce would include an increase in support workers based within the Community to facilitate personal budgets.

RECOMMENDATION: That this proposal be endorsed.

- b. SCHH20 - Supplementary - Remodelling of services for People with Learning Disabilities - Efficiency

The current Domiciliary Care (including Respite Services) and Assessment & Resettlement service supports adults with learning disabilities in supported living environments. The proposal is for better use of staffing resources and the proposed savings from the previous financial year be brought forward to the 2011/12 year.

RECOMMENDATION: That this proposal be endorsed.

- c. SCHH21 - Supplementary - Learning Disabilities Commissioning Transfer - Efficiency

The PCT had provided additional funding of £9.6m for contracts and care packages for adults with learning disabilities following the NHS Campus Closure process. The efficiencies would produce approximately £100k savings through contract efficiencies.

RECOMMENDATION: That this proposal be endorsed.

- d. SCHH22 - Supplementary - Reduction in the Transforming Peoples Lives Service - Efficiency

The project stage of the Transforming Peoples Lives Service has completed, with the outcomes of the service reconfiguration being integrated and embedded into the working practices of the service. This will be achieved through staff reduction whilst not reducing the service to users.

RECOMMENDATION: That this proposal be endorsed.

- e SCHH23 - Supplementary - Management Review of the Commissioning & Partnership team - efficiency

The team provides strategic commissioning, contract monitoring & compliance and service user participation. A review of the team will be carried out with the proposal of a reduction of two full time equivalents to be achieved.

RECOMMENDATION: That this proposal be endorsed.

Appendix D

Children's Services Committee: 21 December 2010

Comments Regarding Supplementary Savings Proposals contained within the Corporate Budget Strategy Update presented to Executive on 7 December 2010

At its meeting of 21 December 2010, the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the supplementary savings proposals presented to the Executive at its meeting on 7 December, which affected the Children's Services Directorate.

Members acknowledged that due to the timing of publication of the agenda for the Executive meeting on 7 December, the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee had already been given the opportunity of commenting upon these savings proposals at its special meeting of 30 November and were therefore content to reaffirm the comments and recommendations made at this previous meeting.

In order to assist the Executive however, these comments and recommendations are reproduced below:

2. CS5a – Remodelling of Services to Young People including the Youth Service – Service Reduction

Whilst considering this proposal, the Portfolio Holder drew Members' attention to a supplementary savings proposal regarding this service, which would be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 7 December. In essence, this supplementary proposal recommended accelerating service reductions so that all were achieved in 2011/12, rather than the phased approach over 2011/12 and 2012/13 as originally planned.

Members were particularly dismayed at this latest initiative, which in their opinion would not allow sufficient time to build capacity and provide training and support to the voluntary sector and schools that a move away from council run provision to a commissioning approach would require.

The Committee therefore agreed to urge the Executive to consider adopting the original 2 phased approach to the remodelling of services to young people.

RECOMMENDATION: Whilst reluctantly acknowledging the need to support the remodelling of services to young people, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee urges the Executive to adopt a 2 phased approach to the proposal, as originally outlined (i.e. a saving of £570k in 2011/12 and a further saving of £1.328M in 2012/13).

4. CS9a – Music Service

The Committee was content to reiterate and endorse the recommendations agreed at its meeting on 23 November regarding this particular savings proposal, which are reproduced below:

At its meeting of 23 November 2010, the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the future provision of Bedfordshire Music Service and in particular examined the 4 service options presented. Members debated at length the key issues affecting the service and also received an ePetition from members of the public entitled "Save the Music Service", which currently had 391 signatures and drew to a close on 10th December 2010.

It was Members' opinion that insufficient regard had been given to collaborating with interested parties to identify creative ways to preserve the service and moreover, the service review itself was ill-timed, given that the outcomes flowing from the independent Henley review of music education would be available for consideration before the end of the year.

The Committee therefore agreed the following recommendations for Executive consideration:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the Executive be requested to reserve its decision until such time as the outcomes of the Henley Review have been published and ensure that nothing irrevocable is done to the music service in the meantime;**
- 2. That the Executive take steps to bring together at the earliest opportunity a small representative group of interested people to identify creative ways in which to achieve retention of Bedfordshire Music Service; and**
- 3. That the Executive receive and respond to the ePetition entitled "Save the Music Service".**