

ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING DIRECTORATE

**Service Context**

The Department manages a diverse set of functions which, nevertheless, combine to form some of the key foundations of strong communities. Clean streets, well maintained green spaces which people can use, sound housing which meets people's needs, safe neighbourhoods - these are marks of desirable places to live. At a time of significantly diminishing resources, priority has been given to ensure that these bedrock services are maintained.

The Department, beyond its universal duties, also serves some of the most vulnerable in the city. As well as providing advice to the many thousands in housing need, the Department supports many others to sustain their tenancies. The department intervenes in the private sector to tackle some of the worst housing conditions in the city. Through close working with the police and health service, services are commissioned to help people leave a life of drug dependency.

There is also a longer term agenda. Work to improve and add to the city's housing stock has importance for many years to come, as do the environmental choices we make today.

The Key Outcomes

Based on the above, the Department has a number of key priorities which the budget is designed to support. They are as follows:

- preventing homelessness;
- improving the quality of private sector housing
- reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
- reducing fuel poverty and providing sustainable energy
- providing a reliable refuse and recycling service
- minimising the amount of waste that ends up in landfill by promoting reuse and recycling;
- clean neighbourhoods, reflecting local needs;
- green spaces which people can enjoy

To achieve these outcomes, the budget brings forward proposals clustered around the Best Council objectives.

**Budget proposals**

**Best Council Objective: ensuring high quality public services**

The contract payment for the provision of support for homeless people living in private sector temporary accommodation has reduced significantly. This reduction reflects the success of the Department in finding early long term solutions for people's housing problems. This is as a result of the on-going work by Leeds Housing Options to prevent homelessness, the remodelling of the accommodation

units, such as hostels, and the introduction of shorter move on targets. Joint work between providers and Leeds Housing Options means that individuals are assisted to move on into more permanent housing as soon as possible.

A line by line review of all budgets across the Directorate will be undertaken to deliver further savings.

**Best Council Objective: dealing effectively with the City's waste**

It is proposed to further roll out the alternate week collection of recyclable and residual waste citywide. By the end of 2013/14 this enhanced service will have been rolled out to 166,000 or 48% of properties in Leeds. In 2014/15 alternate week collection will be rolled out further so that in total an estimated 80% of the city will be in receipt of this service, with detailed consideration of alternative approaches for the remaining 20% of the city. As well as reducing costs of collection and disposal in 2014/15 these service developments will contribute towards an estimated 47% recycling target for the City and the longer term target of 55% for 2016.

Savings will arise from the full effect of the closure of Stanley Road Household Waste Site (HWSS) in August 2013 and subject to approving a business case, the planned closure of Kirkstall Road HWSS for redevelopment in late summer 2014.

**Best Council Objective: becoming an efficient and enterprising council**

Staff savings will be realised through a combination of service redesign for business support processes and structures, ELIs, the deletion of vacant posts and a further review of review of JNC posts in the Directorate.

Within the Parks and Countryside staff savings will derive from a redesign of the Forestry service and the implementation of seasonal working patterns for maintenance staff. Through working longer hours in the summer and shorter ones in the winter months, there will be a reduced requirement to employ seasonal staff during the period May to September.

It is proposed that resources that deal with improving the environment, that are currently based in both Housing Leeds and Environmental Action, are combined so that responsibility for the delivery of the function resides within Environmental Action. Not only will this deliver an enhanced service at a reduced cost but it will clarify responsibilities and accountability for service delivery.

The CCTV and security related functions will seek to expand their business base by engaging with both private sector and public sector organisations. More specifically the planned capital investment in multi storey flats provides the opportunity to extend the benefits of CCTV to more tenancies across the City.

**Other**

It is proposed to change the contract with West Yorkshire Police for the provision of Police and Community Safety Officers (PCSOs). Currently the Council pays 30% of

the cost of 165 PCSOs on the basis of 5 in each ward. By deploying staff differently and reaching agreement on the range of duties that are undertaken, savings can be achieved. An impact assessment is being undertaken to inform how this resource will be deployed in future.

Bus lane cameras have been very successful in reducing the numbers of cars which contravene restrictions, ensuring that the lanes are used as they are intended at peak times by buses and cyclists. Additional income is assumed from the extension of the bus lane enforcement camera scheme to a possible further 18 sites across the City.

Charges to the Housing Revenue Account will increase to reflect more accurately Environmental works undertaken on estates, the cost of maintenance and landscaping work on estates, activity levels in respect of the nuisance service and the level of support required to ensure that vulnerable adults can continue to live in their own homes.

The proposals include targets to utilise income opportunities for the Parks and Countryside service. Sales of forestry products, income from projects and services provided by the Parks and Countryside team as well as income from concessions, retail and cafes are expected to generate additional income in 2014/15.

### **Key Risks**

That assumption in respect of waste growth and the level of recycling across the City is not delivered and there is a consequential increase, over and above the budgeted assumptions, in the amount of waste that is landfilled.

Assumptions in respect of income receivable from Bus Lane enforcement are impacted upon by a reduction in the numbers of offences assumed in the budget assumptions.

That activity levels from income generating activities within Parks and Countryside are less than anticipated.

That both the number of staff leaving on ELI and the number of posts becoming vacant is less than assumed in the budget.

That levels of homelessness increase across the City with the subsequently requirement for the City Council to support these individuals in temporary accommodation

## Environment and Housing

Pressures/Savings	2014/15 £m	FTEs	Is this relevant to Equality & Diversity Y/N
<b>Budget Pressures:</b>			
<b>Inflation</b>			
Pay	1.1		
Price inc Landfill tax	2.0		
Income	(0.2)		
<b>Full Year Effects of previous decisions</b>			
Loss of income from the closure of Quarry Hill Car Park	0.1		
<b>Demand/Demography</b>			
<b>Other</b>		22.0	
Pay Pressures within the Refuse Collection Services	0.6		
Reduction in the costs of financing costs of Refuse Collection vehicles and replacement bins	(0.4)		
Financing costs of the implementation of a new Integrated Waste management IT system	0.1		
Loss of income from car parking fees and Penalty Charge Notices due to the disposal of the Union Street Car park as part of the development of the Harewood Quarter.	1.1		
<b>Total Pressures</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>22.0</b>	
<b>Savings Proposals:</b>			
<b>Procurement</b>			
Savings in the Temporary Accommodation and Emergency Services contract which provides support for homeless people living in private sector temporary accommodation.	(0.5)		Y
Review of all items of expenditure to deliver line by line savings.	(0.2)		N
<b>Dealing effectively with Waste</b>			
Continued roll out of the alternate weekly collection of recyclable and residual waste (AWC). By the end of 2014/15 approximately 80% of Households will receive this enhanced service for the collection of recyclables	(1.9)		Y
Waste Recycling Advisors - to support the implementation of AWC	0.1	8.0	Y
Additional tonnage volumes (non AWC areas)	0.3		N
Delay rolling out any more garden waste collections	(0.1)	(1.7)	N
Savings associated with the full year effect of the closure of Stanley Road waste site and a review of opening and closing times at other sites	(0.3)	(6.5)	N
Reduction in PFI procurement costs during construction phase of the Energy from Waste plant	(0.2)		N
Reduction of electricity income from gas emitted at Gamblethorpe closed landfill site	0.2		N
Review of the management and supervisory structure to provide support to deliver major changes to the Waste service	0.2	5.7	Y
<b>Income, charging and trading</b>			
Additional income generated from the full year effects of Bus Lane Enforcement (BLE) and from a further roll out to non City Centre sites	(0.8)		Y
Additional income receivable from services and contracts delivered by Parks and Countryside	(0.4)		N
Reduction in the subsidy on Allotments	(0.1)	(1.0)	Y
Charges to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) will be reviewed to reflect more appropriately the work undertaken on estates	(1.0)		N
Other minor income variations mainly a review of 24 hour opening at Woodhouse Lane car park and additional sales in parks	(0.1)	(1.0)	N
<b>Other efficiencies/savings proposals</b>			
Staffing savings to be achieved via service restructures, not filling existing vacant posts and staff leaving on the Council's ELI	(1.1)	(33.0)	Y
Review level of payments/funding support for PCSOs	(0.2)		Y
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>(6.0)</b>	<b>(29.5)</b>	
<b>Overall net Saving</b>	<b>(1.7)</b>	<b>(7.5)</b>	

## INITIAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2014/15

### CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE

#### **Service Context**

The Citizens and Communities directorate provides a range of front-line services for local people and local communities. The directorate also has lead responsibility on actions to reduce poverty across the city. The Council is taking forward changes aimed at providing more integrated and accessible services for people, particularly those suffering hardship, under the Citizens@Leeds initiative.

The directorate incorporates the following services, the overwhelming majority of which are front-line services.

**Contact centre** - The council's contact centre deals with 1.5 million calls and 100,000 emails each year. The enquiries are wide ranging and often complex, covering most of the council's key services, including environment services, adult and children's social services, housing (including housing Leeds), council tax and housing benefits and concessionary parking and travel permits. The Centre has also very recently incorporated the NHS's SPUR (Single Point of Urgent Referral) team into its operations. The centre uses state-of-the-art technologies to manage customer contact and provide quality service. Many services are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, using appropriate IVR technology.

**Face-to-face contact** - There are 16 one stop centres across the city, which handle 0.5 million face-to-face customer contacts each year. The enquiries include a range of subjects including housing, council tax, benefits, social services and environment issues such as refuse and pest control. The centres are fundamental to the development of the Community Hub approach as part of the Citizens@Leeds agenda and we are looking to extensively expand the range of services delivered at the first point of contact. This service also includes the interpreting and translation team who provide a translation and interpreting service for the council, customers and external organisations.

**Digital access** - The Digital access team manages the council's website which receives 6 million external visits (i.e. figure excludes visits from council computers) each year, and is developing new ways for customers to find what they are after on-line. The team also manage customer enquiries that come via the Council's social-media presence on Facebook and Twitter.

**Electoral services** – the team compiles the register of electors for Leeds comprising an electorate of 556000 people in 335000 properties and is responsible for the arrangement and conduct of elections and referendums for 8 parliamentary constituencies, 33 city council wards and 31 town and parish councils.

**Registrars of births, deaths and marriages** – provision of a front line public service that deal with the registration of 9800 births and 6500 deaths, issuing 57000 certificates, attesting 6900 notices and performing 1800 marriage and civil partnership ceremonies, and issuing 2600 British Citizenship certificates.

Licensing - administrate and enforce licenses for the sale of alcohol (approximately 2700 premises and 6400 personal licences), provision of entertainment, gambling (136 premises licenced for gambling and 736 gambling permits, notices and registrations) and other various miscellaneous licences.

Taxi and private hire licensing administer and enforce licences for taxis (hackney carriages) and private hire vehicles. There are 537 taxis, just under 1000 taxi drivers, approximately 3700 private hire vehicles, around 4800 private hire drivers and 90 private hire operators.

Local land charges are responsible for the compilation and maintenance of the up-to-date local land charges register and provide the information for approximately 9400 local land search requests each year.

Communities - The communities' team includes delivery of the council's locality working arrangements (area committees and area working), equalities, the third sector partnership and community centres. The team also contributes to the local assets review and supports the new communities' board and the associated work of the migration partnership and the poverty truth challenge.

Area Committees - Our work on locality working provides targeted solutions to tackle a wide range of local issues (e.g. environmental issues and community safety, health well-being, adult social care, children's services and skills and welfare reform). Area Committees and Area Lead Members provide local leadership and a local voice on these issues from a grass-roots perspective.

Development of Community committees - are intended to replace existing area committees in 2014 to further enhance the role of local elected members in decision-making and wider community engagement. Local elected members will allocate £1.8m of well-being funds in 2013/14 and £200k Youth Service funds to support local projects to address locally-determined priorities, totalling £2m. Work is being progressed to consider what other budgets could be delegated to local areas. In addition, service level agreements are in place between Environmental Services and Area Committees to tailor services to meet the needs of localities in this area.

Welfare and Benefits - The provision of welfare and benefits services including welfare rights team, benefits and council tax processing and customer contact for benefits and council tax services. Developing services that tackle the worst effects of financial and digital exclusion and delivering the new local welfare agenda by improving access to benefit and welfare services

Council Tax - This team is responsible for the billing and the collection of Council Tax, which is the local tax on domestic properties set each year by the council. In 2013-14 this will total more than £275 million from 341,000 properties. Administration of the Council Tax Support scheme is a new, locally agreed scheme, introduced in 2013-14, and it replaces the previous national scheme of Council Tax Benefit. It is estimated that in 2013-14 that £50 million will be paid in respect of 78,000 claims

Housing benefit - Our housing benefit team is responsible for the accurate assessment and correct payment of housing benefit and ensures that the 'HB gateway' is secure and free from fraud and error. There are currently 70,417 claims and it is estimated that £285 million will be paid in 2013-14. It is intended that Housing Benefit will eventually become part of Universal Credit

Education benefits - The administration of the free school meals scheme.

### **Budget proposals**

Services within citizens and communities, particularly the contact centre and welfare and benefits are experiencing an increase in demand for services which is creating a budget pressure in 2013/14 which is expected to continue into 2014/15. For example, in recent months calls to the Council Tax and Benefits lines in the contact centre have seen a 30% increase in volume. Overall the pressure for 2014/15 equates to approximately £360k.

The Welfare and Benefits service will see a £430k reduction in its administration grant in 2014/15 without a consequential reduction in workload thus causing further budgetary pressure on a service experiencing increasing demand and a pressure of approx. £200k, mainly staffing, is projected.

The directorate overall needs to accommodate inflation pressures amounting to £380k. As there were no local elections in 2013/14, there is a corporate pressure of £450k for local and European elections in 2014/15.

In terms of savings, efficiencies are expected from corporate reviews relating to procurement and business improvement and total £190k.

Implementation of the e-services agenda is expected to deliver £150k worth of savings to help offset the additional demand costs being experienced in the contact centre.

Welfare and Benefits are also budgeting to realign resources of around £50k.

Use of funding from the Welfare Support Scheme on priority welfare services and actions is expected to deliver efficiencies of £325k.

Overall revenue funding delegated to Area Committees in 2013/14 was £2.0m. In 2014/15 we will see an increase of funding in the Youth Services delegation from £200k to £500k and work is ongoing to identify other budgets that could be delegated to Area Committees. With more budgets/services being devolved to Area Committees it is proposed to reduce the general well-being budget by £200k, which would still see a net increase overall in delegated funding at £2.1m.

Other savings on running costs and staffing are proposed equating to approximately £120k.

Overall the key pressures identified above are more than offset by savings proposals.

**Key Risks**

Demand for services, particularly council tax, benefits and welfare advice is increasing and it is difficult to gauge the full extent of any further demand increases during 2014/15. Whilst saving efficiencies are expected through the e-service agenda, there is a risk that such efficiencies do not deliver cashable savings as customer service officers are diverted to other priority services experiencing high and increasing demand.

The proposal to reduce the well-being budget is proposed on the basis of other service budgets being delegated to area committees to deliver a net overall increase in locality based funding. Work still needs to be undertaken to determine the specific budgets and amounts to be delegated.



## Citizens and Communities

Pressures/Savings	2014/15 £m	FTEs	Is this relevant to Equality & Diversity Y/N
<b>Budget Pressures:</b>			
<b>Inflation</b>			
Pay	0.34		
Price	0.04		
Income	-0.07		
<b>Other</b>			
Customer Access – increased demand re Council Tax and Benefits enquiries and changes to internet publishing process. Further potential pressure of £300k for Customer Access and Welfare and Benefits to be provided for within contingency	0.21	7.0	
Estimated additional cost of elections in 2014/15 (no election in 2013/14)	0.45		
Grant reductions: Housing Benefit Admin, Social Fund admin and Local Council Tax new burdens	0.43		
<b>Total Pressures</b>	<b>1.40</b>	<b>7.0</b>	
<b>Savings Proposals:</b>			
<b>Procurement</b>			
Review of running costs	-0.05		N
<b>Becoming an efficient and enterprising Council:</b>			
Business Improvement Programme	-0.14	-3.0	Y
<b>Other efficiencies/savings proposals</b>			
Re-channel efficiencies from implementation of e-services agenda	-0.15	-5.0	Y
Staffing and running cost efficiencies as a result of fallout of New Burdens Funding	-0.12		Y
Welfare support funding: support costs of delivering the poverty agenda within Citizens and Communities	-0.33		N
Efficiencies in locality/well-being budgets (see note 1)	-0.20		Y
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>-0.99</b>	<b>-8.0</b>	
<b>Overall net Saving</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>-1.0</b>	

Note 1:

Links to proposals to devolve more funding with a net overall increase in locality based funding.