

West Dunbartonshire Council 28 January 2010

Budget Proposals for 2010/2011

The Labour Opposition's proposals for the
General Services Budget

28 January 2010

Delivering for West Dunbartonshire

Budget Pressures

The Council has three main sources of funding:

- Central Government for our AEF (aggregate external finance)
- The Council taxpayer
- Users of services which attract a fee.

By far the greatest source of funding is the AEF, which accounts for nearly £4 out of every £5 that we spend. This means increases in our spending plans can have a disproportionate affect on the council taxpayer. What might seem like relatively small growth in our budget can result in a significant increase in council tax. For example, the council tax would have to be increased by 5% to cover only a 1% increase in our total budget. The Scottish Government has agreed that £210m will be made available to local authorities that do not increase council tax each year for the next three years. West Dunbartonshire Council will receive an additional **£1.208m** this year if we agree to zero increase in Council Tax.

This is the final year of a three year finance settlement for local government and our total AEF allocation is **£209.382m**. The Council received amongst the lowest increase in its settlement in the whole of Scotland. The removal of ring fencing is generally agreeable to elected members as it allows a degree of flexibility when it comes to setting a budget. However Labour Councillors do accept that it is appropriate for the Executive to allocate specific funding to key policy areas.

There are a number of areas that we do not have control over, for example:

- Requisitions to Police, Fire, SPT and Valuation Joint Board
- Remaining Specific Grants

These areas account for **17.82%** of our net budget.

This is the context for our budget. We reviewed every department's budget to make sure that:

- All known and foreseeable costs were included
- Only costs necessary to deliver the Council's policy or statutory commitments are included.

The outcome of this exercise is that it would cost us **£251.402m** to provide all of our services after taking account of fees and charges. Once the AEF is deducted this leaves **£42.020m** to come potentially from Council Taxpayers. Without making any efficiency savings or using reserves to part fund the budget, council tax increase of **9.0%** would be required. Our key pledge is to keep council tax as low as possible while protecting front line services. Over the past few months we have been working closely with officers to identify efficiency savings and enhancements to achieve that twin goal of keeping taxes low and increasing services. The rest of our proposals set out what we plan to do.

2

Labours Political Priorities	
Close budget gap.	£2,222,720
The Labour Opposition proposals include the introduction of a Strategic Investment Fund. The fund will be used to address funding pressures, help modernise council services and support the development of shared services. All bids to the fund must be supported by a business case and will be subject to final approval by the Chief Executive before coming to council for decision.	£1,950,260
The Labour Opposition budget proposals include setting aside a sum of £310,500 to mitigate the impact of the introduction of new charges. This would be sufficient resource to cut the new charges introduced by the SNP by 50% in October 2010. We call on the Chief Executive to prepare a report in June 10 with options on how this sum could reduce charges. It is recommended that the report includes an option to reduce the SNP Sales Fees & Charges with effect 1 st October, 2010. In addition the scheme of charges for Early Education & Childcare services to include an option to revert to an hourly charging rate and the 50% discount to be reinstated. Furthermore the Labour Opposition would ask the chief executive to explore the possibility that the report includes a formula approach be introduced for all charges. With effect October 2011 all charges could increase by inflation plus 2% or as otherwise decided by council from time to time. This would allow council, in partnership with parents to share the burden of the costs of council services and build capacity over time. Any new charges introduced would have the terms of the formula applied so that it would be expected that charges would be dealt with outside of the budget process.	£310,500
Following consultation with Independent councillors the Labour Opposition will set aside an additional resource of £15,000 to be available to help hard working parents meet the transition costs of the increased nursery charges.	£15,000
The Labour Opposition proposals include the establishment of a Disability Support Fund to help disabled persons with multiple care needs to meet the costs of aids and adaptations resulting from the SNP charging policy.	£50,000
The Labour Opposition budget proposals include setting aside a sum of £23,000, to ensure the introduction of the living wage LIVING WAGE OF £7 PER HOUR. We call on the Chief Executive to prepare a report in May with options on how this could be introduced.	£23,000
The Labour Opposition recognise the need for additional road improvement works that will be required as a result of the extreme weather conditions and agrees an additional £100,000 of capital works to carry out the necessary repairs. The capital works will be funded using prudential borrowing of £10,000.	£10,000
The end of year favourable variance of £162,000 to be added to the existing free reserve balance of £258,000 and the £400,000 from the 2010/11 budget to be transferred to the general reserve to provide a 2010/11 general reserve for 2010/11 of £820,000.	Nil
The Labour Opposition proposals include increasing Council free reserves by transferring the surplus £1m earmarked for single status to the General Reserve. This action is cost neutral but would address the specific concerns identified by the council's auditors KPMG. The total free reserves in the General Reserve Account to be £1,820,000	Nil
Sub Total	£4,581,480

Efficiency Savings & Budget Reductions

The Labour Opposition notes that the Scottish Government has underfunded West Dunbartonshire by £5.67m and as a result the Council is forced to make efficiency savings in order to balance the budget for 2010/2011. We have identified efficiency savings to the value of **£4,581,480** and these are set out below.

Chief Executive's Department		
CE 01	Deletion of 1.5 of vacant internal auditor post. This option may have direct implication on the section's ability to deliver the program of work necessary to give assurance in support of the Council's statement of Internal Financial Control. Any cut in service may attract negative comment from the Council's external auditors and Audit Scotland	£61,000
	Sub Total	£61,000
Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Department		
HEED 07	Review of Grounds Maintenance Service provision. Service reduction in a number of areas except street cleaning.	£160,000
HEED 09	Grounds Maintenance. Recharge Lomond Shores - GM costs. Lomond shores currently enjoy this service provision of G.M. and S.L free of charge from the Council. This would recharge at cost for this service.	£40,000
HEED 12	Halls and Events. Rationalise Halls/CLD estate. Some communities may take over management of local halls/centres while some would close. In some areas there is an over provision of community space. This review will rationalise this space and encourage communities to take over control of certain facilities. Full consultation would be required. Saving is for full year which may not be achieved.	£100,000
HEED 18	Catering. Remove free school meal provision for teachers (Education saving). This is a potential saving to education and would require to be explored.	£70,000
HEED 19	Janitors. Reduce janitorial weekend overtime (Education saving). Reduce security checks in schools at weekends. Currently all schools are checked Saturday and Sunday by janitorial staff. Plan would be to reduce this level of inspection.	£40,000
HEED 20	Delete ASB Police Overtime budget. This funding is in addition to £200,000 provided for additional officers which runs to 2011. The Council will pay £22.640 million pounds in requisitions to Strathclyde Police in 2010/11. In addition the council is already subsidising	£100,000

	policing by funding 8 additional officers at a cost of £200k per year. This is not a statutory function but is designed to assist the Scottish Government to reach their target of 1000 additional police officers. Given the SNP Councils decision to charge the elderly, young and vulnerable excessive charges for lifeline services. This spend is unaffordable	
HEED 21	Various Budgets. Structural Change. This will increase the workload of "back office/support" staff. This saving reflects a departmental restructure where back office/support posts are removed. 10 posts deleted.	£263,000
	Sub Total	£773,000
Educational Services Department		
EC 10	Merge VOL EE&CC and Renton EE&CC on St. Martin's site. The Labour Opposition proposals support the retention of St. Martin's Primary School and to co-locate the two EE&CC within the school. At present the council is carrying out statutory consultation on the proposed closure of the school. However without pre-judging the outcome of the consultation we recognise that whether the decision is to close or retain the school there is still scope to collocate the two EE&CC.	£6,750
EC 13	WITHDRAWAL OF FREE SCHOOL MILK IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS FROM APRIL 2010. Feedback from parents and staff suggests that there is a lot of wastage	£240,860
EC 20	FOREGO THE REMAINING RELEASE OF MONIES FOR TEACHERS/LEARNING ASSISTANTS' SALARIES FROM 2007/08 LEVELS Unable to progress with reduce class sizes as per. SOA. Numbers of teachers employed in WDC would be further reduced.	£129,420
EC 27	TO DISCONTINUE FROM AUGUST 2010 THE 0.4FTE DOWNLOAD TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS FOR MANAGEMENT OF PFSWs. Schools have used this money to part-fund posts. Numbers of teachers employed in WDC would be further reduced.	£80,000
EC 34	TO REMOVE BUDGET TO SCHOOLS FOR CLUSTER COORDINATORS AND ASSOCIATED CLERICAL SUPPORT. Adverse effect on school cluster working. This may be offset by allocation of staff through EI/Network review	£46,700
	Sub Total	£503,730
Social Work and Health Improvement Department		
SWK 01	Re-provision of Community Work Support Services in partnership with the Community Planning Partnership. The Community Planning Partnership is investing hundreds of thousands of pounds in developing a comprehensive community engagement strategy to support local communities and this option is dependent on the re-provision of this service by the CPP.	£164,000
SWK 16	Youth Justice. Cessation of funding currently provided to Careers Service for Key worker Post. Longer term effect expected as Careers service will have less capacity to provide services to assist young	£20,000

	people in following career paths. One post in careers service.	
SWK 17	Youth Justice. Cessation of funding for Restorative Justice element of provision. Reduced levels of interventions with children and young people could result in higher levels of demand for other Social Work services. Post to be redeployed. 1 x council post.	£46,000
SWK 19	Childcare. Stop funding of Social Worker post located in Choices Short Breaks and redeployment of post holder. Work would require to be picked-up by the Group work Team within Social Work	£36,000
SWK 26	Review the level of provision of advice giving services across West Dunbartonshire provided by WDC and partner agencies. Potential diminution of level of service provided to clients within WDC. Could lead to people not maximising their benefits and increase poverty in the area. Much of this service is funded from external funding streams e.g. NHS, Working for Families Grant, Macmillan Cancer Research and in partnership with the Community Planning Partnership. Reducing this service would put these funding streams at risk. The potential effect on the population of West Dunbartonshire for whom the service is beneficial to (low income earners, single parents, older people and other disadvantaged groups) may be significant and levels of poverty may rise.	£50,000
	Sub Total	£316,000
Corporate Services Department		
C SERV 02	Removal of canteen subsidy. Eliminate subsidy and offer the service on a gross cost basis. Possible cross cutting impact on the catering trading operation	£55,910
C SERV 04	Town Twinning. Reduce budget from £4,900 to £2,900	£2,000
C SERV 05	Two week closure of main administrative offices over Christmas holidays. Savings bases on energy costs at main office locations based on 6 days usage	£10,000
C SERV 07	Reduce supplies & services. Reduction to publications budget	£3,000
C SERV 12	Workforce Management. Centralisation of HR & Payroll functions. 3 x staff redeployed.	£45,000
C SERV 18	Targeted Trawl. Seek early retirement application from within a group of workers with minimum strain in the fund posts. Options C Serv 15-c serv 19 represent 15.5 posts out of a total establishment of 309 and cannot be achieved without some impact on service delivery. Some investment in modernisation processes through increased used of Dip & Workflow, additional scanning and retraining costs would be required to allow this to be managed. 5 posts	£90,000
C SERV 21	Members services - restructure and develop centralisation	£5,300
	Sub Total	£211,210
General		

GEN1	Trawl savings (up to)	£250,000
	Sub Total	£250,000
Labour Group Efficiency Savings Options		
LG 01	Reintroduction of statutory free school meal entitlement.	£275,000
LG 02	Top slice Training Costs by 10%. The draft budget for training for 2010/11 is £703,000. Personnel red circled as a result of Single Status are not to be affected by this.	£70,300
LG 03	The council has budgeted for £2,454,290 for staff overtime during 2010/11. Top slice overtime budget by 7.5%	£184,070
LG 04	The Council has budgeted to spend over £235,000 on postage during 2010/2011. Reduce postage costs by 5%	£11,770
LG 05	Delete funding for Executive Director of Social Work & Health Post with a view to a joint Executive Director of Social Work and Health funded by Council and NHS GG&C.	£90,000
LG 06	Delete council car and corresponding running costs & staffing. It is recommended that the Chief Executive explores options for hiring an appropriate vehicle for to meet civic responsibilities.	£20,000
LG 07	The Council is committed to the retention and modernising of all its branch library service. The Labour Opposition is recommending a review of branch library services refocusing provision on information technology. All branch libraries must be retained, however in order to maximise usage the opening times to altered to meet customer demand. The part-time option was suggested at the Clydebank public meeting.	£100,000
LG 08	Continue with the Chief Executive spending restrictions programme for the whole of 2010/11. Note: The spending restriction programme allows for recruitment and spending which is supported through the business case process. This continues to allow the council the flexibility to meet statutory requirements and identified business needs.	£750,000
LG 09	The Executive Director of Education & Cultural Services had employed consultancy services to carry out a review of spending within the department. The consultants final report is expected to be available after the budget setting process. However the potential financial benefits are expected to be in excess of £500,000.	£500,000
LG 10	Delete Council newspaper	£18,000
LG 11	Reduce Area Tourist Board grant	£25,000
LG 12	Introduce a moratorium on elected member attendance at conferences for 12 months. Applications for elected members to attend courses must be approved by council.	£7,500
LG 13	Reduce 2010/11 Convener's hospitality to £17,000. At January 2010 the spend was £14,265 and the projected outturn is £17,000. This	£10,000

	results in no additional increase this year to this budget.	
LG 14	The council hospitality budget is £48,970 for 2010/11. It is recommended that we centralise the hospitality budget and reduce by 10%. Bids for hospitality to be approved by Chief Executive.	£4,900
LG 15	The Council is expecting a substantial VAT rebate and is and it is recommended to earmark £400,000 to the Strategic Investment fund.	£400,000
	Sub Total	£2,466,540

4

Council Tax



In section 2 of this document, we noted that without taking any action, a council tax increase of 9.0% would be required. Having outlined the savings we intend to make in section 4, we propose to freeze the council tax for 2010/11 at £1,163 (Band D). This will allow us to carry out the enhancements set out in section 3 whilst maintaining the council tax at its current level.

The above figure excludes water and sewerage charges. The council has no control of the level of these charges. For 2010/11, although there has been a small offsetting movement between the water and sewerage elements, the combined charge for a band D property will remain at £393.57.

Council Tax Band	Annual Tax	Water & Sewerage Charges	Total
A	775.33	262.38	1,037.71
B	904.56	306.11	1,210.67
C	1,033.78	349.84	1,383.62
D	1,163.00	393.57	1,556.57
E	1,421.44	481.03	1,902.47
F	1,679.89	568.49	2,248.38
G	1,938.33	655.95	2,594.28
H	2,326.00	787.14	3,113.14

Risks

The Council has identified a number of strategic and operational risks that must be taken into account as we set the 2010/11 budget. The financial risks identified by KPMG are reproduced below. **Officers have already taken the necessary steps to mitigate against the risks identified by KPMG.**

Details risks to the Council

Financial Pressures: The Council faces severe financial pressures. The result for the year was to increase the general fund balance by £1.7 million to £5.0 million (2008: £3.3 million). However, £4.8 million of the Council's reserves are earmarked for specific purposes, leaving the Council with free reserves of only £258,000. This remains significantly below the Council's approved prudential level target of £4.9 million. The result for the year reduced the free reserves available to the Council by £2.0 million. This was as a result of three significant adverse movements which totalled £2.6 million which were not anticipated within the budget. Excluding these items, the budgeted surplus for the year was £436,000 and the Council returned an actual surplus of £554,000. With such a low level of free reserves, however, the Council is exposed to any further unidentified costs and may thus have difficulty in achieving its objectives in 2009-10 and beyond. The general services revenue budget has been agreed for 2009-10 at £243.9 million. The Council considered the impact of the current economic climate as part of the budget setting process. The financial strategy for 2009-10 to 2018-19 was approved by the corporate and efficient government committee on 30 September 2009, outlining proposals to address the forecast budget deficit of £8.7 million in 2010-11, £25.4 million in 2011-12 and £38.4 million in 2012-13. The Council therefore faces significant pressures in achieving operational sustainability and financial stability in the current economic climate.

Financial management: (i) Good Financial management may not be in place to ensuring that significant public monies and assets are applied to meet national priorities and the needs of local communities. Good financial management is about efficiency, effectiveness, best value and tight financial control. councils need to oversee budgets, monitoring should be ongoing and financial performance reviewed regularly. (ii) Budgets and budgetary control may not reflect the prioritisation of individual service need and may not receive the necessary commitment from service officers, resulting in disproportionate budgetary pressure on different parts of the Council leading to a reduction in service delivery or over-spending. (iii) The approach to joint working may not support effective joint working, restricting the ability to achieve community planning objectives. (iv) Senior management of the Council must fully understand the financial environment in which the organisation operates. The development of strategic and corporate plans should be informed by a proper understanding and appreciation of their financial implications. (v) Long-term plans of the Council may not appropriately reflect the recent economic downturn and the risk of recession. This could result in resources not being targeted to priorities or reflecting changing demographics.

People management: (i) Single status and equal pay may not be appropriately budgeted for, all relevant costs should be included in the appropriate budgets with on-going financial implications fully considered. Management should review their position on outstanding cases and financial impact of these cases on a regular basis. (ii) There may not be in place a comprehensive workforce management strategy, which identifies risks in relation to matters such as Health and Safety, equalities, business continuity, succession planning and performance assessment. (iii) Work force management may not be sufficiently linked to the financial strategy, leading to problems in meeting employee related costs, including pensions, in the longer term. (iv) Absence management arrangements may not be effective in tackling abuse and work-related causes of ill-health or to support staffing so that they can return to work.

Asset Management: (i) Asset management may not be viewed as an integral part of the strategic

and business planning process, with the result that business planning may not be supported by the most appropriate asset base. A corporate approach to asset management and utilisation should be undertaken, to ensure full advantage is taken of economies of scale or opportunities to share. (ii) Information on asset condition and suitability may not be used to inform management proposals for new investment and maintenance plans. Key performance indicators in relation to cost and utilisation should be used to maximise the use of assets and identify efficiency savings. (iii) Costs and time frames may not have been estimated to bring assets currently not in a satisfactory condition or accessible to disabled people up to an acceptable standard. The Council should ensure such estimates have been carried out.

Visions and Strategic Direction: (i) Community plans, Single Outcome Agreements (SOA) and Corporate Plans do not link to more detailed strategies and operational plans such as service plans and budgets, and lack actions plans and clear milestones to measure progress. • The Council has competing demands on limited resources, and as such public services provided are not in line with their Corporate Plan. (ii) Leaders do not clearly communicate expectations, with poor change management and little recognition of the need for staff training and development. (iii) There is no clear or common understanding of members' strategic leadership role or the limitations that should be set on their involvement in detailed management operations.

Procurement: A key risk of local authorities is the failure to fully engage with procurement centres of excellence, council's need to demonstrate that procurement strategies in place are fit for purpose and that procurement and governance strategies comply with the standards set out in the McClelland Report.

Information Management: (i) The responsibility for data handling and security may not be considered as a corporate requirement, and instead handled at a local or service based level. (ii) Information regarding clients may be held at service or departmental level and not shared at a corporate level. This lack of sharing may lead to the delivery of service being less efficient and effective. (iii) Investment in computer systems and ICT infrastructure may not be subject to corporate management team control and (iv) instead performed at a local or service based level. Councils without adequate process in place to ensure all significant investment is in line with strategic targets may fail to achieve the desired outcomes. (v) The responsibility for compliance with information legislation may not be considered as a corporate requirement, and instead handled at a local or service based level. This way of working could lead to inconsistent working practices and possible unnecessary duplication of effort. A lack of corporate policies and guidelines in place to ensure the organisation can fulfil its legal commitments in relation to information processing legislation may increase the risk of non-compliance. (vi) Government initiatives, such as green ICT and OneScotland Portal, are not being sponsored at the appropriate level within the Council and progress is not being reported on a regular basis, which may limit the Council's ability to meet desired objectives. (vii) ICT contingency in the context of the Council's 'emergency planning and response' may not be considered as a corporate requirement and instead handled at a local or service based level.

Partnership Working and Community Leadership/Engagement: (i) There may be a lack of effective leadership to ensure partners are committed to community planning and have shared visions for the community. (ii) A poor shared understanding of the community will result in priorities agreed and decisions about services not being based upon strong evidence of need, relevant information should be collected and shared in systematic way, should be fully up to date, accurate to result in a good connection between strategic priorities and the issues an area is facing. (iii) Partnership governance and accountability arrangements may be insufficiently developed, resulting in a lack of clarity regarding lines of communication, areas of responsibility, delegated authority and scrutiny arrangements (iv) Consultation and engagement with local communities and service users may be poorly co-ordinated or insufficiently linked to wider community empowerment activity. (v) Councils may not fully involve all partners in developing partnerships plans and strategies, as such Community Plans and SOAs. (vi) Councils may lack clear arrangements for linking community planning priorities to financial and service planning processes. Councils may be unable to identify mainstream resources to support initiatives previously funded through ring-fenced monies. (vii) Arrangements for tracking progress towards shared priorities and high-level outcomes may not be linked to performance management at service levels, or partners may be unwilling to share service performance.

Governance and accountability: (i) The role and development of elected members is not clearly defined, and members do not have access to appropriate training and development tailored to their continuing needs to be effective in their role. The lack of clarity may extend to individual elected members responsibility in representation on boards of trusts, companies and other arms length organisations. (ii) Support available to elected members is not always available, as

councils may not provide information of sufficient quality resulting in transparent decisions which allow for sufficient scrutiny, challenge and risk assessment by elected members. (iii) The reasons for establishing and working with external organisations and the intended benefits may not be clear, or councils may not make clear their financial commitment, limitations etc. Monitoring and reporting arrangements for financial and service performance may not be agreed or implemented.

Performance Management and Improvement: (i) Corporate priorities may not be clearly articulated at corporate or service level or may lack specific or measurable outcome targets. Corporate and service plans may not integrate with the provide linkages between resources and performance to demonstrate whether outputs and outcomes have been maintained, improved or have deteriorated. (ii) Clear links may not exist between community plan/corporate objectives and the SOA, making it difficult for councils to demonstrate the relevance of their agreed local outcomes and indicators. (iii) Performance indicators may not be measured accurately resulting in the council being unable to demonstrate the quality, effectiveness or cost of its services overall. Councils may not have systems to collect the relevant information to report on the delivery of agreed outcomes, on a timely basis, with baseline data agreed and ensure sufficient quality control procedures are in place. Minimum service standards may not have been established or published, with the result the public are unaware of the quality of service. (iv) Monitoring of performance may be ineffective, resulting in poor performance not properly identified to allow appropriate remedial action. Effective monitoring of performance should be in place, over time, against corporate and service objectives including those arising from community plans and SOAs and against 'best practice' quality standards or those achieved by others. (v) Involving users through ensuring all information collected through consultation and feedback may not be routinely linked with the performance management system and used to improve service delivery. (vi) Performance reporting may not provide service users and the wider public balanced information on performance, leading to the inability to meet statutory duties or ineffective democratic accountability leading to the poor management of expectations of residents and customers.

Fairer Scotland Fund: The Scottish Government had removed ring fencing which means that that (i) the Community Regeneration Fund; (ii) the Working for Families Fund; (iii) the Not in Education; Employment or Training Fund; (iv) the Financial Inclusion Fund; (v) the Changing Children's Services Fund; (vi) the Workforce Plus Fund; and (vii) the Community Voices Fund, have been bundled up into the '**Fairer Scotland Fund**'. However in 2008/09 the Scottish Government reduced the Fairer Scotland Fund from **£6.1m** to **£5.946m**, a reduction of **£250,000** on the Council's 2007/8 allocation. During 2009/10 the Fairer Scotland Fund was cut by a further **£439,000**. The Scottish Government has also reduced the Fairer Scotland Fund by a further **£440,000** in 2010/11. Unlike other funding the Fairer Scotland Fund has not had any inflationary uplift over the three year period and in fact it has been subjected to year on year cuts totalling **£1,129,000**.

Strategic Assessment – Setting the agenda for change

The Labour Opposition will set the strategic direction of the Council by initiating a series of reviews and bringing forward reports that will look at disposal of surplus assets, modernising service delivery and generating additional income for the Council. The reviews will create a framework for identifying potential efficiency savings and assisting future budget decisions. All savings and receipts are to be held in the Councils Strategic Investment Fund and used to deal with strategic priorities of the Council.

Strategic Assessment Corporate Services

Situation: Currently WDC has decentralised the Human Resources and Payroll functions and following on from the new system implementation there will be an opportunity to rationalise the delivery of service and reduce operational costs

Task: Assess and centralise all functions

Action: Director of Corporate Services will develop a plan to centralise the functions

Result: Will reduce operational costs and improve efficiencies of the service. A report to be presented to the Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee for consideration.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: Currently WDC has decentralised the Finance function and there will be an opportunity to rationalise the delivery of service and reduce operational costs

Task: Assess and centralise the function

Action: Director of Corporate Services will develop a plan to centralise the function

Result: Will reduce operational costs and improve efficiencies of the service. A report to be presented to the Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee for consideration.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: Currently WDC has decentralised the ICT function and there will be an opportunity to rationalise the delivery of service and reduce operational costs

Task: Assess and centralise the function

Action: Director of Corporate Services will develop a plan to centralise the function

Result: Will reduce operational costs and improve efficiencies of the service. A report to be presented to

the Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee for consideration.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: Currently WDC has decentralised the Procurement function and there will be an opportunity to rationalise the delivery of service and reduce operational costs

Task: Assess and centralise the function

Action: Director of Corporate Services will develop a plan to centralise the function

Result: Will reduce operational costs and improve efficiencies of the service. A report to be presented to the Corporate & Efficient Governance Committee for consideration.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Strategic Assessment Educational Services

Situation: The Schools Devolved Management Resources Policy has not been reviewed for some time. There is the opportunity to review, develop and update the policy and processes as it applies to schools

Task: Carry out a review of the Schools Devolved Management Resources.

Action: Report the above review with recommendations for future service delivery

Result: Will result in improving management & control of resources. A report to be presented to the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee for consideration.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: The Council has traditionally provided additional specialist teacher support to primary schools. At present there are 7 posts being provided at considerable cost to the council.

Task: Carry out a review of the Specialist Primary School Teachers.

Action: Ensure that those schools that require additional specialist support are identified and needs met.

Result: A report to be presented to the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: The Council's ten year Early Intervention Programme has been a great success. The service was due to undergo a formal review in 2007, however this was not achieved and instead the service has been subject to piecemeal restructuring.

Task: The Council is required to carry out a full review of the Early Intervention Programme and Network Support Team as a matter of priority. The primary aim of the review is to reposition the service in order to meet the identified needs of our communities

Action: Review current provision. Identify best practice and opportunities for enhancing service.

Result: A report to be presented to a future meeting of Education & Lifelong Learning Committee.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: The Council traditionally provides additional staffing support to schools for deprivation.

Task: Carry out a review of the effectiveness of the additional staffing allowance for deprivation.

Action: Review current provision. Identify best practice and opportunities for enhancing service.

Result: The council will position itself to ensure it is best able to support the delivery of the curriculum for excellence. A report is to be presented to the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee by October 2010.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: The INEA report identified that the council needs to increase its efforts to raise attainment.

Task: The council needs to encourage and support teachers to raise attainment in our schools and promote an attainment-focused ethos in our schools.

Action: Identify existing best practice within our schools and outside of the authority. Teachers should be encouraged to bring forward ideas & suggestions that could assist with raising attainment. Ideas could include:

1) Glow & Scholar (Online programmes): This might require investment in infrastructure to allow these programs to run; investment in teacher training so they know how to use the software. (Software allows them to upload class notes and past papers to a site which pupils can access from home)

2) Dedicated Attainment & Teacher Training Officer: to concentrate on an authority wide-strategy to raising attainment; bringing in the best training for teachers and making sure pupils have the best support. Would focus on continuous attainment-focused teacher training.

3) Leadership Development programme for high-potential teachers in schools

4) Summer training week for teachers on attainment and exam-focused learning for those teachers who volunteer.

5) Recognition awards for teachers to acknowledge achievements in raising attainment

6) Potential High Achievers stream - starting in first year and going right through to six year, bringing the brightest students from across the authority together for a more intensive exam-focused education. This could potentially pull up average grades

7) Effective Learning course - one period per week for two months at the start of third year. The Curriculum for Excellence gives teachers the opportunity to consider approaches such as this

Result: Teachers are supported and encouraged to focus on a variety of initiatives and approaches to improve attainment. A report to be submitted to the Education & Lifelong Learning Committee for consideration.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: The Council currently has significant property and land assets

Task: Investigate options for the Councils current property & land portfolio

Action: To develop an Asset Strategy with clear recommendations to reduce the Councils revenue commitments over the medium to long term and provides for sustainable service delivery & optimise investment opportunities.

Result: Potential to stimulate local economic activity and realise capital receipts. A report to be presented to the HEED Committee for consideration.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: The Council currently owns an interest of 19.4% in Clydebank Shopping Centre. The current market value of this is estimated at £21m.

Task: Investigate options for the Council's stake in the Clyde Regional Shopping Centre.

Action: The Executive Director of HEED is to bring forward a report that outlines the pros and cons of disposing of this asset. The primary driver for disposal will be to ensure that a strategic development plan for the shopping centre can be realised, guaranteeing the long term future of the shopping centre

Result: Potential to encourage the modernisation to help re-establish Clyde Regional shopping Centre as a prime retail centre. A report to be presented to the HEED Committee for consideration.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Strategic Assessment Social Work Services

Situation: The Council currently provides a 24/7 Sheltered Housing service together with a Community Alarm service

Task: Review the need and efficiency of the current Sheltered Housing service and options for future service delivery

Action: Review on options for future service delivery

Result: Increase the flexibility and responsiveness of the services in order to meet the rising demand for sheltered housing services. A report to be presented to the Social Work & Health Committee for consideration.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: The future demographic projections for older people indicate a significant increase in the general age of the population of the Council. This will place pressures on the Council in future years. The Best Value Review of Older People services was reported in May 2008 and described how services should change in the future.

Task: Require to confirm projections used at that time are still relevant and confirm options for meeting future demand. If confirmed, options for meeting future demand require to be identified and approved

Action: Review assumptions of BVR Older People's services and identify issues and options for service

delivery

Result: Assist with service planning Report the above review with recommendations for future service delivery. A report to be presented to the Social Work & Health Committee for consideration.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: Service demand and provision for adults in Community Care is increasing year on year with costs also increasing.

Task: Review options for future service provision, including reviewing levels of service provision and competitiveness.

Action: Review issues identified above, detailing options identified

Result: Help to position the council to meet the challenges of rising demand and finite resources. A report to be presented to the Social Work & Health Committee for consideration.

Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: Spending on agency costs showed an adverse variance of £133,248 in 2009/10.

Task: Investigate opportunities for employing additional care staff to provide service and reduce demand for agency costs.

Action: Analyse current spend in order to make a comparison between care staff costs and agency costs. Also investigate the possibility of creating a bank of council approved part time care workers to meet changing demand of the service. A report to be presented to the Social Work & Health Committee for consideration.

Result: Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Situation: The foster care budget is under severe pressure due to the competition from private foster care providers. Statistics over the last 4 years show a general trend in numbers of children placed with foster carers from 2005/06 the average number of children in foster care was 73 throughout the year whereas by 2008/09 the average had increased to 78. Currently we have 87 in foster care – though the average for 2009/10 so far has been 81. So numbers have been increasing – it may be anticipated that demand will continue to increase to an average of around 84 or 85 for next year. If this is the case we would need to find a further £59,000 for an extra 3 places or £78,000 for an extra 4 places.

Task: Investigate options for making foster caring more attractive.

Action: Investigate the possibility of increasing the budgetary provision to allow the department to appoint more foster carers in recognition of general increases in numbers of children assessed as being suitable for fostering. Also consider other support and incentives that can be made to make foster caring achievable for interested families. This could include providing additional points for housing or providing capital for extensions to properties. A report to be presented to the Social Work & Health Committee for consideration.

Result: Any enhancements required should be funded by the Strategic Investment Fund. Any saving generated through this strategic review is to be transferred to the Strategic Investment Fund.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The proposals set out in this document will deliver:

- a balanced budget that will ensure financial stability
- a Council Tax freeze
- A programme of work that will aim to generate a significant in year surplus revenue and capital surplus to help us meet the challenges of modernising this Council

The key budget figures are summarised below:

■ General Services Budget	
Net cost of current services	£251,401,980
Efficiency savings	(4,581,480)
Enhancements	2,358,760
	£249,179,260
■ Funded by:	
AEF	£209,382,000
Additional AEF	1,208,000
Council tax	38,589,260
Balances	
	£249,179,260

We commend the budget proposals set out in this document. Specifically, **we recommend that a net General Services Revenue budget of £249,179,260 should be approved.** This budget should be based on the draft estimates book issued by the Chief Executive to all Members on 6 January 2010 as updated by the further management adjustment detailed in paragraph 3.7 of the Council report.

We recommend that the enhancements set out in section 2 and valued at £2,358,760 should be approved.

We recommend that the efficiency savings of £4,581,480 detailed in section 3 should be approved.

We recommend that the reserve of £1m previously earmarked for additional single status costs is applied to capital investment.

We recommend that the 2010/11 band D council tax should be set at £1,163. This represents an increase of 0% and assumes a collection rate of 97.00%.