

Opposition Councillors Budget

Explanation Information Pack

2007/2008

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General Points

- No compulsory redundancies are a key feature of these proposals. Officers should attempt to remove vacant posts in the first instance. Where this is not possible any posts which are removed from the structure – staff employed should be redeployed in a comparable position elsewhere in the authority, with full union consultation.
- No frontline key service is to be impacted with these proposals. Where officers find a conflict this should be reported to the spending sub mentioned below.
- A Special spending sub committee should be established as part of these budget proposals. The purpose and remit of the committee is to control and monitor departmental and corporate spend across the controlled lines detailed below.

Item No	Heading	Details	Costs
1.1	Withdraw from RALF		£4,000
	This service is currently provides a 24hr call centre for the reporting of roads and lighting faults. It is a remnant of the former Strathclyde Region and the service provided overnight, could be replaced and absorbed by tagging the reporting on to either the housing emergency line. Notice will be required to be given to the partners		
1.2	Spend to Save Dividend		£50,000
	The opposition budget proposals contain for the second time a huge capital provision for spend to save projects. This additional allocation should reap considerable long term revenue dividends. This budget line anticipates a very small revenue saving in the first year of the project.		
1.3	Members Wages & Expenses		£50,000
	Under the new council potential exists for savings to be gleamed from the wages and expenses bill of members. In the first instance the proposals assume one civic head and the remaining councillors on the new standard set wage band. In addition given the new proposals councillors should voluntarily agree that only mileage should be allowed to be reclaimed and subsistence should no longer be applied.		
1.4	Merge Leader/Provost Secretary		£30,000

	In the early years of the council the Council Leader and Provost shared a secretary. This arrangement was altered and both positions were given a secretary each. These proposals see the restoration to a single post servicing both the council leader and provost for council and civic issues. Staff Redeployment may be required.	
1.5	Scrap PA & Research Posts	£48,000
	These posts were created and only service the Labour Administration. Under the next council these posts can no longer be sustained.	
1.6	Corporate Service Technology Dividend	£43,000
	CMT identified saving.	
1.7	Technology Dividend & DIP Programme	£50,000
	DIP (Digital Image Processing) is a paperless office – where all mail is digitally scanned and archived. As the pilot in Corporate Service has shown huge saving potential exists for extending DIP to the entire council. In particular in Education and Social Work the benefits and savings for introducing such as system are considerable. This line is a corporate target saving for the implementation and extension of DIP to the entire council	
1.8	Contact Centre Savings	£30,000
	Although this project is still in its infancy – it is scheduled to go live in the next few months. The sum identified here is a target efficiency saving for the project and not a cut in the contact service proposals.	
1.9	Council Newspaper & Other Publications	£50,000
	The council newspaper and non essential newsletter publications are to be scrapped as part of this budget. This saving should not be considered to apply to the internal staff newsletter but to other communications.	
2	Policy Units Re-organisation	£700,000
	Across the entire council the collective corporate capacity of policy units is substantial. Indeed with the previous council decisions 5 new posts have now added to the policy divisions within the council. Each department operates some form of strategy and policy unit together with the central policy unit under the chief executive. In the current financial climate it is felt that staff resources could be better deployed in the provision of key frontline services.	

	The CMT are therefore to review all policy unit provisions and redeploy staff where identified as well as the removal of vacant posts. Again no compulsory redundancies are a requirement of this proposal and there is a requirement for union consultation on the proposals.	
2.1	Re-Centralise Personnel	£12,000
	Sometime ago the Corporate Personnel section was broken up and devolved sections were created which placed an additional revenue burden on the council. A side effect of this decision has been the contrary views on staffing and personnel issues expressed by different the sections. This point has been highlighted by staff and unions and is causing considerable problems. This proposal is to return these devolved personnel officers back to the control of the corporate personnel section. They can of course still be located within the departments if required, but the lines of reporting will now be Corporate Personnel.	
2.2	Re-Centralise Finance Officers	£12,000
	In a similar situation to the above finance officers have over time had their reporting lines altered to become the department they monitor, rather than corporate finance. We believe that this has led to a situation where the officer is now gamekeeper turned poacher – this proposal will see their reporting lines altered to be corporate services rather than the department they are based in.	
2.3	Scrap Leaders Phone In	£7,500
	This pilot project has grown arms and legs since it was created. Based on a full year the project will cost £7,500. We feel that this unnecessary expenditure is diverting resources away from frontline services. People should be able to contact the leader of the council at anytime and not just on a once a month basis.	
2.4	Non Essential Spending Freeze	£1,382,100
	<p>This is a Corporate target which will be scrutinised and monitored by the Spending Sub Committee. All non essential spending on desks, furniture, IT equipment, postage, telephones and miscellaneous expenditure. To assist departments the spending sub committee will require approving all purchases in office furniture, IT and such like.</p> <p>Departments will also be required to recycle all office materials and information services should assist by pulling a central list of all surplus office equipment. This information should be made available on the intranet and departments will be required to source items from surplus material before making a request to the spending sub committee. We also feel that it is important that encouragement is given to staff to deliver these savings by rewarding departments who achieve the most and if more savings are identified then re-investment of additional sums should be applied.</p>	

2.5	Applied Balances		£500,000
	As per officers recommendations		
2.6	Corrective Action CMT Target Saving		£1,100,000
	Since 16 th of November 2006 the CMT have taken corrective action to reign in departmental expenditure to offset a £2.4million potential overspend. Within a few months the CMT has achieved this target. This budget sets the CMT, in conjunction with the Spending Sub Committee, a target saving spread across the entire year.		
2.7	Scottish Water Collection Fee		£15,000
	CMT identified income.		

Information Pack – SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Item No	Heading	Details	Costs
2.7	Reopen Renton CE Centre		£80,000
	<p>The council has been criticised over its decision to close the Renton CE Centre. This valuable resource is an essential part of the Renton Community and has had a significant impact on the community and its groups.</p> <p>While we accept that the council re-affirmed its commitment to the closure of the centre however we feel that this decision should be revisited by the new council. This budget enhancement ensures that should such a decision be taken by the new council to re-open the centre, which we ideally recommend, that sufficient resources are available.</p>		
2.8	Reopen Balloch Toilets		£25,000
	<p>The loss of the public toilets throughout the area were a retrograde step for the authority. The area which was most effected by the closures was Balloch, where tourists and coach parties are no longer stopping in the area because of the lack of facilities. At the very least this budget provision allows for the toilets to be re-opened during the summer period so that tourists and coach parties can be enticed to return to the town.</p>		
2.9	Transfer to Capital		£410,000
	<p>In line with the officers recommendation we agree to approve an additional £410,000 of revenue expenditure to be transferred to capital. This transfer will create over £4.1m of additional capital resources.</p>		
3	Spend To Save		£1,011,000
	<p>The Scottish Exec has announced an additional resource to WDC of capital consent purely for the purpose of spend to save projects. The CMT is to draw together all departmental bids and submit them to the spending sub committee for consideration. All bids must provide either revenue or capital savings within a 5 to 10 year timescale that recoups at least 60% of the capital invested.</p>		