

**West Dunbartonshire Council      8 February 2007**

# **Budget Proposals for 2007/2008**

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The Labour Administration's proposals for the  
General Services Budget

**08 February 2007**

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**Raising the Game: Labour's Programme for Progress**

## Introduction

This document sets out the Labour Administration's budget proposals for 2007/2008. The budget will:

- Deliver a balanced budget
- Set the Council Tax for 2007/08
- Continue to meet the pledges set out in our manifesto "Raising the Game".

### Raising the Game: Five Key Pledges

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| 1. Keep the Council Tax as low as possible while enhancing front-line services                             |
| 2. Work to secure resources to provide modern, well-equipped schools, fit for the 21 <sup>st</sup> century |
| 3. Continue our drive to target anti-social behaviour  |
| 4. Increase spending on lighting and CCTV to help keep our streets safe                                    |
| 5. Improve our drive to target the scourge of litter   |

The Labour Administration has worked hard to meet our manifesto pledges and since our first budget in February 2004 we have made significant progress.

- **£107m** funding support secured towards the regeneration of the schools' estate
- **£9m** committed to the primary schools' regeneration programme
- **£6.7m** earmarked for initiatives designed to address anti-social behaviour over our term
- **£3.6m** allocated for our Safer Lighting Initiative
- **£6.6m** invested into our street cleaning services to address litter, vandalism and graffiti
- **£1.3m** earmarked for sports facilities for our school pupils and the wider community

It has been acknowledged that West Dunbartonshire Council has had **the lowest Council Tax increase over a decade** and we are confident that our budget proposals for this year will show that over the four years we have set some of the lowest Council tax levels in Scotland.

The Administration recognises the financial burden which the Council Tax places on our citizens particularly our elderly. The Budget for 2007/08 will cement our reputation for investing in key frontline services. The Administration will continue to deliver on our key priorities and this Budget demonstrates to the citizens of West Dunbartonshire that we have the plans and resources to meet our manifesto pledges.

## 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 that 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 increase by 5% to cover only a 1% increase in our total budget.

This is the third year of a three year finance settlement for local government and our total AEF allocation is **£173.359m**. This is an improvement on the **1.7%** that was previously announced. After adjusting for redetermined grant, announced outwith the settlement, the allocation is **4.2%** an increase of **£6.952m** on last year. The ring fenced monies of **£2.331m** come with additional spending commitments and an above average increase to Police and Fire. The real year on year increase amounts to **2.82%** or **£4.621m**.

In preparation of this budget, the Council has had to absorb a number of significant budget pressures. In particular, **full provision has been made for the estimated cost of securing a single status agreement** in line with the proposal approved by Council on 20 December. The Council has also had to absorb huge increases to energy costs and has provided additional resources to assist with the delivery of the best value improvement plan.

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

- ring fenced budgets
- requisitions to Police, Fire, SPT and the Valuation Joint Board.

These areas account for 27.54% 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 are 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 **£215.264m** to provide all of our services after taking account of fees and charges. Once the AEF is deducted, this leaves **£41.905m** to come potentially from Council Taxpayers. **Without making any efficiency savings or using reserves to part-fund the budget, a tax increase of 12.13% would be required.** Clearly this is not acceptable. Our first key pledge is to keep council tax as low as possible while enhancing front line services and a 12.13% tax increase would not deliver that pledge. 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.

## Enhancements

The sources of funding set out in the previous section will allow us to build in real growth to our budget for next year. In addition, there are a number of areas where services will improve without the need for additional budget provision because service development has been included in the base budget. This section sets out the enhancements which will help deliver our key pledges starting with those that will be funded by increasing the budget by **£626,000**. This will assist with the Council's largest capital programme with a total investment of **£26.124m**.

### New Enhancements Funded by Budget Growth

General	
Increased capital investment – This will be used to fund loan repayments under the prudential regime and will allow us to increase our capital programme by £3.500m.	£350,000
Increased capital investment - This will be used to fund loan repayments under the prudential regime and will allow us to increase our roads and lighting capital programme by £0.600m.	£60,000
Outdoor Recreation - The lack of recreational facilities for young children in public parks during the summer school holiday period has generated dissatisfaction from many parents, particularly during spells of warm weather.  This enhancement will enable the provision of seasonal soft play and putting facilities in Dalmuir, Levensgrove and Christie Parks during June, July and August.	£45,000
Memorial Wall, Clydebank - The Council is aware that within Clydebank there is no formal memorial that includes names of people who perished while serving their country in the armed services.  To rectify this situation an enhancement is proposed to have a permanent memorial wall at Solidarity Plaza created to recognise those service people and provide a fitting memorial.	£25,000
Public Toilet Provision – Christie Park and Levensgrove Park - Following extensive public consultation and numerous direct requests the Council proposes to open the public toilets in Levensgrove and Christie Parks from April to September inclusive.  This enhancement, together with the improvement in outdoor recreation services within parks will significantly improve park facilities for all users and increase usage and activity in the parks for all within the community.	£20,000

<b>General</b>	
<p>Beatson Project - In partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support the Council has been in discussion with the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Board and the Scottish Executive to establish a dedicated money advice and social care information network within the new Beatson Oncology Centre which is to be opened at Gartnavel this summer. The Council's Macmillan project tries to reach every new person diagnosed with cancer in our area. At present we're meeting this target of 500 cases annually generating £1 million in benefits and income for the cancer sufferers and their carers. The Beatson Oncology Centre covers much of the West of Scotland and has over 18,000 cases every year. Macmillan cancer Support have pledged significant funding support if the Scottish Executive and other partners can contribute to the Beatson project. The Council will run the Beatson Advice Project and the £30k approved by the Council is our contribution.</p>	£30,000
<p>West Dunbartonshire CAB - The £10k funding will be used to support the launch of the new integrated CAB services by providing a budget for promotional information, literature, the development of a website, and display material to support public events and training. The funding will enable the CAB to provide good standards of presentation of information and on a scale that will address demand for the new services.</p>	£10,000
<p>Free School Meals-Pilot Holiday Programme - The proposal is to provide school lunches during the summer holiday period for primary aged children who are entitled to free school meals in up to 5 locations (covering 10 schools) across the authority. The scheme would operate as a pilot for 4 weeks during the summer of 2007, with lunches provided three days per week.</p> <p>The school groupings being considered in order of priority would be:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Martin's / Renton Primaries</li> <li>• Edinbarnet / St Joseph's Primaries</li> <li>• St Michael's / Dalreoch Primaries</li> <li>• Linnvale / Whitecrook Primaries</li> <li>• Aitkenbar / St Peter's Primaries</li> </ul> <p>The programme would aim to provide an hour of organised activity, sport or art based, plus a healthy lunch in a school base. Parents would be required to opt-in to the programme in advance and to take responsibility for their children's safe journey to and from the programme.</p> <p>The pilot would be evaluated to establish take up by families, effectiveness of the practical arrangements and impact of the programme on children's attitude and well being.</p>	£80,000
<p>Provost Fund – Veterans' Day Celebrations – This enhancement will allow the Provost to support Veterans' Day events throughout West Dunbartonshire, including civic hospitality and modest grants to assist event organisers.</p>	£6,000

## Enhancements Included in Base Budget

<b>Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services</b>	
Leisure Services – vocational training – skills for work – Leisure Services, in partnership with ECS and with a range of support from the Scottish Executive, SQA, HMIE, SFEU and LTS has delivered the first year of a curriculum Sport and Recreation course at the Play Drome, Clydebank. The pupils who took part in the first year of this pilot training scheme have now moved onto a second year of training and a new admission of school pupils has recently enrolled. It is also planned to expand the scheme in 2007/2008 by delivering a third class at the Play Drome and rolling the programme out to other Council leisure facilities. (Programme is jointly funded by Leisure and ECS).	£10,000
Leisure Services – Youth United - The successful Shining Stars initiative for children with and affected by disabilities is being expanded to cater for 14-24 year olds and is being branded as Youth United. The scheme will cater for individuals affected by a wide range of disabilities including physical impairments, sensory impairments, learning difficulties and those with behaviour or communication problems and will offer free use of leisure facilities and activity sessions via an annual membership scheme.	£10,000
Leisure Services on-line booking facility – Leisure Services are expanding the MRM Plus 2 Leisure management ticketing and information system to offer customers the opportunity to book and pay online for leisure activities and facilities. This initiative is jointly funded by an e-government grant and departmental revenue funding.	£8,000
Grounds Maintenance – ongoing delivery of the Council's litter control strategy - Since the implementation of the Litter Control Strategy in 2003, there has been a positive improvement to the environment. The aim is to continually reduce the effect of littering, dog fouling, graffiti and fly tipping throughout West Dunbartonshire. The Council's Litter Control Officers promote this strategy through a combination of awareness raising, education and enforcement and look to introduce new campaigns each year to maintain the momentum of the initiative. Environmental awareness is an important part of life and the Litter Control Strategy is focussed upon provision of a safer and cleaner environment for the community as a whole.	£575,000
Walking audits and improvements of key pedestrian routes - In partnership with the Access Panel, now extended across West Dunbartonshire (initially carried out in Dumbarton using ring fenced PTF funding) and funding of £30,000 per year allocated from Council budgets for improvement works. This will assist all pedestrians to access key services more safely.	£30,000
Travelling Green initiative being extended – Through increasing co-ordinator post from part to full time (originally funded by the Executive now increased using Council funding £10,000 per year). This recognises the success of the first two years of the initiative and the demand from remaining schools for assistance. The initiative is now to go national using our staff for assistance (but separate funding coming from the Executive for this).	£10,000
Further enhancement of our footway gritting and snow clearing procedures - Through purchase of new spreading and ploughing equipment to the value of £15,000. This is already proving highly successful this first winter.	£15,000

Further improvement to our watercourse inspection and maintenance procedures - Plus enhanced assistance to communities during flooding events, especially crucial in recent months. The cost of this is approximately £30,000 per annum but the commitment will inevitably grow as climatic change takes place.	£30,000
Cycling facility improvements – Being developed for implementation in early summer, in conjunction with Sustrans. £125,000 of grant funding secured.	£125,000
Green Travel Plan – West Bound - now in place for the Council and measures to encourage a reduction in car use are being implemented during 2007. Jointly funded with SPT at a budget of £30,000 in year 1.	£30,000
New system for reporting of road defects – Managing implementation of repairs in place and being enhanced during 2007 using a “find and fix” approach. There is no direct cost for this but our reaction time to repairs has improved significantly.	No direct cost
SXP service enhanced through training – Selected school staff for emergency/ad hoc cover for unexpected absence of patrollers close to schools. This will preserve the facility to assist children to access schools on foot.	£2,000
Assessment system established for locations used by children awaiting pick up by school buses. Only Council in the country doing this and soon to be rolled out nationally. Work carried out in partnership with SPT and co-funded by Roads, Education and SPT. The joint project is costing some £20,000 funded 50/50 by WDC and SPT. Improvement actions which will follow from the assessments will be carried out over the next 2 years at approximately £30,000 per year budget allocation.	£80,000

### Education & Cultural Services

Additional Behaviour Support Staff – This allows for additional support staff in schools to assist with behaviour support strategies.	£113,524
Additional teachers - From August 2007 all Primary 1 classes will have a maximum of 25 pupils per class. Also all English and Mathematics classes in S1 and S2 of secondary schools should average at 20 pupils per class. The additional funding is necessary to ensure compliance with this agreed directive.	£418,334
To ensure compliance with recommendations of the Parental Involvement Act – This will assist in ensuring New Parent councils and forums are established in each school. School Boards will be dis-established from August 2007 with new parent councils in place. This complies with the recommendations of the Parental Involvement Act.	£7,800

**Social Work**

The Council has invested further funding in residential care for older people in relation to funding for Care Home providers and in meeting the needs of increasing numbers of older people.	£895,000
The Council has invested further funding in providing access to home care.	£45,000
Additional funding has been invested to support the care at home agenda which includes meeting the increased need for flexible respite services. These services enable adults with a learning disability to remain at home thus relieving the authority of the additional burden of meeting the full cost of a support package.	£150,000
Additional funding has been invested to meet identified and additional assessed need. This is particularly true in relation to the need to develop specialised and individualised housing support services for adults with complex disabilities.	£125,000

**General**

Provision to engage additional support to assist with the delivery of the best value improvement plan as reported to Council on 17 January 2007.	£420,000
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## Efficiency Savings

We have identified efficiency savings and areas of income generation to the value of **£2,306,310** and these are set out below.

<b>Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services</b>	
Grounds Maintenance – Reduced service provision.	£105,000
Roads – Reduce expenditure on maintenance schemes.	£135,000
Leisure – Reduce weekend opening hours on Saturday/Sunday evenings.	£19,000
Regeneration – Increase planning advertisement fees.	£9,250
Regeneration – Increase letters of comfort fees.	£10,000
Roads and lighting enhancement – transfer to capital programme.	£60,000
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£338,250</b>
<b>Social Work Services</b>	
Removal of vacant posts – This relates to 15 FTE posts comprising posts or parts of posts which have been vacant for some time and which are now deemed to be not required.	£297,000
Recruit additional foster parents to reduce reliance of fostering agencies.	£50,000
Manage placements in residential accommodation for children to ensure that children are accommodated appropriately and are rehabilitated into mainstream provision as soon as is appropriate.	£100,000
Management action required to bring catering costs back into line with the budget provision for 2006/07.	£15,000
Mental Health - Manage placements of clients more effectively and efficiently to achieve a reduction in cost.	£50,000
Homecare - Manage placements of clients more effectively and efficiently to achieve a reduction in cost.	£50,000
Identify housing support services currently funded from core funding and transfer to supporting people funding.	£200,000
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£762,000</b>

<b>Education &amp; Cultural Services</b>	
Reprofiling of accessibility strategy programme	£30,000
Remove attendance officers from each secondary school. Move to school positions (assume 2 early retiral).	£95,700
The devolved school budgets increased to the same level of GAE increase.	£149,710
Reduction to library property maintenance provision.	£10,000
Reduction in the libraries other supplies and services budgets.	£8,000
Non filling of Head of Centre post at Clydebank Mobile Creche – full year saving + admin. costs.	£32,810
Redeployment/retiral of 2 FTE outreach teachers.	£60,240
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£386,460</b>

<b>Chief Executive</b>	
Finance - WDC to become a paypoint provider.	£15,000
Finance - Technology Dividend.	£43,000
Finance - Scottish Water collection fee increase.	£15,000
Legal and Admin - Alexandria Registration Service – Proposal to close one office.	£17,000
Legal and Admin - Rental income – 89 Kilbowie Road.	£35,000
Legal and Admin - Research Officer and Leader's P.A. posts – Option to delete posts.	£48,000
Legal and Admin - Management Restructure.	£11,000
ICT & BD- Upgrade corporate servers – Transfer of spend to capital.	£9,850
ICT & BD - Computer equipment– Transfer of spend to capital.	£15,150
ICT & BD – Purchase and upgrade of Web portal software – Transfer to capital.	£25,000
General efficiency saving to corporate resource budget.	£10,000
Allocation to non-general services accounts.	(£85,400)
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£158,600</b>

<b>General</b>	
Increase appropriate sales, fees and charges lines by a further 3% giving a total increase of 5%.	£336,000
Staffing efficiencies arising from Voluntary Severance Packages	£200,000
Treasury Management efficiencies	£125,000
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>£661,000</b>

# 5

## Council Tax

In section 2 of this document, we noted that without taking any action, a council tax increase of 12.13% would be required. Having outlined the savings we intend to make in section 4, we propose to set the council tax increase for 2007/08 at 2.2%. This will allow us to carry out the enhancements set out in section 3 whilst keeping the tax as low as possible.

This means that for most of our residents the tax will rise by £19.45 to £904.56 a year. This is an increase of only 37p a week.

The taxation increase proposed is less than the current rate of inflation and demonstrates our strong commitment to keeping tax increases down. The impact on the full range of tax bands is shown below.

Council Tax Band	Annual Tax
A	£775.33
B	£904.56
C	£1,033.78
D	£1,163.00
E	£1,421.44
F	£1,679.89
G	£1,938.33
H	£2,326.00

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The proposals set out in this document will deliver:

- a balanced budget that will ensure financial stability
- a Council Tax increase of 2.2%
- sufficient resources to meet our manifesto pledges.

The key budget figures are summarised below:

### ■ General Services Budget

Net cost of current services	£215,263,550
Efficiency savings	(2,306,310)
Enhancements	<u>626,000</u>
	<u>£213,583,240</u>

### ■ Funded by:

AEF	£173,359,000
Council tax	38,204,550
Balances	<u>2,019,690</u>
	<u>213,583,240</u>

We commend the budget proposals set out in this document. Specifically, **we recommend that a net General Services Revenue budget of £213,583,240 should be approved.** This budget should be based on the draft estimates book issued by the Chief Executive to all Members in January 2007.

We recommend that the enhancements set out in section 3 and valued at £626,000 should be approved.

We recommend that the efficiency savings of £2,306,310 as described in section 4 should be approved.

We recommend that £1,500,000 is transferred from the HRA Reserve to the General Fund Reserves and that £2,019,690 is applied to the budget.

We recommend that the 2007/08 band D council tax should be set at £1,163. This represents an increase of 2.2% and assumes a collection rate of 96.75%.