

# Revenue Budget Proposals 2011/2012 Shaping our Future

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# Shaping our future

## Foreword

The UK national debt now stands at over £4.8trillion and that figure is currently rising at a rate of £150bn a year. This runaway debt is at the core of the challenges now facing the entire public sector.

We are at a crossroads in our society where the public sector can no longer continue to deliver what we currently do. As citizens we need to debate what we need our public sector to prioritise and deliver.

By failing to reprioritise the services we deliver there is a danger that we spread our resources so thin that they are rendered ineffective.

Our local economy is still in a fairly weakened state since the recession and jobs remain scarce. As a council we have taken some bold steps by recently introducing a living minimum wage and declaring a no compulsory redundancy policy at the start of this budget process.

As part of this debate as a council we have agreed to undertake a new budget process which we hope will enable a more inclusive approach to the budget setting process.

Either as individuals or as part of a wider group you can contribute your views on the options that are actively being considered and even propose new savings that you feel might not have been considered.

All views expressed will be considered at the final budget setting day in January.

Craig McLaughlin  
Convenor of Corporate Services on behalf of the SNP group





## Our Funding

In recognition of the financial challenges and tough times faced by West Dunbartonshire Council we have investigated changes to our financial planning and processes to drive improvements in our financial performance as a Council.

The development of a ten year financial plan with an annual review, the formation of the Strategic Finance Working Group and the acceleration of the budget process have all helped to prepare the Council for the financial challenges ahead.

The Public Sector in the UK has to respond to unprecedented budget reductions and this has hit Scotland significantly.

The Scottish Government has now informed us of the funding proposed for 2011/12. The allocation to our Council is predicted to fall by just under £10m, which is equivalent to a 4.5% cut. As a result of the UK government's restrictions on public spending, the settlement also includes a reduction of £131m nationally deferred from the current year (of which the WDC share is £2.52m), and a further reduction of £178.886 million in respect of 2011/12 (of which the WDC share is £3.326 million).

West Dunbartonshire's reduction of 4.53 % is substantially above the average Scottish Authority reduction of 2.6 %, mainly due to changes in the distribution of funding, declining school rolls and declining population trends. The report on the Revenue Estimates for 2011/12 takes account of the settlement and the various policy changes that have been agreed. As a result the draft budget identifies a funding gap of £2.450 million that has to be addressed by further efficiency savings :

The administration proposes to close that gap through the implementation of the list of options on page 3 (savings noted are in 2011/12):

Reference	Option	Saving
CRP01	Customer Engagement Strategy – the transfer of high volume transactions to the contact centre and related development of the web site	£125K
HED15	Asset Management – reduce number of operational buildings and costs	£250K
GDC04	Shared Services – realise efficiencies through Clyde Valley CPP Collaborative in commissioning/procurement of Children’s specialist and Adult Care	£230K
GDC02	Procurement – engaging in a review of the procurement activity, improving effectiveness, standardization and developing collaborative opportunities	£750K
EDC18	School Meals – return to statutory entitlement from April 2011	£400K
EDC10	Nurseries – removal of Heads of Centres in eight nurseries (Statutory consultation required)	£200K
SWK13	Recover costs on transport provided to community groups.	£80K
SWK17	Addictions – reduce levels of rehabilitation provision	£25K
GENERAL	Redeployment costs – manage restructuring processes more effectively	£250K
HED08	Reduction of concessionary leisure price - staff membership	£140K
	Total	£2.450 Million



### **Saving Options considered not currently proposed**

The administration now proposes to consult with stakeholders, including residents and staff, in relation to the budget that will be presented for approval on the 27 January 2011. As part of this process any stakeholders who disagree with the proposed savings options will be invited, to identify alternative options that would generate the same level of savings. To assist in the process a series of public consultation meetings will be held in Dumbarton, Alexandria and Clydebank on the 11, 12 and 13 January and stakeholders will also be given the opportunity to comments and feedback about the consultation can be made via the budget microsite which can be found at [www.wdcweb.info](http://www.wdcweb.info).

As part of this new process the options listed above are the efficiencies currently actively being considered by the administration. People can make representations to remove options but must identify how and where the saving would be made. We have listed below other options that were considered by the administration but rejected.

Every proposal received will be considered on its merits and the final decision on which options will be selected will be decided at the full council meeting in January.

### **Social Work**

- SWK03 - Reduce level of on-site support in Sheltered Housing - £165K
- SWK04- Reduce locations for Older Peoples Day and Residential Care - £100K
- SWK09 - Reduce levels of Disability Day Care - £60K
- SWK12 - Increase charges on special needs equipment - £75K
- SWK15B - Increase other charges not affected by the new means tested regime - £200K
- SWK18 - Reduce Youth Justice service provision - £20K

### **Education**

- EDC11 - Close Garshake and Gartocharn nurseries - £240K
- EDC12 - Remove out of school care provision - £100K
- EDC13 - Close Whitecrook E.E.C.C. - £41K
- EDC14 - Amalgamate Lennox and Auchnacraig E.E.C.C. - £95K
- EDC19 - Remove free school milk - £190K
- EDC20 - Reduce free school transport to statutory levels - £500K

## Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

- HED02 - Remove staff at Balloch Public Conveniences - £25K
- HED03 - Rationalise and review the outdoor recreation services - £25K
- HED04 - Reduce Xmas lights and remove Xmas switch on events - £35K
- HED06 - Realign school crossing patrol service - £90K
- HED07 - Review events activity - £83K
- HED08 - Reduce concessionary leisure pricing for children, OAPs and other groups- £150K
- HED09 - Recover full cost of care gardens scheme - £140K
- HED14 - Reduce Antonine Sports Centre Subsidy - £20K
- HED16 - Remove previous enhancement of fooway repairs - £100K

## General

- GWM03 - Charge staff for disclosure checks - £50K
- GRL02 - Reduce grant funding to voluntary groups and strategic partners - £150K



**In spite of these challenges we believe we can deliver a balanced budget and still provide essential and important services in our community. The draft budget will allow us to continue to deliver against a number of previously agreed initiatives including :**

### **1 Waste Management and Transport**

We have introduced an improved recycling service which is being delivered through the alternate weekly collection which will be rolled out to the Clydebank area during March 2011, going forward into the 2011/12 budget. This has significantly improved our recycling performance to just below the 2013 target of 50%.

The re-routing exercise that is taking place in conjunction with the alternate weekly collection implementation has improved productivity by up to 15% and waste management sits within the top performing areas in terms of best practice within the Clyde Valley Shared Services.

In the report that went to 4 November 2009 HEED committee, the identified reduction of potential penalties relating to the introduction of this service highlighted a potential saving of £2.7million in the period (it should be noted that the Scottish Government suspended the Landfill Allowance Scheme penalties as authorities were making suitable progress to achieving the national picture). It was also identified that significant savings in landfill tax burden would be achieved and we are on target to have saved approximately £1million

in landfill tax payments between 2009 and the end of 2012.

### **2 Housing and Community Safety**

Despite the unprecedented financial challenges facing the Council, we will aim to make improvements to the Homeless, ASB and Repairs Services through the proposed phase 2 restructure of services, whilst at the same time maintaining a contribution to the Council's finances through trading surpluses.

This draft budget will enable the Council to continue its commitment to controlling and reducing anti-social and criminal behaviours through sustaining our partnership arrangements with Strathclyde Police and maintaining the additional 12 officers over and above our share of the national commitment to be employed directly within West Dunbartonshire.

### **3 Asset Management**

A more effective corporate approach to the management and portfolio of assets will result in better use how we use our buildings and assets. Better management of these assets will result in better use of our properties, meeting the needs of the Departments delivering services to the Community and a reduction in our revenue costs.



#### 4 Economic Development

We will continue to be at the forefront of Economic Development in the area as a result of the development and introduction of a new Economic Development Strategy for the Council, in its role of lead agency for Local Regeneration.

#### 5 Fostering and Kinship care

We have increased resources underpinning our priority to provide effective support to children and young people within the West Dunbartonshire community and which is supported by our ongoing provision of children's homes and our alternatives to care service which has proved to be successful in managing and reducing expensive placement outwith the Council area. The enhancements to the fostering scheme recently approved should eventually remove the need to use fostering agencies over time.

#### 6 Respite care

The draft budget includes provision to allow the Council to meet the concordat commitment to provide an additional 10,000 weeks of respite care.

#### 7 Free personal care

Funding has been invested in services to older people to assist in the process of shifting the balance of Care for older people to allow more people to receive a care service in their own home rather than being

placed in a care home.

#### 8 Telecare

The telecare service continues to be rolled-out across the authority in order to provide appropriate levels and types of care, again this supports both the shift in the balance of care for older people and the aim of minimising delayed discharges from hospital.



#### 9 Council Tax

This has delivered benefits to many constituents over the last 3 years and this Council is committed to continuing with the freeze.

#### 10 Class Sizes

30% of the Children in Primary1 to Primary 3 are in class sizes of 18 or less. This is over 10% in excess of the national target and amounts to an investment of £260,000.



## 11 School Milk

We will continue to provide free school milk to all primary children across the authority at a cost of £190,000.

## 12 Breakfast Clubs

We will continue to provide breakfast clubs in 24 primary schools at a cost of £200,000.

## 13 School Transport

The Council will continue to maintain the high level of service and provide free transport for primary children living more than 1 mile from their school and for secondary children living more than 2 miles from their school. This is more generous than the statutory requirement and amounts to an investment of £500,000.

## 14 Poverty and Unemployment

Key priorities for West Dunbartonshire continue to be tackling poverty and unemployment. The Council is currently facing unprecedented challenges including weak employment and poor business growth, a highly competitive labour market, and high levels of benefits dependency which is affected by the most significant UK welfare reforms since 1948.

These challenges are impacted by poorly developed local partnerships and areas of duplication. Influenced by the current financial climate, there is a need for the Council to manage its services as efficiently

and effectively as possible.

Services should be coordinated, joined up, strategic and focused on areas where the need is the greatest. By bringing budgets and staff together, the changes described below will improve overall service delivery for the residents of West Dunbartonshire.

We will bring a range of services within the remit of the Chief Executive's Department to reduce duplication, improve service delivery and maximise the impact on the most vulnerable.

The merging of these services within the Chief Executive's Department will reduce duplication of effort; align performance management and ensure that services contribute effectively to the overall delivery of the SOA.

By bring a more joined up approach to community work, advice and educational services we can ensure that we connect the employability services to help to tackle this areas deep rooted poverty.

The landscape for wider Youth Services continues to be overly complex and needs to be more cost effective. Partnerships with external agencies are not properly developed. Outcomes are not clearly defined and there is considerable risk of duplication. The relationship between this area of work and wider corporate priorities is not clear. It is essential that Youth Services contributes more clearly to the priorities for West Dunbartonshire

- particularly employability, Integrated Children's Services and Safer Communities. This can be best delivered through a new coordinated approach to funding and delivering Youth Services within the Chief Executive's Department.

The changes described above will streamline and improve overall services provision. It will bring these services together under a single strategic delivery approach and apply a stricter analysis of performance and costs. It is also essential that the Council and its partners get smarter at maximising income from all external sources. Demonstrating effective partnership working is a fundamental condition of all key funding bodies.

## Conclusion

In principle the Council agree to accept the additional funding of £8.551M which has been included within the draft budget and agree that the Council leader submits the draft response to Cabinet Secretary for Finance's offer as outlined in appendix 3(b) to the report.

We look forward to feedback from stakeholders on this process and the options to close the budget gap.

The Council recognizes the times we all face, our constituents, our employees and our partners, however, we believe through working together, facing the challenges and further improving financial planning, we will continue to deliver our vision of "making West Dunbartonshire a better place to work, live and visit."

