



Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 28 October 2008
Time:	5.30 pm or on the rising of the Streetscene and Transport Services O&S Committee, whichever is the later
Venue:	Committee Room 2 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Members are asked to consider whether they have personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they are.

Members are reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they are subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

2. PROJECTED BUDGET 2009/2011 (Pages 1 - 4)

At the meeting of the Cabinet on 16 October 2008 (minute 217 refers) a number of budget savings were proposed and the following resolution was agreed:

“(1) Cabinet recognises that these are difficult times financially for everyone and that it must do all it can to ensure that Wirral’s Council Tax Payers are not faced with the additional burden of high Council Tax increases. Cabinet understands the need to make urgent savings in order to close Wirral’s budget gap and therefore recommends the following....”

Cabinet asked that these items be referred to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for urgent consideration. There are two proposals which fall within the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These are:

- Introduce £20.00 charge per visit (up to five items) for Eric Service – £515,000
- Delete publicity budget for Waste Control designed to cover introduction of new bin system which is now bedded in – £45,000

WIRRAL COUNCIL

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 28TH OCTOBER 2008

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES

PROJECTED BUDGET 2009/2011

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At Cabinet on 16th October 2008 a number of budget savings were proposed and Cabinet asked that these items be referred to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.
- 1.2 This report outlines the proposed Technical Services budget savings pertinent to this Committee with further information regarding the details of the proposed savings including implications for service delivery as appropriate.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At Cabinet on 16th October 2008 a number of budget savings were proposed and Cabinet asked that these items be referred to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration (Minute 219 refers).
- 2.2 The budget savings for the Technical Services Department consist of six items totalling £1,966,000. The proposed budget savings pertinent to this Committee are as follows:

Introduce £20.00 charge per visit (up to five items) for ERIC Service	£515,000
Delete publicity budget for Waste Control designed to cover introduction of new bin system which is now bedded in	£45,000

- 2.3 Details of these proposed budget savings including implications for service delivery as appropriate are set out in the next section.

3.0 PROPOSED BUDGET SAVINGS

3.1 ERIC Service

- 3.1.1 Local Authorities have a duty to collect bulky household items, for which they may charge. A recent survey carried out by Southampton City Council showed that the majority of Councils now charge residents for this service (65% of 72 respondents).
- 3.1.2 Once charges are introduced, the number of requests for the service will drop by up to 80% initially. (Calls fell by 70% when Wirral last introduced a £15 charge).

- 3.1.3 Evidence from other Local Authorities shows that the life of many bulky household items is extended once charges are introduced as residents find alternative ways of getting rid of unwanted items. Items of quality will be directed to a number of social enterprises or charities operating doorstep collections within the borough. Technical Services will need time to consult with these organisations prior to charges being introduced.
- 3.1.4 The new bulky waste service will need to be promoted to encourage use of the service, however the emphasis will be on the promotion of reuse and recycling of bulky goods rather than disposal. This will include marketing and signposting via the website and Streetscene Call Centre of other free means of collection by charities, social enterprises and initiatives such as “Freecycle”, where unwanted items are offered for free. Technical Services will also continue to encourage and facilitate local community groups to organise “Community Giveaway Days” or similar initiatives.
- 3.1.5 The cost of the service reflects the charges made by our current service provider and the proposal is therefore cost neutral.
- 3.1.6 It is important to note that to mitigate the risk of any potential fly tipping a provisional sum has been identified from within this budget saving option to facilitate a rapid response to fly tipping should it be required (see section 4.2).

3.2 Waste Recycling Education and Awareness

- 3.2.1 The reduction in funding for the communication of waste and recycling initiatives has the following implications:
- 3.2.2 The remaining funding for maximising the use of the Wirral’s dry and garden waste recycling schemes is sufficient to cover the following annual activities:
- Delivery of an annual garden waste calendar with supporting material to 108,000 households.
 - Delivery of an annual grey/green bin calendar with supporting material.
- 3.2.3 Any further initiatives or communications will only be possible if the Council can continue to access external funding.
- 3.2.4 Previously Wirral has been extremely successful in attracting external funding and in the short to medium term this should continue.
- 3.2.5 Technical Services have just submitted a funding bid to WRAP to include the continued employment of the participation officers (until March 2010) but do not expect to know the outcome of this bid until January 2009.

Technical Services will continue to seek external funding for communication type activities. However, the uncertainty of funding opportunities restricts the ability to plan strategically over the medium and long-term, in order to maximise and monitor the efficiency of existing recycling schemes.

- 3.2.6 It is important to note, that whilst Wirral has enjoyed early success with the new recycling services, increasing recycling from 14% in 2006/7 to 32% in 2007/8, this placed us 226th out of a total of 393 LA's in England and a recycling performance of over 40% would have been necessary to achieve top quartile performance in 2007/8. At this stage of the year our target of 34% appears to be being met and possibly exceeded.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The budget proposals outlined in this report will result in a permanent reduction in Departmental base revenue budgets of £560,000 from 2009/10 onwards.
- 4.2 As described in section 3.1.6, it is proposed that an allocation of £90,000 is set aside from the £515,000 ERIC Service budget saving option to facilitate a rapid response to any potential fly tipping if required.

5.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 These budget proposals will not involve redeployment/redundancy of any employees.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct Equal Opportunities implications.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct Community Safety implications.

8.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct LA21 implications.

9.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct planning implications.

10.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no direct anti-poverty implications.

11.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no direct human rights implications.

12.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no direct social inclusion implications.

13.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no direct local member support implications.

14.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 None.

15.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 That Committee endorse the budget savings outlined in this report.

DAVID GREEN
DIRECTOR, TECHNICAL SERVICES