

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET

24 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT	BUDGET PROJECTIONS 2012-15
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER	COUNCILLOR STEVE FOULKES
KEY DECISION	YES

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Following the agreement of the budget for 2011-12 at the Council meeting on 1 March 2011, this report presents the projected budgets for 2012-15.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the budget projections be regularly reviewed.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Regular reporting of the projected financial prospects is a requirement of good corporate and financial planning.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Assumptions Underpinning the Projections

- a) Inflation - Provision is included for price inflation of 2% per annum from 2013 with income to continue to increase by 3% per annum. Pay awards will be limited to those employees earning less than £21,000 per annum for 2012-13 and are assumed to increase by 2% per annum from 2013. Cabinet on 3 November 2011 agreed to make no provision for price inflation for 2012-13.
- b) Capital Financing - Cabinet on 21 February 2011 agreed a capital programme at an increased revenue cost of £1.9m in 2012-13. Cabinet on 13 October 2011 agreed to the capitalisation of statutory redundancy payments in 2011-12 at an additional £0.3m.
- c) Pension Fund - the increase arising from the actuarial valuation including the impact of the outsourcing of the highways and engineering services contract will increase the contribution by £0.3m in 2012-13 and by £0.3m in 2013-14. The revaluation scheduled for March 2013 will be implemented from 2014.
- d) National Insurance – Employers NI changes will cost an additional £1m.
- e) Waste Disposal - Landfill Tax is increasing by £8 per ton per annum, an increase of 50% between 2010-11 and 2014-15. The levy is assumed to increase by £1.5m per annum from 2013.

- f) Merseytravel - From 2013 the levy is assumed to increase by £1m per annum.
- g) Schools - it is assumed that the Schools Budget will vary in line with the Dedicated Schools grant.
- h) Academies – the Department for Education will reduce the budget by a further £0.9m in 2012-13 to fund academies.
- i) Neighbourhood Management – Cabinet on 2 June 2011 agreed to increase the budget by £0.4m to be funded by the Local Services Support Grant.
- j) Home to School Transport – Cabinet on 2 June 2011 agreed to increase the budget by £0.2m to be funded by the Local Services Support Grant.
- k) Integrated Transport – Cabinet on 23 June 2011 agreed to increase the budget by £0.3m.
- l) Housing – Cabinet on 21 July 2011 agreed to increased housing expenditure of £0.3m to equal the New Homes Bonus.
- m) Adult Social Services Re provision - £3.5m identified as part of budget preparation.
- n) Efficiency Investment - in order to continue to deliver efficiencies in future years it will be necessary to continue to invest and therefore £2m per annum has been provided.
- o) Other Unavoidable Growth - a number of items of unavoidable growth of less than £0.2m will arise. These usually total about £1m per annum.

4.2 Grant Negotiations

- 4.2.1 The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2011-12 incorporated a provisional settlement for 2012-13, in which the Formula Grant will be reduced by £14m.
- 4.2.2 The Spending Review 2011-15 incorporated four year projections for local government expenditure. However the Finance Settlement only provided figures for 2011-13. Figures for 2013-15 will be subject to the outcome of the Local Government Resource Review (LGRR). Clearly this will have a major impact on the budget projections for 2013-15 included in the appendix. The Terms of Reference for phase I of the LGRR were reported to Cabinet on 14 April 2011. A response to a consultation paper on phase I, localisation of business rates, was agreed by Cabinet on 13 October 2011. Phase II, community budgets, was reported to Cabinet on 1 September 2011. Subsequent phases will be reported to Cabinet as they are released.
- 4.2.3 The Government has announced a new general grant, the Local Services Support Grant of £1.2m. This absorbs a number of previous specific grants totalling £0.5m and was reported to Cabinet on 2 June 2011.
- 4.2.4 The New Homes Bonus of £0.3m has also been released as a general grant which was reported to Cabinet on 2 June 2011.

- 4.2.5. H. M. Treasury (HMT) has announced a Council Tax freeze grant for 2012-13 only equivalent to a 2.5% Council Tax increase, amounting to £3.3m for Wirral.
- 4.2.6. As part of the LGRR the Government proposes to reduce specific grants from 2013. The pro-rata impact for Wirral could be a loss of £7m in 2013-14 and £23m in 2014-15.

4.2.7. The EU is considering the introduction of a Financial Transactions Tax.

4.3 **Other Legislative Issues**

- 4.3.1 The Independent Public Service Pensions Commission issued final recommendations on 10 March 2011. The Pensions Committee is being updated on progress.
- 4.3.2 Pensions Contributions – HMT is seeking to recover either from employers or pension funds an amount equal to a 3.2 percentage point increase in contribution rates from 2012. Negotiations are ongoing and the latest options were reported to the Pensions Committee on 21 November 2011.
- 4.3.3 Welfare Reform Bill – Implementation of Universal Credit and a Local Council Tax Benefit System due to commence in 2013. The Local Council Tax Benefit System will result in a reduction of grant of £3.2m. A response to a consultation paper was agreed by Cabinet on 22 September 2011.
- 4.3.4 Localism Bill - Will require a local referendum if a proposed Council Tax increase is considered to be excessive from 2012-13.
- 4.3.5 Council Tax Revaluation - This has been deferred until after 2015.
- 4.3.6. Council Tax Discounts – Consultation to be reported to Cabinet on 8 December 2011.
- 4.3.7 **Census** - During the course of this budgeting period the results of the Census 2011 will become available and will be incorporated into the grant distribution formulae. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has released the Mid 2010 estimated populations. The reduction for Wirral since the Census 2001 is greater than for any other metropolitan or unitary authority. If this is confirmed in the Census 2011 then the reduction in grant receivable could be significant. The ONS has confirmed that the analysis of the Census data should be completed for incorporation into the Finance Settlement for 2013-14.

4.4 **Balances**

- 4.4.1 The budget for 2011-12 includes balances of £14.1m.
- 4.4.2 The final phase of the Early Voluntary Retirement/Voluntary Severance Scheme covering those staff due to depart in early 2011-12 was projected to utilise £4.4m of the balances. Cabinet on 13 October 2011 agreed to the capitalisation of statutory redundancy payments in 2011-12 increasing balances by a net £2.7m (£3m less increased capital financing costs of £0.3m).

- 4.4.3. The budget for 2011-12 will utilise £2.8m of the balances to fund one-off expenditure.
- 4.4.4. HM Treasury has announced two increases to National Insurance which will cost an additional £1m.
- 4.4.5. Cabinet on 17 March 2011 agreed to reinstate the budget for Fernleigh for 2011-12 at a cost of £0.5m.
- 4.4.6. Cabinet on 2 June 2011 received details of the Local Services Support Grant and the New Homes Bonus.
- 4.4.7. Cabinet on 23 June 2011 agreed that integrated transport would not deliver the previously agreed savings but would instead cost an additional £0.3m.
- 4.4.8. Closure of the Accounts for 2010-11 which was reported to Cabinet on 23 June 2011 resulted in a net overspending of £3.3m.
- 4.4.9. The Insurance Fund Annual Report presented to Cabinet on 23 June 2011 transferred £0.9m to balances.
- 4.4.10. The Treasury Management Annual Report presented to Cabinet on 23 June 2011 transferred £3.0m to balances.
- 4.4.11. Cabinet on 23 June 2011 agreed to transfer the Connexions Pension Reserve of £4.7m to General Fund balances.
- 4.4.12. This had originally been identified to meet reprovision costs of £3.5m in Adult Social Services in 2011-12.
- 4.4.13. Cabinet on 21 July 2011 agreed to allocate an amount equal to the New Homes Bonus for housing expenditure.
- 4.4.14. Cabinet on 22 September 2011 agreed to fund the costs of the independent review following the DASS PIDA totalling £0.3m.
- 4.4.15. Therefore the projected balances are as follows:-

	£m
Budgeted opening balance	14.1
Overspending 2010-11	-3.3
Insurance Fund	0.9
Treasury Management	3.0
Connexions Pension Reserve	4.7
Adult Social Services Reprovision	-3.5
EVR/VS	-1.4
Capital Financing	0.3
Policy Options 2011-12 only	-2.8
National Insurance	-1.0
Fernleigh	-0.5
Local Services Support Grant	0.5
Integrated Transport	-0.3
Independent Review	<u>-0.3</u>
Projected Balance	9.8

4.4.16. The minimum recommended balances are £6.0m.

4.5. **Savings**

4.5.1. Cabinet has agreed to the following savings:-

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
	£000	£000	£000
Human Resources IT System	474	100	20
Family Group Conferencing	130		
IT Services	400	400	400
Benefits	1,200		
Printing Services	<u>250</u>		
	2,454	<u>500</u>	<u>420</u>

4.5.2. Subsequently the Strategic Change Programme Board has been reformed that the agreed savings from the implementation of the Human Resources IT system will not be achieved.

4.5.3. In addition to the savings agreed by Cabinet the Strategic Change Programme Board has agreed to the following additional savings for 2012-13:-

	£000
Looked After Children	70
Disposal of Assets	310
Office Rationalisation	123
Street Lighting	100
DASS Market Management	847
Facilities Management	<u>500</u>
	1,950

These revisions were reported to the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15 September 2011.

4.5.4. The full year effect of the Early Voluntary Retirement/Voluntary Severance scheme savings net of re-provision and structuring costs totals £17m which will be achieved in 2012/13. This will increase to £20m after the additional cost of the pensions has been met in 2017.

5.0 **RELEVANT RISKS**

5.1 Any projections carry risks. For 2012-13 the Government has indicated the provisional Formula Grant and so the risks are primarily with the expenditure projections which will be influenced by changes to Government policies, inflation, and delivery against budgets in 2011-12.

5.2 For 2013-15 the Government proposes significant changes to the grant distribution system which could cause major changes to these projections.

6.0 **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

6.1 All of these projections represent my assumptions of the most likely outcome from a wide range of available options.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Government is consulting on a number of issues which will impact on the budget projections. I respond to all consultation exercises to try to ensure the best outcome for Wirral.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS – FINANCIAL

9.1 The assumptions outlined above are reflected in the budget projections in the Appendix.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

FNCE/256/11

REPORT AUTHOR: Ian Coleman
Director of Finance
telephone: 0151 666 3056
email: iancoleman@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Budget Projections 2012-15

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Budget - HM Treasury - March 2011
Independent Public Service Pensions Commission Report - March 2011
Spending Review - HM Treasury - October 2010
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012-15 - October 2011
Local Government Finance Settlement 2011-13 - DCLG - January 2011
Council Budget 2011-12 - March 2011

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
This report is revised for each meeting of the Cabinet.	

**Wirral Council
Budget Projections 2012-15**

	2012-13 £m	2013-14 £m	2014-15 £m
Base Budget	294.8	284.3	277.8
Increased Requirements			
Pay Inflation	1.0	3.5	3.5
Price Inflation	-	4.2	4.2
Capital Financing	2.2	2.0	2.0
Pension Fund	0.3	0.3	2.5
National Insurance	1.0	-	-
Academies	0.9	-	-
Waste Disposal	-	1.5	1.5
Merseytravel	-	1.0	1.0
Neighbourhood Management	0.4	-	-
Home to School Transport	0.2	-	-
Integrated Transport	0.3	-	-
Housing	0.3	-	-
DASS Re provision	3.5	-	-
Council Tax Benefit	-	3.2	-
Other Unavoidable Growth	1.0	1.0	1.0
Efficiency Investment	2.0	2.0	2.0
Specific Grant Reduction	-	7.0	16.0
	<u>307.9</u>	<u>310.0</u>	<u>311.5</u>
Reduced Requirements			
Income Inflation	-1.0	-1.0	-1.0
Savings Agreed	-2.0	-0.4	-0.4
Additional Savings	-1.9	-	-
	<u>303.0</u>	<u>308.6</u>	<u>310.1</u>
Resources			
Revenue Support Grant	34.2	31.0	28.0
Business Rates	110.6	110.6	99.0
Council Tax Grant	6.6	3.3	3.3
Local Services Support Grant	1.2	1.2	1.2
New Homes Bonus	0.3	0.3	0.3
Council Tax	<u>131.4</u>	<u>131.4</u>	<u>131.4</u>
Forecast Resources	284.3	277.8	263.2
Shortfall	18.7	30.8	46.9