

## Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011

Joint Report of the Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Director of Customer and Business Support Services

### Revenue Budget Estimates 2011/12

#### Purpose of Report

- 1 This report presents the 2011/12 budget proposals for Neighbourhoods and Housing. It includes:
  - The national context regarding local government funding and the implications for City of York Council
  - The approach that has been adopted to develop budget proposals
  - The outcomes of the customer budget consultation
  - the revenue budget for 2010/11 (Annex 1) to show the existing budgets
  - the budget adjusted and rolled forward from 2010/11 into 2011/12
  - the cost of pay and price increases and increments for the portfolio
  - proposals for service pressure costs and savings options for the portfolio area (Annex 2)
  - fees and charges proposals (Annex 3)
  - the Housing Revenue Account (Annex 4)
- 2 Budget Council will be held on 24 February 2011 and will make decisions on the overall budget for the Council. In order to facilitate the decision making process the Executive are meeting on 15 February 2011 to consider the recommendations identified by the individual portfolio Executive Members and the results of the consultation exercise.
- 3 The Executive Member is therefore asked to consider the budget proposals included in this report and identify their recommendations(after considering the proposals in annexes 2 and 3) which will be considered by the Executive as part of the consultation exercise. The Executive Member is invited to provide comments on the budget proposals in this report.

#### Background

- 4 The financial context for the 2011/12 budget has been significantly impacted by :-
  - Worldwide recession leading to Central Government deficit reduction plan
  - Unprecedented reductions in Public Sector spending

- At the same time we have unavoidable ongoing financial pressures arising from
  - Increasing number of older people, living longer and requiring care and support services for longer
  - An increase in the number of severely disabled children who require intensive support into and throughout adulthood
  - Reductions in income from Council services as people have less money to spend
  - Reduction in funding of subsidised bus travel for older people
  - Increased cost of waste disposal
  - Impact of changes to Pensions and NI legislation

5 The Council's 2011/12 budget is being developed within the constraints of the extremely challenging financial climate, the government's Spending Review and provisional finance settlement information. In particular:

- a Total reductions in government funding of 28% over the next four years, heavily frontloaded with York's grant being cut by 13.3% in 2011/12.
- b 22 grants, worth £14,403k in 2010/11 and with an indicative value of £11,478k in 2011/12, have been rolled into the formula grant.
- c The increase in formula grant in the provisional settlement, including the grants transferred in, is only £5,183k, leaving a shortfall in funding of £9,221k between the two years.
- d 23 grants, worth £8,200k in 2010/11, have been transferred to the new Early Intervention Grant, for which the council will receive £6,350k in 2011/12 a further shortfall of £1,850k.
- e 21 grants, worth £13,685k in 2010/11, have been incorporated within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). The provisional DSG for 2011/12 is £106,564k, an increase of £13,659k from the 2010/11 level (subject to pupil number adjustments).
- f There are a further five grants (worth £759k in 2010/11) as yet still under review.
- g Against these pressures Executive were advised in December that directorates would need to find savings of £15m to be able to set a balance budget for 2011/12.
- h In addition, other grants (worth £5,544k in 2010/11) which formerly were direct grants to service areas have been cancelled, creating additional financial pressures in directorates.
- i While the Council has been penalised over the past few years by the workings of the floors and ceilings within the formula grant mechanism, for 2011/12 this same process will offer the protection of a damping gain of £2,541k.

- j The Council will receive a further reduction in formula grant of £4,639k in 2012/13.
- 6 Against these funding reductions the Council has been offered a sum of £1,828k per annum for each year of the Spending Review period if the council tax level in the area is frozen at the 2010/11 level. At the same time the threat of 'capping' local authorities who decide to raise council tax levels or net expenditure above a level yet to be determined by the government has not been removed. York currently has the second lowest Council Tax of all Unitary authorities.
- 7 The 2010/11 revenue budget monitoring process has identified areas of activity that currently have insufficient capacity to deal with the increased demands on those services. In addition consideration has been given to the Council's top priorities, and the need to ensure that key front line areas of activity, particularly those in respect of adults and children, can continue to be provided. From this analysis, specific areas of investment will be proposed within the Council's 2011/12 budget, in particular within the following areas:
- Increasing demand on adult social care services
  - Impact of economic downturn on the Council's income generating services
- 8 The proposed budget for 2011/12 reflects the need to direct investment into these areas in order that planning and monitoring of service delivery and improvement can take place against an adequate resourcing platform.
- 9 In addition, the Council recognises that adequate provision needs to be created within the budget to ensure that the continuing financial impact of the economic downturn can be contained effectively. Following detailed review of economic pressures both on front line services and the Council's Treasury Management function, it is proposed that money will be set aside within the budget to contain the impact of these pressures.
- 10 In order to create the financial capacity to enable adequate investment in these priority areas the budget strategy has been based around certain key financial management principles. A fundamental maxim of the strategy is that Directorates have been made clearly responsible for the robust and effective self-management of their existing financial resources and that restraint has been expected in putting forward for additional growth in budget to be funded corporately
- 11 Directorates have been expected to contain their net expenditure within clearly defined and strictly enforced cash limits with a clear expectation that Directorates self manage all non-exceptional budget pressures within this cash limit. These pressures include the anticipated cost of the pay award and any incremental increases due in year. Explicitly linked to self-management within defined cash limits has been the requirement for directorates to demonstrate the re-allocation of budgets in order to contain internal financial pressures.
- 12 CYC has a strong track record of delivering Value for Money and initiated an innovative efficiency programme, More for York which is on track to deliver

£9m savings from the work undertaken in the current year so it is well placed to meet the financial challenges set out above.

## **Budget Consultation**

- 13 As with previous years we have asked residents what services they value and where they would wish CYC to continue providing the levels of service they receive now and where they think we should reduce spending. This year steps were taken to reduce the cost of the Budget Consultation, due to the very nature of the consultation. Budget questions were included in Your City and available online. Residents were also able to give their views through a separate online budgeting tool - YouChoose. The consultation generated a statistically reliable response of 738 for Your City and 465 for YouChoose. Whilst the level of response is lower than last year the results remain statistically reliable, and furthermore overall spend was less than £1,000

### **Your City Questions** - This was based upon 3 questions

- 60% of residents would choose to meet the budget challenge through higher fees and charges, 44% through reductions in service and only 30% of residents through increased Council Tax.
- People are more willing to pay increased charges for Planning, Parking and Leisure facilities than they are for Homecare services.
- In deciding whether budgets for different services should stay the same or be reduced, residents were more likely to say that funding for social care services, community safety and street based services should remain the same – 85% Children’s social care, 75% crime prevention and community safety, 76% Adult social care, 76% waste and recycling, 74% road and footpath maintenance and 70% street cleaning.
- Residents were more willing to reduce spending on a broad range of leisure and culture services and on young peoples services and transport with 64% reducing sport and leisure facilities (including events and activities), 63% reducing theatres and museums, 47% reducing parks and open spaces, 45% reducing libraries, 42% reducing young peoples services and 41% reducing transport services.

**You Choose Questionnaire** - This was an interactive online tool that asked residents to identify how to make £15m savings by either increasing/decreasing Council Tax, spend or fees and charges on a range of services.

- Perhaps because residents were asked to identify total savings they were generally much more likely to reduce expenditure in all areas. However the same pattern of preference as in Your City was repeated with 98% of residents reducing the budget for Council support and public engagement, 92% reduced leisure and culture budgets, 89% reduced Adult Social Care budgets, 81% reduced Children’s Social Care budgets whilst community safety was reduced by 74% of residents.
- In terms of service efficiencies and saving money, respondents were very supportive of all the options. A review of the authority’s fleet vehicles was supported by 82% of respondents, sharing services with partners by 78% and outsourcing services to external suppliers by 57%.

## Principles

14 Directorates have identified options for savings for consideration by the Executive portfolio holder based on 4 key principles. Each of these principles will bring benefits for the citizens of York, and each will be guide us as we tackle the realities of significant budgetary changes in the months and years to come

- **Create-** opportunities for our citizens and communities, our businesses and educational establishments to prosper and thrive
- **Protect**
  - The most vulnerable members of our community – older people, people with disabilities and, children– by ensuring that the services with which we provide them are the very best possible
  - All citizens by ensuring that vital Council services that secure their well-being continue to be delivered and that all customer groups receive equal outcomes
  - The financial interests of our residents by not raising the amount of Council Tax they pay in 2011/12
  - Staff by ensuring wherever possible that we provide security of employment
- **Partner**
  - Increase public participation in decision-making and service delivery
  - Bring together service provision from a range of agencies at a local level so that individuals, community groups and voluntary bodies can shape and prioritise and even take control of delivering services that are needed at a local level.
  - With the voluntary and community sector; health services, and city partners in the police, fire service, education and business to join up services and make the most of all the resources within the city
  - Cost and Quality of services are important to CYC – where we cannot match both the cost and quality of service offered by other providers we will consider using the Community and Voluntary sector, staff co-operatives or the Private sector to deliver services.
- **Efficiency**
  - We will continue to monitor spend and drive costs down
  - We will rationalise and reshape services to make them as efficient as possible
  - Get better value from our non salary spend through effective procurement

## Delivering the Savings

15 Once again the More for York programme will be used to support the delivery of the savings. The programme will now be on a much larger scale and Directorate Management Teams will be central to delivery and managing the

changes. It must be stressed that achievement of these efficiencies will not be easy to deliver but they are essential in order to deliver investment into priority areas. The scale and pace of the transformation process in coming years will be critical to the Council maintaining financial stability. In addition, clearly with the future pressures on public spending, combined with known forecast increased pressures in children's care, adult care, and waste management, the Council will face the need to both achieve significant transformational change, and review the overall type and level of service provision in coming years.

## **Departmental Overview**

16 In Communities and Neighbourhoods we will

- Work with partners and communities to provide modern high quality frontline services in neighbourhoods in the city.
- Spend £24m on the cleanliness of our Environment, the condition of the cities roads, collecting and recycling our waste and providing parking facilities in the city
- Spend £34m pa on the provision of housing services in the City for those in need, of which £31m is part of the ring fenced Housing Revenue Account. We will invest a further £28.9m on Council Houses over the next five years, including upgrades to kitchens, boilers and aerials.
- Work with partners to ensure there are low levels of crime and antisocial behaviour, and that business premises are properly regulated. Provide quality registration and bereavement services

Looking ahead we will work to

### **Create**

- Develop a foyer scheme facility for young people, which will reduce homelessness, and reduce the long term cost of these services

### **Protect**

- Spend £16m per year to keep our streets clean and safe, to remove rubbish and litter, to maintain our excellent record on recycling and Improve recycling facilities in the City
- Invest £1m over the next 5 years In new technology solutions to reduce our energy usage
- Invest a further £23.6m over the next 5 years in the Council's roads, bridges and drains in addition to an annual repair budget of £4.1m
- Work with partners and communities to increase the recycling rate in the city by at least 1%
- Use £2.5m funding secured by building affordable new home on council owned land to provide essential housing services.

### **Partner**

- Work with all city partners and the Voluntary sector and Community partners to join up services at a local level, remove duplication and provide services

focussed on the needs of local people.

- We will ensure that local communities, voluntary sector organisations and partners have the opportunity to develop and deliver their own solutions for a wide range of services.

## Efficiency

- We will streamline management structures and use innovative technologies and business processes to deploy staff more efficiently and reduce the need for temporary staff and overtime.
- We will consolidate the procurement of services and supplies to reduce spend on items such as construction materials, transport and fleet contracts and public convenience cleaning services.
- Modernise the Parking service to introduce customer focussed shift patterns and new ways of making payment online or by phone.
- Highways maintenance will be provided more effectively by managing and scheduling the repairs in line with the classification of the road and the extent of the damage
- Ensure that charges for discretionary services cover the full cost of providing them.

## Budget Proposals for Neighbourhoods and Housing

- 17 A summary of the budget proposals is shown in Table 1 below. Further details on each individual element are presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

**Table 1 - Summary of Budget Proposals**

	Para. Ref	£'000
Base Budget 2011/12	18	27,860
Adjustment for former service grants transferring into the general formula grant (RSG)	19	+424
Allocation for increments	20	+399
Service Pressure proposals	21	0
Savings proposals (Annex 2)	23-26	-3,244
Proposed Budget 2011/12		25,439

### Base Budget (£27,860k)

- 18 This represents the latest budget for 2010/11, updated for the full year effect of decisions taken during 2010/11, e.g. supplementary estimates awarded.

### Adjustment for Former Service Grants (£424k)

- 19 This adjustment is the budgetary effect of former direct service grants being transferred to general grants. The review of the service provision identified in paragraph 20 includes areas that are no longer funded by direct grants

### Increments (£399k)

- 20 The job evaluation exercise resulted in a twelve grade structure with four levels within each band. 2011/12 is the final year that will include incremental payments for staff appointed at the bottom of the grade as part of that process.

### **Service Pressures (£0k)**

- 21 A range of options for service pressure proposals has been considered and in view of the overall available resources it is proposed that no additional budget is allocated for Neighbourhoods and Housing. There is a general price freeze on most budgets. The amount allowed within service pressures for price inflation is to fund known price increases, e.g. contract payments.

### **Contingency Items**

- 22 Members should note that there are potential expenditure pressures that may materialise in 2011/12 but which are not yet certain or not quantifiable at this stage. The Executive will decide on 15 February 2011 whether or not to set a general contingency to provide possible funding for such items for 2011/12.

### **Savings Proposals (-£3,244k)**

- 23 Members will be aware that the 2010/11 budget savings were significant and that all Directorates are operating within a tight financial environment. In addition the Council has accelerated its' efficiency programme, More For York, which had an initial target of generating £15m of budget savings over three years, to meet the financial constraints of the governments' spending Review and the provisional finance settlement.
- 24 In seeking to achieve savings for the 2011/12 budget Directorates have examined budgets with a view to identifying savings that have a minimum impact on the services provided to the public, customers and the wider Council and are not already included in existing blueprints for More For York. They have concentrated on initiatives that:
- improve quality and efficiency
  - reduce Management and administrative costs
  - protect frontline services especially services for the most vulnerable members of our community
  - result from ongoing service reviews
  - generate income
  - address budgetary underspends
  - improve cash flow and interest earnings

- 25 In addition to the initiatives listed above the price increases and list of savings also include proposals to increase fees and charges. Generally these are in line with inflation, but this is varied by directorates as they are affected by national constraints/requirements.

- 26 Annex 2 shows the full list of savings proposals for the Neighbourhoods and Housing portfolio. It also includes some proposals that are across the



Communities & Neighbourhoods Directorate, some of which will impact on the Leisure, Culture and Social Inclusion portfolio. However, as the majority of the impact is likely to be in this portfolio they have been included in Table 1 above.

### **Fees and Charges**

- 27 The details of the proposed fees and charges for the services provided by this portfolio are set out in Annex 3.

### **Housing Revenue Account**

- 28 Local Authorities are required, by legislation, to keep a HRA. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 stated that items of income and expenditure only relating to Council housing must be contained within the account. Thus the terms “ring fenced” or “landlord account” are now referred to, as transfers between the HRA and General Fund are normally prevented.
- 29 The Act also outlined the arrangements whereby subsidy is allocated on a “notional” HRA. This account is based on the Governments assessment of what local authorities should charge in rents and spend on management and maintenance, rather than what they actually do charge and spend.
- 30 Authorities have a duty to ensure that the HRA balances, to keep the budget under review and to take all reasonable steps to avoid a deficit.

### **Draft HRA Negative Subsidy & rent increase**

- 31 The two major sources of funding HRA expenditure have been Government Subsidy and rent income. Following the removal of the payment of rent rebates through the HRA there is now a net surplus on the notional HRA as the rent income now exceeds the subsidy payable by the Government for HRA expenditure on management, maintenance, etc. This results in a “negative” subsidy payable by the authority to the Government of £7,746k for 2011/12. This compares to £6,145k for 2010/11.

	2010/11 Estimate £'000	2011/12 Estimate £'000
HRA subsidy payable (including MRA)	19,143	18,035
Less Notional Rent Income from council tenants	(25,288)	(26,837)
Equals Negative Subsidy payable	(6,145)	(7,746)

- 32 Housing rents are based on a formula for rent setting created by central government. Under the original formula similar properties should be charged similar rents by 2012 regardless of who owns the property. This is known as rent convergence. This formula rent takes account of various factors including the number of bedrooms a property has, property valuation,

average earnings and the date at which all rents are expected to converge. The guideline rent increase for 2011/12 is 6.5% with convergence due to be achieved in 2015/16. The actual average rent increase for this council, taking all these factors into account, is expected to be 6.4%.

### **HRA Borrowing and Debt Repayment**

- 33 From 1 April 2004 authorities can determine for themselves what capital investment is required and have the freedom to borrow (within prudential principles) to deliver housing services. Some supported borrowing continues and the interest charges for the elements used to fund HRA capital expenditure is paid from the HRA and refunded through subsidy. Prudential borrowing which takes place over and above the (supported) capital financing requirement is “unsupported” in that the authority must find the means of paying back interest and principal from within its own resources.
- 34 In October 2009 the Executive Member agreed to submit a bid to the Homes and Communities Agency for grant to build in the region of 18 new family council houses. Following the emergency budget in June 2010 all schemes had to be re-submitted. The funding was confirmed and therefore the HRA may undertake prudential borrowing during 2011/12, which will be funded from the rental income stream received from the new properties.
- 35 Previously authorities were required to make a revenue provision to repay 2% of net HRA debt and this was funded through HRA subsidy. Authorities are no longer compelled to make this provision and any voluntary contribution will not be paid by subsidy. Guidance suggests it is advisable to make a voluntary contribution and as a result since 2004/05 a provision of 2% has been made on outstanding HRA debt. This will continue in 2011/12.
- 36 The result of all the adjustments outlined within this report is an in-year surplus of £383k. Together with the budgeted brought forward working balance of £9,189k this leaves a working balance of £9,572k on the account.
- 37 This surplus is broadly in line with that forecast in the HRA business plan. The HRA surplus needs to remain on the account to be reviewed once the HRA business plan is updated to reflect both the budget detailed in this report and the 2010/11 outturn position. Members are reminded that the HRA surplus is needed to fund expenditure in future years.
- 38 A review of the operation of both the HRA and the current subsidy system has been undertaken by the department of Communities and Local Government (CLG). This review looked at all aspects of housing finance and recommended a move towards a system of self financing, however it will not be implemented until 2012/13. At the time of writing the details of the proposed self financing offer are still being awaited.

### **Consultation**

- 39 This paper forms part of the Council's budget consultation. The results of consultation to date are included in the report. These include a Your City Questionnaire, Youchoose, an online questionnaire, a public meeting led by the Leader of the Council and Director of Customer and Business Support

Services where participants were presented with information on pressures facing each directorate, and a further session with the business communities of the city.

### **Options**

- 40 As part of the consultation process the Executive Member is asked for their comments or alternative suggestions on the proposals shown in Annexes 2 and 3.

### **Analysis**

- 41 All the analysis is provided in the body of the report and the annexes.

### **Corporate Priorities**

- 42 The budget represents the opportunity to prioritise resources towards corporate priority areas. The principles set out in this report which have driven the development of savings and growth proposals are derived from the Councils corporate priorities.

### **Implications**

- 43 The implications are:
- Financial - the financial implications are dealt with in the body of the report.
  - Human Resources - There are a number of potential redundancy situations included in Annex 2 and there could be a reduction of approximately 40 posts across the directorate, of which 35 would relate to this portfolio. All necessary consultations with the unions will commence as soon as any decisions are made.
  - Equalities - The consideration of the impact of these proposals on each equalities strand has been carefully considered by officers as part of the budget preparation process. Consultation has also taken place with representatives of groups in York and feedback has been incorporated. Individual Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA) have been undertaken where appropriate and the impacts of each proposal are set out in Annex 2. An Overall EIA of the budget has been undertaken and will be a background paper to the Executive report.
  - Legal - there are no legal implications to this report.
  - Crime and Disorder - there are no specific crime and disorder implications to this report.
  - Information Technology - there are no information technology implications to this report.
  - Property - there are no property implications to this report.
  - Other - there are no other implications to this report.

### **Risk Management**

- 44 Key reporting mechanisms to Members on budget matters will continue to be through mid-year monitoring reports and the final Revenue Outturn report for the year. The format/timing of these reports has recently been considered by

the Council's Management Team but as a minimum they will report on forecast out-turn compared to budgets and will also address the progress made on investments and savings included within the budgets.

- 45 The budget setting process always entails a degree of risk as managers attempt to assess known and uncertain future events. This year has demonstrated the difficulty of achieving this. As with any budget the key to mitigating risk is prompt monitoring and appropriate management control. As such updated figures and revised corrective actions will be monitored via Directorate Management Teams, Corporate Management Team and the monitor reports during the year.

### **Recommendations**

- 46 The Executive Member is invited to consider whether the budget proposals are in line with the Council's priorities.
- 47 The Executive Member is invited to provide comments on the budget proposals for savings and growth which have been prepared by Officers and contained in this report, which are intended to form part of the Council's budget to be considered by the Budget Executive on 15 February 2011.
- 48 The Executive Member is asked to consider the budget proposals for consultation for Neighbourhoods and Housing for 2011/12 contained in this report and listed below and provide comments to be submitted to the Budget Executive on 15 February 2011.
- 2011/12 Base budget as set out in paragraph 18;
  - Savings proposals as set out in Annex 2;
  - Fees and charges as set out in Annex 3
  - The HRA budget as set out in Annex 4.

### **Contact Details**

#### **Authors:**

Debbie Mitchell  
Finance Manager for Communities &  
Neighbourhoods  
Tel: 554161

#### **Chief Officers responsible for the report:**

Sally Burns  
Director of Communities and Neighbourhoods  
Tel: 552003  
Ian Floyd  
Director of Resources  
Tel: 551100

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** None

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all* **All**

**Background Working Papers**

**Annexes**

Annex 1 - 2010/11 Budget

Annex 2 - Savings Proposals

Annex 3 - Fees and Charges

Annex 4 - Housing Revenue Account