

4 Year Financial Strategy - City and Environmental Services

Introduction

1. City and Environmental Services like all Directorates has undergone significant reductions in staffing and budgets in recent years whilst maintaining some of the Councils most visible frontline services, including 6 million refuse/ recycling collections, 4 million Park and Ride Journeys and maintaining and investing in the highways and transport infrastructure. From a regulatory perspective the Directorate delivers Planning, Development control and Highway Regulation functions thereby have a significant impact on the wider economy and people of York beyond the directly delivered services.

Approach to Protecting Priority Areas

2. All areas of the Directorate have been reviewed and certain service areas have been protected in 2016/17. It is envisaged that this will remain the case over the medium term. Protected services include:
 - There will be no introduction of additional charges or any significant changes in operations for domestic waste customers
 - No additional charges will be applied to services operating from Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC's) and opening times will remain as they are currently
 - As a Lead Local Flood Authority under the Flood and Water Management Act, the Council are required to deliver a range of responsibilities for flood risk management
 - The Highways budget for day to day highway maintenance for potholes, gully emptying and bridge maintenance
 - The Winter Maintenance (gritting) budget will be protected and will also receive additional funding of £115k
 - The Dial and Ride service which is the public transport provision for the most vulnerable in society

- School Crossing Patrols
- The Concessionary Fares scheme will remain unchanged

Medium Term Efficiencies and Savings

3. As a result of the savings made to date the Highways function has been reduced to a small revenue budget which covers day to day maintenance with the potential for only incremental savings through operational efficiencies. The Highways Capital Programme including maintenance and development delivers our statutory duties to maintain the highway network. The workforce has recently being reduced to ensure that a sustainable core of skills and knowledge is retained with a degree of job security and then as the Capital Programme fluctuates from year to year sub contractors are being used to complement this core staff. For this reason there are no further significant reductions in the Highways budget.
4. The Waste service will be concentrating on operational efficiencies and containing cost growth. Cost pressures on the service are principally existing budget overspends, recycle costs and income from green waste additional bin services. There are no savings planned in 2016/17 for Waste Services but in the medium term Market testing of the Waste Service will be considered in order to ensure collection services are as efficient as possible.
5. Planning, Development Management, Building Control and Highway regulation are all moving towards a model in which a core of knowledge and skills is retained from anticipated fee revenues with significant fluctuations in workload managed through the use of external providers and where possible through the use of shared staff resources with other Local Authorities. This approach allows key staff to be retained. The exception to this approach is the Local Plan development for which no direct fee revenue is attributable.
6. The most significant revenue in the Transport area is parking income totalling £6.8 million. Car parking charges will be frozen in 2016/17. Any future increases in charges will be considered at a later stage following a strategic review and consideration of the Council wide objectives. Having consulted with the Parking industry,

increased income can be achieved through increased volume, in conjunction with flexible pricing to aim for full capacity during both peak and non peak periods. The approach will be to consider how the private sector could bring their expertise to York to help achieve this ambition.

7. Another area of potential significant revenue is civil (camera) enforcement of bus lanes. This is not a growth target, but merely revenue reinstatement following re-introduction of active enforcement over the next 18 months.
8. Every other significant area of Transport (with the exception of network control/essential traffic management) will be considered over the medium term. This will include a reduction in bus subsidies and additional income requirements to continue operation of the CCTV centre. In addition it should be noted that Transport will lose £1 million of external revenue in 2016/17 and staffing reduction plans are being planned in advance of 31st March 2016 to prevent any revenue pressures.

Decisions Required

9. The decisions that are set out in the 2016/17 savings provide the basis for moving forward over the next four years, as the majority of savings themes originate in 2016/17. Specific reports over the coming months will need to be considered including the review of Parking services and reintroduction of enforcement cameras

Risks and Impact Assessment

10. Within Waste Services, general efficiency savings across staffing, fleet and collection methods are required to address the current projected overspend within the waste collection budget. This will include introducing more efficient rounds (fewer staff and vehicles) but will not deliver additional future savings. There is a risk that if these efficiencies cannot be achieved this would necessitate the requirement to increase charges to balance the budget. Furthermore, any delay or failure to achieve efficiency savings

would jeopardise any potential benefit which may be achieved from market testing.

11. The impact on Design and Conservation will depend precisely where the saving is made. The team comprises a number of environmental specialists across a range of different professions. The saving would either result in the loss of a single specialist officer such as: archaeology, or landscape /tree advice , heritage or alternative would reduce a number of full time posts to part time. The consequences would be felt by the Development Management team, applicants and service users as specialist advice may not be available when sought.
12. Additional income from Development Management will be dependent on Government increasing charges or devolving to local authorities. The income received will also be dependent on application numbers.
13. Additional parking income represents a significant saving for the directorate. However, there have been recent reductions in parking transactions and income and continuation of this trend would impact this savings target. This saving can only be achieved if the city centre remains buoyant and council policies do not adversely impact usage.
14. The impact of the reduction in bus subsidies are likely to reduce the opportunities for people to travel around the city particularly in the evening or on Sundays unless the routes are taken up by commercial operators.