

<b>REPORT TO EXECUTIVE</b>			
<b>PORTFOLIO AREA: ALL</b>			
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> December 2002		
<b>Public</b>			
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes	<b>Recorded in Forward Plan:</b>	Yes
<b>Inside Policy Framework</b>			

**Title:** **CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - BUDGET REPORTS – FURTHER COMMENTS**

**Report of:** **Overview and Scrutiny Manager**

**Report reference:** **ME 2/02**

### **Summary:**

The reports summarises the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments on those savings and charges reports considered at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2002.

### **Recommendations:**

The Executive consider, take account of and where appropriate give its reaction to the comments.

**Contact Officer:** John Mallinson

**Ext:** 7010

## **1. COMMENTS**

The following is a summary of the committee's comments which are recorded more fully in the draft minutes. They follow the sequence, headings and reference numbers of those draft minutes.

### **CROS.153/02 BUDGET POLICY ISSUES**

### **(a) Department of Environment and Development**

Pursuant to Minute CROS.125/02, the Director of Environment and Development presented report EN.131/02 (as amended) providing the supplementary information requested by Members in respect of Car Park charges.

It was stressed that such reports must include all relevant information to allow effective scrutiny and avoid the need for deferral of consideration.

RESOLVED – That the additional information detailed within report EN.131/02 be noted.

### **(b) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revised Revenue Estimates 2002/03**

A Member queried why the balance was so high this year, and would it not have been possible to use that money on additional repairs or environmental works for the benefit of tenants. The Accountancy Manager responded that attempts had been made to utilise the same, but ultimately a judgement had had to be made in conjunction with the Director of Housing.

The Member further questioned whether the balance on the HRA would be transferred to the General Fund upon closure of the account, rather than being spent on tenants whose money it was. The Accountancy Manager confirmed that to be the case.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

### **(c) City Centre Marketing Initiative**

RESOLVED – That this Committee supports the recommendation that the Executive agrees the allocation of £20,000 to the City Centre Marketing Initiative as part of the budget setting process for 2003/04, subject to the full contribution from City Centre partners having been received for the current year.

### **(d) Asset Management Bids**

RESOLVED – That the report be noted, subject to the Director's assurance that the programme of disability access improvements reflected the recent work of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **(e) Financial Ledgers Replacement Bid**

RESOLVED – That this Committee supports the recommendation to the Executive that a budget bid of £100,000 for the replacement of the financial ledgers be funded from an advance from the Renewals Fund as set out in paragraph 1.4 of Financial Memo 2002/03 No.66, as part of the 2003/04 Budget process; but that the Executive note the departure from usual practice (in relation to such advance funding).

### **(f) Budget Bids – Tullie House and Sports Development**

It was asked that the report be amended to clearly state that these were budget bids. A Member further noted that the report contained no recommendation, and stressed the need for recommendations to be provided in all reports.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

### **(g) The Voice of Cumbria in Europe**

There were concerns that duplication be avoided with any other representation (including Northwest Shires Policy Unit). It was felt that the report did not give adequate information on what the postholder would do and how he/she would be managed.

RESOLVED - That this Committee supports the recommendation to the Executive that £6,000 be provided for the next three years as part of the budget process to part fund an Officer to represent Carlisle and Cumbria's European needs located in the Brussels Office of the North West Regional Assembly.

### **(h) Three Year Budget 2003/04 to 2005/06 – Updated Forecast**

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

### **(i) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2003/04**

In considering the matter, Members raised the following issues, to which the Head of Financial Services, the Principal Accountant and Director of Environment and Development responded:

*1. Why had budget savings as regards car park charges and Bereavement Services been included when these were currently out to consultation?*

All had been included in one global report, the final report being amended to reflect these decisions when made.

*2. Although a bid was to be made for £43,400 to fund administrative support for the Executive Management, no report had been submitted to date - why? If a report were forthcoming could this Committee receive it?*

The City Treasury had details of the bids to be funded and that issue would be addressed in the next report.

*3. Clarify the position as regards the invoice which was raised prematurely during 2001/02 in relation to Archaeology costs for the Lanes Development.*

The invoice was raised in error and resulted in a credit of £44,000 being included erroneously in the year end General Fund balances. That invoice had since been

cancelled and provision was required to fund that loss of income in 2002/03. It could be funded from General Fund balances.

*4. The commercial arm of the Commercial and Technical Services Business Unit was expected to achieve an overall profit of £250,000 in 2003/04, which had been built into the estimates. How robust were the figures and was that reflected in the Business Plan?*

A hybrid situation existed within the Unit. There was a Plan but, if not sustainable, it would be met from DSO reserves of £512,000.

*5. It was originally reported that the Leisuretime externalisation process would save the Council £48,000 in 2002/03 (Financial Memo 2002/03 No.70 refers), however, the process had cost the Council £50,000 in 2002/03. How had that discrepancy arisen?*

An overspend had arisen which would be the subject of investigation, and a report would be submitted to the Executive on 19 December 2002 and to this Committee on 9 January 2003.

*6. A £7,600 bid in respect of the removal of unauthorised vehicles had been requested due to a significant increase in the number of abandoned vehicles, especially those which had been burnt out which prevented identification, which trend was expected to continue in the future. A Member indicated his support for that bid.*

It was noted that there was a legislative requirement upon the Council to remove such vehicles.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the comments of this Committee, outlined at points 1 – 6 above be referred to the Executive.

#### **(j) Renewals Reserve – Replacements 2003/04**

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

#### **(k) Review of Advice Agencies**

RESOLVED – That consideration of this matter be deferred pending the outcome of consultation with the Cumbria Community Legal Services Partnership and the Legal Services Commission.

#### **(l) Best Value Customer Contact – Final Report – Financial Issues**

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

#### **(m) Community Centres Budgets**

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**(n) Tullie House – Savings Proposals**

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**(o) Budget Consultation**

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**(p) Budget Bid to Cover Our Cost of Local Plan Production**

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**(q) GIS Report – Budget Bid**

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

**(r) Accommodation – Bousteads Grassing and Civic Centre**

RESOLVED – That the reports be noted.

**(s) CCTV Monitoring/Bid for Budget Increase**

Members felt that any review of Pub Watch/Shop Watch must be done in conjunction with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

RESOLVED – That the recommendations contained within report EN.133/02 be accepted.

**(t) Budget – Litter Bins**

The Chairman indicated that there was currently a lack of litter bins in many areas of the City, which problem had been raised by several Members. Bins were especially necessary outside Schools, fast food outlets, etc, and the Council could not expect the public to dispose of litter responsibly if there were no bins provided. He added that no budget existed at present and sought Members' views on how such a budget could be created.

RESOLVED – (1) That this Committee recommends that the Executive investigate the creation of a Budget for the provision of litter bins in the future.

(2) That the Head of Planning Services be asked to use "planning gain" in the provision of litter bins around new takeaway facilities.

**2. CONSULTATION**

The committee is a consultee

### **3. STAFFING/RESOURCES COMMENTS**

N/A

### **4. CITY TREASURER'S COMMENTS**

N/A

### **5. LEGAL COMMENTS**

N/A

### **6. CORPORATE COMMENTS**

N/A

### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT**

N/A

### **8. EQUALITY ISSUES**

N/A

### **9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

### **10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

### **11. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Executive consider, take account of and where appropriate give its reaction to the comments.

### **12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To give the Executive's feedback to the committee.