



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

A2 (1)

PORTFOLIO AREA:

Date of Meeting: 04 August 2003

Public

Key Decision: Yes/No

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

Inside Policy Framework

**Title: STRATEGIC & PERFORMANCE SERVICES – GENERAL FUND
PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2002/2003**

Report of: HEAD OF STRATEGIC & PERFORMANCE SERVICES

Report reference: SPS /2003

Summary: The report identifies items of committed and uncommitted expenditure and seeks Members' consideration of carry forward and recurring funding requests.

Recommendations: Members are requested to consider the carry forward and recurring funding items.

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

1.1 Summary

Category B – Expenditure committed for schemes commenced in 2002/3

- (a) £4,500. Establishment of a corporate image library & improved photographic images, for use by the entire organisation.
- (b) £4,000. Expenditure to develop democratic engagement issues, including Citizenship packs for schools and a marketing campaign to attract young voters.
- (c) £89,660. Expenditure necessary to enable the organisation to undertake its best value obligations as well as funding the procurement of improved performance management software and addressing the forthcoming CPA action plan

Category C – Uncommitted expenditure

- (a) £3,500. The purchase of a branding manual.
- (b) £11,000. Maternity cover for 2 members of staff.
- (c) £9,000. To meet the already incurred costs of the CPA peer challenge.

Recurring Expenditure

- (a) £16,300 to provide administrative support to the Unit.

1.2 Category B

Corporate Image Library

The improvement of internal and external communication by the Council were issues raised in various best value reviews and inspections, particularly the Communications best value review and, more recently, by the CPA peer challengers, inspectors and the liP inspector.

Part of the improvement plan involves creating a comprehensive image library that will be made available to all officers charged with marketing the organisation through various publications. This will enable officer to produce quality, easy-to-access, attractive materials to aid communications and will present better value than sourcing images on an ad-hoc basis. The need for this facility was raised more than 12 months ago but no financial resources were made available. Ongoing costs will be met from the current Communications budget, but an initial sum of £2,000 is needed to set up the service, which will cover the costs of digitally scanning the preferred images and saving them electronically.

A library of professional, up-to-date images is essential if we are to produce good quality, easy to read publications. Individual Business Units have difficulty identifying funding for updated photography. An amount of £2,500 will allow the Communications Team commission professional photography to be held centrally to provide a valuable resource for all Business Units.

Democratic Engagement Issues

As part of our objective to encourage inclusion among hard to reach groups, including young people, the Corporate Plan commits us to piloting a Citizenship Pack for schools although no funding was earmarked for it and it has not been progressed.

The Council is currently undertaking a best value review of Democratic Engagement which includes the question of how to involve young people in the decision-making process. The ability to produce these packs (required funding - £3,000) would go some way to addressing the issues and give the Authority a high profile in schools.

The Council is committed, in the Corporate Plan, to carrying out two marketing campaigns a year specifically aimed at young voters. No funding was identified for them. In April this year, the Council ran a marketing campaign to raise awareness amongst young people of their right/obligation to vote in the local election. Work was carried out with students at the Cumbria Institute of the Arts, who created the final artwork. The campaign has been completed and the Council must honour its pledge to pay for the materials the students used on the Authority's behalf, at a cost of £1,000.

Best Value Obligations

The Council's programme of best value reviews is running behind schedule, which has resulted in the associated resource requirements for best value being delayed also. There are 4 best value reviews ongoing in 2003/4 and all require resources for consultation exercises, research, workshops etc. In addition, the best value budget has been identified as the best source of funding for new performance management software, which will make recording and reporting on performance information much easier in the future. The cost of this will be approximately £20,000. Any early actions the Council takes in responding to the CPA inspection, such as performance management training etc, will also be supported by the Best Value budget.

1.3 Category C Carry Forward Requests

Branding Manual

The Council's 'brand' is most visible through its logo, signage, lettering and language. Through these, the organisation can be seen, judged and identified. The Communications best value inspection criticised the Council for its proliferation of different branding which confused staff, the public and partners. In order for the Council to effectively promote itself and to differentiate itself from other authorities in the region, particularly at this time of regionalisation, it needs a clear branding practice which is adhered to by all staff. This can be greatly assisted by the procurement of a clear, professionally produced branding manual, a crucial marketing tool in any organisation. This will leave staff in no doubt as to what lettering, logo etc to use in publications and assist in instant recognition of Carlisle City Council.

Maternity Cover & Peer Challenge

Two officers in the Policy and Performance Team holding critically important posts both require maternity cover in the current financial year. Funding for maternity cover must be found from within existing budgets and there is no clear capacity for that.

In May this year, the Peer Challenge review team spent three days in the authority in preparation for our CPA inspection, which was unexpected when the previous year's budgets were being developed. The Council has recently been invoiced £9,000 for this service. The cost has to be met from the Strategic & Performance Services budget but there is no funding committed to it.

1.4 Recurring Expenditure Bid

At the time of reorganisation, administrative support for the new Unit of Strategic and Performance Services was overlooked and, as a result, the Unit has been left

vulnerable in terms of workload management and capacity. There is currently only one half-time administrative officer for the entire unit and many administrative duties, which were previously carried out by an administrative assistant from the old Town Clerk's Department, have had to be absorbed by professional officers, including flexitime/holiday/sickness management and monitoring, filing, mail sorting, meeting/diary management, invoicing and ordering etc. This is seriously affecting the efficiency of the Unit and particularly of the Business Unit Head. By strengthening the administrative function in the Unit, the Unit's efficiency and responsiveness will increase.

2. CONSULTATION

2.1 Consultation to Date. N/A

2.2 Consultation proposed. N/A

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to consider the carry forward and recurring funding items.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To enable the business unit to provide a better service, both internally and externally and to increase efficiency.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- **Staffing/Resources** – Additional staff are required to provide administrative support
- **Financial** – The recommendations above have a financial implication as set out in the body of the report.
- **Legal** – N/A.
- **Corporate** – Some of the requests for funding are for issues that will be of benefit to the entire organisation and will put us in a stronger position when campaigning to retain a local government presence in Carlisle in the future
- **Risk Management** – Associated risks are identified in the Council's Risk Register.
- **Equality Issues** – N/A

- **Environmental – N/A**
- **Crime and Disorder – N/A.**