

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2007/08 to 2010/11

ISSUED FOR CONSULTATION PURPOSES – DECEMBER 2007

This document contains the draft budget proposals of the City Council's Executive set out as follows.

Section	Detail
A	Background and Executive Summary
B	Revenue Budget 2007/08 to 2010/11 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule 1 - Existing Net Budgets• Schedule 2 - Proposed Budget Reductions• Schedule 3 - Recurring Spending Pressures• Schedule 4 - Non-Recurring Spending Pressures• Schedule 5 - Summary Net Budget Requirement• Schedule 6 - Total Funding and Provisional Council Tax
C	Capital Programme 2007/08 to 2010/11 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule 7 - Estimated Capital Resources• Schedule 8 - Proposed Capital Programme• Schedule 9 - Summary Capital Resource Statement
D	Council Reserves Projections to 2010/11 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule 10 - Usable Reserves Projections
E	Budget Discipline
F	Statutory Report of the Director of Corporate Services
G	Glossary of Terms

These budget proposals are based on detailed proposals that have been considered by the Executive over the course of the last few months. In particular the following reports of the Director of Corporate Services were considered at the Executive meeting of 17th December 2007. All reports are available upon request.

1. CORP68/07 - General Fund Revenue Budget 2007/08 to 2010/11
2. CORP69/07 - Provisional Capital Programme 2007/08 to 2010/11
3. CORP70/07 - Draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Investment Strategy 2008/09

SECTION A – BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background to the Budget Process to date:

The preparation of the budget proposals is an ongoing process, which starts in the summer with the agreement by Council to the Medium Term Financial Plan, Corporate Charging Policy, Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan. These strategy documents set out the Council's policies in guiding the budget process and in particular set out the three year financial projections that the Council is faced with prior to starting the new budget process.

The Council's existing approved budgets are then scrutinised together with any proposals for new spending pressures and savings proposals.

Throughout the process, consultation is carried out with the Councils Overview and Scrutiny Committees who feed back their views on any proposals under consideration to the Executive.

Following the receipt of all of this information, the Executive issues their draft budget proposals for formal consultation.

Budget Process – future progress:

Following the issue of the Executive's draft budget proposals, a formal consultation period will run from 18th December 2007 to 14th January 2008. During this period any interested person may submit their views on the proposal to the Chief Executive, Civic Centre, Carlisle CA3 8QG.

In addition to the above, formal consultation meetings will be held with:

- The Large Employers Affinity Group (to include any Non Domestic Ratepayers) on 15th January 2008.
- Trades Unions on 16th January 2008.
- The Council's Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th January 2008, Community Overview and Scrutiny on 7th January 2008 and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny on 8th January 2008.

The Executive at their meeting on 21st January 2008 will consider feed back from the consultation process, and final budget recommendations will be made to the Council on 5th February 2008.

It should be noted that at this point in time there are a number of issues which have not yet been finalised and which will impact on the Final budget proposals to Council on 5th February 2008. These issues include a number of government grant allocations such as:

- Final Government Finance Settlement – RSG and NNDR
- Regional Housing Pot Capital Grant
- Disabled Facilities Grant
- LABGI (from 2009/10)
- Housing & Planning Delivery Grant

Summary Budget Proposals - Key Issues:

The key issues, which are expanded on further in the proposals, are as follows:

- (i) The draft budget proposes a Council Tax increase of 3.5% for the City Council (Parishes Precepts will be in addition in the rural areas).
- (ii) Based on current projections, this will result in the following requirement to be taken (to)/from Council reserves to support Council expenditure over the period as follows:

Additional contribution (to)/from Reserves	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000
Recurring Expenditure	(718)	(788)	(229)
Less Job Evaluation earmarked from Reserves	1,000	1,000	1,000
Net Recurring Expenditure	282	212	771
Non-recurring Expenditure	1,229	716	392
Total	1,511	928	1,163

- (iii) As a result of the savings and pressures identified during this budget process, the recurring deficit projection has reduced from £1.169m in 2008/09 to £282,000 as shown in the table above.
- (iv) Within the recurring expenditure is the estimated sum of £1m to fund the Job Evaluation project. There has been a sum of £1m set aside from balances for a three year period pending the identification of ongoing savings to absorb the cost on a recurring basis. The cost is estimated at this time pending completion of the project which is now estimated to be completed in the summer of 2008.
- (v) Although there is scope to fund the estimated requirement from the Projects Reserve in 2007/08, this could not be sustained in future years. A strategy for identifying recurring savings within the revenue budget has been drawn up by SMT and the Executive and this strategy will continue to be developed during the coming year.
- (vi) This Strategy will continue to concentrate on the following key areas:
 - Service Improvement Reviews – the financial target for these reviews will be required to achieve a minimum 5% reduction in the gross cost of those services. The Service Improvement Reviews which commenced in 2007/08 and will be completed in 2008/09 cover Community Services, Brampton Business Centre, Central Recharges and Marketing. A programme of review which covers all the Council's services provided and the timescales will be drawn up by March 2008. The reviews will be completed in time to be included early in each annual budget process.
 - Asset review – this will set out clear objectives one of which will be to deliver recurring additional income or recurring reduced costs. It will provide a timetable of deliverables and the impact on services and improvements. A report will be considered early in 2008 with a key focus on issues related to the LAV options.

- Shared Services – the requirement is to achieve a 3% efficiency savings target via the shared services agenda by the development and delivery of the Shared Services Strategy.
 - To carry out a review of those services which do not fall within the Council's core priorities.
- (vii) The Executive will monitor the development of the Strategy and the achievement of its objectives.
- (viii) Given the financial pressures the Council is under, the scope to continue support for new spending pressures and initiatives in future years will be dependent upon the extent to which the Council is successful in realising and redirecting additional resources to identified priorities, and the level of Reserves and income receipts.

SECTION B - REVENUE BUDGET 2007/08 TO 2010/11

1. REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2007/08

- 1.1 The Executive recommends that the Council's revised net budget for 2007/08 is approved totaling £19.422m compared to the original budget of £17.075m. The increase of £2.347m can be summarised as follows:

Detail:	£000
Recurring expenditure	0
Salary review	14
CLL Contract fee	(5)
Non-Recurring expenditure	
Planning Inquiry	290
LABGI (net)	745
Capacity Building (re-profiling of budget)	(14)
Expenditure carried forward from financial year 2006/07 (see 1.2)	1,317
Total	2,347

- 1.2 The increased budget for 2007/08 is principally as a result of the carry forward of budgets from previous years for work not completed at the financial year-end. Although the 2007/08 budget is increased, there is a corresponding decrease for the previous financial year and so there is no overall impact on the Council's financial position.

2. REVENUE BUDGET 2008/09 to 2010/11

- 2.1 The Executive recommends that the net budgets for 2008/09 to 2010/11 submitted in respect of existing services and including existing non-recurring commitment and estimated Parish Precepts, are as shown in **Schedule 1** below:

Schedule 1 – Existing Net Budgets

Existing Budget	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000
City Council			
- Recurring	17,527	18,318	18,948
- Non – Recurring	793	324	0
Parish Precepts	400	410	420
Total	18,720	19,052	19,368

At this stage the implications of the introduction of the Job Evaluation process has been retained within the forward year projections at £1m per annum. This is an initial estimate only of the potential impact and a significant amount of work remains to finalise this issue and to investigate ways to contain the impact within available resources.

- 2.2 It is further recommended that the existing budgets set out in **Schedule 1** be reduced by proposals for budget reductions as detailed in **Schedule 2**. Full details of all of the proposals are contained within various reports considered by the Executive at various stages during the budget process to date.

Schedule 2 – Proposed Budget Reductions

Proposed Budget Reductions	Note	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000
Increased Income:				
Income in excess of target:	1			
• Development Services		(53)	(53)	(53)
• Licensing		(3)	(3)	(3)
Treasury Management	2	(150)	0	300
Market Hall Income	1	0	0	(40)
Shared Services (Income)	1	(25)	(25)	(25)
Synthetic Football Pitch	1	(68)	0	0
Total Additional Income		(299)	(81)	179
Expenditure Reductions:				
Arts and Events	3	(25)	(50)	(50)
Energy Efficiency Advice Centre	4	(35)	(35)	(35)
Review Location of TIC	3	(23)	(46)	(46)
Brampton Business Centre/Telecentre	5	0	(200)	(200)
Community Services Review	3	(53)	(153)	(153)
Conference Group	3	(15)	(29)	(29)
Printing and Copying Review	3	(40)	(40)	(40)
Hospitality Budget	1	(2)	(2)	(2)
Pay Award Provision	1	(195)	(295)	(400)
Recruitment	6	(500)	(1,040)	(1,040)
Renewals Reserve savings	7	(206)	(245)	(422)
Total Expenditure Reductions		(1,094)	(2,135)	(2,417)
TOTAL RECURRING BUDGET REDUCTION PROPOSALS		(1,393)	(2,216)	(2,238)

Note 1: Detailed reports have previously been considered on all of these issues as part of the budget process.

Note 2: The Treasury Management projections will be amended in the light of these proposals and the economic conditions and will be reported to the January Executive.

Note 3: Reports have been considered which identify that savings are achievable. The Executive request a review of the detailed options to deliver this level of saving, to be reported by May 2008.

Note 4: This saving is dependent upon the detailed terms of the contract.

Note 5: This saving is not anticipated until 2009/10 and the Executive request an options report by September 2008.

Note 6: SMT in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to produce details on the operation of this scheme in January 2008.

Note 7: A full report setting out options has been considered by the Executive. The revenue savings identified have been incorporated as a saving. This will be reviewed as part of next years budget process.

- 2.3 It is further recommended that the existing budgets set out in **Schedule 1** be increased by new spending pressures detailed in **Schedules 3 and 4**. Full details of all of the proposals are contained within various reports considered by the Executive at various stages during the budget process to date.

Schedule 3 – Recurring Spending Pressures

Recurring Spending Pressures	Note	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000
Concessionary Fares	1	158	158	158
Waste Collection	2	69	69	69
Stray Dogs	3	10	10	10
Pension Fund revaluation	4	197	394	591
Shortfall in income projections from fees and charges:	5			
Housing Benefit Admin Grant		44	87	127
Synthetic Football Pitch		0	9	9
Land Charges		53	53	53
Car Parking Charges		82	82	82
Bereavement Services		42	42	42
Total Recurring Spending Pressures		655	904	1,141

Note 1: The proposal is to implement the Government's statutory scheme and this is the estimated cost based on an 18.5% increase in ridership.

Note 2: Potential shortfall in income originally projected following the introduction of revised Waste Collection arrangements.

Note 3: The responsibility of collecting Stray Dogs has transferred from the Police Authorities to Local Authorities. Funding for this scheme now forms part of the RSG settlement.

Note 4: The results of the triennial pension valuation exercise have not yet been received from the County Council but are due shortly. Indications from the County Council anticipate that the increase will be in the region of 1% per annum for the next three years. A full analysis will be provided once the information has been received.

Note 5: The Executive has considered various reports into projected shortfalls in income which have occurred for a variety of reasons. Decisions have been made to attempt to mitigate the shortfalls, and the net impact contained above is the best estimate of the shortfalls for 2008/09 at the present time. There is a remaining risk that the overall position could improve or worsen further, and the position will be monitored carefully throughout the year.

Schedule 4 – Non-Recurring Spending Pressures

Non-Recurring Spending Pressures	Note	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000
Brampton Business Centre/Telecentre	1	40	0	0
Carlisle TIC & Assembly Room	2	14	0	0
Shared Services/Efficiencies	3	100	50	50
Petteril Riverbank Protection work	4	20	0	0
Health and Safety Inspections	5	42	42	42
Draft Travel Plan	6	30	0	0
Customer Contact Centre	6	20	0	0
Waste Collection – Enforcement	7	40	0	0
Carlisle Renaissance	8	50	300	300
Small Scale Community Projects	9	80	0	0
Total Non-Recurring Proposals		436	392	392

Note 1: This pressure relates to a projected shortfall in income in 2008/09. However it is anticipated that the shortfall will be resolved in future years following a fundamental review of the service.

Note 2: Options to address this projected shortfall in income are currently being evaluated and will be reported to a future meeting of the Executive.

Note 3: Earmarked budget to achieve potential efficiency savings as a result of the Shared Services agenda. Progression of this scheme will be subject to further reports and approval of the Executive before the release of any monies will be approved. This also includes a subscription of £16,000 per annum to Connected Cumbria Partnership Strategic Board (CCPSB) to fund the Council's involvement in the Cumbria wide group

Note 4: Survey and investigatory work at River Petteril

Note 5: An additional Health and Safety Enforcement Officer for a three year fixed term contract to enable minimum acceptable standards are met following a recent audit of the Occupational Health and Safety function.

Note 6: Savings identified in the 2007/08 budget process which are now not achievable but which will be progressed for 2009/10.

Note 7: A non-recurring pressure of £40,000 for the continuation of the Waste Enforcement Officer role which will be funded from the WPEG grant (now part of the RSG settlement).

Note 8: The progression of the Carlisle Renaissance Initiative will require additional resources to deliver. The amount included above includes the continuation of the existing funding to 31 March 2011 pending more detailed consideration of future costs by the Executive in January.

Note 9: This is the proposal for the continuation of the schemes for small scale community projects which commenced in 2006/07.

- 2.4 As a consequence of the above, the Executive recommends that the Net Budget Requirement for Council Tax Purposes for 2007/08, with projections to 2009/10, be approved as set out in **Schedule 5** below:

Schedule 5 – Summary Net Budget Requirement for Council Tax Purposes

2007/08 Original £000	2007/08 Revised £000	Summary Net Budget Requirement	2008/09 Budget £000	2009/10 Proj'd £000	2010/11 Proj'd £000
		Recurring Revenue Expenditure:			
		Existing Expenditure(Schedule 1)	17,527	18,318	18,948
		Budget reductions (Schedule 2)	(1,393)	(2,216)	(2,238)
		New Spending pressures (Schedule 3)	655	904	1,141
16,964	16,973	Total Recurring Expenditure	16,789	17,006	17,851
		Non-Recurring Revenue Expenditure			
(279)	742	- Existing Commitments (Schedule 1):	793	324	0
		- Spending pressures (Schedule 4)	436	392	392
0	1,317	- Carry Forward	0	0	0
16,685	19,032	Total Revenue Expenditure	18,018	17,722	18,243
		Less Contributions from Reserves:			
(1,000)	(1,000)	Recurring Commitments (Note 1)			
73	64	- Pay & Workforce Strategy	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
927	936	- Balance	718	788	229
		Sub total	282	(72)	(1,163)
364	(1,974)	Non Recurring Commitments			
0	0	- Existing Commitments (Note 2)	(793)	(324)	0
364	(1,974)	- New Commitments (Schedule 4)	(436)	(392)	(392)
		Sub total	(1,229)	(716)	(392)
16,122	16,122	Total City Council Budget requirement	16,507	16,794	17,080
390	390	Parish Precepts Est. - (Schedule 1)	400	410	420
16,512	16,512	Projected Net Budget Requirement for Council Tax Purposes	16,907	17,204	17,500

Note1: This is the projected recurring budget shortfall for which additional savings will be required. It should be noted that the bulk of the projected shortfall is in relation to the potential impact of the Job Evaluation process and work will continue to identify ways to keep the potential impact within available resources.

Note 2: Non - recurring Revenue commitments arising from existing approved commitments from earlier years are as follows:

Existing Non Recurring Commitment Approvals	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000
Housing Strategy	120	120	0
Carlisle Renaissance Team	340	0	0
Planning Standards Authority	108	49	0
Connected Cumbria Partnership	16	0	0
Capacity Building/ACE/Joint Working/WDP	42	42	0
Synthetic Football Pitch	43	0	0
Slippage from 2006/07	124	113	
Total	793	324	0

- 2.5 As a consequence of the above and having made the appropriate calculations required under Section 32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Executive is putting forward a proposal for an increase in Council Tax for 2007/08 of **3.5%**. This is set out in **Schedule 6** below.

Schedule 6 – Total Funding and Provisional Council Tax Projections

2007/08	Total Funding and Council Tax Impact	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
33,893.11	Estimated Taxbase	33,988.01	34,083.18	34,178.27
£000		£000	£000	£000
16,122	Projected Net Budget Requirement for Council Tax Purposes (Schedule 5):			
390	- City	16,507	16,794	17,080
16,512	- Parishes	400	410	420
	- Total	16,907	17,204	17,500
(6,000)	Funded By:			
(1,453)	- Council Tax Income	(6,227)	(6,463)	(6,708)
(8,658)	- Revenue Support Grant	(1,255)	(10,320)	(10,372)
(11)	- National Domestic Rates Grant	(9,014)	0	0
(390)	- Estimated Council Tax Surplus	(11)	(11)	0
(16,512)	- Parish Precepts	(400)	(410)	(420)
	TOTAL	(16,907)	(17,204)	(17,500)
£177.02	City Council Tax:			
	Band D Council Tax	£183.22	£189.63	£196.27
£5.99	Increase over previous year: £	£6.20	£6.41	£6.64
3.5%	%	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%
	NB:			
	- The projections are <u>Indicative only</u> for 2009/10 and 2010/11.			
	- This <u>excludes</u> the impact of the Parish Council Tax proposals in the rural areas.			

- 2.6 It should be noted that the funding projections in **Schedule 6** are based upon:
- A provisional Government Grant entitlement of £10.269m for 2008/09 with projections for 2009/10 of £10,320 and £10,372 for 2010/11 as announced by the Secretary of State on 6 December 2007.
 - The Council Tax Surplus and Taxbase are currently estimated and final figures will be available in the new year.

SECTION C - CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/08 TO 2010/11

1. REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET 2007/08

1.1 The Executive recommends that the revised 2007/08 Capital Programme be approved at £9.802m compared to the original budget of £8.205m as set out in the report of the Director of Corporate Services CORP60/07. The increase of £1.597m can be summarised as follows:

- New Schemes £1.902m
- Slippage to future years (£0.305m)

2. CAPITAL BUDGET 2007/08 TO 2009/10

2.1 The Executive recommends that the estimated Capital Resources available and proposed Capital Programme for 2008/09 to 2010/11 be approved to be financed and allocated as detailed in **Schedule 7 and 8** below:

Schedule 7 – Estimated Capital Resources

Estimated Resources	Note	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000
Capital Grants:				
• Regional Housing Pot	1	(1,110)	(1,110)	(1,110)
• DFG	2	(226)	(226)	(226)
• General		(20)	0	0
• Slippage from 2006/07		(25)	0	0
Capital Receipts:	3			
• Generated in year – General		(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
• Generated in year – PRTB		(1,100)	(552)	(526)
Capital Contributions		(40)	0	0
TOTAL		(3,521)	(2,888)	(2,862)

Note 1: The funding of supported borrowing has been removed from the RSG allocation and has been replaced by a separate capital grant funded from the Regional Housing Pot. The allocation for 2008/09 has not yet been received and the amounts above are estimated figures.

Note 2: The Disabled Facilities Grant allocation will not be announced until January 2008. The projection is based upon current allocations.

Note 3: The capital receipt projections arise from the sale of land and preserved Right to Buy Receipts. The receipts will be used to support the Council's priorities and in particular sustainable communities and the Housing Strategy. As always the extent to which the Council is meeting its expected capital receipt target will be closely monitored.

Schedule 8 – Proposed Capital Programme

Capital programme	Note	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000
<u>Current Commitments:</u>				
Slippage from 2006/07		74	0	0
Private Sector Housing Investment	1	849	849	849
Major Repairs to Council Property	2	250	250	250
Vehicles and Plant	1/3	129	1,911	255
IT Equipment	1/3	254	283	322
Industrial Estate Maintenance	1	490	215	200
Desk Top Replacement	1	108	108	108
Housing Strategy (5 Year)	2	1,250	400	0
Play Areas	1	50	50	50
Housing Foyer	4	300	0	0
Historic Quarter	1	840	0	0
Total Existing Commitments		4,594	4,066	2,034
<u>New Spending Proposals:</u>				
MUGA & Sports Initiatives	1	105	0	0
Environmental Enhancements	1	160	160	160
Petteril Riverbank Protection Work	1	82	0	0
Hammonds CCTV	1	25	0	0
Adelaide Street Allotment Fencing	1	10	0	0
Caldew/City Centre Flood Defence	1	21	0	0
Kingmoor Nature Reserve	1	40	0	0
Family Hostel Replacement	1	400	0	0
Total New Proposals		843	160	160
TOTAL POTENTIAL PROGRAMME		5,437	4,226	2,194

Note 1: The budgets identified have been earmarked for the schemes shown, but progression with the schemes will be subject to further reports and approval of the Executive before the release of any monies will be approved.

Note 2: Detailed reports have been considered during the budget process and once approved by Council, these schemes can be progressed.

Note 3: The Vehicle, Plant and equipment budget is approved for 2008/09 but for 2009/10 a full report and options appraisal will be prepared for the Executive.

Note 4: The amount of £300,000 is match funding to carry out refurbishment work to the YMCA building at 22 Fisher Street, Carlisle. The Council's contribution is to be funded from the 2006/07 Regional Housing Board grant received and is subject to a further grant application being accepted as detailed in Report DS97/07 which was considered by the Executive 22 October 2007. Feedback is expected in February. A further report will be provided to the March Executive regarding the outcome.

A summary of the estimated resources compared to the proposed programme is set out in **Schedule 9** below:

Schedule 9 – Summary Capital Resource Statement

Summary Programme	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000
Estimated Resources 31 st March 2008	(11,721)	0	0
Less transferred to earmarked reserves	2,000	0	0
	(9,721)		
In year impact:			
Estimated Resources available (Schedule 7)	(3,521)	(2,888)	(2,862)
Proposed Programme (Schedule 8)	5,437	4,226	2,194
Projected (Surplus)/Deficit in Resources	1,916	1,338	(668)
Cumulative year end position			
• Capital Receipts	(7,805)	(6,467)	(7,135)

SECTION D – USABLE RESERVES PROJECTIONS

1. The Executive recommends, as a consequence of Sections A, B and C detailing the Council's Revenue and Capital budgets, the overall use of the Council's usable Reserves as set out in **Schedule 10** below.

Schedule 10 – Usable Reserve Projections

Council Reserves	Note	Actual 31/03/07 £000	Revised 31/03/08 £000	Projected 31/03/09 £000	Projected 31/03/10 £000	Projected 31/03/11 £000
Revenue Reserves						
General Fund Reserve		(3,800)	(3,800)	(3,800)	(3,800)	(3,800)
Projects Reserve	1	(6,641)	(3,791)	(3,405)	(2,477)	(1,314)
Collection Fund		6				
Residents Parking		14				
Building Control		30				
Routledge Reserve		(75)				
Sheepmount		(150)				
Conservation Fund		(191)				
LSVT Warranties		(488)				
Total		(11,295)	(7,591)	(7,205)	(6,277)	(5,114)
Capital Reserves						
Renewals Reserve	2	(1,681)	(1,125)	0	0	0
Capital Receipts		(10,460)	(9,721)	(7,805)	(6,467)	(7,135)
Asset Investment Reserve		(2,060)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)
Lanes Capital Reserve		(266)	(281)	(296)	(311)	(326)
Total		(14,467)	(13,127)	(10,101)	(8,778)	(9,461)
Total available Council Reserves		(25,762)	(20,718)	(17,306)	(15,055)	(14,575)
Other Reserves		(93,910)				
Total Reserves		(119,672)				

Note 1: The movement on the Projects Reserve is as follows:

Balance as at:	Projected Balance £000	In Year Revenue Requirement £000	Transfer from Renewals Reserve £000
31/03/08	(3,791)	1,511	(1,125)
31/03/09	(3,405)	928	0
31/03/10	(2,477)	1,163	0
31/03/11	(1,314)		

Note 2: This reserve is used for the replacement of items of vehicles, plant and general and IT equipment. Reports have been considered recommending this reserve be deleted from 1st April 2008 and the capital and revenue implications are built into the proposals.

SECTION E - PROPOSED BUDGET DISCIPLINE

1. The Council has adopted a 3-year financial strategy as set out in its Medium Term Financial Plan to assist in the integration of financial planning with the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. The current medium term financial projections point to a shortfall in the Council's budgets, which will require additional savings to be identified. In addition, the scope for the Council to continue support for initiatives in future years and to redirect resources to priorities will be dependent on the extent to which the Council is successful in realising and redirecting additional resources. The requirement to identify savings or raise additional income in future years is a continuing pressure facing the Council. In the light of this, the Executive recommends the following Budget Discipline to the Council.
2. In preparation for the 2009/10 Budget Cycle the Executive requests the Town Clerk and Chief Executive to investigate a number of key areas of the Council's work and produce a series of reports throughout 2008/09 for the Executive.
 - The Council's improvement plan will be progressed and will have as one of its major actions, the establishment of a value for money (VFM) methodology which will enable the Council to assess how it is achieving best value across all of its services.
 - Although there is scope to fund the estimated budget deficit from the Projects Reserve in the medium term, this could not be sustained. A strategy for identifying recurring savings within the revenue budget has been drawn up by SMT and the Executive and this strategy will continue to be developed during the coming year.
 - This Strategy will continue to concentrate on the following key areas:
 - Service Improvement Reviews – the financial target for these reviews will be required to achieve a minimum 5% reduction in the gross cost of those services. The Service Improvement Reviews which commenced in 2007/08 and will be completed in 2008/09 cover Community Services, Brampton Business Centre, Central Recharges and Marketing. A programme of review which covers all the Council's services provided and the timescales will be drawn up by March 2008. The reviews will be completed in time to be included early in each annual budget process.
 - Asset review – this will set out clear objectives one of which will be to deliver recurring additional income or recurring reduced costs. It will provide a timetable of deliverables and the impact on services and improvements. A report will be considered early in 2008 with a key focus on issues related to the LAV options.
 - Shared Services – the requirement is to achieve a 3% efficiency savings target via the shared services agenda by the development and delivery of the Shared Services Strategy.
 - To carry out a review of those services which do not fall within the Council's core priorities.
 - The Executive will monitor the development of the Strategy and the achievement of its objectives.

- Using the information gathered from an initial review carried out by Internal Audit in 2004, it is envisaged that further, more detailed, discussions could be undertaken to explore the possibility of new and/or increased trading and charging opportunities for particular services.
3. Members and Officers are reminded that it is essential to maintain a disciplined approach to budgetary matters and as such:
- Supplementary estimates will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
 - Proposals seeking virement should only be approved where the expenditure to be incurred is consistent with policies and priorities agreed by the Council.
4. In order to continue the improvements in the links between financial and strategic planning, the Strategic Planning Group will continue to meet regularly to progress forward planning on these issues.

SECTION F – DRAFT STATUTORY REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

1. As in previous years the Council is required to set its Budget Requirement. However there are a number of matters arising from the introduction of the Local Government Act 2003 (Section 25) that the Council must also consider:
 - (i) The formal advice of the statutory responsible financial officer (which for the City Council is the Director of Corporate Services) on the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides;
 - (ii) The Council has to determine what levels of borrowing, if any, it wishes to make under the new Prudential Code that now governs local authority borrowing.

2. Robustness of the Estimates

Whilst relevant budget holders are responsible for individual budgets and their preparation, all estimates are scrutinised by Financial Services staff, the Senior Management Team and the Strategic Planning Group prior to submission to members.

The Council's revenue and capital budgets are 'joined up' in terms of the cost of the proposed capital programme is reflected in the revenue estimates.

The Council has no history of overspending against budget, indeed, in the past there has tended to be a degree of underspending. Improved budget monitoring and base budget procedures have proven effective in addressing this issue.

There are risks involved in projecting budgets particularly over the medium term and the year-end position will never exactly match the estimated position in any given year. Areas of specific risk in the current three year period under consideration are:

- The Governments recent spending review (CSR07) indicates that Central Government funding of Local Government will be much tighter over the next 3-year period, and indeed beyond this. This has been reflected in the recent grant settlement where the Council was amongst those who received the lowest percentage increase in the country at just 1% in 2008/09 and 0.5% in 2009/10 and 2010/11. Coupled with the requirement to identify 3% cashable efficiencies for redirection to priorities, this will increase the pressure to provide efficiency and improve value for money in the provision of council services including the progression of shared service initiatives.
- A major potential financial implication for the Council for 2007/08 onwards is the financial implications of the Job Evaluation process. Currently the projections include a recurring cost of £1m per annum from 2007/08, although this is considered to be a worst case position. The project is on going and currently is anticipated to come to a conclusion in May 2008. Senior Managers will continue to investigate ways as the project progresses to contain the impact within available resources.

- To improve the accuracy of base budgets and to avoid year end underspending, income budgets have been set at more realistic levels based on usage to date, price increases etc. This does however increase the risk that income budgets may not be achieved as indeed has been experienced in previous years. There is also an increasing significant reliance on Grant Income.
- The budgets as presented include an increase in the concessionary fares scheme, which is an increase on the current scheme. There is however a significant risk that the projections on ridership and other issues have been understated and that the cost to the Council may increase. This position will continue to be monitored closely during 2007/08 and 2008/09.
- The level of interest receipts and return on Treasury Management activities are subject to market rates. Members are advised of this risk every year but clearly actual interest returns are determined by a variety of factors largely outside the Council's control. At over £1.5m, interest receipts are an important element of the Council's budget.
- Central contingencies – there have been no contingency budgets built in to the existing estimates. This means that any unforeseen expenditure that cannot be contained within existing budgets will require a supplementary estimate to cover any costs. There is however sufficient reserve balances to cover such events.
- Benefits estimates – whilst the budgeted net cost of benefits is relatively small it is the product of gross expenditure and income of approximately £26m. Calculation of the budget is also very complex and depends on estimates of a variety of factors in the benefit subsidy calculation. There does remain a risk therefore that the outturn may vary from the budget.

At this stage it should be noted that the current projected revenue deficit still requires substantial savings to be identified to meet the ongoing projected shortfall. This shortfall can be more accurately evaluated once the results of the Job Evaluation process are known. Currently many of the savings proposals are at an early stage of consideration and whether these are robust enough to be included in the final budget proposals will be determined as part of the on going 2008/09 budget process.

With regards to the capital budget, the Council is committed to Carlisle Renaissance and a team has been appointed to assist with the delivery. The funding for this team currently finishes in 2008/09 after which delivery of the project needs to be reconsidered. As part of this budget process specific budgets have been earmarked to assist with the delivery of the project but currently there are limited earmarked budgets for the actual delivery of the transformational projects. There are also potentially significant capital budget requirements arising from other initiatives and ongoing studies which currently have no funding allocations.

Taking the above matters into account it is my opinion that the budget presented for Council approval for 2008/09 is sufficiently robust. However this is subject to (i) regular budget monitoring and the necessary steps being taken to resolve the ongoing projected deficit from 2008/09 i.e. delivering the savings proposals identified and

continuing work to deliver further savings, and (ii) clarifying the requirement for the future capital programme.

3. Adequacy of Reserves

The level and usage of the Council's Reserves is undertaken annually as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Whilst viewed in isolation the Council's Reserves appear healthy, the appropriateness of the level of reserves can only be judged in the context of the Council's longer term plans. The Council's medium term financial projections show that the Council has a significant revenue deficit from 2008/09. The Council's policy on reserves is that wherever possible reserves should not be used to fund recurring expenditure, but that where it is, this should be made explicit and steps taken to address the situation in the following years. The deficit projections must therefore be addressed and the Executive will need to set out in its Budget Discipline how it expects Officers to address the situation in preparing for the 2009/10 budget cycle. Currently £1m for 3 years has been earmarked from reserves to meet the potential cost of the job evaluation project pending identification of further savings. Whilst clearly there is a risk that other savings cannot be identified, the Council has a history of identifying savings in the face of difficult decisions.

It is my opinion that Council Reserves are currently at an appropriate level and form a crucial element in the council's longer-term financial strategy. However steps need to be taken to resolve the ongoing projected deficit from 2008/09 by delivery of savings proposals currently identified and identification of further savings. During the current budget, recommendations have been made on dismantling the Renewals Reserve and transferring remaining balances as appropriate to earmarked or to the Projects Reserve and this will need to be approved by Council.

4. Determination of Borrowing

The new Prudential Accounting regime enables the Council to borrow subject to meeting criteria of affordability. The draft Prudential Indicators have been established and these will be finalised for Council approval once decisions on the overall Capital Programme have been made.

For the period under review it has been recommended that no borrowing will take place due to the level of capital receipts currently being generated with the forward projections also including no prudential borrowing. The capital programme for 2008/09 to 2010/11 is largely funded from capital receipts, particularly from the Preserved Right to Buy Sharing agreement.

There is a risk however in the long-term sustainability of funding the capital programme from a reducing availability of capital receipts over the longer-term and the use of prudential borrowing will be kept under review.

SECTION G – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

BUDGET

- **GROSS** – the total cost of providing the council's services before taking into account income from service related government grants and fees and charges for services.
- **NET** – the Council's gross budget less specific government grants and fees and charges, but before deduction of RSG and other funding from reserves.
- **ORIGINAL BUDGET** – the budget for a financial year approved by the council before the start of the financial year.
- **REVISED BUDGET** – an updated revision of the budget for a financial year.
- **NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR COUNCIL TAX PURPOSES** – the estimated revenue expenditure on general fund services that needs to be financed from the Council Tax after deducting income from fees and charges, certain specific grants and any funding from reserves. It is referred to by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) when deciding the criteria for capping local authority revenue expenditure.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE - Expenditure on the acquisition of a fixed asset or expenditure, which adds to and not merely maintains the value of an existing fixed asset.

CAPITAL RECEIPTS – the proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets. Capital receipts can be used to finance new capital expenditure within rules set down by the government, but they cannot be used to finance revenue expenditure.

CONTINGENCY – money set aside in the budget to meet the cost of unforeseen items of expenditure, or shortfalls in income, and to provide for inflation where this is not included in individual budgets.

COUNCIL TAX – the main source of local taxation to local authorities. Council tax is levied on households within its area by the billing authority and the proceeds are paid into its Collection Fund for distribution to precepting authorities and for use by its own General Fund.

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG) (often referred to as SPECIFIED CAPITAL GRANT (SCG)) – individual government grants towards capital spending on providing disabled adaptations to housing. The DFG grant covers 60% of the DFG expenditure with and Local authorities must meet 40% from its own resources.

FEES AND CHARGES – income raised by charging users of services for the facilities.

GERSHON – each Local Authority must produce an efficiency plan in order to achieve efficiency savings set at 2.5% per annum over a three-year period as determined by the Government.

INTEREST RECEIPTS – the money earned from the investment of surplus cash.

LAV – Local Asset Vehicle

NON-RECURRING EXPENDITURE – items which are in a budget for a set period of time.

PRECEPT – the levy made by precepting authorities on billing authorities, requiring the latter to collect income from council taxpayers on their behalf.

- **PRECEPTING AUTHORITIES** – those authorities which are not billing authorities, ie do not collect the council tax and non-domestic rate. County councils, police authorities and joint authorities are ‘major precepting authorities’ and parish, community and town councils are ‘local precepting authorities’.

RESERVES – amounts set aside in one year to cover expenditure in the future, which all Authorities must maintain as a matter of prudence. Reserves can either earmarked for specific purposes or general.

REVENUE EXPENDITURE – day to day running costs of the Authority, including employee costs, premises costs and supplies and services.

REVENUE SUPPORT GRANT (RSG) – a grant paid by central government to aid local authority services in general, as opposed to specific grants, which may only be used for a specific purpose.

- **NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATE (NNDR)** – paid as part of the RSG, this is a levy on businesses, based on a national rate in the pound set by the government multiplied by the ‘rateable value’ of the premises they occupy. NNDR is collected by billing authorities on behalf of central government and then redistributed among all local authorities and policy authorities on the basis of population. Also known as ‘business rates’, the ‘uniform business rate’ and the ‘non-domestic rate’.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE – an amount, which has been approved by the authority, to allow spending to be increased above the level of provision in the original or revised budget.

TAXBASE – the number of Band D equivalent properties within each Local Authority area used to determine the RSG by the ODPM and to calculate the Council Tax yield by each authority.

VALUE FOR MONEY – a much-used term that describes a service or product that demonstrates a good balance between its cost, quality and usefulness to the customer. A VFM audit takes into account the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of a local authority service, function or activity.

VIREMENT – the permission to spend more on one budget head when this is matched by a corresponding reduction on some other budget head i.e. a switch of resources between budget heads. Virement must be properly authorised by the appropriate committee or by officers under delegated powers.