



East Northamptonshire Council

Policy and Resources Committee - 15 June 2009

Progress of Budget Review Group

Summary

To seek approval for the proposals from the Budget Review Group.

Attachment(s)

None

1. At its meeting on 23 February 2009 the Committee agreed to create a small group of Members and Officers to review, during the current year, the revenue budget for 2010/11 (minute 365 refers). The group consists of Councillors North, Richardson and Glithero, the Chief Executive and the two Executive Directors
2. Several meetings have been held and a number of potential areas for cost reduction are currently being analysed for further consideration by the Budget Review Group.
3. However, there are two revenue items where approval is now sought, following consultation with the Leading Group, to reduce the revenue budgetary provision in 2010/11. The two areas are Historic Building Grants and Community Safety Grants.
4. For a number of years the Council has provided a sum of about £42,000 in its revenue budget to support historic building grants. Most years the level of demand for grants has been much lower, typically around £22,000 - £28,000. However, whilst these sums have been committed and allocated they have not always been drawn on by the applicants and therefore our actual spending each year has been lower than this. The Council is one of the few authorities that still supports such schemes. Unlike other grant provision the Council's contribution is not seen as key in levering in other sources of finance or generating match funding from other bodies. It is therefore proposed to withdraw our Historic Building Grants scheme.
5. The Council agreed in 2003 to provide £50,000 per annum for five years to provide community safety grants in the rural area. This provision was a direct consequence of the Council committing significant investment to CCTV in the town centres. The money has been allocated to provide grants to individual households for security measures and a separate pot to support much wider community initiatives to address local safety concerns, such as street lighting, security measures on recreation grounds, footpaths and so on,. These schemes were often led by the parish councils. The current year 2009/10 should be the last year of funding but the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and hence next year's budget, assumes a continuation with the budget provision beyond the original commitment. Following consultation with the Budget Review Group it is now proposed to withdraw the majority of funding, as originally planned, but retain a sum of £15,000 per annum to help support more targeted help to local communities. Individual households will no longer be eligible for Community Safety Grants.
6. The Budget Review Group has already considered several other areas for reductions in budget provision for 2010/11 and following consultation with the Leading Group has decided not to pursue the ideas further at this stage.
7. It is recommended that the Historic Building Grants Scheme be withdrawn from the 2010/11 budget and that a sum of £15,000 be provided for Community Safety Grants in 2010/11 for community based (not individual household) initiatives.

Implications:					
Corporate Outcomes or Other Policy/Priority/Strategy					
Good Quality of Life	<input type="checkbox"/>	Good Reputation	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Good Value for Money	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	High Quality Service Delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Effective Partnership Working	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strong Community Leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Effective Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	Knowledge of our Customers and Communities	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours			<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other:					
Decision(s) would be outside the budget or policy framework and require full Council approval <input type="checkbox"/>					
Financial	There are no financial implications at this stage				<input type="checkbox"/>
	There will be financial implications – see paragraph 7				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	There is provision within existing budget				<input type="checkbox"/>
	Decisions may give rise to additional expenditure at a later date				<input type="checkbox"/>
	Decisions may have potential for income generation				<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk Management	An assessment has been carried out and there are no material risks				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Material risks exist and these are recorded at Risk Register Reference - inherent risk score - residual risk score -				<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff	There are no additional staffing implications				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Additional staff will be required – see paragraph				<input type="checkbox"/>
Equalities and Human Rights	There will be no impact on equality (race, age, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation) or human rights implications				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	There will be an impact on equality (see categories above) or human rights implications – see paragraph				<input type="checkbox"/>
Legal	Power: Local Government Act 1972 and Local Government Finance Act 2003				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers:					
Person Originating Report: Mark Lovell, Chief Finance Officer. Tel: 01832 742074 malovell@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk					
Date: 22 May 2009					
CFO		MO		CX	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 19)