

## APPENDIX 1

### COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

24<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2005

#### REVENUE BUDGET 2005/06

The Committee was advised that the Department was facing significant cost pressures in the coming year. This coupled with the Service Improvements had resulted in a net increase in the overall level of resources made available to the Department.

#### a) Service Improvements

- i) The main area of growth related to significant improvements in the library services in terms of revenue consequences of the on-going refurbishment and replacement programme; the provision of additional PCs and increased opening hours. Library opening hours were reviewed in respect of new libraries and libraries reopening after refurbishment; in other libraries the position was reviewed in the light of public responses;
- ii) A one-off contribution of £100,000 to the Leicestershire Regiment Museum had been included. Members of all Groups welcomed this.
- iii) Although no additional provision had been made for the Bookfund, the current level of spend remains above the County average.

#### b) Savings

- i) Efficiency Savings of £436,000 were proposed. £200,000 of this amount would be achieved as a result of on-going savings resulting from the restructuring undertaken in the previous year. The remaining £236,000 would be found by reviewing operating costs in some 40 individual budget heads. There would be no adverse impact on frontline services;
- ii) The additional £292,000 savings from operational budgets would be achieved by non allocation of inflation (c£150,000) and by asking service managers to look critically at their operational budgets. No single area of the service was substantially affected. Examples cited included reductions in expenditure on furniture and fittings

(£10,000), delaying replacement of scientific equipment (£10,000), reducing the range of printed promotional materials in the light of the development of the County Council website (£8,000) etc. This exercise would potentially have a marginal impact on service delivery. There would be no staffing implications as a result of these savings. An assurance was also given that the action to be taken in relation to the County Analyst Service would have no impact on public safety;

- iii) The proposed 3.5 fte staff reduction would be achieved by deleting 1.5 posts currently vacant in the trading standards service, not recruiting to a vacant planning officer post (this should be seen in the context of the Department no longer needing to provide planning services for Rutland Council) and not recruiting to a post in Environmental Management which was likely to become vacant;
- iv) Increased income would contribute £60,000. The Department had lobbied the Government for a larger share of the Aggregates Levy but had not been successful. The criteria for qualifying for grants from the Aggregates Levy had recently been modified and a report on this would be submitted to a future meeting.

c) Other Matters

- i) No changes were proposed to the Shire Grants budget;
- ii) The growth bid of £35,000 for an Equalities Officer had been withdrawn. Discussions were being held with a view to the Department utilising corporate resources to help with progressing to Level 3 of the Equalities Standard. The Committee would be advised if there were insufficient resources available and progress towards achieving the target was at risk

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/06 AND 2007/08**

The Committee was advised that the new starts within the capital programme for 2005/06 amounted to £1.8million. This was an increase on the £1.6million in 2004/05 and the £0.8million in 2003/04. This programme had to be financed from capital receipts, specific grants and for the first time prudential borrowing.

In response to questions the Committee was further advised:-

- i) that all Libraries in the replacement programme would be designed to be DDA compliant. In addition the Department would be able to bid for funding from the Corporate DDA Capital programme and utilise revenue funding for schemes which would cost less than £500; new equipment was

- being installed in all community services buildings to assist those with a hearing impairment;
- ii) The lease on the Library Services for Education facility at Rothley expires in 2007 and provision had been made in the capital programme with a view to relocating in 2007;
  - iii) The storage requirements of the Records Office had been examined and the conclusion reached was that the existing facility would be adequate until 2008. A report on this matter would be submitted to the Committee shortly.

### **EXTERNAL FUNDING**

The Committee was advised that the Department had been successful in obtaining funding of £990,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for further developing the Bosworth Battlefield Visitors Centre. The total sum of external funding generated was £2,244,930. Members congratulated officers on this achievement.

### **DECISION**

That the proposed Revenue Budget 2005/06 and Capital Programme 2005/06 and 2007//08 be noted and the comments now made be forwarded to the Scrutiny Commission.