

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FINANCE AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL
14TH DECEMBER 2005

1. RE: INCOME SERVICE OPTIONS

At its meeting on the 14th December 2005 the Panel made the following recommendation regarding Income Service Options:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

The Income Service Options (as set out in pages 83 - 112 of the Financial Strategy* 2006-2009) be approved.

(*Contained in the Blue Budget Book previously circulated)

2. RE : NOISE NUISANCE

Following the referral from the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 9th November 2005, Members of the Finance and Corporate Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel considered a briefing paper from the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager regarding noise nuisance.

The Environmental Health and Licensing Manager explained that the Council could not afford to provide twenty-four hour cover and that the Council received an average of 425 complaints per year and approximately half a dozen of these were real emergencies.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11.1. (1)

The Council uses Remote Recording Devices, which enable complainants to record any noise. The recordings are then analysed to decide how great the noise nuisance is. Unfortunately, there is often a five or six week waiting list for the equipment. If the Council had more Remote Recording Devices, it would not need to employ more staff

Members felt that an increase in staff was not necessary but that the period of time to wait for equipment was too long and therefore felt that the Council should provide more funding for new equipment.

RECOMMENDED to the Cabinet:

The funding of new remote recording equipment be considered.

3. RE: REVIEW OF BASE BUDGET (2005/06)

At its meeting on Wednesday 14th December the Finance and Corporate Affairs Policy and Scrutiny Panel considered the attached table detailing the outcome of the Budget Review Group's consideration of the Base Budget 2005/06 and made the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

That the key budget components listed in the attached table, be accorded the priorities indicated.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

OUTCOMES OF BUDGET REVIEW GROUP MEETINGS:

Key Budget Components	Growth Pressures: National / Regional Priorities	Gershon Efficiency Opportunities *	Scope for Improvement / Reduction in Service Level	Recom. Priority (H/M/L/N)**
<p>1. CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL (11.05.05) (Budget Book Ref. A290)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National - new Government scheme from April 2006. (May not be fully funded through RSG). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distribution of passes / SMART cards County-wide shared service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved service level beyond the new Government scheme will be subject to further scrutiny. Task and Finish Group undertaking review reporting back to Finance and Corporate Affairs Panel on 25th October 2005. 	<p>High (basic Scheme)</p> <p>Medium (for improvements)</p>
<p>2. COMMITTEE SECTION ADMINISTRATION (25.05.05) (Budget Book Ref. P137 and A350)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging/ developing scrutiny function introduced by the Local Government Act 2000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The use of new technology – CAIRO system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved support for the Scrutiny function. *** 	<p>High</p>

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11.1. (1)

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3. SPU ADMINISTRATION (08.06.05) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive's Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working & community leadership (ESEWeB) • Civil Contingency duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Executive's line management responsibilities (SPU) 		High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Improvement Agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CPA & Improvement Planning – Best Value – Performance Management – External Audit & Inspection Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity-building – Member development 		High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in working and funding of services through partnerships, e.g. Wyre Forest matters • Local Area Agreements (LAAs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared services – possibility of Gov Office (GOWM) funding for LAA secretariat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on strategic partnerships making the greatest contribution to both Community Strategies 	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher profile, e.g. ASBOs, ARZs, Neighbourhood Wardens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible merger of 'northern' partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible merger of 'northern' partnerships 	High

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E-Government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National – Implementing Electronic Government programme Local – growth in electronic working, including website / intranet development & Worcs Hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worcs Hub – improved customer service & possible future ‘back office’ savings Continued growth in electronic service delivery 		Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom of Information Act – requests for information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		Medium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPA Improvement Plan – communication and consultation with communities to increase public awareness of services and standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint County / District publication, e.g. C Tax leaflet; Newsywe; marketing tourism 		High
<p>4. HIGHWAYS (22.06.05)</p> <p>Street Furniture & Nameplates (Budget Book Ref. A150)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A statutory responsibility of the Council Pressure on budget due partly to increased rural occupation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major expenditure on materials and external contractors, work awarded on quotations Procurement Practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget insufficient to meet existing demand, work undertaken on a priority basis 	High
<p>General Cleansing (Budget Book Ref.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Protection Act 1990, Wyre Forest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards are improving in relation to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoning Plan introduced to improve service 	High

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A155)	District Council is the principal litter authority	BV199.	delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management team also supervise street nameplates, bus shelters and car parks' maintenance • Service scrutinised in 2004/05 – recommendations made to Cabinet 	
Maintenance of Verges Budget Book Ref. A160)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements to enhance the service beyond the funding provided by the HPU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope for continued partnership working with the HPU and WFCH. • Scope for continued efficiency due to integration with Parks & Open Spaces workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued assessment of the needs of the service undertaken and efficiency looked for in the use of resources, both men and plant 	High
Residual Function (Budget Book Ref. A165)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary road closure orders for public events Statutory function. • Bus Quality Partnership, Cycle Forum & HPU, partnerships delivering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited scope for electronic service delivery of applications for temporary road closures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to move this budget heading from Cultural, Leisure & Commercial Services to Planning, Health & Environment for greater 	Medium

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	national priority of meeting local transport needs more effectively		budget monitoring	
5. STREET MARKET (TEMP) (06.07.05) (Budget Ref A020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local – improvement needed (poor perceived quality of appearance and range of goods on sale) • More themed markets, e.g. farmers markets, French market • National – decline in demand / popularity • Competition from discount stores & car-boot sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to externalise service (improve quality for same cost) • Reallocation of resultant savings in salaries to improve services (salary allocation to be transferred within Cultural, Leisure & Commercial Services to Estate Management. • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discretionary service – but a requirement to manage the local Markets Charter administration • Task and Finish Group recommendation agreed by Cabinet to externalise street market function. 	Medium
6. INDUSTRIAL ESTATES AND OTHER PROPERTY (20.07.05) Rushock Ind Est (Budget Book Ref. A240)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not reviewed - subject to separate review process 			

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Other Ind Est's (Budget Book Ref. A245)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not reviewed - subject to separate review process 			
Hoobrook Enterprise Centre (Budget Book Ref. A250)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not reviewed - subject to separate review process 			
Other Property (Budget Book Ref. A255)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimise the cost of ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential to review rents, or dispose of unwanted, non commercial, non strategic property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of the relationship between Income generated and the asset value of each property is to be undertaken to establish where concessionary rents have been set, and may be reviewed. 	Medium

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<p>7. PLAY LEADERSHIP (10.08.05)</p> <p>Budget Book reference A040</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After School Clubs – helps working parents, single parents, etc. • Summer/Easter holiday playschemes • Quality of life issues • Diversionary activities • Providing play opportunities, development of young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal review currently under way on holiday provision • Consider greater partnership working with other providers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discretionary service • Unpopular with public if withdrawn 	<p align="center">High</p>
<p>8. PARKS & OPEN SPACES (24.08.05)</p> <p>PO45 & A125</p> <p>Habberley Valley</p> <p>Parks & Open Spaces' Maintenance</p> <p>Nature Reserves</p> <p>Broadwaters Mill</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community wellbeing • Quality of life • Leisure & Recreation • Cultural activities • Liveability • Tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued efficiency and effectiveness by working with other organisations relating to the maintenance of trees and woodland • Continue seeking grants to improve facilities and the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to tender for work from other organisations, i.e. schools to reduce WFDC costs • Continue to work closely with other Sections within Cultural, Leisure & Commercial 	<p align="center">Medium</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural strategy • Play & Sports development • Vandalism 	environment within Parks & Open Spaces, i.e. Heritage Lottery Fund	Services to optimise efficiency, i.e. Streetscene and car parks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise the integral role that these facilities play in community life and obtain best value from the natural environment 	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for Green Flag status for Brinton park and QEII Gardens, draft management plans for facilities • Maintain high occupancy rate of allotment users • Maintain high satisfaction ratings for play areas and paddling pools 	

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<p>9. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES (07.09.05)</p> <p>PO101 and A025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of facilities refurbished as part of a Capital Building Maintenance Programme, debate exists about the need for additional facilities at a local level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service market tested 2005, together with Building Cleaning. The tenders exceeded the Council's budget provision • In-house team required to improve service standards at nil additional cost • Management asked to examine the benefits of geographical working • The Commercial Services Policy and Scrutiny Panel was requested to investigate a working partnership with the public or private sector to cover the cleaning of public conveniences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service is to be reviewed as part of the Commercial Services Scrutiny Panel Work Programme in 2005/06 	<p style="text-align: center;">High</p>
<p>10. COMMUNITY BASED ACTIVITIES (21.09.05)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of life issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget small and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discretionary service but 	<p style="text-align: center;">Medium</p>

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Budget Book reference A135	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits tourists – economic development; brings trade into town centre, car park income, etc. • Enhances streetscene – 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> considered value for money • No opportunities for savings 	involves many partners	
11.SPU GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (05.10.05) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA 2000 – power to promote economic wellbeing of District • Sub Regional (GOWM & AWM) & local priority • Opportunity for Stourport Road Employment Corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with AWM and County Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Sugar site: case for “economic intervention” to bring it forward • Key Commitment 2005/06 	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising and promotion • Local Priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake joint promotions with partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion and marketing is required if area is to compete for higher value jobs and skills 	Medium

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centre Regeneration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley town centres • Local Priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Opportunity Bewdley, Stourport Forward & Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership on key projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Centres are part of the Key Commitments 2005/06 	High
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership Working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSP's are national and local priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership under LAA's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on Horsefair area through LAA 	High

* Gershon = 'same for less' or 'more for the same / less'. It does not include cuts in service levels.

** H - High Priority (Statutory function; inescapable commitments; National/Regional/Local Priority)
M - Medium Priority (Desirable but not essential)
L - Low Priority (Programme for future years; consider against other funding sources, (e.g. capital, grants)
N - Non Priority (Duplication by other providers; no evidence of significant local need)

*** ***On 25th May 2005, the Budget Review Group agreed that this was a high priority and made recommendations for another position within the Committee Section to provide support for the Scrutiny function. Recommendations for an extra post were agreed at Cabinet on 30th June 2005.***