

Overview & Scrutiny Budget Consultation 2015/16

Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 26th January, 2015

Section	Issue/Question	Response
GENERAL COMMENTS		
	The Leader and Chief Executive were thanked for the openness and public assurance which had characterised the budget process this year.	Acknowledged.
	What provision has been made for lower inflation in the light of reduced fuel costs?	This was discussed at CRO&SC on Thursday. Non- standard inflation doesn't just include fuel and energy, it also contains food costs. We will be looking at this further, on a risk based approach.
COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE		
	Will the cost savings from the management restructuring be set against the workforce efficiencies which have previously been reported to CRO&SC?	No: these are separate and will be retained within the portfolio.
	The closure of Mold TIC is a concern as there is not yet a Connects facility in Mold, which is a visited because of Moel Fammau, Loggerheads, the market. Could this be reconsidered?	The concerns are understood: new tourist information is being produced and the website is being improved to provide more and better information.
	Who will manage the Destination Flintshire website in future? Could an App for tourism be developed?	There is a meeting with the Flintshire Tourism committee scheduled to discuss this. An app is currently being developed.

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	There is a lack of tourism information for the disabled.	This concern will be discussed with Flintshire Tourism.
	Restructuring process costs	Exit costs for VR and EVR, vacant posts being deleted.
	Comment on the proposal for merging a senior regeneration manager post with one from housing, when the latter is funded from capital	One is capital funded, one revenue and this is reflected in the projected £22k saving.
PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT		
	With the cessation of the out of hour's dog service, could Streetscene provide advice?	We will ensure that the Streetscene service is able to advise on this. The Police would still deal with dangerous dogs.
	When will more be known about the staffing collaboration with Wrexham CBC? There are concerns if the contaminated land officer post is not proceeded with.	There isn't a timescale, but discussions are ongoing. If this isn't practical, we will look at addressing this ourselves, possibly on a .5 contract basis. For specialist posts, there are a lot of ongoing discussions with Wrexham. We are confident that we will be able to proceed on this.
	Can the pest control rates be 'affordable'?	The fees will reflect rates charged by the private sector, but also recognise the need for the service level to offer value for money. 80% of our calls are on a concession basis. We are looking at neighbouring authorities' charging policies and will need to discuss rates for our Housing tenants.

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	How will an Alternative Delivery model for work within drainage contribute?	We currently carry out discretionary work and will concentrate on statutory work.
	Are all of the units at Greenfield Business Centre occupied?	The Chief Officer (Planning & Environment) said that an answer can be provided for Friday's CROSC meeting.
	The loss of planning enforcement officers is a cause for concern.	The only loss is of a team leader: with the introduction of area planning teams covering major and minor applications and enforcement, the service should improve. This is a responsive approach to providing a better service.
STREETSCENE & TRANSPORTATION		
	Is the B42 bus service affected by the proposals?	An answer will be provided outside the meeting.
	Removal of the Demand responsive transport service. The need to ensure connection to Chester and to railway stations	A review of subsidised bus routes is being carried out.
	Will the HRCs which are retained have longer opening hours?	Any changes to the operating arrangements for the HRCs would be a change in policy which will need to come back to the committee for consultation.

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	Should those HRCs which are retained be those which have the largest tonnage rather than optimal accessibility?	Those HRC s which are most accessible tend to be those with greatest tonnage. Evidence has shown that the removal of HRCs does not make people fly tip. There will be a new pricing structure for the collection of bulky items from households.
	Charge hands for each refuse collection round	<p>Each refuse collection vehicle will have a charge hand who will be responsible for 'signing off' that a street has been left tidy and that all of the refuse receptacles have been returned from whence they were collected. This will eradicate 'missed collections'.</p> <p>For Streetscene, there will be area based chargehands.</p>
	Sunday refuse collection	Concerns are acknowledged. There will need to be a round review which will come back to the committee
	Food waste collection bags	It has never been the intention to discontinue the delivery service.
	Side Waste and bin capacity	<p>The discontinuation of side waste collection may be considered for future years as a change in policy, but is not a part of current proposals.</p> <p>The current bins were purchased with a Welsh Government grant which it is unlikely to repeat.</p>

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		There is a concern that providing larger bins discourages recycling, which has an impact on landfill use and thus our costs.
	Loss of Streetscene roles: concern that staff who carry out tree trimming in the winter are reassigned to gritting	Arboricultural skills are needed and will be retained within the workforce.
	Mold Bus Station building	The future use of this building will be reviewed as part of the wider Asset Strategy. It is hoped that Mold Bus Station can be developed as a transport hub.
	Bus shelters	Some of these, especially in rural areas are already maintained by town and community councils. Discussions are being held with Town and Community councils.
	Car park charging	Different communities will have different needs - short (possibly with a free element) and long stay facilities - and this will need to be discussed further with the committee. A report will come to the committee at its March meeting and then go to Cabinet in April. The traffic regulation orders will need to be looked at to prevent an increase in on street parking to avoid charges. The income from car parks is ring fenced to our transport related costs.

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	Part night lighting	This will only be on a risk basis, in areas such as industrial estates – Dock Road in Connah’s Quay and Station Road in Sandycroft cited as examples.
	Street light failure and service standards.	New service standards will need to be established and the committee will be consulted.
	2 nd brown bin collection charging. Does the £14 which was originally charged mean that we have an obligation to provide the service, and can those who do not want to retain the 2 nd brown bin give it back to the Council?	The existing records are being updated and there will be a fixed charge for each extra bin. More details will need to be provided to the committee.
	Grass cutting on visibility splays	Concern regarding how realistic this is. Steve Jones to discuss with Cllr Carolyn Thomas outside the meeting.
	Zero tolerance on littering.	We want to reduce reactive cleaning through a zero tolerance approach. There will be publicity and a ‘yellow card’ approach, before fining. There is to be a programme for enforcement.
.	Winter road maintenance standards. Some priority 2 routes will need gritting to allow access to priority 1 routes	Flintshire’s standards are noticeably higher than adjoining authorities and a revised policy will be brought back to the committee.

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	Cessation of trade waste collections	New approach will be to 'sign post' private sector service providers. Facilities such as churches and community centres may become part of domestic collections.
	There was a reference to staff working overtime: wasn't this changed with Single Status?	This was covered by the Part 3 negotiations for Single Status. Overtime is still payable outside the normal working day, once employees have worked over their contracted 37 hours. There are premium payments for night working.