

Report to: Cabinet

Subject: General Fund Revenue Budget and Service Plan 2007/08

Date: 15 February 2007

Author: Head of Finance

## 1. <u>PURPOSE OF REPORT</u>

1.1 This report presents the General Fund Revenue Budget and Service Plan for 2007/08 for approval.

### 2. PROCESS

- 2.1 Under the Council's constitution, the Cabinet makes its final performance plan and budget proposals after consideration of the comments made by the Scrutiny Committees in respect of the draft performance plan and budget. The draft performance plan and budget was presented to the respective Scrutiny Committees on 22, 23 and 25 January 2007 and comments made are included in paragraph 5.2.2.
- 2.2 Statutory consultation with business rate payers is currently being undertaken and any responses received will be presented at the meeting.
- 2.3 The final budget and performance plan proposals determined by Cabinet will be considered at the Council Budget meeting on 1 March 2007. The Borough Council has a statutory responsibility to determine its council tax by 10th March.
- 2.4 The Council has developed its Strategic Corporate Plan 2005-2008, setting out its Key Aims and Key Improvement Plans. This incorporates the statutory requirements for a Best Value Performance Plan. The Corporate Plan also incorporates the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

## 3. BACKGROUND

## 3.1 Key Aims

Budget and service planning processes have been combined. This represents good practice and has been acknowledged as such by the Audit Commission.

Proposals for service developments have been determined in line with the Council's Priorities for Improvement and Other Improvement Plans:

### Priorities For Improvement

- Improve Community Safety
- Develop facilities, activities and a safe environment for children and young people
- Enhance the physical environment of the Borough

### Other Improvement Plans

The Council is fully committed to addressing national, regional and sub-regional priorities, and to improving its support services to ensure that priority issues are addressed efficiently and effectively. The priority desired outcomes are identified as:

- Continued provision of good quality, well managed social rented housing
- An increase in the proportion of waste recycled, and reduced amount of waste generated.
- Local services that are more accessible and customer friendly
- Residents who are informed about the Council and its work and who participate in civic and community activity.
- Efficient and effective support services.

### 3.2 Improvement Tasks

Improvement Tasks represent the most significant activity the council proposes to carry out during the year to ensure continuous improvement. Most represent "one-off" developmental activities – but some are ongoing activities critical to overall improvement.

Responsibility for delivering Improvement Tasks is allocated to appropriate

levels of management within the organisation – lead officers are identified in each table of Improvement Tasks in the document.

Performance indicators are used to measure and target improvements to performance against the Council's ongoing responsibilities.

As with Improvement Tasks, responsibility for delivering against performance indicator targets is allocated to appropriate levels of management within the organisation – lead officers are identified in each table of performance indicators in the document.

The Budget and Service Plan document is the source document for annual departmental service plans, which include relevant Improvement Tasks and performance indicators. Corporate Key Tasks are allocated to appropriate lead officers.

### 4. PROPOSED GENERAL FUND BUDGETS AND SERVICE PLAN 2007/08

- 4.1 The Council's overarching Financial Strategy sets out the framework for overall financial control and administration for the Council. It also details how individual items such as Central Government Funding, Taxation levels, Resource Development Bids Scoring Methodology etc. impact on the annual budget and this has been taken into account in presenting this annual budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Summary.
- 4.2 In respect of Central Government Funding, Cabinet received a report on 7 December 2006 showing the Council's Provisional Revenue Support Grant of £8.668m 2007/08. The Final Revenue Support Grant Settlement figures are now available and these confirm the Provisional figure of £8.668m.
- 4.3 In developing a budget proposal, assumptions on the core budget have to be made and the various assumptions in respect of inflation and technical changes are shown at Appendix 1. These have been included in both the annual budget and MTFP calculations.
- 4.4 The Council is also currently considering its options in respect of the management of Council Housing Stock and a final decision is expected soon. The General Fund estimates make provision for the New Landlord costs of LSVT which are expected to have a neutral impact on the budget being funded by a contribution from New Charter and repayment of a loan by the new landlord. These estimates have been calculated on the best information available at the present time and may be subject to change.
- 4.5 The tables below highlight the main areas of increased expenditure and additional efficiencies:

## Major Budget Variances 2007/08

Item	Budget Variance 2007/08 £
Premises Expenses – mainly Utilities/NNDR	362,000
Elections	124,000
Planning Core Strategy – Examination Costs	70,000
Planning Contingency Budget	(75,000)
Planning Fees	(48,000)
Concessionary Fares:	
<ul> <li>operator inflation</li> </ul>	88,000
<ul> <li>travel pattern changes</li> </ul>	50,000
Council Tax Benefits/Rent All/Rent Rebates	89,000
Insurance Provision – softer insurance mkt	(25,000)
Housing General Fund LSVT Budget	(300,000)
Housing – Reduced Govt Grant Concrete Houses	111,000
Leisure – DNA Income	(95,000)
Deferral of Car Park Charging (MTFP impact)	138,000 net
Waste Management/Landscape Services	121,000 net

## Estimated Efficiency Savings 2007/08

Item	Est Efficiency for 07/08 in 06/07 MTFP £	Efficiency in 07/08 Core Budget £
Procurement of Goods and Services at Constant Prices	120,000	150,000
IT Systems Replacement ongoing revenue costs	110,000	115,000
Implementation New Creditors System – Staffing Savings	0	20,000
IT Hardware Replacement Fund – improved procurement prices	0	30,000
Waste Collection - Entec Efficiency – delayed implementation until 2008/09	38,000	0
Procurement Food/Drink Vending & Bar Contract Prices	0	32,000
Prudent Treasury Management	0	104,000
Other	2,000	2,000
Total reductions in base budget	270,000	453,000

Many of the above items will feature in the Council's Annual Efficiency Statements that are required as part of the "Gershon" agenda.

#### 4.6 Fees and charges

Discretionary fees and charges have been increased by 5% although specific charges will be at the discretion of individual portfolio holders provided that the overall level of increase is achieved. Changes in expected volumes of customers, both upwards and downward have also been anticipated, again in line with market expectations.

### 5. PROPOSED GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2007/08

5.1 The following table summarises the proposed General Fund Budget for 2007/08. The detailed budgets together with performance plans are presented in Appendix 2. The major variances between the original estimate for 2006/07 and the estimate for 2007/08 are analysed by Portfolio at Appendix 3.

Portfolio	2006/07 Original £	2007/08 Estimate £	Variance £
	~	-	~
Leader	2,798,300	2,594,500	(203,800)
Agenda 21, Crime & Community Development	1,386,300	1,404,500	18,200
E-government & Member Services	0	0	0
Development & Economic Regeneration	362,200	344,200	(18,000)
Direct Services	4,964,700	5,139,300	174,600
Housing General Fund	980,700	919,500	(61,200)
Leisure Services	2,894,500	2,557,800	(336,700)
Finance	13,700	1,331,900	1,318,200
Total	13,400,400	14,291,700	891,300

#### General Fund Budget Summary 2007/08

## 5.2 Proposed Resource Developments 2007/08

5.2.1 On 11 January 2007, Cabinet approved the list of 2007/08 Resource Development Bids, detailed in the table below, for referral to Scrutiny Committees. These represent those schemes scoring above 39 points using the Council's approved methodology and they are considered to be affordable given the financial settlement and the Medium Term Financial Plan. The approved methodology ranks schemes in accordance with the level of contribution made towards the achievement of the Council's Priorities and Improvement Plans. These schemes have now been included in the budget summarised above and at Appendix 2. These schemes have been incorporated into the schedules of improvement tasks where they represent funding for a one-off improvement project. For completeness the full set of Revenue Resource Development Bids is shown at Appendix 4.

## General Fund Revenue Resource Development Bids 2007/08 (above 39 points)

DESCRIPTION	Ref	2007/08 Net Revenue Bid	2008/09 Net Revenue Bid	2009/10 Net Revenue Bid	2010/11 Net Revenue Bid	2011/12 Net Revenue Bid	TOTAL SCORE
SCHEMES ABOVE 39 POINTS		£	£	£	£	£	
Community Safety							
Sanctuary - Domestic Violence Security South Notts Home Improvement	HR2	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	45.00
Agency	HR8	39,500	29,000	29,000	29,000	29,000	44.00
South Notts Handy Person Service	HR7	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	39.50
		65,500	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	
Young People Changing Lifestyles Action Plan							
Delivery	LR10	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	61.00
Gedling Green Exercise Project	LR19	10,000	10,000	10,000	0	0	44.00
		30,000	30,000	30,000	20,000	20,000	
<u>Other Key Improvement Plans</u>							
Project Officer - First Lets Team	HR6	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	41.50
		9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	
Business Case							
Environmental Health Officer (net nil cost bid)	P&ER4	0	0	0	0	0	40.00
		0	0		0	0	40.00
		0	0	0	0	0	
Total Schemes Added to Budget		104,500	94,000	94,000	84,000	84,000	

5.2.2 Scrutiny Committees resolved to make the following recommendations to Cabinet on the proposed Resource Developments and Members may wish to consider these in making proposals to Council in March:

## **Resources and Management Scrutiny Committee**

i. That Cabinet consider directing more resources to the development of sustainable energy sources within the Council's operational buildings. These resources should allow for both the investigation and implementation of sustainable measures that have an overall cost benefit.

ii. That in the next review of the Council's priorities sustainability should feature as a specific area.

## Services Scrutiny Committee

i. That they fund the resources necessary to meet the previous recommendations of the Committee on sustainable energy objectives.

ii. That sustainability should feature heavily in the methodology of scoring for the selection of Resource Development Bids.

## **Community and Quality of Life Scrutiny Committee**

i. To reconsider its decision on the need for additional resources for scrutiny.

ii. That this Committee regret the decision made not to proceed with car parking charges which has led to a deficit on balances which are needed to support the revenue budgets.

### 5.2.3 <u>Revenue Implications of Capital Programme</u>

The revenue implications i.e. ongoing running costs, of the proposed 2007/08 Capital Resource Development Bids are detailed in Appendix 5 along with the estimate of costs in the medium term. These costs are included in the General Fund Revenue Estimate summarised in paragraph 5.1 above.

## 5.2.4 Financing of Capital Programme

As detailed in the Capital Programme Report, an earlier item on this agenda, it is proposed that borrowing be undertaken to finance part of the capital programme in 2007/08 and 2009/10. Borrowing has an impact on the revenue budget in terms of interest costs and principal repayment and this is reflected in the General Fund Revenue Estimate summarised in paragraph 5.1 above and the medium term financial plan.

## 6. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

- 6.1 The following table identifies the impact of <u>all</u> the options that are proposed in this report:
  - i) The incremental increase in base revenue expenditure from 2006/07.
  - ii) Fees and charges to be increased by an average 5%.
  - iii) Revenue Resource Developments 2007/08 totalling £104,500.
  - iv) The ongoing revenue implications of Capital Resource Developments 2007/2008 totalling £14,800 (Appendix 5).
  - v) Anticipated cost of borrowing to finance the capital programme for 2007/2008-2011/12.
  - vi) The achievement of the efficiency savings in 2007/2008 (para 4 above).
  - vii) An increase in Council Tax of 3.0% for 2007/2008 giving a Band D Tax of £135.12 (previously £131.18).

## MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2007/08 TO 2011/12 HIGH LEVEL SUMMARY

	2007/08 £	2008/09 £	2009/10 £	2010/11 £	2011/12 £
Total Projected Expenditure	14,291,700	14,953,500	14,429,300	15,518,300	16,028,200
Less: Amount (from)/to Balances	(627,700)	(890,500)	79,800	(612,400)	(714,200)
Net Budget Requirement	13,664,000	14,063,000	14,509,100	14,905,900	15,314,000
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Expected balances at year end	2,042,000	1,821,500	1,901,300	1,288,800	574,600
Required balance (7.5% projected expenditure)	1,071,900	1,121,500	1,082,200	1,163,900	1,202,100
(Surplus)/Deficit on required balances	(970,100)	(700,000)	(819,100)	(124,900)	627,500
Net Budget Requirement	13,664,000	14,063,000	14,509,100	14,905,900	15,314,000
Less: Net External Support	8,668,400	8,863,500	9,062,900	9,266,800	9,475,300
Collection Fund Deficits	(83,900)	(60,000)	0	0	0
Required Council Tax Yield	5,079,500	5,259,500	5,446,200	5,639,100	5,838,700
<b>-</b>					
Council Tax level	£135.12	£139.17	£143.35	£147.65	£152.08

Percentage Council Tax increase	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%	3.00%

- 6.2 The implementation of the Local Government Act 2003, which has introduced new requirements for the Council's Head of Finance to comment on the robustness of the Council's estimates, and the need to look at the medium term (3 years) in order to produce the required indicators as detailed in the Prudential Code, means great emphasis needs to be placed on the Council's medium term financial planning. Although an absolute requirement to look over three years is required, it is considered good practice to look over as long a period as is reasonable. This Council has a history of producing a medium term financial plan over a 5 year horizon and this is still considered the appropriate period for this Authority.
- 6.3 The Council Taxpayer has to meet the difference between the planned expenditure and the Government grant receivable after the use of any

balances are taken into account. It is this difference that is used to calculate individual Council Tax bills for 2007/08.

## 7. FINANCIAL RISK ISSUES

- 7.1 A minimum balance of 7.5% of total projected net expenditure on the General Fund is required in accordance with the Council's approved Financial Strategy. This requires the balance to be £1,071,900 for 2007/08. The external Auditor regards this level of balance on the General Fund to be satisfactory. It is also appropriate to maintain this level of balances to reflect uncertainties in the financial process in the medium term.
- 7.2 The surplus/deficit on balances in the above table shows amounts above/below the recommended minimum general fund balance in any one year. Current spending plans show that surpluses initially grow but reduce quickly moving to a deficit position by 2011/2012 dropping below the required 7.5% of total expenditure to 3.6%. Underlying this is an annual deficit between the amount of income expected when compared to anticipated expenditure. Although predictions show that this can be accommodated within the four year horizon, further adjustments are required to rectify this core imbalance.
- 7.3 The forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 2007, which covers the period 2008/09 2010/11, means current projections of future external grant are more uncertain as it is expected that the CSR will anticipate a year on year 3% cashable efficiency saving being achieved. Financial modelling shows that the long term imbalance in the budget can be managed with increases in council tax above 3% but below the current 5% capping level. The extent to which Members will be required to maximise council tax increases will depend upon levels of efficiencies and new income generating initiatives e.g. car park charging.
- 7.4 The Authority continues to increase the amount of activities undertaken in association with a variety of partners. This requires reliance on partnership funding and/or the delivery of integrated programmes, e.g. the financial link between the Council's investment in recycling and the development of a local Material Recycling Facility, in order to satisfactorily deliver on time and within budget.
- 7.5 In April 2008 Central Government intends to introduce a national concession for free bus travel. The principal responsibility for service delivery and subsequent level of funding has not yet been determined and this could see a change in a service which currently costs Gedling approximately £1m. A recent review of the current free travel scheme operating in Nottinghamshire shows that the Gedling contribution to the Nottinghamshire Concessionary

Fares partnership would increase by as much as £200,000 per annum in 2008/09 if existing service level arrangements were to stay in place. This could lead to pressure either on the budget or the need to reduce the current concessionary fares provision.

## 8. <u>COUNCIL TAX</u>

The council tax for a band D property for 2006/07 is £131.18. The level of council tax for 2007/08 depends on the extent of service developments and financial risk issues that the Council decides to provide for in the budget for next year. For illustration, an increase in council tax by 1% provides additional funding of  $\pounds$ 50,000.

## 9. <u>RECOMMENDATION</u>

Cabinet are asked recommend to Council on 1 March 2007 a Council Tax increase of 3% to balance the financing of a Net Budget Requirement of £13,664,000 in 2007/08.

### BASE BUDGET 2007/08

#### 1. <u>Central Government Funding</u>

The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2007/08 shows an additional cash allocation of £451,200 or 5.5%. In addition to this specific government departments have announced other revenue monies that are to be made available. In all cases these amounts are provisional and/or represent Officers best assessments of likely resource to be allocated to this Council:

LABGI	£510,000
Planning Delivery Grant	£321,800
Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant (via LAA)	£47,800

## 2. <u>Major Budget Indices</u>

i. <u>Pay</u>

An estimated pay award of 2.25% has been included in the 2007/08 base budget which equates to £315,000. In the medium term financial plan, 2.25% has been included for 2008/09 and 2% each year thereafter.

ii. Pensions

During 2004/05 the pension fund Actuary completed a tri-annual review of the pension fund and the required level of employer contributions. An increase in the employer's contribution rate from 13.6% to 17.9% is being phased in over 5 years. 2007/08 is the third year of that phased implementation and the effect is incorporated in the base budget and the MTFP.

iii. Inflation

In the majority of cases budgets have been capped to the previous year's level. Inflation has only been applied to supplies and services budgets where there is a contractual obligation to do so.

Specific measures for Electricity (164%, £295,000), Gas (45%, £44,000), NNDR (2.6%, £11,300) and Water (5%, £5,000) have been applied in line with best information available.

#### iv. Fees and charges

Discretionary fees and charges have been increased by 5% although specific charges will be at the discretion of individual portfolio holders provided that the overall level of increase is achieved. Changes in expected volumes of

customers, both upwards and downward have also been anticipated, again in line with market expectations.

## 3. <u>Technical Accounting Changes – Asset Rentals</u>

The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting 2006 removed the requirement to make a capital financing charge to service revenue accounts, effectively removing the notional interest element of Asset Rentals and leaving only depreciation charges.

Removal of notional interest does not have an impact on Council Tax as the charges to service revenue accounts were not a charge to the bottom line, being offset by entries within Central Capital Financing budgets. However, the removal of the charges provides explanation for some variances between the 2006/07 Original Budget and 2007/08 Budget, as detailed in Appendix 3.

# Appendix 4

## **GENERAL FUND REVENUE - RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT BIDS 2007/08**

DESCRIPTION	Ref	2007/08 Net Revenue Bid	2008/09 Net Revenue Bid	2009/10 Net Revenue Bid	2010/11 Net Revenue Bid	2011/12 Net Revenue Bid	TOTAL SCORE
		£	£	£	£	£	
SCHEMES ABOVE 39 POINTS							
<u>Community Safety</u>							
Sanctuary - Domestic Violence Security	HR2	20,000		,			
South Notts Home Improvement Agency	HR8	39,500	-				
South Notts Handy Person Service	HR7	6,000	-	-			4
		65,500	55,000	55,000	55,000	55,000	
Young People							
Changing Lifestyles Action Plan Delivery	LR10	20,000	-	,		20,000	
Gedling Green Exercise Project	LR19	10,000			0	0	44.0
		30,000	30,000	30,000	20,000	20,000	
Other Key Improvement Plans							
Project Officer - First Lets Team	HR6	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	41.
		9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	
Business Case							
Environmental Health Officer	P&ER4	0	0	0	0	0	40.0
		0	0	0	0	0	
Total Schemes Above 39 Points		104,500	94,000	94,000	84,000	84,000	
SCHEMES BELOW 39 POINTS							
Community Safety							
Event Security (Arnold Carnival)	LR32	5,900	0	0	0	0	33.0
Security Guards at Redhill Leisure Centre	LR29	7,600	8,000	8,400	0	0	18.0
		13,500	8,000	8,400	0	0	
Young People		,					
Arts and Health Project Delivery	LR20	14,100	16,000	24,100	24,100	24,100	36.
Free Use of Leisure Facilities	LR9	63,000	,	,		-	
Arts Development Project Delivery	LR21	35,500	,	,			
		112,600	,				(
Physical Environment		_,	.,	-,			
Urban Design Officer	P&ER3	10,000	10,300	0	0	0	32.
Parks Accessibility Audit	LR1	10,000	-		-		
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		20,000				-	
Other Key Improvement Plans			. 5, 550	5,000		U	
Environmental Audit	P&ER5	7,500	Ω	0	0	0	27.
CAPS Training - Departmental	P&ER2	17,100		0	0	0	
Data Input on Cemeteries Computer System	LR24	10,000		-	10,000	-	
Rent Deposit Scheme	HR5	12,000	,	,			
Homelessness Support Officer	HR4	25,600					
Additional Resources for Scrutiny Function	SR1	37,900					
Automatives for Scrutiny Function		110,100	-	-			

## General Fund Revenue - Resource Development Bids 2007/08 continued

DESCRIPTION	Ref	2007/08 Net Revenue Bid	2008/09 Net Revenue Bid	2009/10 Net Revenue Bid	2010/11 Net Revenue Bid	2011/12 Net Revenue Bid	TOTAL SCORE
		£	£	£	£	£	
Business Case							
Allotment Reinstatement/Competitions	LR25	6,000	6,000	6,000	1,000	1,000	11.50
Leisure Centre Condition Surveys	LR2	26,000	0	0	0	0	11.00
Development of a Marketing Strategy for							
Leisure	LR26	15,000	0	0	0	0	9.00
Procurement Options Review	LR28	5,000	0	0	0	0	0.00
Towards An Excellent Service Programme	LR27	15,000	0	0	0	0	0.00
Instructors Pay	LR3	5,500	5,600	5,800	6,000	6,300	0.00
		72,500	11,600	11,800	7,000	7,300	
Total Below 39 Points		328,700	236,000	238,400	224,200	221,500	
Total General Fund Revenue Bids		433,200	330,000	332,400	308,200	305,500	

## Appendix 5

# Revenue Implications of the 2007/08 Capital Resource Development Bids

DESCRIPTION	Ref	Net Revenue Implications Capital Bids				Bids
		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
		£	£	£	£	£
Schemes Above 39 Points						
Relocation of Teal Close Football Facilities	LC2	0	8,700	8,700	8,700	8,700
	CC1	0	2,500		,	,
New Performance Management System	LC10	0	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Replacement of Artificial Cricket Wickets	LC10 LC4	0	15 000	15 000	15 000	0 15,000
Bigwood School Community Sports Fac.	-	0	15,000			
Jackie Bells Field Facilities Refurbishment	LC1	0	0	5,000		· ·
Salop Street Youth Facility	LC3	0	0	3,000	,	,
Queensbower Ball Court & Play Area	LC11	0	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
AHP - Replace Bowls Pavilion	LC5	0	0	0	0	0
Licensing System	P&EC3	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500	12,500
Monument Repairs	LC7	0	0	0	0	0
Safety Surface Renewal	DC6	0	0	0	0	0
CAPS Development	P&EC2	800	800		800	800
Total Schemes Above 39 Points		13,300	42,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
Additional Schemes						
Relocation of Shopmobility	P&EC4	0	5,200	5,200	0	0
Re-site Play Area Rutland Road	LC14	0	0	0	0	0
Provide Play Area Edison Way	LC19	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
Additional Schemes Added By Cabinet 11/01/2007		1,500	6,700	6,700	1,500	
Total Revenue Implications of Capital Resource		44.000	40 700			
Development Bids		14,800	48,700	56,700	51,500	51,500