

SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA FOR

Council

Friday 6 February 2015

10.00 am

The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford HR1 2HX

Proposed amendments to the revenue budget

Pages

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Revenue Budget 2015/16 - Proposed Amendments

Attached are two proposed amendments to the revenue budget:

Amendment 1 – Independent Group

“That £125k be removed from the rurality grant funding allocated to support rural transport provision and used instead to part fund the second phase of feasibility work”

Amendment 2 – It’s Our County Group

That £220k be removed from the public realm grass cutting budget and used instead to fund the following increases:

- £75k to provide match funding for parish councils undertaking open space grass cutting
- £75k to further defer implementation of the ‘change to nearest school’ transport policy and introduction of post-16 special education needs transport charges until September 2016
- £70k to increase to £114k the pilot local area co-ordination grant scheme

The amendments will be debated following the proposing and seconding of the Cabinet’s budget proposals and will be voted on in turn.

If approved the amended budget will be the substantive budget Council then vote on.

The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires council to set a balanced budget.

Approval of the amendments moves a budget allocation from one budget head to another; it does not change policy or authorise the activity which the budget amendment seeks to support. This is the function of Cabinet which will receive reports on the items before making a decision to implement any change in policy. This enables consultation with affected groups, for example schools.

Peter Robinson
Chief Financial Officer (S151 Officer)

Proposed amendment to the Revenue Budget 2015/16

That £125k be removed from the rurality grant funding allocated to support rural transport provision and used instead to part fund the second phase of feasibility work in respect of the establishment of a rail link to Rotherwas, should initial feasibility work demonstrate the demand for such a link.

Group: Independents

Submitted by: Councillor Sebastian Bowen

Seconded by: Councillor Chris Chappell

Directorate/Service	Description of amendment	Implications for Service Delivery	Budget (reduction)/increase £'000
ECC/Rotherwas Rail Feasibility Study	To provide funding to complete initial feasibility work on providing a new Station at Rotherwas	£125k could provide the demand forecasting and initial feasibility work and if the amount continued into 16/17 it would enable the completion of the outline business case which would cost £250k in total. Detailed design and a full business case would cost a further £400k.	125
ECC/Rural Transport	Reduce the amount allocated from the additional Rurality Grant to Rural Transport	The implications of reducing the amount spend on Rural Transport by £125k would mean that three or four bus services would not be able to be supported so communities in some rural areas would not benefit from a bus service or would have a lower frequency of service. The effect would be that some areas of the county would not have services reintroduced. The reduction in funding available would make the decision on which services to support more challenging and is likely to cause complaints from those communities who feel they have been disadvantaged. At this stage it is not feasible to identify which individual services would be affected as the final picture will not be known until discussions with operators have taken place.	(125)
Total			0



Chief Financial Officer:

Date: 26.1.15

Proposed amendment to the Revenue Budget 2015/16

That £220k be removed from the public realm grass cutting budget and used instead to fund the following increases:

- £75k to provide match funding for parish councils undertaking open space grass cutting
- £75k to further defer implementation of the 'change to nearest school' transport policy and introduction of post-16 special education needs transport charges until September 2016
- £70k to increase to £114k the pilot local area co-ordination grant scheme

Group: It's Our County

Submitted by: Councillor Elizabeth Harvey

Seconded by: Councillor TBC

Directorate/Service	Description of amendment	Implications for Service Delivery	Budget (reduction)/increase £'000
ECC/Public Realm - Grass-Cutting	Provide match-funding to Parishes under-taking grass-cutting on public spaces by extending the lengthsman scheme.	Parishes will be given the opportunity to maintain or enhance service provision by bidding with their match-funding for a portion of this budget to determine their own grass-cutting priorities. Variable take-up levels by Parishes would mean variable service provision across the county. If the whole of the £75k is taken up by parishes providing match-funding this would give total funding of £150k which coupled with the £180k remaining in the £400k Cabinet proposals (£400k - £220k) a total spend of £330k compared with £400k.	75
ECC/Home to School Transport	Allow for the option to defer the change to "nearest school" transport policy and the introduction of post 16 SEN charges until September 2016	New starters will continue to be eligible for free transport to both catchment and nearest schools in accordance with current distance criteria. Options could include delaying implementation of the change in school transport policy, or financial assistance for those schools and colleges affected to operate their own schemes. These will have a £35k impact in 2016/17. The potential deferral of the introduction of post 16 SEN charges for school transport, £40k; £75k in 2015/16 and £110k in a full academic year, and for each of the following three years. Consultation with schools and parents will be undertaken to agree the most effective approach to the implementation of this deferment.	75
Adults and Wellbeing/Investment in Well Being Innovation and Locality Coordination	Support and extend pilot work in wellbeing and local area coordination, supporting locally led projects that attract further external match-funding. £44k of Public Health funding can also be paired with this budget amendment of £70k, giving a total budget in 2015/16 of £114k and the potential addition of a further £70k in match-funding from external partners.	The increased investment in well being innovation, locality coordination and local support will increase community resilience. This will enable officers to determine whether this has an impact in reducing demand on health and social care and if this approach warrants additional investment to achieve wider efficiencies by reducing demand. In addition to the £70k revenue budget, £44k Public Health Funding will be added to this amount (total £114k) with a potential of a further £70k of external match funding which if achieved would give total funding for this initiative of £184k	70
ECC/Public Realm - Grass-Cutting	Reduction in proposed increase to grass-cutting budget spent through the Balfour Beatty contract.	Reduction of £220k in grass cutting, in the event of no take-up by Parishes, would mean no rural verge cut and a 50% reduction (from 4 to 2) in amenity cuts to local priority areas. This would be mitigated by positive decisions by parish councils to take-up the lengthsman option.	(220)
		The implementation of the components of this amendment will require sequencing by officers to provide confidence that Parish take-up of grass-cutting under the lengthsman scheme will deliver the matched funding which is required for the other components.	
		The optimum net effect of this amendment would be an increase of £330k rather than £400k in the BBLP grass-cutting budget.	
Total			0

Date: 27.1.15

