

Cost pressures/requests for funding

Oxford Inspires £120,500

There are two sums involved. In 2002/3 the Council awarded a grant to Oxford Inspires but retained the money in the Council's accounts. At the year- end, £70,500 remained unspent but was not carried forward and returned to balances. Oxford Inspires have reminded the Council that we hold this money for them and would like it paid.

Executive Board on November 1st will receive a request for £50,000 contribution to Evolving Cities.

Members may wish to establish that the Business Unit does not have the capacity to fund these from existing budgets.

Senior Management Costs £95,000

As reported in the 1st Quarter monitoring, there is insufficient funding for the performance management team. Senior management salaries have also risen by more than inflation.

Members may wish to take a final view on this £95,000 cost pressure once we know what capacity funding we receive.

Local Cost of Benefits £500,000

There are two reasons for this. The DWP now reimburse 100% of benefits correctly paid. If the Council makes an error in payment, subsidy is much less and if subsidy is overpaid the Council needs to try and collect it back. This element of loss in subsidy is approx £400,000. The second reason is for vulnerable persons housed in accommodation where rents are higher than the Rent Officer assessment. and benefit subsidy is not paid in full on rents over the Rent Officer assessment. This amounts to £100,000.

Freedom of Information staffing costs £16,000

The new freedom of information act comes into force in two months, Officers have been clearing, sorting and indexing archives so that we will be able to deal with requests in January. Costs have been kept to a minimum and mostly contained within budgets. This is the modest balance left over.

I recommend Members accept this £16,000 as a budget variation.

BBL community centre rates & service charges £32,700

Neighbourhood Renewal report a £32,000 cost pressure from unbudgeted business rates and service charges. However other business units have benefited from substantial rates savings, which have helped them meet this and subsequent budgets.

One option is to transfer a budget from one of those other areas. Alternatively Members may wish to have a report setting the area of rates savings/pressures so they can take a broader view.

Local Plan earlier completion of inspection – bring forward from 2005-06 £95,000

Planning have a fixed budget spread over 2 years for the Local Plan. Earlier spending is anticipated that will mean bringing forward budget from 2005-6 to fund it.

I recommend the Planning budget is increased by this amount, and the 2005-6 budget is adjusted accordingly.

Bonn Square £50,000

If Members are minded to proceed with this scheme there is a potential £50,000 revenue liability that will impact on the General Fund.

it is not clear this money will be needed this year, and the more appropriate route would be to include this in the 2005-6 budget.

Increased insurance premiums £27,332

The Insurance officer has indicated that premiums will be higher than budgeted.

I recommend this is accepted as a budget variation.

Area Committees – revenues budget £100,000

Area Committees have asked for an ongoing £100,000 revenue budget, having been advised that many of their proposed schemes do not meet the necessary criteria to qualify as capital.

This is not a budget variation, and is closer to an in year bid. I could not recommend its acceptance as such.