

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY

May 2010

SECTION 1 – HIGH LEVEL BUDGET ANALYSIS

1.1 Services for the Community - 2010/11 Revenue Budget

Service Area

Housing and Building - Homelessness

Housing and Building - Neighbourhood Response

Total

2010/11 Revenue Budget £'000		
Gross Expenditure	Income / Recharges	Net Budget
3,581	(2,270)	1,311
1,547	(264)	1,283
5,128	(2,534)	2,594

1.2 Services for the Community – Proposed Savings

Service Area	2010/ 11 Approved Budget £'000	Proposed Saving £'000			Total Savings	2013/14 Residual Budget £'000
		2011 / 12	2012 / 13	2013 / 14		
Housing and Building Services - Homelessness	1,311	262	153	0	415	896
Housing and Building Services - Neighbourhood Response	1,283	194	27	0	221	1,062
Total	2,594	456	180	0	636	1,958

SECTION 2 – CURRENT AND FUTURE SERVICE PROVISION

2.1 Homelessness (2010/11 Revenue Budget £1,311,000)

Current Service

The Housing and Building Services Housing Needs team delivers the council's statutory duties to homeless people and is working towards meeting the target set by the Scottish Government to eliminate homelessness by 2012. This includes providing information and advice to help people access housing and prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place, assessing and delivering homelessness services for homeless people, and assessing and delivering housing support to vulnerable / homeless people.

The service is based centrally but delivered throughout West Lothian within the various partnership centres and in customers' homes. The service accommodates and supports individuals and families within four main units of accommodation (Blackburn Homeless Unit, Quentin Court Hostel, Newlands Hostel and Strathbrock Family Unit) as well as homeless households living in around 300 temporary tenancies.

Future & Proposed Changes to Service

The projected net budget for 2013/14 will support the delivery of a homeless service focused on prevention, assessment and support.

Front line staff and partners took part in a major event in 2009 which resulted in a redesigned homelessness process that will eliminate waste from the system and improve the customer journey. Ongoing work will ensure the implementation of this streamlined and more efficient process. This includes changing our approach to homelessness from re-active to pro-active, focusing on preventing homelessness occurring in the first place. Reducing the number of households who become homeless will enable us to channel resources more effectively to provide good, sustainable outcomes for those who do become homeless.

2.1 Homelessness (continued)

The savings will be achieved through:

- Development of one assessment form which captures all relevant information from the customer in one place.
- Integration of information technology systems to minimise duplication by allowing one key-in process with information populating all appropriate systems.
- Establishment of a prevention team with appropriate skills and tools to prevent homelessness occurring in the first place. This will include mediating young people who present as homeless back to their family home where appropriate.
- Improved targeting of housing support to channel resources to those who need it.

A review of voluntary organisation service provision will be carried out, to ensure funding is used more effectively to meet agreed outcomes.

The out of hours 'standby' duty system is being reviewed, in line with the working time directive, which will result in revised staffing arrangements within the emergency accommodation units to respond to people who become homeless outwith office hours, removing the need for additional staff to be on call.

2.2 Neighbourhood Response (2010/11 Revenue Budget £1,283,000)

Current Service

Building on the work of the Neighbourhood Response Team (NRT), in 2007 the council and Lothian & Borders Police established new Safer Neighbourhoods Teams made up of police officers and NRT officers to provide a more robust, enforcement-based, multi-agency response to antisocial behaviour 'hotspots'. The Neighbourhood Response Team has now been fully integrated with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams across the nine multi-member ward areas in West Lothian. Led by police and council intelligence and other relevant partnership information, council and police officers work in partnership to proactively tackle antisocial behaviour and community concerns around crime and disorder.

West Lothian Council's Noise Nuisance service has been in operation since May 2006. The team has now been extended to work seven nights a week, 7pm to 4am across the whole of West Lothian. This development provides a significant extra resource to address antisocial noise and general antisocial behaviour, which helps to alleviate pressure on police resource. Noise nuisance officers work closely with their colleagues in the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Environmental Health to proactively and efficiently tackle antisocial behaviour across West Lothian.

The Registration of Private Landlords scheme ensures that the private rented landlords are registered and that there is good management, good standards and good behaviour of tenants and landlords across this sector.

Future & Proposed Changes to Service

A new Community Safety Unit is being created, which will fully integrate and co-ordinate the community safety and anti-social behaviour approach across all partners. The Community Safety Unit will work closely with other services involved in the community safety agenda to ensure maximum effectiveness, including schools and voluntary youth work organisations.

The Community Safety Unit will take an early intervention and prevention approach. It will adopt a community engagement model to ensure that local priorities are understood and used to help prioritise and target use of resources on a daily basis.

SECTION 3 – SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET REDUCTIONS AT ACTIVITY LEVEL

3.1 Homelessness

Activity	Objective	Corporate Planning Priority	Staff Resource (FTE)	Revenue Budget 2010/11 £	Proposed Reductions 2011/12 to 2013/14 £	Revised Revenue Budget £
Homelessness Prevention	To improve our support services to prevent people from becoming homeless including providing mediation, counselling, personal housing plans and rent deposits schemes.	Protecting Our Environment And Communities	22.9	629,975	0	629,975
Homelessness Provision	To assess need and provide temporary and emergency accommodation and enhance the role of the private sector and other partner agencies to promote sustainable outcomes.	Protecting Our Environment And Communities	26.9	2,102,714	311,000	1,791,714
Housing Support	To help vulnerable tenants sustain their tenancy and support vulnerable homeless people in securing a sustainable housing solution.	Protecting Our Environment And Communities	8.1	298,501	104,000	194,501
	Income	Protecting Our Environment And Communities		(1,719,666)	0	(1,719,666)
	Total :-		57.8	1,311,524	415,000	896,524

3.2 Neighbourhood Response

Activity	Objective	Corporate Planning Priority	Staff Resource (FTE)	Revenue Budget 2010/11 £	Proposed Reductions 2011/12 to 2013/14 £	Revised Revenue Budget £
Noise Related Complaint Service	To provide an efficient and effective response to deal with noise related complaints of an antisocial behaviour nature. This will comply with relevant antisocial behaviour legislation	Protecting Our Environment And Communities	6.0	189,448	0	189,448
Antisocial Behaviour	To reduce anti-social behaviour in West Lothian in conjunction with the safer neighbourhood unit and other community partners	Protecting Our Environment And Communities	9.0	1,073,794	175,000	898,794
Private Landlord Registrations	To ensure that all private landlords in West Lothian comply with the national registration scheme for private landlords.	Protecting Our Environment And Communities	1.0	52,402	46,000	6,402
	Income	Protecting Our Environment And Communities		(32,498)	0	(32,498)
	Total :-		16.0	1,283,146	221,000	1,062,146

SECTION 4 – SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY DETAILED BUDGET REDUCTION PROPOSALS

Service	Service Proposal No.	Description	Impact		Proposed Saving £'000				Reduction Category
			Potential Service Impact	Action Required to Deliver Reduction	2011 / 12	2012 / 13	2013 / 14	Total Forecast Savings	Efficiency, Service Change, Income Charging
Housing and Building	SC1	Homelessness strategy development funding	Potential to provide services differently and ensure funding is used more effectively to meet outcomes	Prioritise areas of homelessness need and a review of Voluntary Organisation service provision.	100	118	0	218	Service Change
Housing and Building	SC2	Non-filling of vacant housing needs officer post	None	Delete post	29	0	0	29	Efficiency
Housing and Building	SC3	Rapid improvement exercise homeless frontline services	This would result in leaner processes with a potential reduction in the number of staff. It may be at the detriment to the front line service	The actions from the improvement exercise need to be implemented.	58	0	0	58	Efficiency
Housing and Building	SC4	Strathbrock family unit. Removal of vacant service co-ordinator post	This is dependant on how well the new unit functions in initial six month phase.	Delete vacant post	38	0	0	38	Efficiency
Housing and Building	SC5	Rapid improvement exercise allocations	New processes will allow a reduction in the number of staff.	Delete vacant post	37	0	0	37	Efficiency
Housing and Building	SC6	Blackburn homeless unit staffing	Change current standby arrangements and replace with contracted staff	New structure to be agreed in line with Working Time Directive.	0	35	0	35	Efficiency

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			Potential Service Impact	Action Required to Deliver Reduction	2011 / 12	2012 / 13	2013 / 14	Total Forecast Savings	Efficiency, Service Change, Income Charging
Housing and Building	SC7	Safer neighbourhood teams - non-filling of five youth worker posts.	Posts cannot be filled so current youth services will be maximised.	Delete vacant posts	175	0	0	175	Efficiency
Housing and Building	SC8	Registration of Private Landlords Removal of post.	Duties to be redistributed among existing council services.	Reductions through workforce management	0	27	0	27	Efficiency
Housing and Building	SC9	Registration of Private Landlords – Removal of agency staff.	Duties to be redistributed among existing staff.	End Contract.	19	0	0	19	Efficiency
Total Service Reductions Proposals - Services to the Community					456	180	0	636	

Efficiency	356	62	0	418
Service Change	100	118	0	218
Income / Charging	0	0	0	0
Total	456	180	0	636