

## Draft Budget 2007/8: Recommendations of Scrutiny and Performance Panels following budget consultation

This appendix is a late appendix due to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny and performance Panel not meeting until 1 February 2007.

### *Recommendations of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny & Performance Panel*

- 1) The Panel was disappointed that no-one from the Cabinet was available at the meeting to discuss the reasons behind the decisions taken over the panel's original recommendations made in November.
- 2) The Panel would like the following items to be excluded from the budget savings:

<b>Saving</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Reduce the current highways responsive maintenance service to a reactive service	100,000	This will have an adverse affect on road condition, may impact on insurance claims and will result in 6 redundancies.
Reduce the gully cleansing service to a reactive service	20,000	This could increase levels of flooding and will affect 4 posts.
Playground fitting service	7,000	The health and safety of young persons could be compromised
Trading standards – removal of weights and measures testing equipment	1,000	The council will no longer be able to test the accuracy of large weighing equipment, e.g. weigh bridges
Reduce the sweeping and litter picking frequencies	172,000	Reduction in street cleanliness is not acceptable. This will result in 14 redundancies
Central library – reduce hours	39,450	Latest figures show 34,000 visits on a Sunday over the last 12 months, more than at some branch libraries for the whole week. The trend is currently rising
Discontinue grant to non-Council funded museums – Jerome K. Jerome	2,200	This comprises 90% of the museums running costs, if removed the museum is likely to close
Discontinue grant to non-Council funded museums – Locksmiths House	13,650	Recent notification has been given that the other main contributor to the museum, Yale, is also to reduce their contribution. The museum is likely to close if both grants are removed/reduced. Propose to continue grant for one more year.

Bereavement services – change to internal artificial floral decoration	1,750	Service requested to seek sponsorship/advertising from local fresh flower retailers
Deletion of community sports worker post	18,964	
Increase fees to cricket and bowling clubs	£4,000	This would have a detrimental effect on the take up of sports within these sectors

3 The panel reluctantly includes the discontinuation of the “Right to Read” project in the savings package but only on the advice of officers that attempts are being made to fund this through alternative sources within the Council. The panel would not support this project ceasing.

4 The panel also considered additional savings and would again recommend that these are taken up by the Cabinet, these are:

Increase staff car parking charges by 20%	£74,000	
Reduction of available days within a branch library	£50,000	The panel would support a review of the branch libraries to ascertain whether there are branches where further reductions would have minimal impact on service users
Further increase of £2 in the charge for replacement wheelie bins to fund concessions	£1,500	

5 The panel discussed additional ways to increase the income to the Council and proposed a review of charging for car parking on Sundays. Visitor numbers to the Town Centre on a Sunday are increasing, this is evidenced in the rise in visitor numbers to the central library and anecdotally from trader comments. However at present whilst free parking is provided by some private car parks, if charging is introduced, demand is likely to be low and any income would need to be offset against additional operational / enforcement costs. A review of neighbouring authorities shows similar patterns of demand and supply. Therefore in the present climate the introduction of charges is unlikely to realise any significant income but could be considered for a more detailed review and future proposal.