

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SERVICE COMMITTEES

Education

1. To note the current position regarding the budget for 2001-2002, and register the Committee's concern to the Policy and Resources Committee, that, despite the overall increase in 'Standard Spending Assessment and in specific grants, the funds available are insufficient to meet all of the Government's targets, (the current identified shortfall is £2,580,000), without seriously reducing the Department's capacity to fulfil its functions, particularly in a year when it will be inspected.
2. To ask officers to continue their dialogue with schools on those issues where further decision and clarification are required, particularly in relation to the take-up of Standards Fund, relative funding for different age groups and increased delegation.
3. To request a further report at the February meeting that takes account of budgetary developments and negotiations.
4. To note the budgetary difficulties created by factors beyond the Committee's control, especially the pressure resulting from the loss of adult education funding from the Standard Spending Assessment (a net loss of £600,000) and from the need to provide places for additional pupils and new schools (£1,500,000).
5. To draw the attention of the Policy and Resources Committee to the continuing and exceptional demands faced by the Education Committee.
6. To note the particular problems faced by Wiltshire in relation to other authorities. In particular, at a time when government has indicated its intention to "level up" funding, its continuing disadvantage from Area Cost Adjustment is particularly regretted, and to ask the Policy and Resources Committee to pursue this matter with Central Government.

Environment and Transport

1. To draw to the attention of the Policy and Resources Committee the exceptional cost increases faced by this Committee. The Committee's budget for 2001-02 requires an increased provision of £3.173m (9.4%) in order to fund the same service standards that apply in 2000-01. Under the financial plan, it has been allocated only £0.972m (2.9%) – a shortfall of £2.201m (6.5%). It is noted with regret that, despite these unavoidable costs, the Standard Spending Assessment for Wiltshire's Highway Maintenance had been reduced by 0.4% and proposing that the basis of this calculation should be challenged
2. To welcome the proposed increase for structural highway maintenance through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) settlement, which noted that the full extent of Government support for other elements of the County Council's Local Transport Plan was not yet known.
3. To advise the Policy and Resources Committee that an increase of £0.79m in the revenue budget allocation (together with a minimum allocation of £0.6m in the capital programme) for structural highway maintenance would avoid the prospect of challenge by Central Government about the overall level of structural maintenance in the County's highway network. In such circumstances, this would enable the County Council to increase its expenditure for structural highway maintenance by 38% above that in the current year.
4. To invite the Policy and Resources Committee to amend the Environment and Transport Committee's budget by a further sum of £0.292m, to reflect the increased cost of the Education Transport Service.
5. To recognise the concerns of young people about the cost of public transport and to seek a further £30,000 to be added to this Committee's budget, to avoid an increase in the cost of 16+ travel passes from September 2001.

Social Services

1. The Social Services Committee regrets that the Government has not recognised the external pressures faced by Wiltshire Social Services, has ignored the fact that current spending is 18% above the existing standard spending assessment (SSA) and has this year limited the SSA increase to a mere 2.3%.
2. To request the Policy and Resources Committee to continue to lobby the Government for a more appropriate level of funding, taking into account the high cost of delivery of services in a rural County such as Wiltshire.
3. To request the Policy and Resources Committee to recognise the considerable difficulties and the implications for service Users and Carers arising from the financial guidelines currently set for the Committee.
4. To request the Policy and Resources Committee to reconsider the Social Services Committee's budget allocation when further information is available on specific grants from the Government and following discussions with Wiltshire Health Authority on the appropriate allocation of responsibilities for Health and Social Care.
5. To reject the proposal in the budget paper for a 10% cash reduction in grant aid to voluntary organisations, and ask that a report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee on how an alternative saving of £196,000 can be achieved.

Policy and Resources Committee (Committee's Budget)

1. To note the levies on the County Council from outside bodies.
2. To approve a budget for 2001-02 of £25.233 million
3. To approve the removal of the budget for the Child Care Voucher Scheme.

The Wiltshire Library Plan 2000

On considering the following recommendation from the Education Committee and a report by the Chief Education Officer,
To recommend that an additional £300,000 be added to the Library Service's stock fund in 2001-02 to meet the Community Services Sub-Committee's highest priority and the National Library Standard.

1. To note the recommendation and to consider it along with other budget issues early in the new year.
2. To ask the Chief Education Officer to report to the Community Services Sub-Committee on the funding requirements of the Library Service's stock fund.

Policy and Resources Committee (16 January 2001)

Social Services Budget Report Update

1. To note the changes to the social services year-end expenditure projection for the current year and the financial position for 2001-02 and, in particular, the additional demands facing the Social Services Committee. There is an overall increase of resources required in 2001-02 of £0.381m compared with the original budget report presented to Social Services Committee in December.

County Council Budget 2001-02: Position Statement

1. To note the position statement in the County Treasurer's report, including his assessment of the Secretary of State's possible criteria for budget capping in 2001-02 and his exemplification of the additional £3m for services associated with an increase of 7.9% in the Council Tax.
2. To request the County Treasurer to report direct to the County Council when the full position is known.
3. To confirm that the budgets of the Social Services Committee and other Committees must be sufficient to enable the Council at least to meet its statutory duties and avoid reasonable legal challenge.
4. To draw the attention of the Education Committee to the apparent change in the balance of the Committee's budget and request the Committee to bring forward the Best Value review of the library service to 2001-02 instead of the narrower review which was recommended by the Community Services Sub Committee on 10 January 2001.
5. To recommend the County Council
 - (i) to increase the provision in the financial plan for the Education and Environment and Transport Committees by £1.6m and £0.3m respectively to reflect the higher education SSA.
 - (ii) to increase the provision for the Environment and Transport Committee by a further £0.5m in order to claim the full level of funding of £9.57m under the Local Transport Plan settlement for 2001-02
 - (iii) to increase the provision for the Social Services Committee by £0.5m to reflect the changed date of introducing the new specific grant.
 - (iv) To consider final levels of Committee budgets and Council Tax in the light of the Treasurer's final report.