

_____ Taking pride in our communities and town

Date of issue: 08 March 2012

MEETING	CABINET	
	Councillor Anderson	Leader of the Council - Finance & Strategy
	Councillor S Chaudhry	Community & Leisure
	Councillor A S Dhaliwal	Performance & Accountability
	Councillor Pantelic Councillor Parmar	Education and Children Environment & Open Spaces
	Councillor Swindlehurst	Neighbourhoods & Renewal
	Councillor Walsh	Health & Wellbeing
	Councillor P K Mann	Opportunity & Skills
DATE AND TIME:	MONDAY, 12TH MARCH, 2	2012 AT 6.30 PM
VENUE:	FLEXI HALL, THE CENTR BERKSHIRE SL1 4UT	E, FARNHAM ROAD, SLOUGH,
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER:	CATHERINE MEEK	
(for all enquiries)	01753 875011	

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS

The following Papers have been added to the agenda for the above meeting:-

- Item 5 was not available with the rest of the agenda.
- Item 7A is an urgent item which the Chair has agreed to include on the agenda

PART 1

AGENDA ITEM	REPORT TITLE	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
5.	Review of Reserves and General Fund Balances	1 - 6	All
7(A)	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Adoption 2012-2013	7 - 14	All



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SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Cabinet	DATE: 12 March 2012
CONTACT OFFICER: (For all enquiries)	Julie Evans, Strategic Director c (01753) 875300	of Resources and Regeneration
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- WARD(S): All
- **PORTFOLIO:**Leader of the Council and Commissioner for Finance and
Strategy, Cllr Rob Anderson

PART I KEY DECISION

REVIEW OF RESERVES AND GENERAL FUND BALANCES

1 Purpose of Report

To present to the Cabinet the outcome of the Section 151 officer's review of Reserves and General Fund Balances following the adoption of the Medium Term Financial Strategy on the 21st February 2012 and a review of committed expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2012 based on the known position as at the 31st January 2012.

2 Recommendations/ Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that:

- (a) The allocation of the initial £1.46m arising from 2011-12 planned savings programme as a contribution to General Fund Balances be agreed as a commitment to the long term financial sustainability of the council.
- (b) After the contribution to General Fund as detailed above, a further £685k arising from 2011-12 planned savings is allocated to earmarked reserves to fund the one off items approved by Council on the 22nd February be agreed.
- (c) Officers undertake a comprehensive review of provisions in the light of progress made during the year and provide recommendations for reallocation of any available resources arising as a result to the April Cabinet meeting.

3 Supporting Information

Members have adopted a rigorous approach to budget monitoring and early implementation of planned savings throughout the course of the year. The success in this area provides a one off opportunity to reallocate resources to priority areas.

In keeping with the medium term financial strategy and 12/13 budget agreed by Council on 22nd February, securing a greater level of safety net in the current economic climate is integral to our financial strategy. Adopting a risk based approach to increasing general fund balances in a planned way reflects best practice.

Where we identify a future requirement for a non recurring expenditure item, whilst there may remain some uncertainty around timing of expenditure, we can and should set aside funding to meet the obligation in the form of Earmarked reserves. Again, this reflects best practice.

Reviewing our provisions in the light of actual events is key and the resolution of the Councils Equal Pay Claims in the current year following the successful implementation of Job Evaluation in 2009 is a good example of the need to rebase our provisions on a timely basis to meet the ongoing needs of the organisation.

Resources identified as a result of the above exercise will be reported to the next cabinet meeting along with recommendations for allocating any further one off funding on an equitable basis to areas that most meet the needs of our local community.

4 <u>Community Strategy Priorities</u>

Priorities:

- Economy and Skills
- Health and Wellbeing
- Regeneration and Environment
- Housing
- Safer Communities

Cross Cutting themes:

Civic responsibility - the part that residents can play in delivering the Strategy and in improving Slough for the benefit of everyone.

Improving the image of the town – The report will contribute to improve the image and promote the many benefits of living and working in Slough through supporting the future financial stability of the Council.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

This report is aimed to increase the financial sustainability of the authority and therefore provides safeguarding of future years' funding requirements for the creation and development of healthy and sustainable places and communities.

5 Other Implications

(a) <u>Financial</u>

This report provides certainty over financial sustainability by asking Cabinet to approve a route of funding to increase the General Fund Balances and set aside adequate reserves to fund agreed one off investment in 2012-13. This report also provides transparency over how increases to General Fund Balances and earmarked reserves will be funded.

(b) Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal	None	
Property	None	
Human Rights	None	
Health and Safety	None	
Employment Issues	None	
Equalities Issues	None	
Community Support	None	
Communications	None	
Community Safety	None	
Financial	See Section 5 above	
Timetable for delivery	See Section 6 below	
Project Capacity	See Section 6 below	
Other	None	

(c) <u>Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications</u>

There are no human rights implications

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

This report has been drafted in line with the Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 public sector equality duty.

6 Additional Information

6.1 General Fund Balance and Earmarked Reserves

The table at 6.4 shows reserves approved by Council on the 22^{nd} February. Cabinet are asked to note the approved increase of General Fund Balance from £6.384m to £7.500m and the increase in earmarked reserves of £685K to fund future commitments.

6.2 Further Allocation

In the event further savings are secured in the 2011-12 budget increasing the sum available to be reallocated during 2012-13 it will be presented to Cabinet on the 16th April for allocation to Community Schemes on the basis of priority.

6.3 Timetable

Date	Action
12 th March	Cabinet consider method for allocation of additional 2011-12 resources
12-31 st March	Review and modelling of current year expenditure and liabilities so that any additional resources for allocation or in year liabilities are identified.
1-16 th April	Resource for allocation assessed and additional investment items costed.
16 th April	Report taken to Cabinet for approval of additional investment items

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL General Fund Reserves

		*Subject to Nov 2				
		2011/12		2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
	Committee Approved	Jan 12 Position	Projected Position	Projected Position	Projected Position	Projected Position
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund Balance						
Balance as at 1st April	5,388	6,384	7,500	8,000	8,000	8,000
Planned Contribution to/(from) Revenue Account						
Balance as at 31st March	5,388	6,384	7,500	8,000	8,000	8,000
Earmarked Reserves						
Miscellaneous Reserves:						
LABGI	0	192	192	0	0	0
Contingencies	1,000	730	1,000	750	500	500
Berkshire Liabilities	400	440	400	200	100	0
Future Debt & Cap reqmnts	3,096	4,016	3,497	3,000	1,500	1,500
Stat Prop Funct & Landlord duties	300	605	300	300	300	300
Financial System Upgrade	200	300	400	0	0	0
PFI Unitary	1,407	1,498	1,498	1,498	1,498	1,498
Harmonisation	250	400	50	0	0	0
LSP Management	0	16	16	0	0	0
Economic Risk and Transformation	500	2,699	3,000	3,000	2,000	1,000
Learning Disability Transfer	0	113	158	750	1,500	0
Organisational Change	0	750	1300	750	750	750
ECS Social Workers Laptop	0	30	30	0	0	0
Berkshire SRG	0	156	156	156	0	0
School Places	300	530	530	530	530	0
Looked After Children	0	646	0	0	0	0
Heathrow rail link reserve	0	30	105	105	105	105
Events	0	30	30	30	30	30
Community Cohesion	0	75	0	0	0	0
Safeguarding and Adoption	0	0	190	190	0	0
Alley gating reserve	0	0	90	60	30	0
Organic Income	0	0	35	0	0	0
Concessionary Fares	0	0	100	0	0	0
Waste Disposal	0	0	150	0	0	0

		2011/12			2013/14	2014/15
	Committee Approved	Jan 12 Position	Projected Position	Projected Position	Projected Position	Projected Position
Information Governance	0	0	50	0	0	0
GIS	0	0	75	0	0	0
Increased collection	0	0	120	0	0	0
Traffic Signals energy	0	0	65	0	0	0
Total Miscellaneous Reserves	7453	13256	13537	11319	8843	5683
Grants Reserves:						
Community & Wellbeing	0	148	0	0	0	0
Ed & Ch Schools - Oracle	0	0	0	0	0	0
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Education & Children	0	314	0	0	0	0
Green & Built	0	360	0	0	0	0
Resources & Regeneration	0	285	0	0	0	0
Improvement and Development	0	34	0	0	0	0
Total Grants Reserves	0	1,141	0	0	0	0
Housing Benefits	0	394	394	394	394	394
Department Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Reserves	0	1,287	1,053	1,053	1,053	1,053
Insurance Reserves	375	516	750	750	750	750
Total Earmarked Reserves	7828	16594	15734	13516	11040	7880
Trading Accounts	85	0				
Total General Fund Reserves	13301	22978	23234	21516	19040	15880

7 <u>Conclusion</u>

Cabinet will recall the Council's firm commitment not only to increasing balances but also to investing in Community schemes which will benefit the taxpayer. This report sets out a method for identifying and applying any 2012 unallocated resources and ensuring financial sustainability.

8 Background Papers

- '1' Medium Term Financial Strategy
- '2' Performance and Finance Report to Cabinet for 12 March 2012

AGENDA ITEM 7a

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO:CabinetDATE: 7th March 2012CONTACT OFFICER:Neil Aves: Asst. Director Housing Services(For all enquiries)(01753) 875527WARD(S):AllPORTFOLIO:Clir J Swindlehurst - Neighbourhods and Renewal

PART I KEY DECISION

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET ADOPTION 2012-2013

1 Purpose of Report

To propose the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2012-2013 and to highlight arrangements to fund the operation after the impending introduction of Self-Financing is completed at the end of this financial year.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve that:

- a) The Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2012/2013 be approved. (Paragraph 5.6 and appendix 1 refers)
- b) The growth items, identified in paragraphs 5.5 & 5.8 amounting to £245,000 for supervision and management and £950,000 for Repairs & maintenance be approved.
- c) The revised medium term capital programme be approved (Paragraph 5.11)
- d) The Cabinet notes the medium term sustainability of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

3 Community Strategy Priorities-

- Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion
- Adding years to Life and Life to years
- Being Safe, Feeling Safe
- A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play
- Prosperity for All

By adopting a prudent medium term financial strategy for the Housing Revenue Account the Council has created a business plan which sustains council housing for the foreseeable future. By reducing expenditure, delivering savings through service restructures and reinvesting in areas of concern for tenants, residents and members alike, the Council's housing services can contribute to each of the community strategy priorities.

4 Other Implications

(a) Financial

The proposed HRA budget was prepared in accordance with CIPFA guidance and accounting best practice. Budget proposals will ensure balances are maintained at an appropriate level and adequate funding is available to deliver an effective housing service in accordance with the HRA Business Plan.

(b) Risk Management

Budgets have been constructed in accordance with CIPFA accounting rules and the medium term HRA business plan uses a nationally accredited business model to predict income and expenditure in future years.

Estimates of income particularly from shop and garage rents have been reviewed in the light of the current economic climate but estimates of key inflation indices over the next year may be inaccurate leading to unexpected budget pressures. However the HRA currently holds sufficient balances to manage such issues should they arise.

Longer term there is uncertainty regarding the future funding of council housing while the Government undertakes a review of the whole housing subsidy regime. Proposals for this are likely to be released within the next fortnight and further reports will be brought before members in due course.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no legal or human rights implications to this report.

(d) Race Relations Amendments Act Implications

This report relates to all tenants and leaseholders occupying current or former council homes. Rent fees and charges are set in accordance with government guidance and relate closely to each persons individual circumstances and usage. Where individuals are of limited means benefit advice, debt and welfare counselling is available and accordingly the proposal will not disproportionately affect any section of the community as defined under the above legislation.

5 Supporting Information

HRA Budget Estimates 2011-12(current year)

5.1 The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced HRA budget for 2011/12 to ensure that affordable homes continue to be provided and managed for the residents of Slough. Whilst, if balances are available, an 'in year' deficit can be budgeted for, overall there must not be a deficit on the account. The balance carried on the Housing Revenue Account must be set at a prudent level, and based upon the stock size within Slough and the introduction of Self-financing this has been revised from £1.2m to £4m – £6m due to the increased level of risk following the take on of debt.

- 5.2 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) estimates have been revised on the basis of an analysis of expenditure and income to date and projections forward for the remainder of the year undertaken. The opening balances on the HRA as at 1 April 2011 were £9.5m and a surplus of £0.5m is projected for the year giving a balance to be carried forward of £10m. This surplus is after Revenue contributions to the capital programme of £1.6m.
- 5.3 The forecast surplus is due mainly to £0.3m planned maintenance activities which will be carried out in 2012/13 and £0.3m of additional supervision and management savings following the introduction of Housing services in 2010/11 to replace People 1st. Rent income reduced by £0.1m due to planned demolitions on the Britwell estate which were not included in the business plan last year.
- 5.4 It is anticipated that £1m of the revenue contributions to capital will be held in the Capital Expenditure Reserve Account as a contingency for the Decent Homes project expected to be completed in December 2012.
- 5.5 Planned maintenance activities include for example Asbestos removal, fencing which are currently charged to the capital programme and in line with component accounting guidelines are now charged to the Housing repairs account.

Housing Revenue Account Base Budget 2012-2013

- 5.6 The Localism bill gained Royal Assent in November 2011 and this included a revised system of accounting for the Housing Revenue Account known as self financing. Slough Borough Council will take on additional debt of £137m in March 2012, transferred from central Government, and the existing subsidy system will be disbanded at that time. There will continue to be central guidelines and policies that will need to be followed e.g. rent restructuring but all income and expenditure will be managed locally from 28 March 2012 subject to sale of council house regulations which are currently in consultation. A deficit of £1.5m is projected for the year after allowing for £6m as the estimated cost of additional homes on the Britwell estate.
- 5.7 Rent restructuring is planned to continue until convergence which is estimated to be in 2015/16 however due to limit rent restrictions this is likely to take until 2020/21 in Slough. The policy of setting target rent at tenancy change will be monitored as it may bring this completion date forward.
- 5.8 HRA expenditure has been revised to take account of the new service structure. Allowances have been made for inflationary pressures but not for annual pay awards as these will not be forthcoming for at least the next two years. Planned maintenance activities as per paragraph 5.5 above increase the repairs expenditure budget by £950,000.

Additional Tenant Participation Officer, increasing the compliment to 3 to work closely with the 3 Housing Area teams to promote and support community participation	£35,000
Working budget for the Slough Customer Senate in their co- regulation and scrutiny role, based on £5 per household per year	£35,000
Response to SCS to undertake an inspection of all stairways, lobbies and communal areas of housing blocks to implement Decent homes work to these areas, to tender and commence works.	£100,000
Review and replacement of all lcommunal lighting columns and introduction of new low energy, high intensity bulbs.	£50,000
Introduction of delegated 'just fix it' budget for Housing Officers to sort out problems simply and quickly without the usual bureaucracy	£20,000
Establishment of a Social Housing Fraud Officer to determine the extent, if any, of illegal subletting and abuse of the housing and benefit systems	£35,000
Establishment of a Business Delivery & Contract Clienting Officer to drive forward service improvements and ensure faster on site delivery of estate improvements, environmental works and maintain performance on grounds maintenance, cleansing and responsive repair contracts.	£40,000

- 5.10 These growth bids are offset by the release of the transformation budget of £250,000 set up last year to cover the establishment of the in house housing service.
- 5.11 Provision has been made for higher than RPI increases in energy costs compared to the current contracted prices. The housing repairs budget has been increased by 3.5% to allow for the inflationary increase of RPIx to be applied in April 2012. Central services costs have been included based on proposals included in the main operating budget of the council.
- 5.12 Capital charges are based on total borrowing of £160m at an interest rate of 5%. These costs are likely to reduce when the Public Works Loan Board extend new facilities at the end of March 2012. These treasury arrangements have been examined by our advisors (Arlingclose) and their report suggests the rate for new borrowing may be 3% 3.5%. However existing loan arrangements need to be finalised so that HRA and General Fund loans can be disaggregated and the effects of this are currently being identified.
- 5.13 Council on the 21st February 2011 authorised the capital programme including £13,052,000 for HRA expenditure. The final programme is now estimated at £15,786,000 including an estimated £6m for the Britwell satellite housing project. Revised programme expenditure totals are as per the table below. Other affordable housing schemes are being examined with a view to maximising potential income from revised pooling arrangements should the Right to Buy scheme be modified in line with the current consultation due to end in March 2011.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£ 000's	£ 000's	£ 000's	£ 000's
Decent Homes	5,968	4,924	5,208	5,610
Planned Maintenance	3,134	2,270	2,301	2,484
Environmental works	100	100	100	100
Aids & Adaptations	584	500	400	350
Affordable Housing	6,000	5,000	2,000	3,000
Total	15,786	12,794	10,009	11,543

HRA Business Plan Projections

- 5.14 The HRA has been projected over 30 years and is highlighted in Appendix 2. However, due to the major changes to the system due in 2012 / 13, only the short to medium term (5 years) can be treated with some degree of certainty. Rent policy after rent restructuring is not yet known and will also have a major bearing on the business plan going forward. The plan identifies the ability to repay the increased borrowings associated with self –financing and it is based on the existing rent increase policy of RPI +0.5% continuing over the life of the plan. This is consistent with the model used by Government to determine the settlement payment and therefore it is likely that any future government policy change will need to identify appropriate funding.
- 5.15 Changes to the right to buy regulations have been examined and an increase in sales from 20 properties to 30 properties in 2012/13 has been included rising to 50 for the following 3 years and then back to 30 thereafter as a prudent estimate.
- 5.16 In addition Planned Maintenance activity, including the capital programme, has been reworked in the model based on Asset Management projections. The recommendations above regarding the base budgets and growth items have been modelled and Appendix 2 shows the effect of these recommendations. The capital programme assumptions include maintaining all dwellings at the existing approved standard.
- 5.17 The HRA is projected to generate an annual surplus, based on latest Asset Management information, sufficient to commence a repayment of debt programme in 2021/22 with all existing forecast debt repaid by 2036/37. Other borrowing requirements may be necessary in the future and repayment dates will be identified in any future submissions.
- 5.18 The Business Plan projections highlight balances in line with the level recommended in paragraph 5.1 above. This should allow the council to deal with any unknown or unexpected challenges that may occur in the coming years from management of existing stock.

6 Comments of Other Committees

The time constraints regarding the introduction of self financing prevented this report from being presented to Overview & Scrutiny Committee however a retrospective copy will be provided together with the offer to attend a future meeting to provide a full explanaition of the proposals if required.

7 Conclusion

The self - financing proposals including the national rent policy have been fully examined and are projected to be beneficial to the council. Balances remain healthy throughout the 30 year period and the new debt taken on in 2011/12 of £137m is projected to be repaid by 2036/37.

8 Appendices

- 1 HRA Budget 2011/12 and 2012/13
- 2 HRA Business Plan to 2024/25

9 Background Papers

- '1' HRA detailed 30 year business plan
- '2' Repairs and maintenance 30 year programme
- '3' Supervision & management 30 year budgets profile
- '4' Dwelling units and average rent profile
- 5' Capital expenditure 30 year programme

	201	1-12	2012-13
	REVISED	PROBABLE	BASE
	BUDGET	OUTTURN	BUDGET
INCOME			
Rent Income - Dwellings Rent Income - Non Dwellings Charges for Services & Facilities - Tenants Charges for Services & Facilities - Leaseholder	(28,463,600) (1,769,700) (1,390,600) (595,000)	(28,401,600) (1,752,121) (1,374,805) (605,416)	
	(32,218,900)	(32,133,941)	(33,935,000)
EXPENDITURE			
Repairs & Maintenance Supervision & Management Special Services Housing Subsidy Depreciation & Impairment of Fixed Assets Increase/Decrease in Provision for Doubtful Debts	8,135,000 6,139,700 1,821,700 7,468,800 5,020,400 100,000	7,833,848 5,986,500 1,738,637 7,478,800 5,020,400 180,000	8,785,000 6,107,000 1,880,000 Nil Nil 207,000
	28,685,600	28,238,184	16,979,000
NET COST OF SERVICE	(3,533,300)	(3,895,757)	(16,956,000)
Capital Charges Revenue Contributions to Capital	1,866,300 1,580,000	1,866,300 1,580,000	8,031,000 10,376,000
(Surplus) / Deficit	(87,000)	(449,457)	1,451,000
Reserves Balance - Brought Forward Balance - Carried Forward	(9,160,700) (9,247,700)	(9,530,621) (9,980,078)	(9,980,078) (8,529,078)
	(0,= 1,100)		(0,0-0,010)

Note: Subsidy system disbanded March 2012. Depreciation now adjusted out of the account as a technical accounting adjustment and is replaced by Revenue contributions to the capital programme.

HRA Business Plan

Appendix 2

	Fore	cast		Business Plan				
	Mar-12	Mar-13	2012/2017	2017/2022	2022/2027	2027/2032	2032/2037	2037/2042
Income								
Rent Income - Dwellings	(28,402)	(30,307)	(164,154)	(195,167)	(225,323)	(254,530)	(287,553)	(324,822
Rent / Other Income - Non Dwellings	(1,752)	(1,647)	(8,726)	(9,890)	(8,874)	(10,040)	(11,359)	(12,852)
Charges for Services & Facilities - Tenants	(1,375)	(1,371)	(7,016)	(7,344)	(7,950)	(8,860)	(9,890)	(11,055
Charges for Services & Facilities - Leaseholder	(605)	(610)	(3,284)	(3,905)	(4,574)	(5,325)	(6,159)	(7,133)
	(32,134)	(33,935)	(183,180)	(216,306)	(246,721)	(278,755)	(314,962)	(355,862
Expenditure								
Repairs & Maintenance	7,834	8,785	46,149	44,904	53,352	55,970	70,002	75,420
-	7,834 5,987	8,785 6,107	46,149 29,784	44,904 32,676	36,970	41,828	47,324	53,543
Supervision & Management Special Services	1,739	1,880	9,825	11,116	12,576	41,828	16,099	18,126
	1,739 7,479	1,880	9,825	0	12,576	14,229	16,099	18,120
Housing Subsidy Depreciation & Impairment of Fixed Assets	5,020	-	-	0	-	-	-	_
Increase/Decrease in Provision for Doubtful Debts	180	207	1,088	1,231	1,393	1,576	1,827	2,068
	28,238	16,978	86,846	89,927	104,291	113,602	135,253	149,150
Net Cost of Service	(3,896)	(16,956)	(96,334)	(126,379)	(142,430)	(165,153)	(179,709)	(206,70
Net Cost of Bervice	(3,898)	(10,950)	(90,334)	(120,379)	(142,430)	(105,155)	(179,709)	_ (208,70
Capital Charges	1,866	8,031	40,211	38,748	30,822	22,947	11,324	- 3,110
Revenue Contributions to Capital	1,580	10,377	58,664	54,187	86,205	100,771	110,813	152,88
-							·	
Net Operating Expenditure / (Income)	(449)	1,451	2,541	(33,445)	(25,403)	(41,435)	(57,571)	(56,930
Reserves								
Balance - Brought Forward	(9,531)	(9,980)	(9,980)	(7,440)	(10,884)	(6,287)	(7,722)	(15,562
Debt Repayment				30,000	30,000	40,000	49,732	0
Balance - Carried Forward	(9,980)	(8,529)	(7,440)	(10,884)	(6,287)	(7,722)	(15,562)	(72,492