

OFFICERS' COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The following sets out comments by officers on a proposal offered up in the budget amendment. Members of the Council should take this advice into consideration when considering and debating the amendment in question.

Proposal

Discontinue East End Life and carry out statutory advertising through other newspapers releasing £250k of saving.

Corporate Director's Comments

There is an ongoing Review of East End Life which is due to report by May 2011 and as part of this work the financial impact and effect on Council services of alternative approaches is being assessed. These figures are therefore based on a number of assumptions.

Currently East End Life provides a medium which assists in achieving the Council's duty to inform and also provides advertising space for the Council, including unavoidable advertising of statutory notices and highly desirable marketing of Council services, including housing opportunities.

The saving of £250,000 assumes the full costs of East End Life net of external advertising revenue would be saved, and it allows for the Council to set aside £265,000 in the General Fund budget to pay for statutory advertising and a small amount for other desirable advertising. This is about half of the amount that Council departments currently spend on advertising in East End Life and thus the proposal assumes that Directorates would review and reduce their advertising spending as a result of no longer having East End Life available to them. Part of the Mayor's review will need to look at how feasible or desirable it is for the Council to reduce its level of advertising in print media in this way.

With the exception of statutory notices, which under current law must be published in print, there are alternative cheaper marketing routes available, notably the internet, although it is arguable that increasing use of the internet over print media would tend to exclude people without access to technology from access to Council services.

In addition, current rate cards for alternative print media in the Tower Hamlets area suggest that if East End Life was discontinued, there is a risk that the cost of advertising for the Council could rise considerably. This risk is not reflected in the figures used in the proposal.. No other publication in Tower Hamlets currently reaches as many people as East End Life, so achieving the same 'reach' is likely to

involving advertising in more than one newspaper; again that would tend to increase costs. Members need to be aware, therefore, that if they wish the same level of publicity for services with the same reach as currently achieved by East End Life the cost to the Council will almost certainly be higher than the status quo position

Finally there would be one-off redundancy costs to consider which could be in excess of £300k.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

At this stage of the Mayor's review there remains considerable uncertainty about the assumptions used to work up the various cost options set out in this proposal. As the review finalises, these numbers will need to be validated and as a result of this validation, the numbers may change. What is very clear, at this stage, is that the respective of cost/savings models associated with the status quo, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly or ending publication are very close and small changes in assumptions either way can have a considerable impact on the value for money assessment and bottom-line cost. For example, costs for the external publication of statutory notices will not be fully known until a tendering exercise is completed and contracts awarded.

Members need also to be aware that the above figures have been calculated on the basis of a very minimal approach to external advertising. It means, for example, that notices, such as the Housing Choices adverts, will not be published in the same form or with the reach as currently achieved through East End Life. If Members wish to continue with the prevailing approach and coverage for these items, the costs will be considerably more than set out in this proposal.

This proposals ask Council to reduce the communications budget on the assumption that £250K can be saved from ceasing publication of East End Life. If, as a consequence of completing the review, it is clear that this saving cannot be achieved, or that an alternative option is better value for money, this is something the Mayor will need to consider in the context of spending within budget during 2011/12.

Members also need to be advised that redundancy costs associated with this proposal have been estimated to be £300,000. These would need to be accounted for either before the saving could be taken by the Council (i.e. no saving in 2011/12 and a part year effect in 2012/13) or would be a call on general fund balances. This would have the effect of reducing general balances below that which is recommended to Council in the budget report pps 305-307 ..

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

The councils HR procedures would need to be followed

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	Yes	East End Life is used by the council to promote access to services. In particular access to statutory notices and Housing Choices notices will be significantly reduced unless alternative budget provision is made elsewhere in the budget for the provision of these services
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	Yes	Without regular provision of information to the housing list some vulnerable residents could miss the opportunity to apply for vacant properties. East End Life also advertises Council services which might not come to the attention of people who could potentially benefit from them.
Does the change involve revenue raising?	Yes	The council will need to advertise in other sources for statutory notices and this could result in a net cost to the council thus requiring identification of alternative revenue sources.
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	No	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	No	

CHANGES TO STAFFING		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	Yes	Discontinuing East End Life would lead to a reduction in staff numbers.
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	Yes	Discontinuing East End Life would lead to a reduction in staff numbers and a redesign of roles for remaining staff.

**OFFICERS' COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL
BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

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Proposal

Reduce Senior Staff Salaries

Corporate Director's Comments (Corporate Director- Resources)

If the saving was delivered in the manner indicated the saving would be made.

However the Council cannot unilaterally change a person's contract of employment and at this stage we could not predict the outcome of negotiations. If the Council wanted to enforce the changes, it may be necessary to enter a change process that could result in severance payments to officers.

There is a risk that the saving would not be delivered with effect from 1st April and in that case only a part-year effect would be realised. In that event savings would need to be found in other ways or the balance would fall to reserves as an overspend at the end of the year.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

See above

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	NO	
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	NO	
Does the change involve revenue raising?	NO	
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	NO	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	NO	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	NO	

CHANGES TO STAFFING

Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	NO	The effect of the proposal would be a reduction in the salaries of certain senior staff.
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	NO	

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Proposal

Staff Salaries Settlement

Corporate Director's Comments (Corporate Director- Resources)

The cost of a £250 pay rise to staff earning under £21,000 would be approximately £750,000 and if there is no pay award to staff this year (which is subject to a national agreement) the contingency would not be required for this purpose.

There are two main risks around this;

- Although the Local Government Employers Organisation has made no pay offer to the staff side, this is a matter for negotiation over which the Council has no direct control.
- Inflation generally is currently running at a rate much higher than the 2% allowed for in the contingency.

It is therefore possible that this contingency may be required to cover the costs of pay awards or inflation. If the saving is taken, this budget pressure would need to be funded in other ways, if necessary through additional savings.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

See above

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

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Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	NO	
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	NO	
Does the change involve revenue raising?	NO	
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	NO	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	NO	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	NO	

CHANGES TO STAFFING

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Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	NO	

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Proposal

Special Responsibility Allowances: Abolish Special Responsibility Payments for Chairs of Licensing, Appeals, General Purposes, Audit, Human Resources Committees and the Olympics Ambassador. Saving proposed = £47,157

Corporate Director's Comments

The proposals are lawful and can be implemented on the decision of the Council.

The abolition of the SRAs listed would yield the savings figure shown in a full year.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

None

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

The proposal is lawful if decided by full council.

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

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Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	NO	
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	NO	
Does the change involve revenue raising?	NO	
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	NO	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	NO	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	NO	

CHANGES TO STAFFING**Does the change
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OFFICERS' COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The following sets out comments by officers on a proposal offered up in the budget amendment. Members of the Council should take this advice into consideration when considering and debating the amendment in question.

Proposal

Language Extension Classes, also known as 'Mother Tongue Classes'

Set up a private trading company to provide extra-curricular language classes to make service cost neutral and protect it in the long-term.

Expand coverage of world languages covered by these classes eg. Russian, Portuguese, Italian.

Corporate Director's Comments

In theory it would be possible to set up an arms length management company, but this would bring with it management costs and considerable set up time and running costs which would be an additional burden on resources.

Although it is possible in theory, the business case would not likely be viable as we would need to make the staff redundant, with the additional cost of this, and there would be no guarantee of buy back to sustain a trading company.

One of the strengths of the current service is the close links with local community groups, which both host and sometimes staff the service. This has great advantages in terms of cohesion as well as language development which might be lost in an arms length company.

The additional languages listed above are already provided as mother tongue classes.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

The proposal would require a fully worked up business case before agreement.

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

Any staffing implications will need to be dealt with in accordance with Council HR Policies.

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	Yes	The change might reduce resources by introducing charges to a previously free of charge service
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	Yes	Yes it might as above
Does the change involve revenue raising?	Yes	It is unlikely that charges to pupils would ever meet the full costs of staffing
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	Yes	Children from poorer families might have problems in accessing
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	No	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	Yes	As above
CHANGES TO STAFFING		
Does the change involve a	Yes	TUPE would apply but there may not be full level buy back

reduction in staff?		
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	Yes	This is possible with an arms length company running the service

OFFICERS' COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The following sets out comments by officers on a proposal offered up in the budget amendment. Members of the Council should take this advice into consideration when considering and debating the amendment in question.

Proposal

Single Person's Discount on Council Tax

Corporate Director's Comments (Corporate Director- Resources)

The proposal in the pack on page 208 (IO/4 Improved income collection, debt management and fraud prevention) involves a stretch target to reduce the rate of claims for single person discount to 33% in 2011/12, moving down to 30% by 2013/14. Officers believe the target indicated is achievable in the longer term and the risk will be that the further stretch will not be achieved in 2011/12.

The target can only be achieved if there are sufficient people currently mistakenly or fraudulently claiming single person discount and the Council can identify and deal with these cases.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

This proposal can be included in the budget but for the reasons set out above there is a considerable risk of non – achievement which will increase the likelihood of an overspend in 2011/12.

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	NO	
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	NO	
Does the change involve revenue raising?	YES	The proposal would recover additional Council Tax income from residents who are currently erroneously or fraudulently claiming a Single Person discount in contravention of Council Tax legislation.
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	NO	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	NO	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	NO	

CHANGES TO STAFFING

Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	NO	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	NO	

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The following sets out comments by officers on a proposal offered up in the budget amendment. Members of the Council should take this advice into consideration when considering and debating the amendment in question.

Proposal

Events - Savings comprising of:

Reducing the budgetary impact of the annual fireworks display. Inviting Hackney to contribute to the event, to make it a joint production. Or failing Hackney taking up their share of the responsibility, ensure more "bang for our buck".

Halve the Tower Hamlets Council contribution to the Greenwich and Docklands International Festival

Halve the Tower Hamlets contribution to the Spitalfields Music Festival

Corporate Director's Comments

Fireworks - Approaches have been made to Hackney in the past and they have steadfastly refused to contribute to the annual fireworks event in Victoria Park.

50% cuts to Greenwich and Docklands and Spitalfields Festivals for 2011 - 12. - In keeping with the Council's third sector strategy both these organisations are on three year SLA's which cover next financial year. The notice required to terminate or alter contract sum is six months, so for 2011-12 they should have been notified before the end of September 2010.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

None

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	Yes	Failure to receive contribution from Hackney could result in reduced or cancelled fireworks event
Does the change involve revenue raising?	Yes	From London Borough Hackney
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	No	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	No	
CHANGES TO STAFFING		

Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	

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Proposal

Consultants

Corporate Director's Comments (Corporate Director- Resources)

The use of consultants is currently increasing and is likely to increase further over the next few years as the authority seeks to implement large scale and complex solutions to cost reduction that are outside the capacity of officers and in some cases require specialist skills and knowledge that the Council doesn't possess in-house. These costs would need to be met from such places as invest to save reserves and contingencies if not from existing budgets.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

The Majority of Consultants spend in the Council is funded from non re-occurring sources of funding such as Capital or Grants. Examples include the BSF programme and the Councils major regeneration Scheme. It is unlikely therefore that there is ongoing revenue saving that can arise from this proposal. Members should be assured that Consultants spend in recent years has been less than 0.05% of Council Spend.

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

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Does the change involve revenue raising?	NO	
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Proposal

Conferences, Advertising, Newspapers and Periodicals

Corporate Director's Comments (Corporate Director- Resources)

The proposal on page 183 of the pack (ALL/1 Directorate Supplies and Services Efficiency) involves reducing discretionary expenditure such as for conferences and advertising by applying a target to each Directorate's budget. Officers believe this is a challenging target, especially in the context of other similar exercises in previous years. Any additional savings over and above add to the risk that the targets will not be achievable.

Advertising enables the Council to raise awareness of its services, draw attention to consultations and other matters of importance to local residents and advertise employment vacancies. Some advertising is statutory and cannot be avoided.

Staff attendance at conferences is often useful in enabling learning and development and networking that benefits the Council.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

See above

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	NO	
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	YES	A reduction in advertising could feasibly reduce awareness of Council services and thus reduce access to service for individuals without access to other sources of information.
Does the change involve revenue raising?	NO	
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	NO	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	NO	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	NO	

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Proposal

Cut 'In The News' to release savings of £7,500

Corporate Director's Comments

'In The News' is a weekly electronic copy of coverage received by the council in the local, regional, national and trade media which is circulated to councillors. It is a by-product of the council's analyses of how service information and the council's corporate priorities are conveyed in the media to residents.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

None

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

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Proposal

Film Officer -Film Officer to make a contribution to main budget of £48,000 (represents levering in an additional 25% of funding through film location contracts)

Corporate Director's Comments

Films location income - The income derived from film locations is dependant upon the levels of activity taking place in the borough. There is little scope for increasing charges as it is likely we would lose income to other competing boroughs. It is therefore difficult to set increased income targets as the business is market dependant and will fluctuate up and down each year. The contractor does market the borough and this is reviewed regularly, Tower Hamlets is already one of the busiest boroughs for filming in London.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

For the reasons set out above, members can set this as an aspirational target however there are significant risks that it won't be achieved.

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	No	
Does the change involve revenue raising?	Yes	Additional income from organisations utilizing facilities
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	No	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	No	

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Proposal

Council Subscriptions to Organisations

Corporate Director's Comments (Corporate Director- Resources)

The Council can make a decision to withdraw from these organisations if it wishes.

The Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) is an organisation which provides policy advice, learning and development programmes, events and conferences, consultancy and other resources to its members and other organisations.

The New Local Government Network campaigns for a more devolved constitutional settlement in the UK, to drive forward the localism agenda and press for further decentralisation of power from Whitehall. It provides independent research, events and advocacy to central and local government partners.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

No Comments

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

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CHANGES TO STAFFING

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OFFICERS' COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

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Proposal

Pot Plants – Reduction in Facilities Management budget, with savings to be primarily achieved through ending all spending on buying and maintaining pot plants.

Corporate Director's Comments

There is a long term fixed value contract for the provision of pot plants in administrative buildings. That contract (which is for some £80k over 4 years) does not expire until 2012/13.

If LBTH were to withdraw from the contract then it is likely that a significant proportion of the remaining contract amount (i.e approximately £ 52,200) would still be payable as a LBTH's outstanding obligation under the contract terms. It might be possible to dispute this sum but, again, any legal costs that might be incurred in doing so could possibly outweigh any benefit to be gained from early contract termination.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

This saving could be pursued but for the reasons set out above there is a considerable risk of non achievement.

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

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Proposal

Provide an Additional 17 Police Officers

Corporate Director's Comments

17 police officers would require £680k for each year (minimum contract period 2 years). It would also require the agreement of the Borough Commander.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

None

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

It will require renegotiation of a contract with Met Police.

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

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Proposal

ESOL - Provide an additional gross 500 places to clear the waiting lists for ESOL courses.

Corporate Director's Comments

The funding proposed would contribute to reducing waiting lists for ESOL. The unit cost proposed is reasonable.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

No additional comment

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	Yes	Provides more opportunity for accessing service
Does the change involve revenue raising?	No	
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	No	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	No	
CHANGES TO STAFFING		

Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	

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Proposal

Road Maintenance -Double the Council's spend on road repairs in 2011/12 to take account of the high wear and tear caused by the hard winter

Corporate Director's Comments

Funding would be targeted at repairing damage caused by severe weather experienced earlier this winter.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

None

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

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staff?****No**

OFFICERS' COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The following sets out comments by officers on a proposal offered up in the budget amendment. Members of the Council should take this advice into consideration when considering and debating the amendment in question.

Proposal

Wapping Road Maintenance - Repairs to Wapping Wall and Wapping High Street including repairing the sinking road, potholes and cobbles.

Corporate Director's Comments

Funding would be targeted at repairs and remedial works to those areas of the road in most urgent need of attention.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

None

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	NO	
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	NO	
Does the change involve revenue raising?	NO	
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	NO	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	NO	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	NO	

CHANGES TO STAFFING**Does the change
involve a
reduction in staff?****NO****Does the change
involve a redesign
of the roles of
staff?****NO**

**OFFICERS' COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL
BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

The following sets out comments by officers on a proposal offered up in the budget amendment. Members of the Council should take this advice into consideration when considering and debating the amendment in question.

Proposal

Provide additional Dog Wardens (x2), Litter Wardens (x2) and Park Warden(X2)

Corporate Director's Comments

Streetcare Officers operating to a generic job specification and from localised offices will in future undertake the roles of litter and park wardens. Additional funding would be utilised to supplement the existing staffing compliment as it would be to supplement animal warden resources.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

None

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	No	
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	Yes	Provides more resources, increases options for service users
Does the change involve revenue raising?	No	
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	No	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	No	

CHANGES TO STAFFING**Does the change
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OFFICERS' COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The following sets out comments by officers on a proposal offered up in the budget amendment. Members of the Council should take this advice into consideration when considering and debating the amendment in question.

Proposal

Mudchute Children's Centre, Isle of Dogs

Provide capital funding to expand the buildings. This will enable the nursery provision to be doubled from 18 to 36 baby places, the playgroup provision to be doubled from 16 to 32 places, it will provide an additional 20 places for children at the breakfast club, an additional 20 places in the after school club, and allow the centre to take in up to 20 children each day during school holidays under an emergency holiday scheme. They have enough children on their waiting to immediately fill all new places that become available.

Capital spending for 2011-12: £590,750

Corporate Director's Comments

Mudchute was included in the capital round of the Early Years funding from the DfE in July 2010. The DfE withdrew £1.7m of capital funding for private and voluntary Early Years capital mainly for schemes such as Mudchute, which had not got to final contract close.

While there is undoubtedly need for additional places all settings need to be mindful of the additional revenue costs associated with expansion and the viability in the future of the provision.

There is no capital in CSF for this type of non-statutory provision.

To date there have been no announcements from the DfE of future funding for private and voluntary sector early years providers. Officers would advise members to consider the needs of the whole borough before deciding to fund this particular centre.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

The Chief Financial officer would advise members to consider the needs of the whole borough before deciding to fund this particular centre.

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	Yes	Proposal provides additional places which could mean additional resources to address inequality, but a further appraisal of provision for the whole borough would determine whether this proposal optimises the increase from an equalities perspective.
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	Yes	As above
Does the change involve revenue raising?	No	
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	No	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	No	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	No	

CHANGES TO STAFFING		
Does the change involve a reduction in staff?	No	
Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff?	No	

**OFFICERS' COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL
BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

The following sets out comments by officers on a proposal offered up in the budget amendment. Members of the Council should take this advice into consideration when considering and debating the amendment in question.

Proposal

Docklands Heritage Boards

Corporate Director's Comments (Corporate Director- Resources)

It is estimated that each board would cost £600 to replace on a like for like basis.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

None

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	NO	
CHANGES TO A SERVICE		
Does the change alter access to the service?	NO	
Does the change involve revenue raising?	NO	
Does the change alter who is eligible for the service?	NO	
Does the change involve a reduction or removal of income transfers to service users?	NO	
Does the change involve a contracting out of a service currently provided in house?	NO	

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**OFFICERS' COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL
BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY**

The following sets out comments by officers on a proposal offered up in the budget amendment. Members of the Council should take this advice into consideration when considering and debating the amendment in question.

Proposal

Increase Contingency by £457,099

Corporate Director's Comments (Corporate Director- Resources)

The Council can make a decision to increase contingencies and this would increase the Councils capacity to deal with risk. This would offset some of the risks to which attention has been drawn in other comments relating to this amendment.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

See above

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	NO	
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OFFICERS' COMMENTS ON ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSAL BY THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY

The following sets out comments by officers on a proposal offered up in the budget amendment. Members of the Council should take this advice into consideration when considering and debating the amendment in question.

Proposal

Move £1m from General Reserves to a Reserve to Repay Debt With Excessive Interest Payments.

Corporate Director's Comments (Corporate Director- Resources)

The Council's overall debt is not particularly high compared with other similar authorities. However the Council does hold some debt at high interest and currently the HRA Subsidy rules mean it is not in the Council's financial interests to redeem that debt. When the HRA Subsidy is abolished, which is expected to be in 2012/13, the opportunity will be available to reduce costs by redeeming high interest debt. One way of signalling the Council's intention to do this would be by putting money aside in a reserve such as this.

Officers advice is that General Reserves need to be held at a level around the upper end of the policy range, 7.5% of budget requirement, because of the increased risks facing the Council as a result of funding cuts and other economic pressures. The allocation of an additional £3m to the reserve would meet this target and would ensure that General Reserves are replenished. Appendix F in the Budget Pack (pps 305-307) sets out this advice in detail.

However moving £1m of this money to a reserve to pay off debt would retain it for the Council and it would be available for other purposes if required, subject to a Cabinet decision.

Any additional comments of the Chief Finance Officer

See above

Any additional comments of the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal Services)

None

Equality Impact Assessment: Test of Relevance

TRIGGER QUESTIONS	YES / NO	IF YES PLEASE BRIEFLY EXPLAIN.....
Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality?	NO	
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