

Budget Submission 2008/09 (Additional Information on Savings Proposals)

Agency Fees

Currently a number of EH budgets contain provisions for agency fees. These are used to; buy in expertise not available in-house, provide cover for critical services arising from sickness and to support areas where there is no budget, for example out of hours enforcement, or insufficient budget, for example advertising (there are several statutory provisions in relation to licensing that require the Council to publish public notices in newspapers).

These budgets would provide a saving of £10 000 however, this would mean a wholesale reduction in the level of out of hours work that could be carried out, (in particular Licensing Enforcement). The current dependence on contractors has been reduced but not eliminated by the recent recruitment of new staff. Also many of the services offered by the Environmental Health team have little or no redundancy or surge capacity, critical services such as pest control, licensing, contaminated land and LA-PPC are particularly vulnerable to long-term sickness or similar issues. The removal of these budgets will significantly increase the likelihood of inability to provide critical services

Pest Control Charges

The pest control service is budgeted to provide £20 000 income in 2008/9. This is a combination of a £10 000 internal recharge to the Housing Services team and £10 000 income from external contracts. The effect of LSVT will mean it will no longer be possible to recharge as the RSL has opted not to continue using the Council's pest control service. This will effectively mean a reduction in income of £10 000.

However, the Council in common with all other neighbouring Authorities continues to offer a free rodent (rats and mice) control service to all residents in the District. There is potential for the imposition of a standard one off fee for rodent treatments. Excluding the current Council housing stock the pest control service provides in excess of 1000 treatments per year. Therefore an income of £10 000 can be generated for each £10 charged. Applying the current standard treatment fee of £34 gives anticipated income of £34 000.

However, such an approach would be higher controversial and potentially fraught with problems.

- The imposition of the fee is likely to discourage many people from reporting rodent problems. Thereby meaning infestations will not be reported at an early stage when they are more easily contained and eradicated.

APPENDIX B

- Area or block treatments, (an effective approach for large-scale infestation) may prove problematic if some residents pay and others refuse.
- Enforcement powers will have to be used far more frequently. Whilst usually effective this process is slow and can tie up large amounts of Officer time.
- Any increases in the local rodent population will also carry an associated risk of an increase in communicable diseases.