

## **Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08**

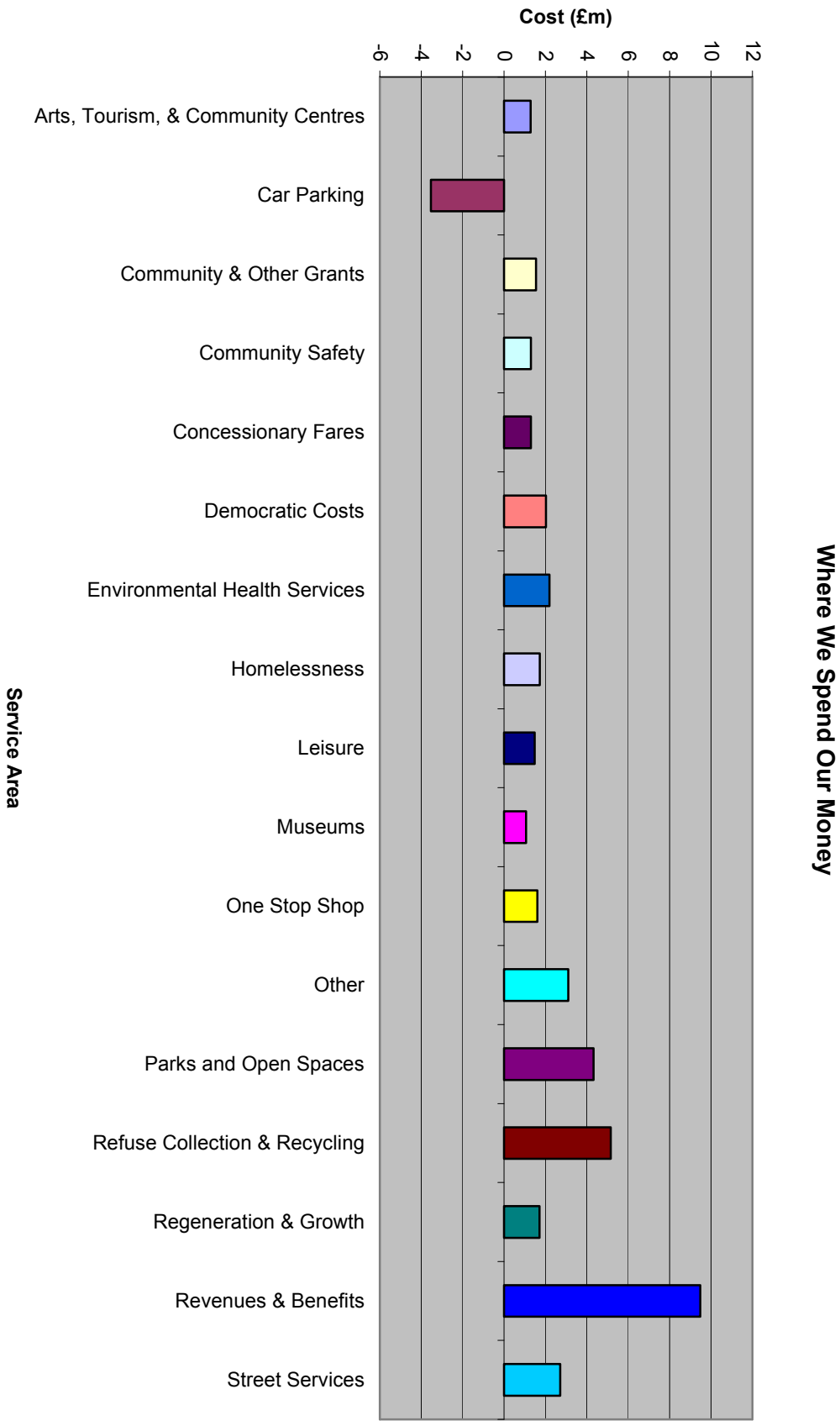
### **Northampton Borough Council 2007/ 08 Budget Consultation**

**During the current administration the council has been refocussing the budget to ensure that it is balanced and to create a sustainable future focussed on the statutory needs of the citizens of Northampton and to deliver the regeneration agenda for the Borough.**

**In 2005/ 06 the council restructured its senior management team and in 2006/ 07 it further restructured the rest of the council which resulted in approximately £3 million savings to the budget. In 2007/ 08 the council will also need to make a further £1.1million of savings to budgets across the whole organisation to help reduce costs further. This will include improving the way in which we make necessary purchases, sharing costs with other councils through more efficient partnership working and utilising technology to better effect.**

**The council has also been working to improve its weakest services following the Comprehensive Performance Assessment in 2004 and has made some significant achievements in key service areas. However, it still needs to look at how we deliver services and prioritise those which it has a statutory requirement to deliver. It also needs to consider whether it can continue to provide some of the discretionary services that the council has historically provided or whether these can be provided in different ways.**

**Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd**



**Regen**

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

### Regeneration of Northampton

The council is primarily committed to the regeneration of Northampton, particularly the town centre, given the prospective population growth. This will be achieved by using capital receipts. We are working energetically towards the improvement of Northampton, the regeneration of our town and renewing its economic vitality. We are working hard with partners to see this moving in the following ways:

- Engaging with the private sector to deliver a major improved retail offer for Northampton.
- Working closely with Legal & General to deliver an improved, expanded and high quality Grosvenor Centre.
- Creating an enhanced theatre district as part of a newly vibrant cultural quarter in the town centre.
- Set new standards of town centre mixed-use development through developing opportunity sites.
- Rediscover the waterside by reconnection of the town centre with the river through new and improved public routes.
- Improve public safety through careful design of all new developments.
- Currently delivering enhanced public open spaces in deprived areas of the town.
- In partnership with English Partnerships and WNDC, delivering brownfield sites for new housing and creation of new jobs.
- The opening of the new link road, Edgar Mobbs Way, in November 2006 improves access to the town's football and rugby clubs and provides further benefits of reducing air and noise pollution in residential areas and enhances Northampton's flood protection,

## **Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd**

- The creation of country wildlife parks with improved access.
- Working with Northampton University to plug the brain drain and create opportunities for new business.
- Attracting inward investment from all sectors.

### **Budget challenges**

A number of budget challenges have been identified in current and future years, and a range of policy options have been generated to meet the potential budget shortfall.

The council has initiated a major efficiency drive and value for money campaign where the aim is to drive down costs while maintaining the same levels of front-line service to customers. Examples of what we are doing here include improving procurement of necessary purchases, sharing costs through more efficient partnership working, and utilising technology to better effect.

An unexpected but welcome take up of the concessionary travel scheme for older people (a new national scheme introduced in April 2006) has led to additional spending of £1 million, the largest in a number of budget challenges in the current year.

A number of major service budgets that were carried forward into the current year from previous years were not realistic and do not match current or expected activity levels. Major variances have arisen in relation to income from car parks (£808,000), trade waste (£400,000), and markets (£232,000).

Another significant and unbudgeted cost burden has been increased energy and fuel prices. Energy consumption at the council's leisure centres alone has risen by more than £100,000 in the past year.

In all of these areas, the budget shortfall will continue into future years unless addressed now as part of the future budget setting exercise.

## **Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd**

### **Policy options for the budget savings**

The following options have been identified as ways in which the Council can vary the services it provides in order to ensure that it can address the potential budget shortfall of £3.5 million in 2007 - 2008.

Some of the services the council provides are statutory services, which means that the Council has to provide them but has some choice about the way and frequency with which it provides them.

Other services that the Council provides are discretionary, for example supporting local community centres and providing grants to local voluntary organisations.

The following are OPTIONS (either, or, or all) and of necessity involve staff. Any member of staff affected by the uptake of any option has been informed in advance and should it be necessary will have the benefit of full consultation and redeployment processes.

The purpose of this consultation is to outline the potential savings that could be made by varying the way in which we provide the services we have to provide and changing or stopping some of the services and grants that we currently choose to provide.

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

### Net budget shortfall

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	Savings Options	
				2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>1 Net Funding Shortfall</b>                      This is the net funding shortfall after efficiency savings (still to be fully costed) and before consultation items below.                      See Appendix 1 from Budget report (19/12/2006)</p>	-	-	3,500	2,884	2,308

### Council tax

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	Savings Options	
				2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>2 Council Tax Increase</b>                      The current budget has been built on a 3% Council Tax increase for 2007/08 and onwards. One per cent of council tax represents revenues of £130,000. This proposal would be achieved by increasing the Council Tax to 5% in 2007/08.</p>			-260	-260	-260

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

### A. Housing Services and Money Advice Centre

The council currently has five district housing offices providing services which could be reduced to three by refocusing service delivery on Neighbourhood boundaries with additional services being provided through the One Stop Shop in the town centre. This would also release accommodation currently used as office space back into the housing stock. The integration of the Money Advice Service to the other benefits advice services provided in the One Stop Shop would also provide savings through release of additional accommodation. Further savings could be found through ceasing the council's discretionary services in relation to energy efficiency whilst maintaining those services it has to provide. Total savings which could be made by changing the way in which these services are provided would be £123,000 in 2007/ 08.

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<b>23 Private Sector Housing</b> Only administer the mandatory aspect of energy efficiency (not continuing with the non-mandatory aspects). This complements efficiency savings identified of £175k.	p40	480	-10	-15	-15
<b>24 Environmental Health</b> Only undertake mandatory activities which will reduce non-mandatory activities like safe cycle routes and encouraging healthy eating. In conjunction with the above, this amounts to 1fte post.	p40	1,110	-10	-15	-15

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>25 District Offices</b>                      Refocus district offices on neighbourhood boundaries and reduce from 5 to 3. This would involve closure of Spring Boroughs and Kings Heath, would help deliver staffing efficiency savings in the one stop shop, and release an additional property in to the housing stock. Also avoids ongoing maintenance liability.</p>			-3	-5	-5
<p><b>26 Housing &amp; Money Advice</b>                      Reconfigure service to relocate and integrate with one stop shop and improve access to advisory services (including Benefits). Impact is 4 fte but vacancies exist plus use of agency staff.</p>	p95	460	-100	-130	-130



## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

### B. Street Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance

The council currently provides weekly cleaning of housing estates and grounds maintenance services for the town's premier and outlying parks and open spaces. It also provides a rapid response service for the removal of fly-tipping and services to remove graffiti. Reductions in the frequency with which these are provided could provide savings of up to £835,000 in 2007/ 08

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>27 Street Cleaning</b> Reduce service by 10%. Housing estates cleaned once every 3 weeks rather than weekly plus fly-tipping response time extended to one week. Town Centre frequencies maintained. Impact is 8 fte posts.</p>	p72	2,240	-130	-200	-200
<p><b>28 Street Cleaning</b> Further reduce service by additional 5%. Fly tipping response extended to two weeks, road sweeping reduced from weekly to fortnightly for main town 'gateways' and to monthly for housing estates. BVPI 199 (Street Cleanliness etc.) likely to become bottom quartile. Impact is 4 fte posts.</p>	p72	2,240	-65	-100	-100

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>29 Street Cleaning</b> Further reduction by 15% reduces fly tipping response times to 1 month, road sweeping to 3 weekly for key routes and monthly for housing estates and key 'gateways'. Town Centre cleaning reduced to alternate days.</p>	p72	2,240	-180	-250	-250
<p><b>30 Weed Spraying</b> Reduction from 4 sprays to 2 sprays per annum. Through re-timing the sprays this should potentially have minimal impact. Spot treatment of problem areas will be undertaken as required. This option has no direct staffing impact.</p>	p72	2,240	-30	-30	-30
<p><b>31 Grounds Maintenance</b> Reduce Grounds Maintenance service for outlying parks and open spaces by reducing from weekly to fortnightly grass cut. (Note: 156 parks and open spaces maintained in total). Impact is loss of 6fte staff.</p>	p72	3,370	-100	-170	-170
<p><b>32 Grounds Maintenance</b> Further reduction in Grounds Maintenance service to include premier parks and open spaces as above plus loss of seasonal bed planting and some reduction in winter pruning. Impact is a further loss of 3fte staff.</p>	p72	3,370	-50	-80	-80

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>33 Grounds Maintenance</b> Further reduction in maintenance to further reduce frequency of cuts, loss of rose gardens at premier parks and reduction in standards of sports facilities. Impact is loss of 5fte staff.</p>	p72	3,370	-90	-150	-150
<p><b>34 Grounds Maintenance</b> Further reduction to involve removal of staff from premier parks and loss of bowling green maintenance standards. Impact is loss of 4fte staff.</p>	p72	3,370	-70	-110	-110
<p><b>35 Graffiti Removal</b> Reduce graffiti removal but continue to prioritise removal of sensitive material (e.g. racist graffiti). Team currently comprises 4 vehicles each with a crew of 2. Reduction of 50% would mean non-sensitive graffiti would still be removed but would take longer (say up to 25 days).</p>	p72	2,240	-60	-120	-120
<p><b>36 Graffiti Removal</b> Cease removal of graffiti in total. This option is in addition to the Graffiti Removal option above.</p>	p72	2,240	-60	-120	-120

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

### C. Parks and Public Amenities

The council currently provides six park rangers to inspect the town's parks and public open spaces as well as maintaining public conveniences at 15 sites across the town. Reductions or ceasing to provide these services could result in savings of up to £350,000 in 2007/08.

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<b>37 Park Rangers</b> Reduce service from 6 to 2 staff, one to cover main premier parks and one to cover outlying open spaces but at reduced coverage. Monthly inspections would continue whilst all premier parks would be subject to daily service though less frequent than at present.	p72	240	-110	-170	-170
<b>38 Park Rangers</b> Removal of the Park Ranger service in its entirety (additional to above).	p72	240	-40	-70	-70
<b>39 Public Conveniences</b> Closure of all except Sheep Street (i.e. 15 blocks currently covered by a mobile team of 2 cleaners who are agency staff). No toilets would be available in premier parks but noting that these are in need of capital investment to bring up to a reasonable standard.	p72	290	-150	-180	-180

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<b>40 Public Conveniences</b> Closure of Sheep Street in addition above.	<b>p72</b>	<b>290</b>	-50	-100	-100

### D. Community Safety and Wellbeing

Northampton Borough Council has invested heavily in community safety and wellbeing over the years. As a result we have an extremely well equipped CCTV control centre watching over our town, and have been recognised nationally for pioneering the CASPAR projects and tackling anti-social behaviour at a neighbourhood level. The council intends to continue to invest in CCTV and values this service. There are some areas, however, in which savings could be made by reducing some of the services it provides which support community development work and require closer working with partner agencies in future, including reductions in the anti-social behaviour unit and health, wellbeing and access services. The council could also decide to not invest further in the Neighbourhood Warden Service, which would mean that the service is not increased, or to discontinue the service entirely. The total savings which could be made as a result of these proposals would be £600,000 in 2007/ 08.

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<b>14 Community Safety</b> The Community Safety service to be reprioritised in order to reduce 2 out of 3 posts. This would reduce the level of activity on gating orders, crime prevention advice, drugs education, research, benchmarking etc. Reduction in the scale of the activity would require prioritisation of activity and a greater cooperative working with other agencies and	<b>p29</b>	<b>1,000</b>	-40	-50	-50

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

partners.

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>15 Anti-Social Behaviour Unit</b> Reduce the NBC contribution to the ASB Unit service. This activity is a partnership between the council and the Police that coordinates local agencies tackling anti-social behaviour. It manages individual cases, prepares cases for legal or quasi-legal intervention including ASBOs. The unit employs 2ft caseworkers and the major part of 1fte support officer. The police have one full time officer attached.</p>	p29	1,000	-50	-70	-70
<p><b>16 Health, Wellbeing &amp; Access</b> Discontinue the Health, Wellbeing &amp; Access service. This service is currently part of the Community Safety service and was set up to coordinate health related services across the council in relation to the Local Area Agreement. There has not been significant progress in view of other competing priorities. Responsibility is currently assigned to one fte who is also responsible for access and services to disabled people.</p>	p29	50	-35	-50	-50

**Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd**

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>17 Neighbourhood Warden Service</b>                      Maintaining the Neighbourhood Warden Service at its current level of 17 staff and realigning the service to 'neighbourhood management areas' as opposed to wards. This would save 8 posts but note that these are not all fully funded in the base budget.</p>	p71	560	-100	-100	-100
<p><b>18 Neighbourhood Warden Service</b>                      Remove the Neighbourhood Warden Service entirely. This saving is in addition to the Neighbourhood Warden Service option above.</p>	p71	560	-375	-460	-460

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

### E. Community Centres and Community Grants

The council currently has staff working in 22 Community Centres providing caretaking and maintenance work. 16 of these are currently managed by local community groups although the council still meets some of the costs of upkeep. This could be reduced, either by transferring the responsibility for the operation of the centres to the community groups who manage them or by closing those which the council manages currently. The council could also reduce the amount of community grants it provides by half or cease to provide a budget for community grants. The council would still continue the support it provides to the Dial-a-Ride scheme. The total saving which could be made by reducing these non-statutory services would be £600,000 in 2007/ 08.

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>19 Community Centres</b>            There are approximately 25 directly employed staff working in 22 Community Centres of which 16 are self-managed, although some costs (caretaking, maintenance) are still met by the Council. This service is non-statutory. This option is to reduce the level of Council financial support by transferring responsibility for the operation of the centres to local community groups or by closure whilst at the same time reducing the level of support to others.</p>	p29	380	-25	-50	-50



## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>20 Community Centres</b> Reduction in Community Centre budgets. This option is to further reduce the support to Council operated Community Centres by transferring responsibility for the operation of the centres to local community groups or by closure. At the same time support to self-managed community centres would be reduced. This option is in addition to the Community Centres option above.</p>	p29	380	-25	-50	-50
<p><b>21 Community Grants</b> Reduction in Community Grants by 50% (excluding Dial-a-Ride). Bids for grant would be invited, considered against an overall grant framework and against Council priorities prior to the decision of actual grants to be awarded by Cabinet.</p>	p30	620	-275	-275	-275
<p><b>22 Community Grants</b> Discontinue Community Grants (excluding dial-a-ride). This saving is in addition to the Community Grants option above.</p>	p30	620	-275	-275	-275

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

### F. Tourism, Arts, Leisure and Sport

Northampton Borough Council has traditionally provided a wide range of leisure, sports arts and events for the people of Northampton. While these have provided a great deal of enjoyment and entertainment to many the Council is under no legal obligation to provide such services and could make some significant savings by making changes to these services. These changes include closing the Lings leisure centre which now requires significant investment and invest further to improve other leisure centres within the town, increases in some charges for leisure facilities to reflect the increases in energy costs required to run them, and reductions in the support given to tourism, sports development and local events management. The total savings which could be made through these changes would be £1,155,000 on 2007/ 08.

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>3 Leisure Centres</b>            Improvement of other facilities across the borough linked to the closure of Lings leisure centre. There are about 40 staff, many of who are part-time and/or casual. Building is in need of significant investment. Disposal of the site would realise a capital receipt that can be reinvested in part to refurbish and upgrade other leisure facilities (where current requirements are about £1m.). Current users could probably become users of other council leisure facilities.</p>	p39	810	-150	-225	-225

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>4 Leisure Centres</b> There has been a national increase in energy costs. This proposal is to recover these increased energy costs through leisure centre charges with immediate effect.</p>	p39	810	-100	-100	-100
<p><b>5 Arts Development</b> Provide the Arts Development service differently. Currently one member of staff in post and 3 vacancies. The unit promotes and organises artistic and cultural activity in the community and the work to some extent overlaps with that of the events team and the museum service.</p>	p29	190	-160	-190	-190
<p><b>6 Events</b> Active management of and support to events other than provision of essential licensing and monitoring of events organised by third parties on council land to be provided through others. This service includes the direct management of the Balloon Festival. Of 4.7fte posts, 1 is vacant and one would be retained.</p>	p29	200	-165	-180	-180
<p><b>7 Licensing &amp; Supervision of Community Events</b> See above. Require this activity to cover costs by making economic charges to events organisers.</p>	p29	200	-15	-20	-20

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
<p><b>8 Tourism</b> Provide the tourism service through other agencies. There are no directly employed staff in this service but redundancies may have to be made by Explore Northants.</p>	p29	280	-130	-175	-175
<p><b>9 Tourism</b> Discontinue the tourism service in its entirety by withdrawal of all funding from Explore Northants. This option is in addition to the Tourism service option above.</p>	p29	280	-75	-100	-100
<p><b>10 Sports Development</b> Consider working with NCC and other parties in order to provide the sports development service by 50%. Service currently employs 3ft staff and 6pt staff, the latter as 'community coaches'. The service also employs additional temporary staff during the summer period. The aim is to provide young people with practical and social skills and to divert them from potential anti-social behaviour and crime.</p>	p39	140	-40	-70	-70
<p><b>11 Sports Development</b> Discontinue the Sports Development service. This service incorporates leisure staff working with the community to reduce anti-social behaviour.</p>	p39	140	-40	-70	-70

**Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd**

<b>Notes</b>	<b>Budget Book reference</b>	<b>Base Budget £000s</b>	<b>2007/08 £000s</b>	<b>2008/09 £000s</b>	<b>2009/10 £000s</b>
<p><b>12 Christmas Lights</b> The Town Centre Christmas lights from Christmas 2007 onwards not to be provided by the borough but the business community to be engaged as in other towns.</p>	<b>p73</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>-80</b>	<b>-80</b>	<b>-80</b>
<p><b>13 Community Grants - Royal &amp; Derngate</b> Phased reduction in the grant to the Royal &amp; Derngate Theatre Trust. This would be combined with negotiations with partners to increase their contributions. Any reduction would need to be phased and the actual amount shown opposite is simply one option for discussion.</p>	<b>p30</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>-200</b>	<b>-300</b>	<b>-400</b>

## Budget Consultation Options for Savings 2007/ 08 cont'd

### G. Civic newspaper

The council produces a 16 page magazine, "Northampton now", that is distributed quarterly to households throughout Northampton. The proposal is to cease production and distribution of "Northampton now". To continue to produce and distribute the magazine to its current standard would cost £80,000 per annum. The saving is based on an historical budget of £30,000.

Notes	Budget Book reference	Base Budget £000s	2007/08 £000s	2008/09 £000s	2009/10 £000s
41 Civic Newspaper Cease production of the Civic newspaper	p29	310	-23	-30	-30

### ***Total of budget policy options for consultation***

42 Total of Consultation items Additions may be made to this if proposals are brought forward during the consultation period.			-3,946	-5,195	-5,295
--	--	--	--------	--------	--------