

48/07 (2) - **Economic Development Unit:** The Leader was invited to present the budget. The Leader outlined the approach taken to the budget, the key issues and the key variations, the proposed efficiency savings and the main risks to the budget and advised that there were no growth items. He commented that the budget comprised seven cost centres which were core EDU, Regeneration Team, Conyngham Hall, Innovation Centre, Renaissance Knaresborough, Ripon SRB and Workshops. The strategy of the budget was to provide services through sustained growth in earned income aligned to efficiencies from adoption of new technology.

The variances produced a net decrease of £360,000 on the 2007/08 Original Estimates. Individual Variances included £15,000 contribution to Leeds City Region Secretariat, £13,000 increased contribution to Nidderdale Plus Partnership, a variance of £197,000 in LAGBI Grant income and a new post within EDU self funded by DDS as part of a restructure of the Property and Economic Development Division. In relation to efficiency savings it was noted that £15,350 had been identified and that fees and charges for Conyngham Hall Room and Service charges had been set to rise between 3.2 % and 10% (4.83% average). He concluded by highlighting the main risk to the budget which was the reliance on earned income and extent to which this was dependent on external factors.

Questions were then invited and there was a discussion regarding the work carried out by the various regeneration partnerships and the extent to which this produced quantifiable outcomes. The Director of Development Services highlighted the difficulties in quantifying outcomes from public realm improvements but did confirm that evidence (e.g. from Ripon) suggested the Partnerships were generally successful in improving the economic prospect of the areas that they served.

Members accepted the budget.

(Eight Members voted for the motion and there were two abstentions)

(5.50 pm - 6.00 pm)