

BUDGET SCRUTINY – 2024/25 Savings

November 2023

BUDGET PROPOSALS OVERVIEW

- The business case proposals have been prepared by the Directorates, supported by Finance, HR, Legal and the Community Impact Team.
- There are 53 proposals which are considered to be achievable in 2024/25. Some proposals will continue into 2025/26.
- Some proposals require investment and further investigation before the full outcomes can be established. These are marked with a * and are at outline business case stage. The costs will be financed from the transformation budget / the capital programme. Scrutiny in February 2024 will be used for an update on any necessary proposals.

BUDGET PROPOSALS OVERVIEW

Members are asked to:

- act as a critical friend in objectively assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the proposals;
- ask Members or Directors for any explanation or information needed to better understand the proposals;
- consider the Community and Equality Impact assessments;
- make recommendations to Officers to improve proposals;
- provide commentary and recommendations (including any alternative options) to Cabinet to consider when making decisions.

Cabinet will receive a report on the 13th December 2023 to consider taking forward those that are appropriate at that time

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

When considering the proposed revenue savings attention is drawn to the Council's overall financial challenges for overall context.

The Council has 4 major streams of budget reductions which are underway:

- selling £1.035bn of investments to the fullest extent possible (to be determined) to pay down debt;
- generating over £100m of capital receipts to also pay down debt;
- reducing reliance on borrowing to fund the general fund capital programme to avoid increasing debt;
- saving £18.2m from the revenue budget for next 2 years and a further £13.65m for each of the following 3 years.

2023/24 Portfolio Budget Summary

Portfolio	Expenditure	Income	General Government Grants	Specific Government Grants	Net Budget
Children Services & Housing	48.9m	(2.2 m)		(10.5 m)	36.2m
Education	18.0m	(5.4 m)	(0.6 m)	(2.6 m)	9.4m
Environment, Economic Development and Directional Leadership	37.8m	(11.8 m)			25.9m
Finance, HR and Payroll	12.1m	(0.7 m)			11.4m
Health, Adult Health, Community and Public Protection	80.8m	(14.2 m)		(8.2 m)	58.4m
Regeneration and Highways	26.6m	(9.2 m)	(0.7 m)	(0.3 m)	16.4m
Transformational Change, Communications and Governance	13.5m	(1.8 m)			11.7m
Grand Total	237.6m	(45.3 m)	(1.3 m)	(21.6 m)	169.4m

The above excludes:

Better Care Fund (BCF)

Dedicated Schools Budget (DSG)

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Public Health Grant (PHG)

Central Financing and Treasury – Council Tax & National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

2024/25 Savings Proposals - Summary

2024/25 Target £18.20m
Identified to date £18.21m

Portfolio and Holder	Saving Proposals 2024/25 £000's
Children Services & Housing - Cllr Barry Johnson	473
Education - Cllr Adam Carter	781
Environment, Economic Development and Directional Leadership - Cllr Andrew Jefferies	3,722
Finance, HR and Payroll - Central Financing - Cllr Graham Snell	2,780
Finance, HR and Payroll - Cllr Graham Snell	743
Health, Adult Health, Community and Public Protection - Cllr George Coxshall	2,164
Regeneration and Highways - Cllr Ben Maney	1,493
Transformational Change, Communications and Governance - Cllr Deborah Arnold	202
Cross-cutting	5,851
Grand Total	18,210

The revenue proposals do require a level of capital and revenue transformation costs. These are **provisionally** detailed below:

Savings Proposal	Proposed Saving 24/25 £000's	Proposed Redundancy Costs 24/25 £000's	Proposed Transformation Cost 24/25 £000's
Revenue costs:			
CTS0001- S117 Reviews to Improve Efficiencies	367	-	150
CTS0006- Review of Care Packages	832	-	239
CTS0015- Commissioning Review - LD and MH Services	125	-	182
CTS0082- Civic Centre Energy Efficiency Review	30	-	30
CTS0125- Sports, Recreation & Leisure Management	77	96	-
CTS0126- Contracts & Disposal Management	105	121	-
CTS0137- Trade Waste	200	-	25
CTS0226- Home to School Transport - Policy update and post 16 charging policy	37	-	20
CTS0307- Review of Directorate Support	33	TBC	-
CTS0127- Street Scene Management	100	33	-
CTS0304- Review of Technical Support Team	80	10	-
CTS0305- Business Improvement and Performance Management	87	155	-
CTS0309- Public Rights of Way Structure	24	24	-
CTS0310- Highways and Transportation Service Management	106	55	-
CTS0320- Review of Depot and Stores	33	9	-
CTS0321- Emergency Planning and Public Protection Management	103	TBC	-
Total estimated revenue costs	2,340	504	646
Capital costs:			
CTS0107- Moving Traffic Offences	348	-	498
CTS0136- Waste Collections	2,551	-	850
CTS0201- Contact Management*	977	-	2,000
Total estimated capital costs	3,876	-	3,348
Total	6,216	504	3,994

Key Issues

Children Services & Housing

- No reduction in front line children's social work staff – or impact on safeguarding responsibilities
- Spans of control have been reviewed which has enabled a realignment and reduction in management.
- Introduction of a strengths-based model in 2018 has seen a reduction in demand. A Think Family and family hubs approach has meant an improved focus on managing support at an early help stage and reduction of children requiring a statutory service.
- A focus on achieving health financial contribution to complex placements via continuing health care (CHC) will achieve this saving.

2024/25 Savings Proposals

Children Services & Housing

Savings Proposal	Group / Directorate	£000's
CTS0013- Growing Portfolio of Temporary Accommodation	Adults, Housing & Health	140
CTS0029- Review of Social Care	Children's Services	233
CTS0027- Review of cases to secure appropriate Health Contribution	Children's Services	100
Grand Total		473

Key Issues

Education

- Realignment of skills (Inspire) into economic development will offer a more streamline service to residents and local employers
 - A reduction in youth provision and careers support.
- Inspire – moved towards only providing a statutory minimum service will result in a reduction in careers advisors and employability & skills provision.
- Providing post 16 SEND transport is not a statutory duty. We are reviewing our policies and procedures in line with our section 114 duties.
- Work is being undertaken with schools to identify ways in which we can reduce overall SEND transport costs and a better experience for children and young people.

2024/25 Savings Proposals

Education

Savings Proposal	Group / Directorate	£000's
CTS0028- Education and Skills Transformation	Children's Services	378
CTS0216- Inspire - Employability & Skills Saving	Children's Services	221
CTS0217- Home to School Transport - Review of Minibuses and Taxis	Children's Services	145
CTS0226- Home to School Transport - Policy update and post 16 charging policy	Children's Services	37
Grand Total		781

Key Issues

Environment, Economic Development and Directional Leadership

- Spans of control have been reviewed which has enabled a reduction in posts where work can be absorbed.
- Building ownership for the pending changes amongst teams whilst balancing the exit strategy of employees leaving the organisation will be carefully managed and supported.
- The move from weekly to alternate weekly kerbside recycling collections will not lead to a reduction in front line staff across the Directorate therefore low risk of service failure.
- The introduction of a Borough wide weekly food waste collection service in September will be supported by an extensive education and support programme for residents to drive and support behavioural change.
- The creation and mobilisation of a new paid-for garden waste collection service will require dedicated multi directorate resources assigned to work at pace.
- Opportunities to generate income and build efficiencies into current service delivery models have been explored and included.

2024/25 Proposals

Environment, Economic Development and Directional Leadership

Savings Proposal	Group / Directorate	£000's
CTS0098- Deletion of Land Charges Manager	Public Realm	69
CTS0109- Review Intelligence Officer Post in Counter Fraud & Investigation	Public Realm	47
CTS0124- Client Support Officer tasks moved to Support & Performance team	Public Realm	45
CTS0125- Sports, Recreation & Leisure Management	Public Realm	77
CTS0126- Contracts & Disposal Management	Public Realm	105
CTS0136- Waste Collections	Public Realm	2,551
CTS0137- Trade Waste	Public Realm	200
CTS0307- Review of Directorate Support	Public Realm	33
CTS0209- Parks and Open Spaces*	Public Realm	273
CTS0304- Review of Technical Support Team	Public Realm	80
CTS0310- Highways and Transportation Service Management	Public Realm	106
CTS0320- Review of Depot and Stores	Public Realm	33
CTS0321- Emergency Planning and Public Protection Management	Public Realm	103
Grand Total		3,722

Key Issues

Finance, HR and Payroll

Finance:

- Implementation of the new finance structure.
- Council tax base and continued good performance.
- Business Rates reflects the benefits of pooling.

HR & Payroll:

- Driving digital efficiencies through self-service and automation.
- Controlling 'people' spend and reviewing pay.
- Workforce Planning and development to support change.
- Implementation of new senior structure.

2024/25 Proposals

Finance, HR and Payroll

Savings Proposal	Group / Directorate	£000's
CTS0312- Business Rates Retention Pooling 2024/25	Central Financing	1,750
CTS0318- Council Tax Base Increase	Central Financing	1,030
Grand Total		2,780

Savings Proposal	Group / Directorate	£000's
CTS0214- People and OD Team	HRODT	240
CTS0118- Finance restructure and related matters	Finance	503
Grand Total		743

Key Issues

Health, Adult Health, Community and Public Protection

- Ability to manage both demand and the market sufficiently to be able to 'control' spend remains a challenge in the context of demographic pressures
- Workforce: Risk of declining morale in front line ASC teams as capacity vs demand gap grows. We have seen an uptick in Care Act Assessment waiting lists.
- Capacity to implement the integrated care strategy – we must guard against a shift from prevention to crisis management; it is our whole systems integrated strengths-based model that keeps our cost base low in terms of preventing placement demand
- Maintaining relationships and partnership working with health during change process

Key Issues

Health, Adult Health, Community and Public Protection

- Maintaining safe, high-quality care noting increasing demand
- Impending Care Quality Commission inspection of Adult Social Care presents additional capacity challenge. Risk of reputational damage if efficiencies are shown to impact upon quality of service.

2024/25 Proposals

Health, Adult Health, Community and Public Protection

Savings Proposal	Group / Directorate	£000's
CTS0001- S117 Reviews to Improve Efficiencies	Adults, Housing & Health	367
CTS0004- Review Charging Policy for Assistive Technology	Adults, Housing & Health	50
CTS0006- Review of Care Packages	Adults, Housing & Health	832
CTS0011- Direct Debits	Adults, Housing & Health	106
CTS0015- Commissioning Review - LD and MH Services	Adults, Housing & Health	125
CTS0021- Expansion of Community Led Support Teams	Adults, Housing & Health	72
CTS0133- Housing First	Adults, Housing & Health	50
CTS0319- Caring for Thurrock	Adults, Housing & Health	562
Grand Total		2,164

Key Issues

Regeneration and Highways

- Addressing outstanding rents reviews and lease renewals to increase rental income from leased properties
- Introduction of an allocation scheme and charging for staff parking in both the Civic Centre and Council operated car parks
- Replacing (midnight to 6 am) contract security guards in Civic Centre with improved CCTV coverage and an incident call out service
- Working with businesses to sponsor Christmas tree and lights in Grays
- Review of FM contracts and introduction of energy efficiency measures

2024/25 Proposals

Regeneration and Highways

Savings Proposal	Group / Directorate	£000's
CTS0077- Rent Reviews	Place	650
CTS0079- Car parking at Civic Offices and Staff Parking Permit Scheme	Place	86
CTS0080- Remove outsourced night-time security guards at Civic Office and Town Hall	Place	63
CTS0082- Civic Centre Energy Efficiency Review	Place	30
CTS0085- Remove subsidy on Christmas Lights	Place	15
CTS0107- Moving Traffic Offences	Public Realm	348
CTS0127- Street Scene Management	Public Realm	100
CTS0211- Outsourced Daytime Security at Town Hall	Place	90
CTS0305- Business Improvement and Performance Management	Public Realm	87
CTS0309- Public Rights of Way Structure	Public Realm	24
Grand Total		1,493

Key Issues

Transformational Change, Communications and Governance

- Driving efficiencies through automation of processes
- Review of communications operating model
- Deletion of vacancies and reengineering of activities

2024/25 Proposals

Transformational Change, Communications and Governance

Savings Proposal	Group / Directorate	£000's
CTS0314- Strategy Team Senior Management Restructure	Strategy, Engagement and Growth	58
CTS0316- Reduction in central communications budget	Strategy, Engagement and Growth	10
CTS0117- Customer Services Vacancy and Customer Contact Association (CCA) Accreditation	Strategy, Engagement and Growth	83
CTS0315- Removal of specialist agency budget within Performance, Quality & Intelligence (PQBI)	Strategy, Engagement and Growth	52
Grand Total		202

2024/25 Proposals

Cross-cutting

Savings Proposal	Group / Directorate	SRO	£000's
CTS0201- Contact Management*	Council-wide	Dave Smith	977
CTS0203- Corporate Services*	Council-wide	Dave Smith	1,788
CTS0202- Workforce Planning and Agency Spend *	Council-wide	Jackie Hinchliffe	2,530
Grand Total			5,295

Savings Proposal	Group / Directorate	SRO	£000's
CTS0087- Mail and Print Service Review	Council-wide	Mark Bradbury	39
CTS0130- Stationery Budget	Council-wide	Mark Bradbury	53
CTS0212- Learning and Development Budget	Council-wide	Jackie Hinchliffe	139
CTS0055- Fees and Charges	Council-wide	All	325
Grand Total			556

TOTAL CROSS CUTTING			5,851
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The first tranche of cross cutting proposals are at Outline Business Case (OBC) stage and require further work.