

Birmingham City Council

Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee

17 May 2024



Subject: Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group meetings

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1 Purpose

- 1.1 To enable Co-ordinating OSC to consider the key issues, comments and recommendations from the 8 Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group meetings held in April 2024.

2 Recommendations

That the Committee considers the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group meetings and requests the relevant Cabinet Members and Directorates to respond to the recommendations set out below:

- 2.1 The Cabinet member for Digital, Culture, Heritage, and Tourism should engage Cabinet Member for Transport to ensure that the necessary discussions take place to achieve delivery of savings under 175 (5G small cell and LoRaWan)
- 2.2 That there is a robust corporate process to monitor the use of Public Health funds and ensure compliance with the 7 Memoranda of Understanding, including how risks are escalated to the Corporate Risk Register (Savings 211,89,96,35,155,156,163).
- 2.3 There is a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the Adult Social Care savings on carers. This is an issue where the Health and Adult Care OSC could add value during the 2024/25 work programme.

- 2.4 That assurance is provided to the Health and Adult Care OSC as part of the 2024/25 work programme that the delivery of the savings 126 and 130 (Review of Care Centre Model, Review of Day Centre Model) is based on best practice, assessed needs as well as delivery of the financial targets.
- 2.5 That Adult Social Care identifies best practice from other areas relating to Shared Lives and this informs the implementation of this saving. Members also want assurance that the delivery of saving 139 takes account of the drop-out rate for some people recruited as Shared Lives Cares.
- 2.6 That Leisure Services continue to monitor and update the equalities impact assessment and the members requested copies of The Active Wellbeing Society service specification (saving 56) and to be updated on the development of the systems approach to leisure services funding.
- 2.7 Savings 10: That in delivering saving 10 Revenues and Benefits continues to develop the holistic and preventative approach to collect outstanding council tax and business rates ensuring staff are able to sign post residents and businesses to other sources of support.
- 2.8 Saving 10: That Revenues and Benefits monitors the productivity of the new staff to ensure that working from home arrangements do not restrict the sharing of good practice within the team and information sharing.
- 2.9 Saving 4: That within the new enforcement staff team recruited to undertake the enforcement work resource is dedicated to building relationships and communication with the Business Improvement Districts and that this work is linked with other services across the Council that also work with the BIDs.
- 2.10 Saving 3: That the Council continues to seek alternative funding to provide non-statutory benefits advice.
- 2.11 Saving 3 (Review of Benefits Advice Team): That while the non-statutory Benefits Advice Team does not function, services across the Council work collaboratively to provide early help and intervention advice including benefits advice. These include the Neighbourhood Advice and Information Service and work delivered through the Cost of Living Crisis programme.
- 2.12 Saving 3 (Review of Benefits Advice Team): That Council communications include information to signpost residents to places where advice of benefits is available.
- 2.13 Saving 105 (Business Improvement and Support Re-design) : That work should continue at pace on delivery of saving 105 and where possible delivery should be brought forward to 2024/25.
- 2.14 Saving 9 (Additional income generated through the Government's New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme): That there is a joined up approach across Council services to maximising the opportunities from bringing empty homes back into use e.g. working with the temporary accommodation to use properties to address the shortage of long term accommodation in the City.

- 2.15 Saving 216 (Debt recovery consolidation): That members are kept informed to monitor progress of the work during 2024/25 to ensure delivery of the saving in 2025/26 including an assessment of the level of risk for the debt types to be recovered.
- 2.16 Saving 216 (Debt recovery consolidation): Once the saving starts the delivery should be monitored to ensure financial delivery of the saving and also customer satisfaction.
- 2.17 Saving 216 (Debt recovery consolidation): That the Council builds on the learning from this savings to identify areas across the Council where services can be consolidated resulting in a more joined up service, better outcomes for residents and efficiencies that deliver financial savings.
- 2.18 Saving 188 (Contract Management Efficiencies) : That the results of the analysis of contracts across the organisation is shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 2.19 Saving 228 (Fees and Charges): That City Operations explores the opportunity to charge for damage to pavements as a result of construction work on adjacent properties.
- 2.20 Saving193 (Early Intervention and Prevention – Library and NAIS re-design) : The consultation process should be well managed and executed properly to enable residents and other key stakeholders to contribute meaningfully.
- 2.21 Cross cutting recommendation: As a principle, where possible, savings identified for 2025/26 should be brought forward to the current financial year to compensate for savings where slippage may occur.
- 2.22 That there is a robust corporate process to ensure that documentation on the delivery of savings is up to date and shared with Overview and Scrutiny Committees in a timely way. Where actions / risks are not completed, as they are dependent on the outcome of consultation or other processes, this should be clearly explained.

3 Background

- 3.1 During the 2023/24 financial year all Overview and Scrutiny Committee's reviewed the delivery of in year savings. Following the agreement of the 2024/25 budget at City Council on 5 March 2024 the Overview and Scrutiny Committees will continue to monitor the delivery of the savings identified in the budget.
- 3.2 It was agreed at Co-ordinating OSC on 19 March 2024 that all Overview and Scrutiny Committees would hold Task and Finish Group meetings ~~during April~~ to consider the savings within the Committees' terms of reference..

4 Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group Meetings

- 4.1 The Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group meetings were held between 9 – 25 April 2024 and the recommendations from this work are set out in Section 2 of

the report. During these meetings members considered progress in delivery of savings, risk and impact.

4.2 The work of the Task and Finish Group provided a forum for robust challenge and benefited from the organisational knowledge members had of previous strategies, policies and programmes when many senior officers are relatively new to the organisation.

4.3 Cabinet members along with Senior Officers, attended the Task and Finish Group meetings, to provide updates on the savings proposals for their areas.

5 Any Finance Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Progress on the delivery of the 2024/25 savings will be reported to future Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

6 Any Legal Implications

6.1 The delivery of some of savings proposals, are subject to public consultation; the Council maintains an open-minded approach during these consultations, considering feedback to shape final proposals presented to decision makers.

7 Any Equalities Implications

7.1 The Council has a Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 The protected characteristics and groups outlined in the Equality Act are Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion and Belief; Sex, and Sexual Orientation.

7.3 The Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them during work programme development, the scoping of work, evidence gathering and making recommendations. This should include considering how policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share a relevant protected characteristic; whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate; whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Birmingham; and whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people are being realised.

7.4 The Committee should ensure that equalities comments, and any recommendations, are based on evidence. This should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

7.5 The Task and Finish Groups made comments / recommendations relating to the impact of savings on the following groups:

- Vulnerable adults (Saving 6)
- Carers (Adult Social Care Savings)
- Access to leisure services and the effect on health and wellbeing for those on low incomes (Savings 52 and 56)
- Impact for families and mitigating actions relating to the review of non-statutory transport packages (Post 16) (Saving 150)

8 Appendices

None

9 Background Papers

9.1 Budget agreed at City Council 5 March 2024: [CMIS > Meetings](#)