

Appendix B: Corporate and Finance Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 24/25 Savings Summary

Summary

The Council's 2024/25 budget was agreed by City Council on 5 March 2024. The budget included 166 specific savings proposals designed to deliver £149.765m during 2024/25 and a further £76.323m in 2025/26.

Below (see Table 2) is the list of savings that fall under the Corporate and Finance OSC. A summary description of each of the savings proposals has also been included below.

There are a total of 39 proposals totalling £19.959 m in 24/25 and a further £33.392 m in 25/26 that fall under this Committee from across Adult Social Care, City Operations, Council Management, Strategy, Equality and Partnerships (SEP) as well as a number of cross cutting savings.

The delivery status of each of these proposals is currently being reviewed and further information on progress will be shared with the Committee at the next savings update session.

As part of the monitoring process each proposal will be risk rated using the RAG approach to indicate the level of confidence we currently have in achieving the full target in year. The RAG definitions and criteria are included below for reference (see Table 1). Savings of high value and those assessed as high risk will be subject to a more detailed monitoring and assurance process that will be overseen by the Council's Portfolio Management Office and Finance to ensure risks are identified early and appropriate actions are taken swiftly.

Relevant service delivery leads and finance business partners will be available at future meetings to talk through progress on the proposals and the action being taken to ensure successful delivery of the agreed savings targets.

Table 1: Criteria for determining the RAG status of savings

RAG Assessment Guidance				
Assessment Criteria	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk	Delivered
Savings RAG	Saving / income delivery plan unclear and / or not specified at adequate granular level. - and / or - Inadequate plan / no plan agreed. - and / or - Major risk of not delivering saving / income within agreed timeframe, leading to slippage or non-delivery.	Saving or income delivery plan lacks some clarity and / or not detailed at an adequately granular level but agreed plan in place to resolve and being actively managed. - and / or - Some risk of not delivering full saving within agreed timeframe, leading to slippage.	Saving or income detail documented and robust plan in place to deliver agreed targets, showing when and who is responsible. - and / or - Saving / income will be delivered within agreed timeframes.	Saving or income realised and evidence provided that costs have been reduced or income achieved.
<i>Headcount Example</i>	<i>Headcount saving proposed, but specific post to be deleted or timescales not yet agreed. No work is currently progressing to resolve this.</i>	<i>Budget Manager has confirmed that posts (to agreed value and timing) will be vacated and deleted from budget but this has not happened yet or is delayed.</i>	<i>Timescales and the specific posts to be vacated / deleted have been agreed and on track.</i>	<i>Officer has departed, budget has been reduced and posts have been deleted from the approved establishment.</i>

Table 2: Savings that fall within the Coordinating Committee

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
221	EIP	More efficient use of BCC Operational Estate - Resident Facing Community Assets	This saving proposal aims to bring together all community facing assets, targeting support to core hubs only. Spokes and non statutory assets will be considered for transfer to the community or possibly closed. There will be engagement with communities to discuss whether community groups could sustainability take over the running of these assets.		2.000	N/A	N/A
178	DTS	Digital and Technology Services Redesign	A review of the service structure, prioritisation of core services, and review of vacant positions.	2.200	2.200	N/A	N/A
103	DCS	Voice Automation within Contact Centre Services	Voice Automation technology will offer an additional access channel for customers and release call handlers from low complexity calls	1.490	1.690	The introduction of digitalisation / voice automation should be a priority but not through forced channel shift, with opportunities identified in other directorates to increase savings.	Agreed. This forms part of a key cross-cutting savings proposal.
144	Legal Services	Restructure and redesign	Proposed reorganisation of structures within Legal and Governance; change delivery of service, efficient ways of working and reduction in headcount.	0.835	1.114	N/A	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
100	DTS	Ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services, by removing telephone lines and mobile phones (Analogue, mobile and land lines).	Reducing numbers of mobile phones in the organisation and taking out analogue telephone lines savings on calls costs and line costs.	0.370	0.370	N/A	N/A
177	DTS	DTS staffing and licence savings for smaller organisation	Review of team sizes where lower volumes of calls are expected in a smaller organisation	0.250	0.400	N/A	N/A
101	DTS	Transforms service delivery to reduce costs, via third party contracts and greater utilisation of commercial relationship	Reviewing Technology platforms, consolidating where appropriate, maximising relationships with key suppliers.	0.220	0.220	N/A	N/A
119	Legal Services	Counsel Spend Reduction	Proposal to reduce spend on external counsel	0.118	0.118	N/A	N/A
175	DTS	5G Small Cells and LoRoWAN	Enabling private sector to use council lampposts to host sensors or 5G small cells for a fee.	0.115	0.168	The income from this proposal should be benchmarked against other authorities and work taken forward with the West Midlands Combined Authority to maximise income from 5G.	Agreed. This research informs this saving

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
						<p>Assurance is needed that the income includes any costs of testing the structural integrity of the lamp posts.</p> <p>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)</p>	Agreed. This has been considered in the delivery approach.
121	Governance	Review of election and committee structure	Proposed to change service delivery; non recruitment to vacant posts and headcount reduction.	0.098	0.130	N/A	N/A
102	DTS	Reduction in agency costs	Improved efficiency in service area, less agency top-up staff required	0.080	0.080	N/A	N/A
118	Legal Services	In-sourcing	Proposal to bring a proportion of legal work back in house from outsource partners to reduce costs.	0.075	0.100	N/A	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
145	Legal Services	Governance efficiencies – fewer meetings/clerking	Reduction in Scrutiny Committees and Full Council meetings, resulting in reduction in headcount and reduction in special responsibility allowances.	0.057	0.066	The number of O & S Committees will be reduced from 8 to 7 with an ensuing SRA saving. Regulatory, Executive and Council arrangements and saving proposals will need to be formulated in the Cabinet response to these recommendations.	Agreed. This is being considered by Legal Services.
123	Governance	Transport for Members (Taxi / Rail)	Proposed reduction of costs by changing how this is currently delivered to be more efficient and cost effective.	0.010	0.010	N/A	N/A
120	Legal Services	Review current contracts for best value - subscriptions / case management system.	Review of current subscriptions/ICT provision to maximise efficiency of service delivery and reduce costs.	0.006	0.006	N/A	N/A
215	DCS	Business Improvement & Support Consolidation	Consolidate administrative activity, where appropriate, across the Council into the existing Business Support function	0.000	0.300	Consideration should be given to bringing some of these savings forward to 2024/25 and ensuring the workload for staff is deliverable.	Agreed. Saving Proposal #105 in 2024/25 is already included in plans to re-design the business support function.

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
104	DCS	Contact Centre SLA reduction from 90% to 85%	Proposal to reduce the call handing service level within the contact centre which will enable a saving to be achieved through the removal of agency posts		0.050	N/A	N/A
217	DCS	Customer contact consolidation	Where appropriate, consolidate customer service contact across the Council into the existing Customer Service Contact Centre		0.219	N/A	N/A
190	Cross Cutting	Automation of Manual Processes	Using technology to complete repetitive manual tasks, and release savings in service areas	0.000	0.200	N/A	N/A
191	Cross Cutting	Greater use of digital tools	Using our digital tools more creatively to reduce administrative effort, processing errors and improve customer service.	0.000	0.200	N/A	N/A
142	Across various SEP services	Review of spans and layers and reorganisation of services within the directorate	A reduction in staff expenditure through a review of spans and layers and reorganisation of services within the directorate.	1.780	1.930	N/A	N/A
143	Across various SEP services	Return non-pay inflation and other budget efficiencies	A reduction in expenditure on non-staff budgets across services within the directorate.	0.667	0.667	N/A	N/A
10	Revenues and Benefits	Increased tax collection - Additional Recovery Team	Income generation – employ additional staff to deal with outstanding council tax and business rate debts. Includes	3.840	3.840	That in delivering saving 10 Revenues and Benefits continues to develop the holistic and preventative	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
			proactive work to identify financial problems at an earlier stage.			<p>approach to collect outstanding council tax and business rates ensuring staff are able to sign post residents and businesses to other sources of support.</p> <p>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.</p>	
1	Finance	Traded Services surrender of pay and price increases subsidy (Group & Capital Finance)	Traded services operate on cost recovery, past budget allocations for inflationary pressures will be returned to the corporate centre.	1.500	1.500	N/A	N/A
4	Revenues and Benefits	Insource Enforcement work	Income generation - Commence bringing some of the external enforcement agent work 'in house' for council tax, business rates and Business improvement district (BIDs) levies.	1.098	1.098	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	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
						Districts and that this work is linked with other services across the Council that also work with the BIDs.	
6	Revenues and Benefits	Cease Local Welfare Provision Scheme	Proposal that the provision of emergency payments (crisis) for food and utilities (gas and electric) cease. Proposal that payments for 'White goods' for provision of (for example) table-top fridges and cookers cease.	0.900	0.900	N/A	N/A
210	People Services	Workforce People Services savings	Review of people services structure and vacant posts	0.849	0.908	N/A	N/A
7	Revenues and Benefits	Review Council Tax Single Person Discounts	Income generation – to review all existing SPDs to ensure the 25% discount is only applied where residents are entitled. This is in addition to existing activity to ensure correct entitlement is awarded.	0.800	0.800	N/A	N/A
2	Finance	Reduction in traded services performance subsidy (Group & Capital Finance)	Improved performance within traded services and obligation to recharge at full market cost hence the subsidy will not be called upon for under-recovery.	0.799	0.799	N/A	N/A
209	Finance	Service review and rationalisation of vacant posts	Review of finance service structure and vacant posts	0.360	0.360	N/A	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
12	Procurement	Corporate Procurement Service – Mini restructure and refining recharging of services delivered to “non-general fund” budget areas.	Undertaking a mini restructure and refining recharging of services delivered to “non-general fund” budget areas.	0.240	0.240	N/A	N/A
3	Revenues and Benefits	Review Benefits Advice Team	Review of non-statutory provision of the Benefits Advice Team within the Benefit Service	0.122	0.162	<p>That the Council continues to seek alternative funding to provide non-statutory benefits advice.</p> <p>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.</p>	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
						That Council communications include information to signpost residents to places where advice of benefits is available.	
113	People Services	Annual Staff Survey review	Replacement of externally run staff survey with in-house options	0.050	0.050	N/A	N/A
112	People Services	Recruitment Portal review	External recruitment portal non-renewal	0.030	0.030	N/A	N/A
105	DCS	Business Support Re-design	A reconfiguration and reduction of the existing business support administrative activity and posts to release savings		2.660	That work should continue at pace on delivery of saving 105 and where possible delivery should be brought forward to 2024/25.	N/A
9	Revenues and Benefits	New Homes Bonus	Income generation – additional work to use external data to identify empty homes that have been bought-back into use and attract payments from the Government (as well as council tax income).		1.984	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.	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
216	Revenues, Benefits, Rents and Finance	"Debt recovery consolidation	Enable the Council where possible to have a single view of debt by consolidating all debt management, debt recovery activity into a single debt management team where appropriate		1.823	<p>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.</p> <p>Once the saving starts the delivery should be monitored to ensure financial delivery of the saving and also customer satisfaction.</p> <p>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.</p>	N/A
188		Procurement Contract Savings	To deliver contract management savings from existing third party	1.000	3.000	That the results of the analysis of contracts	N/A

Ref	Service	Title	Savings Description	2024/25 Target (£m)	2025/26 Target (£m)	Budget Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Recommendation / Savings Delivery Task and Finish Group	Executive Response
			spend - with the aim to improve value for money from and reduce spend with third parties through a range of initiatives, including system controls to enhance compliance, reduction of spend through amalgamating spend / contacts and stopping spend.			across the organisation is shared with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.	
228		Fees and Charges - further savings TBC	Anticipated increase in income relating to fees and charges uplifts across all service areas.	0.000	1.000	That City Operations explores the opportunity to charge for damage to pavements as a result of construction work on adjacent properties.	N/A
			TOTAL	19.959	33.392		

**Recommendations from the Budget Task and Finish Group Report to
Monitored by All Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

Rec Number	Recommendation	Response
1	All savings must have clear Delivery Plans, with arrangements to hold budget holders across the organisation at different levels accountable to the delivery of savings and with a Cabinet Member assigned against each saving. Key milestones towards the delivery of the savings should be included, along with risk mitigation, and governance measures including consultation requirements, VR / CR requirements and service impact. Measures for monitoring and reporting to O&S Committees must be put in place.	Agreed. Delivery Plans have been created for each saving proposal. These include details of the Senior Accountable Officer, the Key Milestones and Risk Management Plan.
2	The Delivery Plans should also set out clearly where the saving type is identified as efficiency, what systems / processes will be put in place to deliver the efficiencies without reducing the level of services.	Agreed. Delivery Plans have been created for each saving proposal. These include details of the Key Milestones, the Objectives and Deliverables as well as the Dependencies and any potential consequential impacts.
3	The Budget report to Cabinet and City Council will identify the savings proposals that will be subject to statutory consultation and assurance is needed that these will comply with legal requirements. This needs to be reflected in the timescales for delivery of the savings.	Agreed. Delivery Plans include Timescales and Key Milestones that will indicate whether a public consultation is required. Accompanying the Budget Report will be access to the Equality Impact Assessments that have been produced for applicable savings proposals, these also confirm legal requirements.
9	Each OSC receives a report following the approval of the Budget and MTFP on the implications of the budget and savings on the services within their terms of reference. In future years, an impact assessment of proposals should be reported to scrutiny in advance of the approval of the budget.	Agreed. An OSC work programme is being developed to provide updates on the savings relevant to each Scrutiny committee throughout the 2024/25 financial year.

10	Each OSC to receive a report every two months during the 2024/2025 financial year to update the Committee on the delivery of savings and service implications.	Agreed. An OSC work programme is being developed to provide updates on the savings relevant to each Scrutiny committee throughout the 2024/25 financial year to align with updates to Cabinet.
13	A review of contracts and contract management is undertaken to ensure that the council achieves best value from contracts and that contracts are renegotiated where necessary, particularly where several contracts are held across different services / directorates with the same provider. This work needs to ensure a complete, transparent and accurate contract register is produced, including details relating to when re-procurements need to commence and with contract start and end dates. As required by the Local Government Transparency Code, the relevant information should be published.	Agreed. As part of the savings proposals all Directorates have been looking at their contracts to identify savings. There is also a cross-cutting savings proposal for procurement contract savings.
14	A multitude of income generation opportunities should be explored, e.g., dropped kerbs, lane rental, commercial events, Shelforce, debt collection, hotel tax, increase use of direct debits – if residents are already using Direct Debits for some services they are more likely to take up for other services.	Agreed. As part of the savings proposals all Directorates have been looking at their income opportunities to identify savings and where appropriate these have been included. Opportunities are also being looked at for 2025/26.