

# Birmingham City Council

## Report to City Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny Committee

27 September 2024



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<b>Title:</b>	<b>REPORT OF SAVINGS IMPLICATIONS TASK AND FINISH GROUP MEETINGS</b>
<b>Lead Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</b>	Not Applicable
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<b>Authorised by:</b>	Marie Rosenthal, City Solicitor Legal and Governance
<b>Is this a Key Decision?</b>	Not Applicable
<b>If this is a Key Decision, is this decision listed on the Forward Plan?</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Reason(s) why not included on the Forward Plan:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Is this a Late Report?</b>	No
<b>Reason(s) why Late:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Is this decision eligible for 'call in?'</b>	Not Applicable
<b>If not eligible, please provide reason(s):</b>	Not Applicable

**Wards:**

All

**Does this report contain exempt or confidential information?**

No

**Has this decision been included on the Notification of Intention to consider Matters in Private?**

Not Applicable

**Reasons why not included on the Notification:**

Not Applicable

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 It was agreed by Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 May 2024 that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee would hold a Task and Finish Group to consider the implications of the savings agreed in the 2024/25 budget. This report sets out the issues identified by the 6 Committees that held Task and Finish Group meeting during July 24 and the recommendations as set out in Section 3 of the report to be made to Cabinet.

## **2 COMMISSIONERS' REVIEW**

- 2.1 Commissioners support the recommendations.

## **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **That the Committee:**

- 3.1 Notes the notes of the Task and Finish Group meetings attached as Appendices A-F
- 3.2 Agrees the recommendations below developed by the Scrutiny Savings Implementation Task and Finish Group meetings to request Cabinet:

From Corporate and Finance OSC Task and Finish Group:

- 3.3 Savings 103: Voice Automation within Contact Centre Services: Agrees that the abandonment rate of call received by the Contact Centre Voice Services is recorded and monitored in addition to the call failure rate.
- 3.4 Saving 7: Review Council Tax Single Person Discounts: Agreed that the Council publicises that single person discounts claimed in error or fraudulently will be identified and reclaimed as a reminder / deterrent to others.

From Economy, Skills and Culture OSC Task and Finish Group:

- 3.5 Saving 106: Service re-design and restructure: Seeks assurances that the impact of any future growth in housebuilding and economic development on the Council's capacity to manage planning applications in light of the staff reductions through the current redesign will be monitored
- 3.6 Saving 109: Income generation (combination of lease and rent reviews for commercial portfolio and increase in planning fee income) Requests a fair and equitable approach is introduced for all Council owned assets rented to community organisations.
- 3.7 Saving 61 Cultural Organisation Grant reductions) & 62 (Cease funding for cultural projects) Commits to holding a single themed meeting on the impact of the Council's grant reductions to cultural organisations on the sector in the city
- 3.8 Requests the Council works with partner organisations to explore how a more sustainable approach can be developed for the arts and culture sector to thrive at a grassroots level in the city.

- 3.9 Seeks assurances the support to the arts and culture sector is effectively built into the Council's proposal to the West Midlands Combined Authority for the Shared Prosperity Fund Local Place Plan.

From Health and Adult Social Care OSC Task and Finish Group:

- 3.10 Seeks assurances that the consultation model for savings related to the Adult Social Care directorate provides more information and support to service users and their carers in future to help them engage effectively with any consultation. Specifically, this consultation model should introduce clear conceptualisation of future service options and information on alternative provision, as well as clarify the role of advocacy and emotional support available.
- 3.11 Requests that Equality Impact Assessments for all savings, and specifically Adult Social Care, include information from relevant partner organisations to enable more robust assessments.
- 3.12 Requests that Health Impact Assessments are developed for all agreed savings, subject to the outcome of the current pilot. Further, the Committee requests that health implications should be included in all future committee reports, both decision making and non-decision making.
- 3.13 Requests that a family centred approach, where appropriate, is adopted for all Adult Social Care cases. As a minimum, Social Work Assessment of Needs and the Carers Assessment should be undertaken at the same time.
- 3.14 Notes the comments, information requested and further work for Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out in Section 4.3 below.

## **4 KEY INFORMATION**

### **Context**

- 4.1 It was agreed by Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 May 2024 that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee would hold a Task and Finish Group to consider the implications of the savings agreed in the 2024/25 budget. Six of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held Task and Finish Group meetings during July 2024 and notes setting out the key issues, comments and recommendations are attached as appendices 1 – 6. The Sustainability and Transport OSC agreed that as the major saving within the Committee's terms of reference related to the Highways PFI that was subject to Judicial Review that any implications would be considered at a later meeting in the year.
- 4.2 The recommendations to Cabinet agreed at the Task and Finish Group meetings are set out in Section 3 of this report. Members also made comments on the savings, requested further information and identified further work that the Committee would undertake, particularly where the savings has not yet been delivered. This is set out in the table below.

4.3 Table 1: Savings Implications Task and Finish Group Comments, Information Requests and Further Work for Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Comment / Information Requested / Further work for O&S Committee	Saving
Economy and Skills OSC	Comment	<b>Saving 107: Reduction in Central Administrative Buildings (CAB) Premises</b> (Saving from operating costs when the buildings are decommissioned): Supports the approach to maximise office accommodation and meeting facilities in the city in buildings managed by organisations in receipt of public funds.
Health and Adult Social Care OSC	Request to City Solicitor	The Health and Adult Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee welcomes the expertise of partner organisations, and specifically Healthwatch and Forward Carers, to inform their understanding of any potential impact and implications of the Council budget 2024-26. Further to this, they would like to formally request to the City Solicitor that these organisations are invited to all future Health and Adult Social Care Committee considerations of this budget including any sessions in private, unless there is a clear conflict of interest.
Education, Children and Young People OSC	Further work for Scrutiny Committee	<b>Saving 150 (Review of Non-Statutory Transport Packages):</b> The Committee to undertake an engagement exercise to seek to understand the impact of this policy change.  <b>Saving 89 (Review of Youth Services, NEET and Careers Service)</b> The item is on the agenda for the September committee meeting, and the Committee to

		receive an update on the review, recommendations, and details of the engagement programme.
	Information Requested	<p><b>Saving 150 (Review of Non-Statutory Transport Packages):</b> More information was required on the number of appeals and other legal actions, and the potential impact on delivery of savings.</p> <p>Officers to inform the Committee on the advice from legal colleagues on the definition of exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><b>Saving 185 (Reductions on Contact Sum for the Birmingham Children’s Trust)</b> The Committee to be provided with the breakdown of the budget and areas of spend.</p> <p>A briefing note to be provided to the Committee on the risk of legal challenge and financial implications for the short breaks policy.</p> <p>Strategic Director to report back on impact of the local authority’s budget if any school with a budget deficit becomes and academy.</p>
Neighbourhoods OSC	Further work for Committee	<p><b>Saving 193 Transformation of Neighbourhood Advice and Information Services and Community Libraries:</b> Officers to attend the October 2024 committee meeting to provide an update</p> <p><b>72 Community Facilities – cease direct management: An update to be provided; 245 Reduce agency staff in Waste Collection; 34 Reduce Grounds Maintenance capability and review Grounds Maintenance activities; 242 Remove ‘additional’ Deep Clean Crews; 46 Reduce agency resource in Street Cleansing; 42 Reduce graffiti crews; 27 Cease</b></p>

		<p><b>non-statutory waste prevention activities.</b></p> <p>Members requested: The Committee would like to co-produce the street management transformation element of the IRP transformation programme, specifically relating to litter, fly tipping, enforcement and street cleaning, with the aim of producing efficient and effective services.</p> <p>As part of this co-production exercise, the committee want to explore with the Directorate the feasibility of implementing recommendations set out in the Cleaner Streets scrutiny report published in February 2023.</p> <p>The Committee would also like an update on Street Management Transformation and Parks &amp; Green Space.</p>
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## **5 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1 Based on the work of the Task and Finish Group the Corporate and Finance Overview and Scrutiny may want to identify potential risks that can be considered by as part of the Council's risk management arrangements.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The Health and Adult Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee sought the views of Healthwatch Birmingham and Forward Carers when considering the implications of savings within the Committee's terms of reference.

## **7 IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **Finance**

- 7.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committees will continue to scrutinise the delivery of savings as a critical component of the Council's financial recovery. The recommendations recognise the financial pressures the Council is facing and the implementation of recommendations will be within existing resources and capacity available.

## **Legal**

- 7.2 The recommendations recognise the need for legal and governance advice throughout the savings delivery programmes and engagement with the Director Legal Business Partners should be encouraged to ensure that any legal risks are considered at an early stage and timely legal advice can be considered. The legal implications for each savings proposal would have received legal advice and legal oversight will continue during this process.

## **Equalities**

- 7.3 Recommendations 3.10 and 3.11 request Cabinet agrees that Equality Impact Assessments on savings include information from relevant partner organisations to enable more robust assessments and also that Health Impact Assessments are developed for all agreed savings, subject to the outcome of the current pilot. Further, the Committee requests that health implications should be included in all future committee reports, both decision making and non-decision making.

## **Procurement**

- 7.4 There are no procurement implications resulting from the recommendations in this report.

## **People Services**

- 7.5 There are no people services recommendations resulting from the recommendations in this report.

## **Corporate Parenting**

- 7.6 The Education, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group has requested a breakdown of the areas of the budget and spend for savings 185 (Reductions on Contract Sum for the Birmingham Children's Trust)

## **8 APPENDICES**

- 8.1 Appendix A: Corporate and Finance OSC Savings Implications Task and Finish Group Notes
- 8.2 Appendix B: Economy, Skills and Culture OSC Savings Implications Task and Finish Group Notes
- 8.3 Appendix C: Health and Adult Social Care OSC Savings Implications Task and Finish Group Notes
- 8.4 Appendix B: Education, Children and Young People OSC Savings Implications Task and Finish Group Notes
- 8.5 Appendix E: Neighbourhoods OSC Savings Implications Task and Finish Group Notes



8.6 Appendix F: Homes OSC Savings Implications Task and Finish Group Notes

**9 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 None