

Public Document Pack

COUNCIL

Monday, 27 February 2023

Present: The Civic Mayor (Councillor Jeff Green) in the
Chair
Deputy Civic Mayor (Councillor Jerry Williams)

Councillors	T Anderson	P Gilchrist	S Mountney
	S Bennett	N Graham	Y Nolan
	J Bird	EA Grey	C O'Hagan
	M Booth	J Grier	A Onwuemene
	A Brame	P Hayes	O Osanlou
	D Burgess-Joyce	A Hodson	S Percy
	H Cameron	K Hodson	C Povall
	I Camphor	J Hoey	S Powell-Wilde
	C Carubia	J Johnson	L Rennie
	P Cleary	C Jones	J Robinson
	M Collins	T Jones	T Smith
	H Collinson	M Jordan	P Stuart
	C Cooke	S Kelly	Jason Walsh
	T Cox	B Kenny	S Williams
	A Davies	D Kenny	J Williamson
	C Davies	J Laing	V Wilson
	G Davies	I Lewis	G Wood
	T Elzeiny	J McManus	A Wright
	S Foulkes	P Martin	
	A Gardner	D Mitchell	

<u>Apologies</u>	Councillors	L Fraser	K Greaney
		E Gleaves	Joe Walsh
		H Gorman	

77 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Civic Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting then led Council in a moments silence in memory of Elle Edwards who was tragically killed on Christmas Eve in Wallasey village.

The Civic Mayor informed the meeting that he had been informed in advance of a number of Members who had a personal interest in agenda item 4c, 'Budget 2022/23 and Medium-Term Financial Plan' insofar as it related to the schools budget element by virtue of holding positions as school governors, as follows:

Councillors Brame, Carubia, Cleary, Collinson, Cooke, Angie Davies, George Davies, Foulkes, Gilchrist, Grey, McManus, Mitchell, Smith, Wilson, Williams and Wood. He also reported that Councillor Jo Bird wished to declare an interest as her partner was a school governor.

Additionally, the Civic Mayor reported the following personal interests insofar as they related to the schools budget element, by virtue of those Members either themselves or close family members working in either Schools or the Council's Education and Children, or Young People's Directorate:

Councillors Chris Jones, Martin, Povall, Robinson and Stuart.

Members were then invited to make any further declarations. Councillors Mike Collins and Yvonne Nolan declared personal interests as school governors, and Councillor Jo Bird declared a personal interest by virtue of her partner being a school governor. Councillors Steve Foulkes, Brian Kenny, Leslie Rennie and Gill Wood declared personal interests as members of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority who voted on the precept. Councillor Leslie Rennie declared a personal interest as her husband received a pension from Merseyside Police. Steve Foulkes declared a personal interest as he received a pension from Merseyside Police. Councillor Brian Kenny. Councillor Ian Lewis declared a personal interest as he was a Trustee of an organisation hoping to acquire Wallasey village library through the Community Asset Transfer programme. Councillor Mike Collins declared a personal interest as his company had a contract with social services.

78 **CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Civic Mayor asked for any apologies and these were then given for Councillors Leah Fraser, Emily Gleaves, Harry Gorman, Karl Greaney and Joe Walsh.

The Civic Mayor informed the Council that he had attended 57 events since the last Council meeting which included Christmas events such as a Community Carol service at Christ the King, the Ukrainian Christmas Day celebration, plus a war memorial centenary celebration, an Everest film presentation, Chinese New Year and a minutes silence for Ukraine. He invited Members to the Civic Sunday on 30 April at St Bridget's Church in West Kirby.

79 **PROCEDURE FOR BUDGET DECISION MEETING OF COUNCIL**

The Council was then invited to consider the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee meeting of 15 February 2023, in respect of the procedure to be adopted for this extraordinary meeting of the Council.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson, it was –

Resolved – That, for the duration of the extraordinary meeting of 28 February 2023 (Budget Council):

(a) the procedure attached as Appendix A to the report be followed in respect of the meeting; and

(b) Council Standing Order 15.4 (timing of speeches) be suspended together with such other standing orders as may conflict with the Budget Council procedure or the Mayor’s administration of the meeting, in such a manner as the Mayor in his or her absolute discretion dictates, to ensure the objective of Council setting a lawful budget and council tax requirement prevails.

80 MATTERS REQUIRING APPROVAL OR CONSIDERATION BY THE COUNCIL

Seven matters had been referred by the meetings of Policy and Resources Committee on 18 January and 15 February 2023.

81 COUNCIL TAX 2023/24 (TAX BASE, DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS AND LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME)

The first matter requiring approval was in relation to proposed Council Tax, the motion for which was moved by Councillor Janette Williamson and seconded by Councillor Yvonne Nolan.

Resolved (38:21) (1 abstention) – That

(1) The level and award of each local discount for 2023/24 be as follows:

Wirral Women’s & Children’s Aid

To continue to award Wirral Women & Children’s Aid 100% discount. This remains unchanged from 2022/23.

Care Leaver’s Discount

To award Care Leavers the requisite discount to reduce their Council Tax liability to zero until they are 25. This to remain unchanged from 2022/23.

Empty Property Discounts 2023/24

Discount category D = 0% Full charge on properties undergoing renovations.

Discount category C = 0% Full charge on empty properties from date they become unoccupied.

Both to remain unchanged from 2022/23, and to include an exception for properties requiring adaptations to meet the need of a disabled person who will be occupying the property as soon as the adaptations are complete and in addition awaiting renovations prior to being occupied by someone under Ukraine resettlement scheme.

Empty Property Premium =

100% (200% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty for more than two years.

200% (300% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty more than five years.

300% (400% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty more than ten years.

All remain unchanged from 2022/23, save for an exception from 1 April 2023 for properties that have restrictions placed upon them restricting the sale to a particular group (usually leasehold properties for the elderly which attract high service charges). An exception to be introduced to the Premium from 1 April 2023.

Council Tax Discretionary Hardship Relief Scheme

The Council Tax Discretionary Hardship Relief Scheme, approved by Cabinet in October 2013, to continue in its current format for 2023/24. The Scheme offers help and assistance in exceptional cases of hardship.

(2) Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS)

The current Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme to remain unchanged from 2022/23 apart from the following :

- a. The scheme to be aligned to all the Department of Work and Pensions uprating's and changes for Housing Benefit and Universal Credit**
- b. There to be no loss of entitlement due to payments made under Homes for Ukraine Scheme (£350)**
- c. In response to the government announcement (Council Tax Support Fund) of the 23 December, an additional reduction of at least £25 where a liability in excess of this exists, for all recipients of Council Tax Support for 2023/24 at the time of annual billing.**
- d. Delegated authority be given to the Head of Revenues & Benefits in consultation with the Director of Finance and Leader of the Council to create a discretionary scheme based upon government guidance to**

utilise any remaining funding provided under the Council Tax Support Fund for 2023/24

(3) Changes to Empty Property Discounts 2024/25

To reduce the Empty Property Premium from 2024/25 to properties that have been empty for more than one year (Currently Two). So that the following apply:-

100% (200% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty for more than one year.

200% (300% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty more than five years.

300% (400% Council Tax) for unfurnished properties empty more than ten years.

(4) Changes to the treatment of second homes (dwellings that are furnished but are not someone's sole or main residence)

From April 2024 the council to charge **100% (200% Council Tax) for any person with a second home within Wirral. Double the amount of council tax of a property occupied as someone's sole or main residence.**

82 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023/24

The Chair announced that following legal advice appendix at item 10 no longer needed to be treated as confidential and could be made publicly available. He proposed that items 5 and 6 on the agenda (exclusion of the press and public and noting the confidential appendix) therefore be withdrawn. This was approved by assent.

The second matter requiring approval was the Council Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24.

Councillor Janette Williamson formally moved the Motion, which was seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson, and which was set out as a recommendation of the Policy and Resources Committee of 15 February 2023, minute 94.

The motion having been formally moved and seconded, Councillor Janette Williamson spoke to her motion.

Councillor Kathy Hodson, as Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee, then spoke to the Schools Budget element of the proposed budget.

Councillor Tom Anderson, as Leader of the Conservative Group, then addressed the Council on the budget proposals.

Councillor Pat Cleary, as Leader of the Green Group, then addressed the Council on the budget proposals.

Councillor Phil Gilchrist, as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, then addressed the Council on the budget proposals.

The budget proposals were then debated.

At 7.40pm the Mayor adjourned the meeting for a short break.

The meeting resumed at 7.55pm.

In respect of the budget motion, the Council divided as follows:

For the motion (38) - Councillors S Bennett, J Bird, A Brame, C Carubia, P Cleary, H Collinson, C Cooke, A Davies, C Davies, G Davies, S Foulkes, P Gilchrist, N Graham, E Grey, J Grier, J Hoey, C Jones, T Jones, S Kelly, B Kenny, D Kenny, J Laing, P Martin, J McManus, D Mitchell, Y Nolan, C O'Hagan, A Onwuemene, O Osanlou S Percy, S Powell-Wilde, J Robinson, T Smith, P Stuart, Jason Walsh, J Williams, J Williamson and G Wood.

Against the motion (21) – Councillors T Anderson, M Booth, D Burgess-Joyce, H Cameron, I Camphor, M Collins, T Cox, T Elzeiny, A Gardner, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, J Johnson, M Jordan, I Lewis, S Mountney, C Povall, L Rennie, S Williams, V Wilson and A Wright.

Abstaining (1)– Councillor J Green.

The motion was therefore carried (38:21) (1 abstention).

The Council was then invited to vote on the Statutory calculations for the Council Tax levels for 2023/24 in accordance with Sections 32-36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The Council voted as follows:

For the motion (59) - Councillors T Anderson, S Bennett, J Bird, M Booth, A Brame, D Burgess-Joyce, H Cameron, I Camphor, C Carubia, P Cleary, M Collins, H Collinson, C Cooke, T Cox, A Davies, C Davies, G Davies, T Elzeiny, S Foulkes, A Gardner, P Gilchrist, N Graham, E Grey, J Grier, P Hayes, A Hodson, K Hodson, J Hoey, J Johnson, C Jones, T Jones, M Jordan, S Kelly, B Kenny, D Kenny, J Laing, I Lewis, P Martin, J McManus, D Mitchell, S Mountney, Y Nolan, C O'Hagan, A Onwuemene, O Osanlou, S Percy, C Povall, S Powell-Wilde, L Rennie, J Robinson, T Smith, P Stuart,

Jason Walsh, J Williams, S Williams, J Williamson, V Wilson, G Wood and A Wright.

Against the motion – none.

Abstaining (1) – Councillor Jeff Green

The motion was therefore carried (59:0) (1 abstention).

A. Resolved (38:21) (1 abstention) - That

- (1) a) the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set out as Appendix 7 be approved;
- b) increases to the Council's fees and charges equal to or above the annual Consumer Price Index reported by the Office for National Statistics in February 2023 be approved, unless either of the following conditions apply:
- i. There is a statutory constraint that prevents such an increase,
 - ii. The Council is operating in a market whereby such an increase would result in the Council being uncompetitive.
- c) the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy for Business Rates for 2023/24 set out as Appendix 6 be approved.
- d) Unearmarked Reserves (General Fund Balances) be maintained at a figure not lower than £13.18m for the course of the 2023/24 financial year.
- e) it be approved that, in respect of the Budget Proposals, the Director with portfolio undertake such actions as they consider necessary to implement the agreed Budget and deliver the savings, income and efficiency proposals developed as part of the formulation process and update Committees accordingly.
- f) the 2023/24 Schools Budget of £337.017m be approved

B. Resolved (59:0) (1 abstention) - That:

- (1) a. the Band D Council Tax be set at £1,798.48 for the Wirral Borough Council element of the Council Tax, representing a general increase of 2.99% and 2.00% ringfenced increase to Adult Social Care, and the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2023/24 of £171.9m as detailed in Appendix 5.
- b. it be noted that the additional precepts from the Police & Crime Commissioner for Merseyside and the Merseyside Fire & Rescue Authority remain in estimated form and authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer to implement any variation to the overall council tax arising from the final notification of the precepts.

- (2) the additional funds of £135,000 arising from the final settlement be allocated as follows:
£41k be invested in specialist, complex investigation work to support Children's social care cases where there are multiple victims or perpetrators.
£94k be invested by not taking the following four budget options that fall within the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee in respect of:
- The review of bulky waste (ERIC) collection service £10k
 - The Environmental Health Service Review £40k
 - The reduction in the recycling promotional budget £20k
 - The reduction in Waste & Environmental Services budget £24k

83 **CAPITAL MONITORING QUARTER 3 2022/23**

The third matter requiring approval was in relation to the capital monitoring for quarter 3 2022/23.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson it was -

Resolved – That

- (1) the revised Capital Programme of £86.3 million for 2022/23 be approved, including the virements of budget referred to in Appendix D of the report.
- (2) the additional funding be approved for the schemes referred to in section 3.7 of the report from a variety of sources, new borrowing required from the Council, capital receipts, external contributions and the repurposing of previously agreed Council borrowing.

84 **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023-28**

The fourth item requiring approval was in relation to the capital programme for 2023-28.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson it was -

Resolved - That

- (1) the new bids as detailed in Appendix B to this report be approved requiring £17.69 million of funding for inclusion in the Capital Programme.

- (2) any new bids supported by grant funding be approved but do not commence until written confirmation has been received from the granting authority.
- (3) the Capital Programme 2023-28 as detailed in Appendix C to this report be approved.

85 **CAPITAL FINANCING STRATEGY 2023/24**

The fifth item requiring approval was in relation to the Capital Financing Strategy 2023/24.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson it was -

Resolved – That

- (1) the Capital Financing Strategy 2023/24 be approved.
- (2) the associated Prudential Indicators be adopted.
- (3) the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision policy be approved.

86 **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2023/24**

The sixth item requiring approval was in relation to the Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson it was -

Resolved – That

- (1) the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2023/2024 be approved.
- (2) the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators be approved.

87 **INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2023/24**

The seventh item requiring approval was in relation to the Investment Strategy 2023/24.

On a motion by Councillor Janette Williamson, seconded by Councillor Jean Robinson it was -

Resolved – That the Investment Strategy for 2023/2024 which includes potential investment in Service Investments: Loans (including the Approval Limit detailed in Table 1), Service Investment: Shares (non-currently held), Commercial Property and Loan Commitments and Financial Guarantees be approved.



Budget Workshops
Subject: Children, Young People and Education Committee
Date: 28th June and 27th July 2022
From: Polly Price, Democratic Services Officer pollyprice@wirral.gov.uk
To: P&R Committee

1. Background

All local authorities are required to set a balanced budget by 10th March each year.

Officers from the Department of Children, Families and Education have developed efficiency options for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R).

Workshops to gather the below feedback were held on the 28th of June and 27th July 2022. Budget option recommendations were agreed during the workshop on 27th July. This will inform the P&R's Committee's proposals and final budget recommendation to Council.

Members were made aware that the Indicative Budget gap for 2023/24 for the Council currently stands at £14.13m and that Officer proposals (savings/income) to bridge that gap total £13.2m.

2. Key Considerations

The overall savings value required for 2023/24 for Children, Families and Education is £4.241m.

Members were given information on what the directorate spends money on and this was broken down into four key areas which were Children and Families, Early Help and Prevention, Modernisation and Support and Schools – Core.

Members were advised that demand was a big factor in spend and that 8/10 Councils were significantly overspending on Children's Services as a result. Unforeseen circumstances needed to be factored in, including the independent review of Children's Social Care which predicted the number of

children looked after would rise from 80,000 to 100,000. If radical changes were not made that could mean an extra 20 children a year looked after by the Local Authority which would add significant budget pressure.

The second workshop looked in more detail at savings proposals and expected pressures and costs for 2023/24, Members were informed of three strategies to reduce costs: Service redesign, Demand reduction and increase external funding and were advised of 10 savings proposals and how these would be achieved.

One of the savings proposals: Workforce remodelling complex team was discussed and Members agreed on the importance of the work of this team. It was decided that the Workforce remodelling complex team would be combined with the service redesign – Social Care/ Family Matters saving which would look at the whole model to ensure that complex work is embedded in all services rather than a targeted change of removing the team.

Table 1: Future Year Savings – Children, Families and Education

Reduction in children looked after numbers - £0.41m
Reduction in adoption budget - £0.1m
Reduction in historic teachers' Pension - £0.19m
SEND inclusion programme - £0.22m
Managing demand by increasing numbers of children in family-based provisions - £1.1m
Commissioning Review of contracts and scope - £0.25m
Service redesign – Social Care/ Family Matters and complex team - £0.6m
Workforce practice and preventative work to manage Children in Need and Child Protection demand alongside external income maximisation - £1.12m
Workforce remodelling: Recruitment, renumeration, pay scales, use of agency staff regional partnerships - £0.25m
2023/24 Total Savings: £4.24m

Future Year Pressures

Cost of Care including 8.5% cost of living rises and 3% growth in Children looked after numbers predicted nationally
Increase in Children in need demand expected as cost of living increases
Social work recruitment and retention bonuses
Social work agency costs
SEND team capacity to match increasing demand
SEND assisted travel fuel inflation and demand growth
Speech and language – Covid impact

Joint Commissioner with Health
Education reforms requirements for all schools to enter into Multi academy trust arrangements
PFI affordability gap inflation
Inflation is at a 40 year high at 9.4% with the potential to reach 12% in October
Emerging threat to delivery of in year savings

Savings rejected by the Committee

No savings outlined in the table above were rejected by the Committee.

List of Savings and Pressures to be considered further

As no savings were rejected by the Committee, all savings outlined in the table above will be put forward for consideration.

3. Members questions

Q: Can grant funding be used to mitigate savings?

A: It is uncertain if the Council will get any additional grants but assurance was given that officers will be exploring every avenue in terms of grant funding.

Q: How do you intend to promote the benefits of working as a social worker for the Council rather than agency?

A: We are doing a piece of work across the north west region currently exploring what the alternatives are and the models to provide agency staff. Ideally, we would always promote and want staff to work for us on a permanent basis. But we accept that the use of agency will be a factor locally and nationally for the foreseeable future.

Members expressed concern about the process of bank social workers and stressed the importance of consistency in children's lives and that includes having the same social worker which may not be possible if it is a pool of social workers. It was outlined that a permanent member of staff would always be the first choice but there are some situations where agency staff are needed.

Q: Regarding the redesign of services, is there any overlap with Adult Social Care and Public Health where the work could be shared?

A: This has been considered, one area with a clear overlap is the All-Age Disability Service which is currently under review to see if savings can be made. Furthermore, back-office support functions for both Adults and Childrens are being brought together to support potential efficiencies.

Q: Have trade union colleagues been consulted on any possible redundancies?

A: There are numerous vacancies across the services and redesign principles that need to be met but trade unions will be consulted.



Budget Workshops
Subject: Children, Young People and Education Committee
Date: 25 th October and 1st November 2022
From: Polly Price, Senior Democratic Services Officer pollyprice@wirral.gov.uk Joe D'Henin, Democratic Services Officer josephdhenin@wirral.gov.uk
To: P&R Committee

1. Background

All local authorities are required to set a balanced budget by 10th March each year.

Tranche 1 budget savings were agreed (highlighted in appendix 1) based on an initial budget gap for 2023/24 for the Council standing at £13m. However, external factors, primarily inflation and soaring energy prices, have led to a dramatically worsened budget forecast 2023/24.

As a result, Officers from the Department of Children, Families and Education have developed a range of Tranche 2 efficiency options for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R).

Workshops to gather the below feedback were held on the 25th October and 1st November 2022. Budget options were presented to and commented upon by members.

Members were made aware that the Indicative Budget gap for 2023/24 for the Council currently stands at £60.5m and that Officer proposals (savings/income) to bridge that gap total £49m.

2. Key Considerations

Members were reminded that overall savings of £4.241m had been identified for 2023/24 for Children, Families and Education in Tranche 1. Whilst the overall savings value required for Tranche 2 was not confirmed, due to the final budget position still being subject to change, Members were presented

with savings options that totalled £447,362 at the lowest end and £1.789m at the highest end.

Members were presented with information on which services Officers concluded were not at the high statutory end of delivery, where potential savings could be identified. The services in this category were: Play Services, Youth Offer, Creative Youth Offer at Pilgrim Street, Social Care Investigation Support and Children’s Centre.

In the first workshop, Officers presented members with four potential Tranche 2 saving options across these service areas:

- Option 1 – 25% reduction in Services
- Option 2 – 50% reduction in Services
- Option 3 – 75% reduction in Services
- Option 4 – 100% reduction (excluding a remaining 25% youth offer to meet statutory obligations).

Table 1 (below) provided a breakdown on the potential savings of each option:

Table 1: Tranche 2 Future Year Savings – Children, Families and Education (Budget Workshop 25.10.22)

Children's Services	Option 1 (£)	Option 2 (£)	Option 3 (£)	Option 4 (£)
Play Services	71,100	142,200	213,300	284,400
Youth Offer	335,650	671,300	1,006,950	1,342,600
Creative Youth Offer Pilgrim Street	85,775	171,550	257,325	343,100
Social Care Investigation Support	38,750	77,500	116,250	155,000
Children's Centres	Part of wider co-location programme			

A breakdown of what the implications of each option would be on the individual services listed was provided to members. Members noted the importance of these services and discussed the need for a second workshop to allow time to digest the options and reconvene to discuss further and make decisions. Members were keen to express their support to the Director of Children, Families and Education.

In the Second Workshop, following feedback from members on the options presented in the previous meeting, where members expressed that the options as presented didn’t recognise the different impacts each service have by applying a savings percentage reduction across the services equally,

Officers brought a new proposal (Table 2) presenting different levels of reductions across the services areas, brought together as three options:

- Option 1 – 100% reduction in play services, a support staff social care saving and HIVE reduction to balance.
- Option 2 -100% reduction in play services and support staff within Social Care. £200k reduction from the HIVE. Redesign Pilgrim Street and Youth Service for balance.
- Option 3 – Closure of all services and contribution to the HIVE stopped. Remainder of monies used to commission Youth Offer from the voluntary Sector.

Table 2 (below) provided a breakdown of the potential savings of each option.

Table 2: Tranche 2 Future Year Savings – Children, Families and Education (Budget Workshop 01.11.22)

Children's Services	Option 1 (£)	Option 2 (£)	Option 3 (£)
All Service Areas in listed Table 1	447,362	894,752	1,789,450

Members were advised that this approach would aim to balance any cuts and preserve those service areas with the greatest impact on children and young people regarding the most needed services if money is available.

Savings rejected by the Committee

Following the first workshop, Members required time to digest and consider the proposals. During the second workshop, Members acknowledged the savings and the refined options presented but did not formally accept or reject the savings.

List of Savings and Pressures to be considered further

Following feedback from members, Officers proposed to investigate the options listed in Table 2 further, taking into account their comments.

3. Members questions

Q: Would the Social Care Investigation Support Team only be fully lost under Option 3

A: Under the new options we are looking at some of the support staff in social care rather than the complex investigations unit. We still need to explore in detail further the practicalities, but we are confident we can find a way of still delivering that service, even if staff are moved into posts within social care.

Q: What difference would it make if you considered the Hive losing £200k in Option 1 rather than Option 2?

A: We want the Hive to be fully operational without costing the Council anything, however, if that money is taken outright, the fear is for this year they would not be able to that funding. A gradual approach gives them time to mitigate/redesign.

Members expressed concerns relating to potential increases in anti-social behaviour should HIVE funding be withdrawn completely.

Q: What does each option mean in terms of practical impact on redundancies?

A: Due diligence on staffing implications will be carried out and saving impacts will be quantified through CIPFA.

Q: Can any potential savings be identified through losing any non-statutory providers?

A: We do not have a lot of non-statutory providers that are not directly involved in keeping children out of social care, meaning they have an important preventative role.



Budget Workshops
Subject: Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee
Date: 1 September 2022
From: Anna Perrett, Principal Democratic Services Officer annaperrett@wirral.gov.uk
To: P&R Committee

1. Background

All local authorities are required to set a balanced budget by 10th March each year.

Officers from the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee have developed efficiency options for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R)

Workshops to gather the below feedback were held during the summer of 2022. Budget option recommendations were considered during the workshop on 2 August 2022. This will inform the P & R's Committee's proposals and final budget recommendation to Council.

Members were made aware that the Indicative Budget gap for 2023/24 for the Council currently stands at £14.13m and that Officer proposals (savings/income) to bridge that gap total £13.2m.

2. Key Considerations

The overall savings value required for 2023/24 for Economy and Regeneration is £620k.

Members were given informed of the overall budget pressures facing the authority including reference to inflation, and were reminded of the overall objective – setting a balanced budget within funding envelope and delivering DLUHC financial strategy imperatives including savings delivery/reserves maintenance/asset sales/regeneration growth.

During the second workshop, Members were informed of the NHS CCH are currently occupying part of the Cheshire Lines Building and paying a contribution towards the lease. In addition, The Council's lease of the 4th and 5th floor of Marris House terminated in July 22 allowing a saving.

Members also discussed the capitalisation of assets for staff who work within the assets division. This option reflects the time spent by staff solely on school assets.

Other savings were put to Members including contracts ending for community alarms and the configuration of the homelessness accommodation programme.

An additional saving of £122k had been generated by the Merseytravel Levy, The Merseytravel levy is set by the Combined Authority, which includes any changes identified in the City Region population levels and demographics. The budget for the levy had been set at £22,587,000, but the actual levy was £22,485,000. This gives a £122,000 saving that can be offered up for 23-24.

This is a saving of the economy and regeneration directorate but sits within the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committees' terms of reference.

Table 1: Future Year Savings – Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee

Rental Income Cheshire Lines £146k
Marris House Savings £136k
Capitalisation of Salaries – Assets staff £85k
Community alarms & Homelessness Accommodation £137k
Merseytravel £122k
2023/24 Total Savings: £626k

Future Year Pressures

Inflation 9.1% - 40 year high
Emerging threats to delivery of in-year savings being tracked through monitoring process
On overall funding some £7m has been removed on the assumption of a discontinuation of the 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot
Position on the gap will remain fluid right up to the point of provisional Grant settlement being known (December) so we need to continually optimise the Council's options on financial modelling and decision-making.

Savings rejected by the Committee

No savings outlined in the table above were rejected by the Committee.

List of Savings and Pressures to be considered further

As no savings were rejected by the Committee, all savings outlined in the table above will be put forward for consideration.

3. Members questions

Q. Where is the asset strategy up to and can asset disposal be used for income generation?

A. The plan is currently being developed, but there cannot be a fire sale of properties. We need to look closely at what assets we need to keep hold of for long term benefit and what we can dispose of.

Q. Regarding asset holding costs and how this would work if premises were leased out? Members also discussed the possibility of charging a peppercorn rent on the condition that premises are maintained.

A. Officers discussed the lease at Hamilton Square and their terms and noted that whilst this was always a possibility, Consideration would need to be given to the organisations who apply for leases such as this regarding their financial viability.

Q. In terms of short term lettings, do we have a condition survey or asset survey to secure short term lets? Consideration needs to be given how much investment is required to update a premises before it is let out.

A: Short terms lets would be leased in current state and would have to be habitable – all buildings would need to be compliant but assets do know their buildings well and the condition of all of them. Officers work very carefully on lease agreement regarding upkeep and maintenance of premises.

Q. Energy costs; how much of a pressure is this likely to be on Council owned properties?

A. Work is being done to keep heating in unused buildings down to a minimum, however this is a balancing act as we do have listed buildings which need to be kept above a certain temperature. Work is being done constantly to keep costs down and the budget was increased in 22/23 to cover increasing energy costs. We are also making progress in terms of de-carbonisation.

Comments

Can we approach the city region in terms of grant payments.

This was taken away as an action



Budget Workshops
Subject: Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee
Date: 31 October 2022
From: Christine Morley, Democratic Services Officer annaperrett@wirral.gov.uk
To: P&R Committee

1. Background

All local authorities are required to set a balanced budget by 10th March each year. Officers from the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee have developed efficiency options for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R)

The Regeneration Directorate has developed efficiency options for consideration by the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee their recommendations are put forward to the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) for review. Workshops to gather the below feedback were held on 31 October 2022. Budget option recommendations were presented during the workshop and will inform the P&R Committee's proposals and final budget recommendation to Council.

At a previous workshop held in September 2022, Members were presented with budget proposals totaling £620kin savings, however due to inflation and other cost increases, Members were made aware that the Indicative Budget gap for 2023/24 had been revised and currently stands at £49m.

2. Key Considerations

Members were informed of the overall budget pressures facing the authority including reference to inflation and were reminded of the overall objective – setting a balanced budget within funding envelope and delivering DLUHC financial strategy imperatives including savings delivery/reserves maintenance/asset sales/regeneration growth.

During the workshop, Members were informed that a number of transformation programmes have been initiated that will lead to reduced running costs through a more efficient operating model. These include:

- The strategic Change Programme

- Birkenhead Commercial District Office Development,
- the Digital Transformation Programme in partnership with Microsoft, a programme of service co-location to further reduce the asset base and associated overheads and administration costs,
- The Asset Strategy and disposals plan
- Asset Transfer and Community Asset Transfer.

Members were informed that Tranche 2 Options are being modelled on reduced service levels with a particular focus on discretionary and asset based services.

The regeneration programme should help with the finances and generate increased income through business rates and council tax. The regeneration finance strategy is nearing completion and will give members an overview of investment throughout the Council. It was proposed that a new corporate model is implemented which centralises all back office functions to achieve economies of scale and reduced management costs. The value of this is estimated to be 10% of all services deemed to be in scope.

Back-office savings would be delivered on a phased basis, with the aim of realising some savings as soon as possible whilst protecting those services essential to deliver the required organisation change.

Members were presented with 9 Budget Options as set out below. It was noted that the figures are indicative and that further work will need to take place on these should they be progressed further.

Table 1: Future Year Tranche 2 Savings– Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee

Regeneration & Place	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Re-chargeable costs, housing and building control	139,606			
Contract efficiencies, business support and housing	152,500			
One-off budget savings, economic growth and housing	879,394			
Mothballing office buildings/administration buildings	683,900			
Re-purposing 4 civic buildings	200,000	130,000		
Re-purposing Community Centres (4 sites)	100,000			
Re-purposing operational assets (4 sites)	213,000	155,000		
Mothballing Wallasey Complex	400,000			
Mothballing Birkenhead Town Hall	273,000			

Future Year Pressures

Inflation 9.1% - 40 year high
Emerging threats to delivery of in-year savings being tracked through monitoring process
On overall funding some £7m has been removed on the assumption of a discontinuation of the 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot

Position on the gap will remain fluid right up to the point of provisional Grant settlement being known (December) so we need to continually optimise the Council's options on financial modelling and decision-making.

Savings rejected by the Committee

No savings outlined in the table above were rejected by the Committee.

List of Savings and Pressures to be considered further

As no savings were rejected by the Committee, all savings outlined in the table above will be put forward for consideration.

3. Members questions

Q. In terms of the Solar Campus, one of the operational assets sites, do either of the suggested options mean redundancies?

A. There will be no redundancies or staff impacts as it is a relocation of existing facilities on the site.

Q. Within the Capital Programme the Council is to fund the 3G pitch at Solar Campus, so would that be paused while this is looked at and who funded the 3G pitch that is there now?

A. The 3G pitch on the site at the moment was jointly funded between Tranmere Rovers and the Council. Tranmere Rovers would like a further two 3G pitches on the site to create a hub and there is a deficit of such pitches on the Wirral.

Q. In terms of the joint ownership of the existing 3G pitch on the Solar Campus site it does not mention an income from that so would that income be offset on this saving?

A: Yes, we would go through the budget options with Members, and we would need Member agreement to any transfer or arrangement with Tranmere Rovers so we would need to negotiate. In terms of the 3G pitch that is already there the Council provided grant funding to Tranmere Rovers to provide that facility so it is not in joint ownership and they are running it.

Q. If the Solar Campus Option 1 asset transfer for the whole site goes ahead is there an expectation that the Council would make the site fit for purpose and if that is the case would that mitigate the saving?

A. In terms of the buildings not currently used by Tranmere Rovers the Academy building is the main issue as it is listed. It would require money to be refurbished and bring back into use. Work is ongoing with Tranmere Rovers to explore grant opportunities alongside some of the environmental funding that is available to secure the funds to make it work. The Council would still intend to charge a rental to Tranmere Rovers so there would be some income. Relocating the users and the staff would have associated costs but it is not thought that this would negate the savings.

Q. Please can we have the information in terms of mitigated savings brought up to date in relation to the Solar Campus as and when it becomes available? If the Council do have to contribute financially and it would not be grant aided does that put the Council in a position where any expenditure might mitigate the saving?

A. A paper is being drafted to explore the issue and an update could probably be given in the next two to three weeks. The sale of Solar Building would bring financial benefit to the Council as it releases the Council from liability for the building. Members discussed the £500,000 DFE funding for dilapidations which is ringfenced for the Solar Building whether leased or not.

Q. Will the proposal be affected if Tranmere Rovers move?

A. This is the First Team training facility as well as their education centre. If Tranmere Rovers move grounds in the future this facility would remain as is and any new stadium would be used for football matches.

Q. In terms of the income it does not give an alternative. What is the amount of rental and the rental income if it was not rented to Tranmere Rovers? Is there an option to rent the site?

A. That information can be put together.

Q. What was the income from the weddings for the use of Wallasey Town Hall? It does not state an alternative for weddings and meetings.

A. It is a relatively modest amount when set against the running costs of the building which are around £300 a day to bring it up to heat and maintain heat over the weekend.

Q. Does the projected saving of mothballing Wallasey Town Hall include mothballing and security costs? How many people are employed in each of the Town Halls and if they close how many would face redeployment as opposed to redundancy?

A. The savings are over and above the costs of the mothballing. The savings are still achieved even taking account of those costs. Staff have been moved around the Borough. There are currently four FM staff at Wallasey Town Hall and three part-time cleaners.

Q. Does either Wallasey Town Hall or Birkenhead Town Hall have a community use?

A. There is very limited community use in Wallasey Town Hall. Birkenhead Town Hall has weddings and private functions. Usage is predominantly Council based.

4. Member Comments Members commented that redundancy has not been fully costed and budget options have additional costs with are not immediately visible. They also suggested officers consider hiring out the Town Halls for later functions etc.



Budget Workshops
Subject: Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee
Date: 4 July & 25 July 2022
From: Victoria Simpson, Democratic Services Officer victoriasimpson@wirral.gov.uk
To: P&R Committee

1. Background

All local authorities are required to set a balanced budget by 10th March each year.

Officers from the Department of Neighbourhoods have developed efficiency options for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R)

Workshops to gather the below feedback were held on the 4th and 25th July. Budget option recommendations were agreed during the workshop on 25th July. This will inform the P & R's Committee's proposals and final budget recommendation to Council.

Members were made aware that the Indicative Budget gap for 2023/24 for the Council currently stands at £14.13m and that Officer proposals (savings/income) to bridge that gap total £13.2m.

2. Key Considerations

The current in year savings for the Neighbourhoods Directorate is £5.2 million, with the Environment, Climate Emergency and transport Committee (ECE&T) contributing £1.560m (11.04% of the overall council saving targets).

Members were advised how directorate targets are in place, based on simple proportionate split on net expenditure (adjusted by levies and some central items) ignoring any savings identified within the 2022/23 process for 2023/24 (approved by the Independent Panel expert), which would contribute to achieving target. Members were further advised how the position on the budget gap would remain fluid right up to the point of provisional grant settlement being known in December.

Table 1:

Future Year Savings – Neighbourhood Services

Income Generation Opportunities in Highway Services - £45k
Strategy implementation and review of parks and countryside estate to drive efficiencies with the service - £185k
Income generation within the Park and Countryside Estate - £120k
Cost avoidance within Waste and Environment Service - £90k
Reduction in Waste & Environment Services budget - £23k
Amendment to Bulky Waste Collection (ERIC service) - £10k
Income generation across Parks and Countryside Estate - £40k
One off income from the sale of used parks vehicles once green fleet replacements are purchased - £100k
TOTAL ECL&T Committee - £613k
CROSS CUTTING - Neighbourhood Directorate Efficiencies, Business continuity planning, digitisation of services and asset transfer opportunities - £285k
2023/24 Total Savings: £898k

Table 2:

Future Year Savings – Economy and Regeneration

The Merseytravel Levy is included within the terms of reference of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, however the budget for this sits within the Economy and Regeneration directorate. The Merseytravel levy is set by the Combined Authority and this reflects any changes identified in the city region population and demographics.

Merseytravel Levy – the 2022/23 budget levy had been set at £22,587,000, but the actual levy was £22,587,000 giving a budget saving of £122K

Future Year Pressures

Inflation is at a 40 year high at 9.4% with the potential to reach 12% in October
Potential worst case additional £16m of pressure in 23/24
Context – other local authorities and a lack of direction on funding re: Fair Funding Review
Emerging threat to delivery of in year savings

Savings rejected by the Committee

No savings outlined in the table above were rejected by the Committee.

List of Savings and Pressures to be considered further

As no savings were rejected by the Committee, all savings outlined in the table above will be put forward for consideration.

3. Members questions

Q: With regards to budget decision making involvement of chairs and elected members as a whole, are there any plans to change the way the budget decisions are made? Particular reference was made to last years restructure of the Constituency Committee Team whereby it was reported not all information on the impact of this was shared with members.

A: Last year the gap was a lot bigger, with regards to the constituency team being restructured, this option was approved by full council as an in year saving and therefore was not considered at a budget workshop such as this. The Department have since been proactive in ensuring that the members of staff in question have been re deployed to best utilise their skills. Comments on the overall decision making process will be reported back to Shaer Halewood, Director of Finance who leads the budget setting decision process.

Q: With regards to the income generation opportunities within the Highways Dept, with specific reference to the implementation of large digital screens – a question was raised regarding the safety and the adoption of ‘ vision zero’ – a strategy aimed to eliminate traffic fatalities through improving driver safety and limiting distractions. It was queried how could introduction of digital screens be deemed safe?

A: All of the sites proposed would need to go through a road safety assessment. Many of the proposed areas would be pedestrianised and therefore not only targeted at busy commuter routes. Members were advised how Salford City Council are achieving an income of around £900,000 a year as a result of using digital advertising screens, therefore the income generation opportunity is high.

Q: With regards to overlapping of services for example maintenance of grassed areas, is there any ongoing work to join services up?

A: It is all part of the same management team, however, universal in-house team ideas and recommendations are being prepared and a report will be presented to Committee in due course on options available.

Q: Are any other Councils doing things that we are not doing to generate income?

A: Wirral Council are members of the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) and a lot of their focus is on best practice and advice is sought regularly on how the Council can best maximise generation income opportunities.

Q: With regards to enforcement in relation to dog fouling, are the Council increasing fines in line with inflation?

A: With enforcement, the Council cannot increase charges as it is set nationally as a statutory amount. Wherever possible, the Council increase charges for other services up in line with inflation and fees and charges are regularly under review.

Q: With regards to a proposed camping facility at Wirral Country Park and a 'Go Ape' facility at Royden Park, would these areas be closed off to members of the public who had not paid to use these facilities?

A: The rights of way would need to be respected, but for safety reasons some areas would need to be sectioned off with reference to the Go Ape facility but would avoid any main rights of way. With regards to the camping facility there is an area of gorse land that has some open spaces within it but further work needs to be conducted.

Q: With regards to the green fleet review were do you see the savings and are we using savings from the use of the cargo bikes?

A: Work is being undertaken with the cargo bike company and have asked to trial some of the bikes. In relation to the green fleet review it covers a number of aspects and have been looking at joining up workshops and looking at a new location for the depot. We are looking at alternative fuels such as hydrogen and alternative vehicles i.e. electric or hybrid. The fuel budgets within the services can be reduced that will need to be tempered with the state of the market at present. Some vehicles need to pull heavy machinery and therefore it would not be appropriate to use electric vehicles in these instances.

Q: Have Councillors and employees been asked for budget savings ideas?

A: Yes, we value input from Councillors and employees that can be looked into. Residents will be consulted through the budget setting consultation that occurs

annually. Staff are asked to feed ideas through their teams and line managers. The idea this year was to start the budget setting earlier.

4. Member Comments

A comment was raised regarding income generation and it was suggested that any initiatives to bring in additional income should be welcomed and the quicker decisions can be made the better outcomes can be achieved.

A comment was raised regarding the one off income from the sale of used parks vehicles regarding the likelihood of the possibility of further income that could be generated due to the appreciation in land rovers and small vans. In response it was clarified that if this savings target is over achieved the revenue would go back into a central pot.

A Member commented that in the future it may be better if members of the public are consulted firstly or alongside members. Members were advised that this feedback would be reported back to the communications team who organise the public consultation.



Budget Workshops
Subject: Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee
Date: 26 & 10 November 2022
From: Anna Perrett, Principal Democratic Services Officer annaperrett@wirral.gov.uk
To: P&R Committee

1. Background

All local authorities are required to set a balanced budget by 10th March each year.

The Neighbourhood's Directorate has developed efficiency options for consideration by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee before their recommendations are put forward to the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) for review. Workshops to gather the below feedback were held on the 31 October and 16 November 2022. Budget option recommendations were presented during the workshop on 31 October and expanded upon during the workshop on 16 November 2022. This will inform the P&R Committee's proposals and final budget recommendation to Council.

Members were made aware that the Indicative Budget gap for 2023/24 currently stands at £49m. There are budget pressures amounting to £60m.

2. Key Considerations

Members were reminded that the Neighbourhoods Directorate had proposed £380,000 for 2023/24 in savings in Tranche 1.

A target of £173,000 was set for additional income made by the Neighbourhoods Directorate. Whilst the overall savings value required for Tranche 2 was not confirmed, due to the final budget position still being subject to change, a further £207,000 was gained through cost avoidance savings. There was a shared saving of £285,000 between Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee and Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee.

Members were presented with information on which services where potential savings could be identified. A number of programmes have been initiated to

allow for a transformation in running costs and an efficient operating model. These programmes focus on discretionary and asset-based services. Where possible combination of services was considered for a reduction in running costs.

Members were informed that a return to environmental enforcement action may be required to increase revenue, and this may need to be delivered by a third party. It was noted that issues such as fly tipping and dog fouling had increased since the pandemic.

Options presented to Members included introducing reactive street cleansing, which would generate a £500k budget saving, however it was noted that this may have an effect on the environment and drainage systems, especially over the winter months. This saving included the possibility of compulsory redundancies and associated industrial action. A further saving could also be found by splitting the parks and countryside service into statutory and non-statutory service provision.

Regarding two further possible areas of saving in safety and transport, Members were informed that whilst officers were considering efficiencies from these services, it was too complex and variable to committee to any savings – however officers wanted to present the option to Members to consider.

Members were also informed that whilst budget savings options such as allotments and tree management had been considered, no viable budget savings or income generation options had been found.

Officers presented members with 4 potential Tranche 2 saving options across these service areas:

- **Budget Option 1** – Environmental Enforcement, to include a shift towards robust enforcement of increasing environmental crimes, this includes littering, dog fouling, trade waste and fly tipping. This option gives an income generation figure of £150k
- **Budget Option 2** – Parks and Countryside. Statutory duties include Sites of Specific Interest, closed church yards, scheduled monuments, Historic Parks and Gardens etc. There are two possible budget savings proposed,
 - Option A** – 100% reduction of non-statutory services = £1m
 - Option B** – 50% reduction of non-statutory services = £500k
- **Budget Option 3** - Street Cleansing. To include a reduction in regular service street cleansing provision across the borough in residential areas, with a move to a more reactive cleaning model. This option gives a budget saving figure of £500k
- **Budget Option 4** – Safety and Transport.

Option A – 100% cessation of vehicle maintenance facility. Financially modelled, although too many unknowns in terms of net saving, due to outsourcing and part year effect. Saving = £n/a

Option B – One off saving reduction in maintenance cost of new vehicles. Saving = £tbc

Table 1 (below) provided a breakdown on the potential savings of each option.

Environment	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Environmental Enforcement	150,000			
Parks & Countryside Service	500,000	1,000,000		
Street Cleansing	500,000			
Vehicle Maintenance	TBC			
Allotments	No proposal as no savings deliverable			
Tree Management	No saving proposed			

Future Year Pressures – Neighbourhoods Directorate

Inflation at a 40 year high at 9.1%.
Threats to the delivery of savings that were tracked through the monitoring process
Potential case of an additional £16 million of pressure in 22/23 financial year
A requirement to reassess the 22/23 impact and 23/24 baseline gap

Savings rejected by the Committee

Members acknowledged the savings and the options presented but did not formally accept or reject the savings.

List of Savings and Pressures to be considered further

Following feedback from members, Officers proposed to investigate the options listed in Table 1 further, taking into account their comments.

3. Members questions

Q. Members commented on variable street cleaning in the borough.

A. There is a statutory element to street cleaning, but there is flexibility as to how this is delivered. Each area presents it's own challenges including alleyway, leaf litter and noted that consistency was required if this option was to be considered.

Q. Experience around third party enforcement has not been great – can we do it better next time

A. Officers to consider inhouse enforcement, against third party options

Q. Car parking enforcement – what does this bring in in terms of income generation and can we look at options when renewing the contract.

A. There are opportunities to look at this and there is a larger piece of work to be done by the regeneration directorate in regards to the car parking strategy which will be bought back to committee.

Q. what would be the impact on the Council Fleet – are officers currently upgrading the fleet and machinery.

A. If a reduction to this service area is to be considered, then there would not be a requirement for as many machines and replacement would not be like for like. Some older equipment is not efficient or fit for purpose. Officers would need to work with procurement.

Q. What will be the impact if we switch to reactive street cleaning. Can we have a proactive area and officer led common sense approach.

A. This will cause an increase in Member complaints. There are challenges like alleyways and puts pressure on acute areas.

Q. Can we look at longer warranties if we look at buying new fleets.

A. We will look at that

Q. Query regarding LED advertising and impact on road safety, light pollution etc.

A. They are appearing on privately owned land. Salford gets £900k a year in income generation. Requests need to go through the highways and transport teams to check they are not a danger.

4. Member Comments.

- Members requested that full Equality Impact Assessments be undertaken on each of the options.
- Regarding waste enforcement. Can the policy be changed before budget savings are made.
- Can re-wilding be considered in regard to parks and countryside.
- Request for through consultation and to look at grading options.
- Is there scope for putting car parking charges into the consultation so the public can see why this has been put forward as a budget option.
- Request that the public are given as much information as possible, that context is given to all options and value for money and benchmarking is used to help inform decisions.



Budget Workshops
Subject: Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee
Date: 27 June & 26 July 2022
From: Victoria Simpson, Democratic Services Officer victoriasimpson@wirral.gov.uk
To: P&R Committee

1. Background

All local authorities are required to set a balanced budget by 10th March each year.

Officers from the Department of Adult Social Care and Public Health have developed efficiency options for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R)

Workshops to gather the below feedback were held on the 27 June and 26 July. Budget option recommendations were agreed during the workshop on 27 July. This will inform the P & R's Committee's proposals and final budget recommendation to Council.

Members were made aware that the Indicative Budget gap for 2023/24 for the Council currently stands at £14.13m and that Officer proposals (savings/income) to bridge that gap total £13.2m.

2. Key Considerations

The overall savings value required for 2023/24 for Adult Social Care and Public Health is £5.784M.

- £1m to be delivered by All Age Disability and Learning Disability Transformation
- £4.78M to be delivered by Social Work Delivery teams, with support from commissioners, through a range of Demand Management Initiatives.

Members were advised that the overall directorate savings target of £5.78M was identified by a simple proportionate split on net expenditure by directorate (adjusted by levies and some central items) ignoring any savings identified

within the 2022/23 process for 2023/24 (approved by Independent Panel expert), which would contribute to achieving the overall Council target.

Members were made aware how the position on the gap would remain fluid right up to the point of provisional Government grant settlement being known in December, therefore the Department need to keep under review financial modelling and decision making. Furthermore, for 2023/24 the impact of Social Care Charging Reform and Government funding made available is yet to be announced.

It was acknowledged that there is some unknown level of funding that will be available to Council's to undertake the Governments Fair Cost of Care review.

During the second workshop, Members were provided with an update regarding domiciliary care. Members were advised that there had been a reduction in domiciliary care package spend due to capacity pressures in the independent care provider sector and the level of recruitment and retention of care staff, and It was explained how the available workforce is limited. It was explained how there are initiatives in place in order to help support this for example, the use of e bikes, career fayre and providing financial incentives.

Table 1: Future Year Savings – Adult Social Care and Health

All Age Disability and Learning Disability Transformation - £1m
Demand Management Initiatives delivered by Social Work Delivery Teams - £4.78m
2023/24 Total Savings: £5.784m

Future Year Pressures

Inflation is at a 40 year high at 9.4% with the potential to reach 12% in October
Potential additional £16m of pressure in 23/24 – There is a need to model the impact of cost of living inflation and the impact of social care reforms, and the need for additional Government funding which is yet to be confirmed.
Lack of confirmation on funding re: Fair Cost of Care Review.
Emerging threat to delivery of in year savings

Savings rejected by the Committee

No savings outlined in the table above were rejected by the Committee.

List of Savings and Pressures to be considered further

As no savings were rejected by the Committee, all savings outlined in the table above will be put forward for consideration with the acknowledgement

that additional Government funding in light of proposed government reforms are unknown at present.

3. Members questions

Q: Regarding the pressures outlined by the Director of Adult Social Care regarding worst case scenario of additional savings, what would the impact be on Adult Social Care?

£16m is the overall figure across the Council. If there was a similar proportionate allocation of savings then we would end up with a significant part of the overall savings.

Q: Regarding Fair Cost of Care projects, has the cost of any additional staffing/ resources to support schemes been assessed?

A: This is being worked through at the moment alongside IT and selfserve solutions. We are expecting some of this will be funded, but we do not know to what extent at present.

Q: With regards to the social care cap that is forthcoming, does it apply to people already in care?

A: In the first 12 months it is just to be implemented for new people admitted to care homes, however, people who are already in care can later backdate and reclaim for one year. It is unclear at present how this will be funded.

4. Member Comments

A Member commented on the nature of the services that Adult Social Care provide and stressed how the majority of services provided by the Department are statutory.

It was acknowledged that the full extent of Government funding available is unknown as yet and therefore expected additional costs to the Council are unknown. Members also were aware of the potential impact of Government care reforms that are forthcoming, and therefore agreed that to agree to suggested savings at this point, would be on a provisional basis.

A comment was made by a member on the appreciation of Officers, on the additional pressures Officers face in light of care market difficulties. This was echoed by further members.

Members commented that the approach to a proportionate allocation of savings requirements across the Council, linked to allocated budget, may not be a

method that could be supported in future approaches to savings allocation, depending on the level of savings required.

Some comments were made about extra care housing and the need to increase the number available in Wirral and some frustrations were expressed over past applications that had been turned down by the Planning Committee and it was suggested that ongoing work continues alongside working with Planning Officers and Developers.



Budget Workshops
Subject: Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee
Date: 1 st November and 10 th November 2022
From: Victoria Simpson, Democratic Services Officer victoriasimpson@wirral.gov.uk
To: P&R Committee

1. Background

All local authorities are required to set a balanced budget by 10th March each year.

Tranche 1 budget savings were agreed (highlighted in appendix 1) based on an initial budget gap for 2023/24 for the Council standing at £13m. However, external factors, primarily inflation and soaring energy prices, have led to a dramatically worsened budget forecast 2023/24.

As a result, Officers from the Adult Social Care and Public Health have developed a range of Tranche 2 efficiency options for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R).

Workshops to gather the below feedback were held on the 1st and 10th of November 2022. Budget options were presented to and commented upon by members.

Members were made aware that the Indicative Budget gap for 2023/24 for the Council currently stands at £60.5m and that Officer proposals (savings/income) to bridge that gap total £49m.

2. Key Considerations

Members were reminded that overall savings of £5,784m had been identified for 2023/24 for Adult Social Care and Public Health in Tranche 1. Whilst the overall savings value required for Tranche 2 was not confirmed, due to the final budget position still being subject to change, Members were presented with savings options that totalled £13,508 at the lowest end and £400,000 at the highest end.

Members were presented with information on which services where potential savings could be identified. It was explained how Tranche 2 options were modelled on reduced service levels, with a particular focus on discretionary and asset based services.

Tranche 2 savings set out options concerning reducing voluntary community and faith (VCF) sector contracts for a mix of statutory services and re-investment options for public health. Members were advised how adult care and health third sectors were in the following areas:

- A- Statutory Services = £688, 016. These contracts provide statutory services to meet requirements of the Care Act 2014 and Health and Social Care Act 2014. They cannot be ceased, but could be reduced whilst still being compliant with statutory duties. This would have a negative impact on people using the services.
- B- Non Statutory Services = £13,507. This relates to one single contract for engagement and consultation. The service is good practice and removal could have a negative impact on the Council.
- C- Better Care Fund (BCF) = £1,335, 958. The BCF sits with the pooled budget. Any reduction would be offset by a reduction in funding therefore nil impact overall. These services prevent more intensive care interventions.
- D- Children’s Services funding = £329, 307. This relates to statutory services to support assessment for young carers as part of a joint commission.
- E- Public Health = £107,831

During the workshops, Officers presented members with four potential Tranche 2 saving options across these service areas:

- Option 1 – no reduction of any contracts
- Option 2 – ending of non statutory contracts
- Option 3 – ending of non statutory contracts plus a 10% reduction in the statutory contracts
- Option 4 – ending of non statutory contract plus a 20% reduction in the statutory contracts

Table 1 (below) provided a breakdown on the potential savings of each option:

Table 1: Tranche 2 Future Year Savings – Adult Social Care and Public Health (Budget Workshops 1st & 10th November)

Adult Social Care	Option	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
-------------------	--------	----------	----------	----------	----------

and Public Health	1 (£)	(£)	(£)	(£)	(£)
Reduced VCF contracts for a mix of statutory services	-	£13, 508	£82, 309	£151, 111	
Public Health	-	-	-	-	£100, 000 - £400, 000

In the first workshop, Members were reminded about the ringfenced public health (PH) grant and the authority must be satisfied that the arrangements put in place by the use of the PH grant provide value for money and that the Secretary of State may reduce, suspend or withhold grant payments or require the repayment of the whole or any part of the grant.

It was explained how the majority of the ringfenced PH grant is currently allocated towards delivering mandated and prescribed functions. Services that were not considered as statutory and were listed within the presentation. The impact of cutting each of the options was explained to members.

With regards to adult social care and health savings, savings options were presented as per the table above. In assessing the impact, Members were reminded how contracts relating to statutory services cannot be ceased. Members noted the importance of services and discussed the need for a further workshop to allow time to digest the options.

During the second workshop, information had been distributed regarding third sector contracts including whether the contract provided a statutory service and contracts currently in place were discussed in detail. It also set out the length of individual contracts. The impact of the reduction in individual services was explained to Members.

Savings rejected by the Committee

Following the first workshop, Members required time to digest and consider the proposals. During the second workshop, Members acknowledged and considered the further information received but did not formally accept or reject any of the savings options.

List of Savings and Pressures to be considered further

Following feedback from members, Officers proposed to investigate the value and outcomes of existing contracts in place.

3. Members questions

Q: With regards, to weight management initiatives funded through the public health grant, how do we measure the success and is it worth the money?

A: An exercise is currently being undertaken to assess the value of commissioned services. It is a demand lead service and therefore at the end of the financial year, the amount spent is generally much lower than the allocation.

Q: With regards to contracts, can we be provided with a full breakdown on how the funding is allocated so we can evidence the outcomes.

A: This will be circulated to Members.

Q: Are the contracts listed, the only contracts under the remit of this committee?

A: Yes, other contracts are funded through grant funding or part of the pooled fund.

Q: With regards to advocacy, can we ensure that it helps to secure service users to secure benefits?

A: Different types of advocacy are more specific statutory work for example if some one is deprived of their liberty in a care home and they do not have family member to help their appeal. There is some support in the early intervention services who would assist with the role of securing benefits.

4. Members Comments

Concerns were raised regarding the value of existing services and the impact upon vulnerable members of society should services be cut. Further comments were made upon risk to the council that could be caused should further cuts be imposed.

Budget Workshops
Subject: Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee
Date: 11 th August 2022
From: Katherine Brown, Democratic Services Officer katherinebrown@wirral.gov.uk
To: P&R Committee

1. Background

All local authorities are required to set a balanced budget by 10th March each year.

The Neighbourhoods Directorate has developed efficiency options for consideration by the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee before their recommendations are put forward to the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) for review. Workshops to gather the below feedback were held on the 28 June and 18 July 2022. Budget option recommendations were agreed during the workshop on 18 July. This will inform the P&R Committee's proposals and final budget recommendation to Council.

Members were made aware that the Indicative Budget gap for 2023/24 currently stands at £14.13m and that Officer proposals (savings/income) to bridge that gap total £13.2m.

2. Key Considerations

Members were advised that the Neighbourhoods Directorate had proposed £380,000 in savings. A target of £173,000 was set for additional income made by the Neighbourhoods Directorate. A further £207,000 was gained through cost avoidance savings. There was a shared saving of £285,000 between Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee and Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee. The total figure amounts to £665,000.

Table 1: Future Year Savings – Neighbourhoods Directorate

Leisure Services Review £77k
Temporary Reduction and Cessation of Sundry Costs Within Leisure Services £80k
Review of existing Leisure Catering Offer £100k

Income Generation £73K.
Income Generation from Additional 3G Football Pitches £100k
Transport Workshop Efficiencies £30k
Neighbourhood Directorate Efficiencies from EVR, capitalisation of salary and CAT £285k

Future Year Pressures – Neighbourhoods Directorate

Inflation at a 40 year high at 9.1%.
Threats to the delivery of savings that were tracked through the monitoring process
Potential case of an additional £16 million of pressure in 22/23 financial year
A requirement to reassess the 22/23 impact and 23/24 baseline gap

Savings rejected by the Committee

No savings outlined in the table above were rejected by the Committee

List of Savings and Pressures to be considered further

As no savings were rejected by the Committee, all savings outlined in the table above will be put forward for consideration

3. Members questions

Q A member questioned if the officers were confident that the 3G football pitches could be delivered in appropriate time, and how would the income be generated by these pitches.

A Yes, the official completion deadline is February 2023, however the more likely completion date will be December 2022. Income would be generated by the hiring of the pitches by clubs and individuals.

Q In previous years there has been concern regarding the lake requiring a draining and cleaning.

A A study was conducted and the outcome of which may be consulted to determine what must be addressed in terms of lake maintenance. Additional funding has been preserved for this.

Q Are the building involved in the Supersite Locations for Workshop deposits owned?

A they are leased.

Q How will the Directorate Wide Cross Cutting scheme avoid the loss of the most experience staff members and manage the performance of other staff members?

A The use of agency staff will be avoided where possible. Apprentices will work alongside more experienced staff in order to expand skill ranges and mitigate the issues that come with an aging work profile.

4. Member Comments

Leisure centre cafes may avoid closure and in turn generate more income if other options were considered, such as menu changes.



Budget Workshops
Subject: Tourism, Communities, Culture & Leisure Committee
Date: 26 & 10 November 2022
From: Katherine Brown, Democratic Services Officer katherinebrown@wirral.gov.uk
To: P&R Committee

1. Background

All local authorities are required to set a balanced budget by 10th March each year.

The Neighbourhoods Directorate has developed efficiency options for consideration by the Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee before their recommendations are put forward to the Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) for review. Workshops to gather the below feedback were held on the 26 October and 10 November 2022. Budget option recommendations were presented during the workshop on 26 October and expanded upon during the workshop on 10 November 2022. This will inform the P&R Committee's proposals and final budget recommendation to Council.

Members were made aware that the Indicative Budget gap for 2023/24 currently stands at £49m. Officers advised that since the previous workshop budget pressures amounting to £60m had arisen, these pressures were a result of Macroeconomics of public sector pay, inflation and the overall rise in energy costs.

2. Key Considerations

Members were reminded that the Neighbourhoods Directorate had proposed £380,000 for 2023/24 in savings in Tranche 1. A target of £173,000 was set for additional income made by the Neighbourhoods Directorate. Whilst the overall savings value required for Tranche 2 was not confirmed, due to the final budget position still being subject to change, a further £207,000 was gained through cost avoidance savings. There was a shared saving of £285,000 between Tourism, Communities, Culture and Leisure Committee and Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee.

Members were presented with information on which services where potential savings could be identified. A number of programmes have been initiated to

allow for a transformation in running costs and an efficient operating model. These programmes focus on discretionary and asset based services. Where possible combination of services was consider for a reduction in running costs.

Officers presented members with Three potential Tranche 2 saving options across these service areas:

- Option 1 - 100% cessation of Wirral Community Patrol and emergency control room. Co-location of two central libraries. Transformation of the leisure service over 5-year period.
- Option 2 - 100% cessation of Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team. Reduce library service to 5 site model. Closure of Oval Sports & Leisure Centre.
- Option 3 – Combination of options 1 and 2 for Library Services. Closure of two principal swimming pools, and ancillary costs based on income generation targets.

Table 1 (below) provided a breakdown on the potential savings of each option.

Table 1: Future Year Savings – Neighbourhoods Directorate, Tranche 2

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Community Safety & Transport	-£850,000	-£285,000	-
Library Services	-£390,000	-£860,000	-£1,100,000
Leisure Services	-£500,000	-£500,000	-£850,000
Museums	No proposals as no savings deliverable		
Floral Pavilion	Pending New Brighton Masterplan		
One Stop Shops	Developing Ideas		
Sail Loft Coastal Kitchen	Developing Ideas		

Future Year Pressures – Neighbourhoods Directorate

Inflation at a 40 year high at 9.1%.
Threats to the delivery of savings that were tracked through the monitoring process
Potential case of an additional £16 million of pressure in 22/23 financial year
A requirement to reassess the 22/23 impact and 23/24 baseline gap

Savings rejected by the Committee

Members acknowledged the savings and the options presented but did not formally accept or reject the savings.

List of Savings and Pressures to be considered further

Following feedback from members, Officers proposed to investigate the options listed in Table 1 further, taking into account their comments.

3. Members questions

Q: What was the Oval Leisure Centre's income and expenditure pre covid?

A: Further shared via email to members.

Q: Where there NHS payments to mitigate losses when they used leisure centres during covid?

A: During the pandemic, partner organisations such as the NHS paid for the use of buildings on a hire only basis and any payments were made to cover operating costs, not to mitigate losses from normalised operations. In accordance with national lockdowns and public health guidance, all sites were closed for significant periods during the pandemic. Charging health partners for losses for operations which would not have been taking place anyway would have therefore been inequitable and not conducive to the joint agency response that took place during what was a national health emergency.

Q: Is it correct we receive £3.7m yearly from Public Health?

A: Yes, but that is not included in these options.

Q: Is it possible to answer which leisure activity generates the most profit?

A: No. Some of the activities within Leisure Services will run at a surplus whilst some will run at a loss. Any surplus generated by high performing activities, will only serve to support the provision of other activities, that, whilst not profitable, will nonetheless be important to many service users. Even where activities do make a surplus, such as 3G football, this may still be seasonal due to the nature of the sport. There is therefore no single formula that would account for the profit and loss of any particular activity.

Q: Rethinking the leisure pass – is there a way to make the pass less broad and become more business minded to create a saving using the passes?

A: The Leisure Services team regularly review the membership models. There are currently several types of memberships available designed to attract a wide range of target audiences. Memberships start from only £18 per month. For many customers, the attractiveness of a flexible multi-site, multi-activity offer is what retains a sustainable, core membership base. To diminish the breadth of some of the offers may only serve to alienate some customers and result in a loss of memberships.

Q: Members requested a breakdown of the Public Health funding expenditure.

Q: How is the PCC grant divided amongst departments?

A: Neighbourhoods and Community Services receive £350k per annum. This is then taken to SWBP to determine how it will be spent. The funding is used on Community Patrol and a number of voluntary third sector organisations who work alongside teams within the Neighbourhoods Directorate.

Q: Will any income streams be lost?

A: Both teams create income, Community Patrol provide services for housing providers and school estates. With more schools becoming academies this is less frequent. £150k in income could be lost. The Anti Social Behaviour team generates a smaller income. There is a £30k agreement with Prima Housing.

Q: Which directorate would undertake these services if these teams are removed?

A: As these are non-statutory services it would not be redirected to a different area but rather it would be undertaken by the local police.

Q: Are there any other councils who have dissolved these teams? What were their experiences?

A: Officers will look into this

Q: Further details were requested regarding department spending

A: Further information will be collated on this.

4. Member Comments

It would be more suitable to delay moving Birkenhead Library into Birkenhead Town Hall, in order to find a more viable location which is central and accessible via public transport.

This page is intentionally left blank