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Agenda for a meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on Thursday, 11 January 2024 at 5.00 pm in Committee Room 1 - City Hall, Bradford

Members of the Committee – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	GREEN
Azam Alipoor Robinson D Green Mohammed Regan	Loy F Ahmed	Stubbs	Love

Alternates:

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	GREEN
Tait M Hussain Shafiq Wood A Ahmed Shaheen	Glentworth Davies	Griffiths	Warnes

Notes:

- This agenda can be made available in Braille, large print or tape format on request by contacting the Agenda contact shown below.
- The taking of photographs, filming and sound recording of the meeting is allowed except if Councillors vote to exclude the public to discuss confidential matters covered by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. **Recording activity should be respectful to the conduct of the meeting and behaviour that disrupts the meeting (such as oral commentary) will not be permitted. Anyone attending the meeting who wishes to record or film the meeting's proceedings is advised to liaise with the Agenda Contact who will provide guidance and ensure that any necessary arrangements are in place.** Those present who are invited to make spoken contributions to the meeting should be aware that they may be filmed or sound recorded.
- **Members of the public are respectfully reminded that this is a meeting that is being held in public NOT a public meeting. The attendance of the public to observe the proceedings is welcome.**
- If any further information is required about any item on this agenda, please contact the officer named at the foot of that agenda item.

From:

Asif Ibrahim

Director of Legal and Governance

Agenda Contact: Yusuf Patel

Phone: 07970 411923

E-Mail: yusuf.patel@bradford.gov.uk

To:

A. PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

The Director of Legal and Governance will report the names of alternate Members who are attending the meeting in place of appointed Members.

2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

(Members Code of Conduct – Part 4A of the Constitution)

To receive disclosures of interests from members and co-opted members on matters to be considered at the meeting. The disclosure must include the nature of the interest.

An interest must also be disclosed in the meeting when it becomes apparent to the member during the meeting.

Notes:

- (1) *Members must consider their interests, and act according to the following:*

Type of Interest	You must:
<i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests</i>	<i>Disclose the interest; not participate in the discussion or vote; and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.</i>
<i>Other Registrable Interests (Directly Related)</i> OR <i>Non-Registrable Interests (Directly Related)</i>	<i>Disclose the interest; speak on the item <u>only if</u> the public are also allowed to speak but otherwise not participate in the discussion or vote; and leave the meeting <u>unless</u> you have a dispensation.</i>
<i>Other Registrable Interests (Affects)</i> OR <i>Non-Registrable Interests (Affects)</i>	<i>Disclose the interest; remain in the meeting, participate and vote <u>unless</u> the matter affects the financial interest or well-being</i> <i>(a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of a majority of inhabitants of the affected ward, and</i> <i>(b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that</i>

it would affect your view of the wider public interest; in which case speak on the item only if the public are also allowed to speak but otherwise not do not participate in the discussion or vote; and leave the meeting unless you have a dispensation.

- (2) *Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to the Member concerned or their spouse/partner.*
- (3) *Members in arrears of Council Tax by more than two months must not vote in decisions on, or which might affect, budget calculations, and must disclose at the meeting that this restriction applies to them. A failure to comply with these requirements is a criminal offence under section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.*
- (4) *Officers must disclose interests in accordance with Council Standing Order 44.*

3. MINUTES

Recommended –

That the minutes of the meeting held on XXXXX 2023 be signed as a correct record (previously circulated).

(Yusuf Patel / Jane Lythgow – 07970 411923 / 07970 411623)

4. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

(Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 3B of the Constitution)

Reports and background papers for agenda items may be inspected by contacting the person shown after each agenda item. Certain reports and background papers may be restricted.

Any request to remove the restriction on a report or background paper should be made to the relevant Strategic Director or Assistant Director whose name is shown on the front page of the report.

If that request is refused, there is a right of appeal to this meeting.

Please contact the officer shown below in advance of the meeting if you wish to appeal.

(Yusuf Patel / Jane Lythgow – 07970 411923 / 07970 411623)

5. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee will be asked to note any referrals received and decide how it wishes to proceed, for example by incorporating the item into the work programme, requesting that it be subject to more detailed examination, or refer it to an appropriate Working Group/Committee.

B. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ACTIVITIES

6. WEST YORKSHIRE JOINT SERVICES (WYJS) - UPDATE 1 - 20

The Director of West Yorkshire Joint Services will submit a report. (**Document “X”**) which provides details on activities of the West Yorkshire Joint Services both in the Bradford District and generally across the region.

Recommended –

- (1) Members note the content of Document “X” and consider any future scrutiny actions that could arise from this item; and**
- (2) Note the breadth of work undertaken by WYJS in the Bradford District and raise any questions related to these services in the district.**

(Andy Robson - Director of WYJS)

7. PROGRESS REPORT ON WORK TO IMPLEMENT THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT LOCALLY AND TO MEET THE COUNCIL'S COVENANT DUTIES 21 - 42

The Assistant Director of Office of the Chief Executive will submit a report (**Document “Y”**) which provides an update on work undertaken and ongoing to implement the Armed Forces Covenant locally and to meet the Council's duties under the Armed Forces Covenant Duty contained within the Armed Forces Act 2021.

Recommended –

To note and comment on the contents of the progress report on work to implement the Armed Forces Covenant locally and to meet the Council's Covenant duties.

(Helen Johnston - 01274 434401)

8. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE SERVICE 43 - 54

The Strategic Director Place will submit a report (**Document “Z”**) which provides an update to the committee on how the service is working towards achieving a high performing, customer focused hackney carriage and private hire service. How it analyses information to drive improvements in service delivery to the benefit of trade and employees.

Recommended –

That the Committee consider and comment on the report.

(Carol Stos - 07582 101569)

9. 2024-25 BUDGET PROPOSALS - FINANCIAL ANALYSIS, INITIAL FINANCIAL OUTLOOK AND BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2024-25 AND BEYOND 55 - 108

The Director of Finance will submit a report (**Document “AA”**) which sets out the 2024-25 Budget Proposals - Financial Analysis, Initial Financial Outlook and Budget proposals for 2024-25 and beyond.

Recommended –

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

- (1) Note the report and the recommendations to the Executive.**
- (2) To feed back any comments on the budget proposals into the consultation process.**

(Andrew Cross – 01274 436823)

Note: This report will be considered by Executive on 11 January 2024.

10. CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24. 109 - 122

The Chair of the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee will submit a report (**Document “AB”**) which includes the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2023/24, which are attached as appendix 1 to Document “AB”.

Also attached as appendix 2, is a list of unscheduled topics for 2023-24.

Recommended –

- (1) That the Committee may choose to add to or amend the topics included in the 2023-24 work programme.**
- (2) That Members consider any detailed scrutiny reviews that they may wish to conduct.**

(Mustansir Butt - 01274 432574)

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Report of the Director of West Yorkshire Joint Services to the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 11th January 2024

X

Subject: West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS) - Update

Summary statement:

West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS) provide a number of services, some of which are statutory, on behalf of the five West Yorkshire Local Authorities Leeds, Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield. Statutory services included in their activity are Archaeological Advisory Services, Archives, Ecology Services and Trading Standards along with other services such as Archaeological Services, Asbestos and Calibration Services which provide a commercial resource.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

Equality assessments - Please consider and comment on the equality impacts of any new, review, or removal of policies, practices, strategies, services or functions. In some instances this may require the completion of an equality impact assessment form. Full guidance is available on BradNet.

Equality objectives – if the work presented contributes to one of the Council's equality objectives a statement must be provided to explain what and how (more detail available in the report guide).

Andy Robson
Director of WYJS

Report Contact: Andy Robson
E-mail: andy.robson@wyjs.org.uk

Portfolio:

Leader & Corporate

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Corporate

1. SUMMARY

WYJS provide a range of statutory services on behalf of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and the Overview and Strategy Committee were approached to facilitate an update report to the Committee on WYJS service provision in the Bradford District and as a key partner organisation seek to enhance existing working relationships between WYJS and the Council. A similar process is being replicated across the other West Yorkshire authorities with Wakefield, Kirklees and Leeds already having considered a similar update item through their respective scrutiny functions.

A briefing note provided by the WYJS Director which provides details on their activity both in the Bradford District and generally across the region is included in the background section.

2. BACKGROUND

1. This item provides an update on the services provided by West Yorkshire Joint Services in the Bradford District and includes examples of recent activity within the district.
2. Due to the variety of services provided by WYJS they impact on the remits of more than just the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
3. In addition, the Bradford appointed members of the West Yorkshire Joint Services Committee which comprises of representation from all five West Yorkshire authorities play key role in the governance of WYJS.
4. Part 8 of this section includes a detailed briefing note providing information on the services provided by WYJS and case studies of recent activity in the Bradford District.
5. The West Yorkshire Joint Services Vision is to support social and economic prosperity across West Yorkshire and operate as a modern and forward-thinking service. Its mission is to:
 - Encourage a growing economy
 - Support safer, stronger and healthier communities
 - Preserve the past, serve the present and protect the future
 - Promote and conserve the natural and historic environment
6. In addition, WYJS focuses on four main interconnected priorities:
 - Business and the economy
 - Environment and heritage
 - Safer, stronger and healthier communities
 - Operating as a modern and forward-thinking service
7. This item is brought to the Committee to provide an update on the activity of WYJS in the Bradford District and to raise awareness of the important services that are provided by them.
8. This item includes the briefing note from Andy Robson, Director of WYJS to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as follows:

BRIEFING NOTE ON WEST YORKSHIRE JOINT SERVICES

11 JANUARY 2024

Briefing from: Andy Robson, Director, West Yorkshire Joint Services

Briefing to: Bradford Metropolitan District Council Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Role of West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS)

West Yorkshire Joint Services deliver a number of high-quality shared services on behalf of the five district Councils within West Yorkshire via a Joint Services Committee arrangement made up of members from each Local Authority. These services either fulfil a statutory role on behalf of the five Councils such as Archaeological Advisory Services, Archives, Ecology Services and Trading Standards or those such as Archaeological Services, Asbestos and Calibration Services provide a first-class commercial resource, delivering vital services to local businesses.

WYJS Vision: To support social and economic prosperity across West Yorkshire and operate as a modern and forward-thinking service.

WYJS Mission: Delivering trusted shared services that:

- encourage a growing economy
- support safer, stronger and healthier communities
- preserve the past, serve the present and protect the future
- promote and conserve the natural and historic environment

WYJS Priorities: WYJS focuses on four main interconnected priorities:

- Business and the economy
- Environment and heritage
- Safer, stronger and healthier communities
- Operating as a modern and forward-thinking service

Archaeology Advisory Service

The Archaeology Advisory Service's principal role is to provide informed and authoritative advice and information to the Planning Authorities in West Yorkshire to help conserve the most significant heritage sites that are affected by development proposals. The Service helps inform and influence sustainable developments within West Yorkshire and promotes an informed understanding and high level of appreciation of those heritage sites.

Archive Service

The Archive Service collects, preserves and makes available for public use over 21,000 individual collections of the region's historic records dating back to the twelfth century. These records are used for research and learning. WYJS also holds one of only five surviving Registry of Deeds in the whole country used for legal purposes or for family and local history.

Ecology Service

The Ecology Service provides informed and authoritative advice and information to the Planning Authorities in West Yorkshire to help conserve the most significant biodiversity habitats and species. The Service holds 501,000 records of individual species (including over 105,000 protected and other notable species) which are mapped on a geographical information system (GIS). The records are accessed or consulted by developers' ecological consultants, nature conservation organisations and the public.

Trading Standards Service

WYJS has several specialist teams within Trading Standards Service covering a wide range of legislation to protect both West Yorkshire businesses and consumers.

The Service uses an intelligence led approach to respond flexibly to emerging threats and demands and ensures issues that cause the highest levels of detriment to consumers and businesses across West Yorkshire are addressed as a priority.

The key activities based on risk and harm, which warrant heightened intervention are:

- Doorstep crime and scams: prevention and detection of rogue trading, scams and frauds, disruption of illegal trading and the recovery of money and assets obtained from criminal activity.
- Safeguarding and maintaining the integrity of the human food supply chain including the safety and legality of animal feed.
- Disrupting the supply chain and availability of illicit tobacco.
- Protecting consumers from purchasing unsafe second-hand cars.
- Product safety: ensuring goods placed on the market are safe and disrupting the sale of age restricted products (for example; alcohol, tobacco and vapes to minors).

Through partnership working this Service also encourages economic growth by proactively engaging with and supporting the West Yorkshire business community (both Primary Authority and non-Primary Authority businesses). Another example of partnership working is the West Yorkshire Financial Exploitation and Abuse Team (WYFEAT) which is hosted and run by this Service. WYFEAT undertakes activities across West Yorkshire to protect vulnerable residents from financial abuse, detecting and investigating incidents of scams, frauds, doorstep crime and family, friends and carer abuse, undertaking effective safeguarding of victims and potential victims, helping residents to be safe, healthy and independent.

Archaeological Services West Yorkshire (ASWYAS)

The Service operates as one of the leading units delivering efficient archaeological and heritage solutions across the UK with an extensive portfolio of sites from housing developments, quarries, road, rail and other infrastructure projects. The Service's approach is focused on delivering customer-focused commercial services, engaging at all stages of development to provide desk-based assessments, heritage statements, geophysical surveys, landscape surveys, watching briefs, trial trenching and excavation services.

Asbestos Services and Calibration Services

Calibration Services protect and support businesses, Local Authorities and other customers by ensuring accurate testing and calibration of weighing and measuring equipment regulated by the Weights and Measure Act 1985. The Service offers UKAS accredited mass calibrations, legal verification of weighing and measuring equipment, and operates two weighbridge test units. The client base includes weighing instrument manufacturers, engineering, pharmaceutical and medical companies, factories and retail users of weighing and measuring equipment.

Asbestos Services provides asbestos testing services to both private businesses, and Local Authorities. This includes asbestos identification and air monitoring which supports compliance and safety for the Service's clients. The asbestos work is also accredited to ISO 17025:2017 standard through the UKAS accredited quality system.

Recent Case Studies

Some examples of the WYJS activity in the Bradford District are highlighted.

Bradford Metropolitan District Council (BMDC)

Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Case studies of WYJS activity in the Bradford District

Archaeological Services West Yorkshire (ASWYAS)

WYAS have undertaken a number of archaeological projects in Silsden in recent years with the most notable site off Keighley Road (works commissioned by Barratt Homes) revealing nationally important evidence for Bronze Age and Iron Age activity. The discoveries include a round barrow, a square barrow and a pit alignment. (Barrows are mounds of soil, stone, and redeposited bedrock heaped over a central burial. 'Pit alignment' is a linear arrangement of pits, typical of the middle and later Bronze Age in southern and central England, originally forming a boundary feature, probably in conjunction with the spoil dug from them raised up as a bank to one side).

Within two pits in the centre of the round barrow, collared urns containing cremated human remains were uncovered. One urn was accompanied by an accessory cup and ceramic beads; the second included three flint knives. These Bronze Age funerary finds are so significant that this site is currently being prepared for publication.

The photograph below shows one of the collared urns in situ.



This photograph shows the aerial view of the site with the square barrow and pit alignment in the foreground.



The Service has also recently completed two geophysical surveys in Silsden, one on land off Hainsworth Road and one close to Bolton Road. The Bolton Road site was also subject to a desk-based assessment on behalf of Persimmon Homes. These site evaluations represent the initial stages in assessing the archaeological importance of a site, prior to development. The work of ASWYAS helps facilitate development in the district whilst preserving, by record, important heritage assets for both the Bradford area and West Yorkshire.

Trading Standards Service

To support the Bradford district business community, the Service provides the Primary Authority scheme to deliver a comprehensive package of advice and support to partner businesses. This is a statutory scheme which is a chargeable service and demonstrates WYJS commitment to form a positive relationship between the business and Local Authority. There are fifteen Primary Authority businesses in the Bradford district, which include the likes of Hallmark Cards, Wm Morrison, Suma Wholefoods and Woolbro Distribution. Partnership working is also established with the West Yorkshire LEP to provide a route to Trading Standards advice for start-up businesses.

The Service operates a Motor Trade Partnership (MTP) as part of its work to protect consumers from purchasing unsafe used cars. Four businesses in the Bradford district are members of the MTP and benefit from guidance on compliance with legislative requirements. Members are audited annually and during the 2022 audit cycle, 3 of the 4 Bradford businesses achieved an award for Excellent Customer Service.

Underage sales enforcement activity is undertaken based on an intelligence led approach. WYJS operates to strict criteria in responding to complaints about the sale of age restricted products to children, particularly alcohol and e-cigarettes, and unsafe consumer goods. Between the period 01/12/22 to 30/11/23 WYJS received 151 complaints from the Bradford District about the sale of age restricted products to children. The majority of the complaints related to alcohol, e-cigarettes and tobacco. Test purchase operations took place throughout the year and a number of underage sales were made by the retailers. Investigations are on-going in respect to these matters.

WYJS has brought four Premises Licence Reviews to the Licensing Committee as a result of visits made to premises holding alcohol licences, where concealed illicit and counterfeit tobacco and e-cigarette products have been found. Alcohol licences were revoked in three of these cases due to the licensing objectives of preventing crime and disorder and preventing harm to children not being upheld. Local media coverage highlighted these decisions, notably the revocation of the licence of Jimmy's Off Licence, Great Horton Road.

On 30 November 2023, Mr Badir Shah, the owner of Phones and Vapes, Bradford appeared at Bradford Magistrates Court to answer charges relating to the sale of an oversized disposable electronic cigarette to a 13-year-old child. Mr Shah pleaded guilty and was fined £400 and ordered to pay a surcharge of £160 and costs of £1028.

This case was launched after WYJS received multiple complaints about the business allegedly selling vapes to children. In April 2023, a 13-year-old volunteer entered the shop, under the supervision of a WYJS Officer, and asked to buy a vape. The volunteer was sold an eLux ENE Lemon Peach Passionfruit 3500 puffs electronic cigarette without asking for any identification, or challenging her age. It is an offence to sell an electronic cigarette containing nicotine to a person under the age of 18 and also an offence to sell a disposable electronic cigarette that has a tank size which exceeds 2 millilitres, or approximately 600 puffs.

During the 2023 firework season officers worked closely with the Bradford MDC Multi-Agency Bonfire group led by the Bradford Community Safety Co-ordinator, to facilitate joint working and integrate the WYJS response to complaints of underage sales of fireworks with the work of other partners, particularly the Police and Community Safety teams. During late October and early November, twelve premises licensed to sell fireworks were visited to monitor compliance. No significant issues were identified and minor non-compliance issues were dealt with at the time by the WYJS Officer.

The Botulinum Toxin and Cosmetic Fillers (Children) Act 2021 makes it an offence to treat, or make arrangements to treat, an individual under the age of 18. Enforcement of this part of the legislation sits with WYJS, (other sections are the responsibility of the Police to enforce). WYJS carried out a trader education project across West Yorkshire to write to all businesses providing botulinum toxin (Botox) and cosmetic filler services that could be identified. A total of 53 Bradford businesses were identified and advised of their obligations. Businesses were asked to sign and return a declaration confirming they had received the advisory letter and that they understood their legal obligations. Any enforcement work arising will be based on an intelligence led approach.

During September 2023, acting on intelligence received from BMDC licensing officers, the WYJS food team conducted a sampling operation in the city centre. Information received concerning a number of city centre public houses all operated by the same individual under a number of limited companies that were allegedly substituting spirits for inferior brands and displaying bar fonts for premium lagers when the barrels in the cellar were a cheaper alternative. The team inspected three establishments simultaneously and took a range of samples which were then submitted to the public analyst for formal examination. Early indications suggest that some of the spirits were in fact adulterated and under strength and investigations are ongoing into the alleged offences.

A recent trend for 'raw feeding' of meat to pet dogs has led to a proliferation of businesses setting up to manufacture this material for pet food. Where feed businesses use products of animal origin in their manufacture, they are subject to an approval process which is policed by the Animal Plant Health Agency (APHA) an executive agency of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Products of animal origin include meat from livestock and poultry. The businesses are also required to register with Trading Standards as feed businesses and are subject to inspection by feed qualified and competent officers.

There are inherent dangers to human health in the handling of raw feed material of animal origin as there is no cooking process involved to act as a 'kill step' for potentially harmful pathogens and the meat is fed to the dog without further preparation.



The approval process requires microbiological sampling by the business to verify the manufacturing process is both hygienic and free from certain pathogens. Achieving approval and registration is costly and complicated. A large proportion of businesses commit their time and investment to get through the approval and registration sign off process and then let standards slip over time. There are a number that actually start operating without the requisite approval and registration and therefore trade illegally.

In February 2023, acting on intelligence received by APHA, a joint visit with WYJS officers was made to premises outside Bradford city centre. During the inspection filthy conditions were witnessed (as shown in the photographs below), the occupier of the premises citing reasons due in part to the rapid expansion of the business. Five feed hygiene improvement notices were served on the business operator requiring action by the operator.



The outcome of this intervention was that improvements were made raising the operating standards and also further investment by the owner into an adjoining unit leading to a revised approval by APHA.

During the course of the year, WYJS, in collaboration with both APHA and BMDC animal health officers have intervened with a further three raw animal feed operators. One of those businesses was trading outside the scope of their registration. They were only permitted to sell feed material from kennel to kennel rather than their practice of also selling to the general public. Notices were served requiring the business to cease the illegal trading. The business now has full approval to continue trading after putting in place the required approved operating conditions.

A further business was found to be trading illegally after a volume of complaints from the public to BMDC regarding the pungent odour of rotting meat resulted in WYJS officers taking appropriate action to stop the illegal activity. The business premises are now occupied by a different company who will shortly begin trading legitimately after being granted the appropriate operating approval.

The third business in question also appears to have been trading illegally based on the complaints received of rotting meat odour emanating from the premises. Upon investigation it appears the illegal business operator has vanished. WYJS officers are currently working with the landlord of the property in order to gain entry to the premises.

In all the above instances, effective collaborative partnership working by WYJS, APHA, and BMDC has resulted in the prevention of unsafe pet food entering the pet food market and reducing the risks to human health from potentially harmful pathogens.

WYFEAT Fraud Prevention Advice & Training

The delivery of an on-going project involving the coordination of WYFEAT training across the West Yorkshire District areas raises awareness of fraud and financial abuse of vulnerable adults and reporting mechanisms. WYFEAT have delivered numerous different training sessions within the Bradford District since the project started. Over the last twelve months, the WYFEAT safeguarding team have reached out to different partners from within Bradford Council, hospital discharge teams and more recently to Elected Members, delivering 11 training sessions, covering topics around financial exploitation and how to recognise the signs, including reporting any concerns to the team. WYFEAT also presented to over 100 attendees at the Adult Exploitation Conference for Professionals in Bradford in November 2022.

WYJS are undertaking initiatives aimed at reducing the impact of doorstep crime across the districts of West Yorkshire. The project referred to as 'Operation Athena' is intelligence and complaint led to help raise awareness of recent Rogue Trader activity within West Yorkshire communities. In line with further PREVENT and safeguarding work, officers from WYFEAT have carried out community engagement visits with residents of 15 different residential areas within the Bradford District since the start of Operation Athena in December 2022. During these visits, officers distribute awareness and information leaflets and speak with residents about recent rogue trader activity. Officers encourage reporting from within the community and give advice on how to prevent becoming a victim to doorstep crime.

WYFEAT Investigations

WYFEAT have been carrying out both investigative and preventative work across the Bradford District. Since April 2023, WYFEAT have received 25 financial exploitation and abuse referrals regarding Bradford residents and in the same period the value of reported fraud/financial exploitation amounted to approximately £170,000. The team are currently undertaking investigations or offering safeguarding support in 17 cases, an example case is detailed below.

Operation Bernese is an investigation into allegations of Fraud by Abuse of Position. The case was referred to WYFEAT recently by Bradford Adult Social Care regarding concerns about the management of a vulnerable adult's finances. The suspect is the victim's daughter and the offences allegedly occurred whilst she was acting as Power of Attorney and managing her mother's financial affairs due to a diagnosis of dementia. The victim lacks capacity to deal with her financial affairs and moved into full time residential care in 2015.

Due to concerns raised, the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) investigated concerns in 2022 and after reviewing the victim's bank accounts, they found seven different transfers made from the victim's account to the alleged suspect's account amounting to £54,500. The victim's account was overdrawn on several occasions meaning that some standing orders for care home fees were not honoured. They also identified some direct debits from the victim's bank account for utility bills however, the victim has not owned a property since 2018 and it is therefore suspected that these may relate to the alleged suspect's property.

The Power of Attorney was revoked by the OPG following their enquiry and WYFEAT are now investigating this matter.

Operation Artemis is an ongoing business engagement initiative that is being run by the WYJS Doorstep Crime & Fair-Trading team. The aim of this operation is to identify businesses at an early stage where consumer complaints have been received that are indicative of breaches of the Consumer Protection legislation. This enables earlier intervention with the businesses in order to bring them into compliance with a view to preventing wider consumer losses going forward.

The threshold for Op Artemis engagement is focused on where there are vulnerable consumers affected or likely to be affected. Raising the profile of WYJS presence amongst local businesses is beneficial both as a deterrent for those looking to cut corners to make financial gain at the expense of vulnerable consumers and also as a mechanism to gather intelligence on any businesses who may cause concern to the Service in the future.

A Bradford based business was recently identified as a suitable candidate for Operation Artemis, after a number of complaints were received in relation to the business not providing refunds to customers amongst other consumer related issues. The activities of this business highlighted concerns to WYJS as some of the affected consumers involved were vulnerable and had suffered a financial loss from paying a deposit for a service that was never received.

After collating the nature of the complaints and identifying issues with the business practices, WYJS officers began engagement with the company Director. After a face-to-face meeting, scrutinising the complaints and identifying the root cause of the problems, the company have agreed to reimburse all the consumers who were waiting for a refund.

This resolution has been greatly received by the consumers who praised the intervention from WYJS and are really happy to finally have their money back. The advice issued to the company will hopefully serve them well and if followed will prevent them from receiving further complaints.

Operation Bale is a large cross regional doorstep crime investigation, which began in June 2022 with a vulnerable, elderly resident who resides in the BD20 area of Bradford. Initial enquiries identified that the vulnerable resident had been repeatedly cold called by an organised group of rogue traders. The victim having paid out over £30,000 for very minimal work on the garage roof at his property. After intense research and intelligence collation, it was identified that the same rogue traders were allegedly offending in three separate Local Authority areas across the North East and West Yorkshire regions. The alleged defendants were using the same offending practices and all the victims they were targeting were elderly and vulnerable. During the investigation it became very clear that the alleged offenders having initially travelled to Bradford to target their victim then continued to return to him to extort money over a period of months.

In March 2023, the alleged defendants involved were assessed and mapped as an Organised Crime Group, believed to be working together to commit doorstep related crime and laundering money through identified bank accounts. The case was then handed over to the Yorkshire & Humber Regional Investigations Team in April 2023 due to the nature of the investigation being cross boundary. WYJS officers continued to support the investigation when required. The Bradford based victim has been safeguarded by WYJS officers to prevent further loss and has been supported throughout whilst the investigation continues.

Operation Brake is a multi- agency operation relating to a double-glazing company based in the Bradford Area. The company have been operating since 2020 and first came to the attention of WYJS in Summer 2022 when complaint received were increasing. An initial advisory meeting was held with the company regarding the complaints and intervention measures were used to try and improve their business compliance. However, despite this intervention, it was clear that the company had no intention of operating as a legitimate company. WYJS continued to monitor them, and their complaint levels continued to increase. The company were found to be targeting vulnerable consumers who lived alone. The company would cold call the vulnerable consumer and make them believe they needed work doing to their property. The company would then send a sales representative to the consumers property who would stay for hours to convince the victim to sign a contract offering different deals and using pressure tactics. The company would then take a 25% deposit which then increased to 50% and would then either ask for more money before completing any of the work or become uncontactable, with the work never completed. The very few consumers who did actually have work done would complain to the company only to be threatened by a manager. The company had in their possession what is referred to as a 'suckers list' which they would use to cold call consumers. It is suspected the offending company have obtained the list of vulnerable consumers from a previous company they all had links to. The offending was well planned and calculated by those individuals who are linked to the company. From the company transactions, it is clear there has been a large amount of money go through their bank account whilst the victims have been left out of pocket by considerable sums. This investigation is ongoing.

The WYJS Proceeds of Crime (POCA) Team are currently assisting Bradford Environmental Health Team with a financial investigation into a couple who are allegedly operating an illegal dog breeding business. They have been allegedly operating illegally since at least 2011 and have never held a licence or incurred the associated costs with running a business of this nature. The couple have also never undergone any fit and proper checks. Investigations by Environmental Health have identified a significant number of dogs registered with the Kennel club and advertised for sale online. They are selling the dogs for around £2,500.00 per time and based on the number of dogs advertised for sale their profit from this illegal business is estimated to be in excess of £900K. It is alleged that the couple have acquired significant assets during the same period. The case is currently listed at Bradford Magistrates for proceedings to commence and the WYJS POCA team are making enquiries to trace assets and confirm the financial gain made from the alleged offending.

WYJS has the responsibility of enforcing legislation in relation to The Tenant Fees Act 2019. This legislation was introduced to prohibit certain types of 'tenant fees' with the aim of making renting fairer and more affordable for tenants. The Service is currently undertaking Operation Titan aimed at improving awareness and compliance within the property rental sector to inform landlords and letting agents of their responsibilities as part of this legislation. WYJS also aims to provide tenants with information about their rights, responsibilities and how to gain redress. As a first step in this project WYJS are identifying Lettings Agents within West Yorkshire in addition to using records provided by the five West Yorkshire Councils' housing teams. The identified Lettings Agents are being contacted and asked to provide key information in relation to their compliance with The Tenant Fees Act 2019. Any identified non-compliances will be recorded on the WYJS intelligence database and dealt with by providing advice or undertaking enforcement action where appropriate. This will help build an intelligence picture of the lettings sector landscape in West Yorkshire and inform future enforcement activity. To date 43 Bradford based agents have been contacted.

The project also aims to strengthen the links between WYJS and the five District Housing Teams to create a stronger intelligence sharing network. WYJS have met with Bradford District housing team and facilitated the team's access to IDB, an intelligence database used by Trading Standards. WYJS officers will be assisting the housing team regarding the use and benefits of the IDB system and how to adopt an intelligence-led approach.

Tobacco

At the start of 2023, WYJS seized its 10 millionth illicit cigarette. In respect to the work undertaken on disrupting the supply chain and availability of illicit tobacco, below are the key outcome headlines for the Bradford district over the last nine years:

- over 3.6 million cigarettes seized
- 618 kg of hand rolling tobacco seized

In addition, the team has also seized more than 13,911 illegal oversize vapes.

In the last twelve months, the team have carried out 68 visits to premises within the Bradford area. The breakdown of those visits are:

- 38 test purchases undertaken with 80% of those resulting in sales of illegal products.
- 30 inspection visits which resulted in the seizures of both illegal tobacco and vapes.

The breakdown of the illegal products seized during the last twelve months are:

- 29,279 x 20 packets of cigarettes seized.
- 1,564 x 50g pouches of hand rolling tobacco seized.
- 5,261 oversized disposable vapes seized.

The work of the team has also resulted in seizures of counterfeit clothing, non-duty paid alcohol and nitrous oxide.

WYJS officers undertake partnership working to contribute to the Tackling Illegal Tobacco for Better Health programme. Officers deliver education sessions to community groups, schools, colleges and front-line professionals. To date, during 2023, 15 presentations have been delivered in the Bradford District to an audience of 1595 members of the public and 137 professionals including schools, community faith groups, youth groups, public health, police, housing and youth workers. A further 10 pop-up community events have been delivered in Bradford at libraries, wellbeing events and health professional events.

West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service

In addition to providing advice and information to the Bradford District Planning Authority in respect to planning applications, the team have also been working on a number of strategic projects which include:

- The River Worth/River Aire Keighley flood alleviation. The Service was involved in the design and monitoring of a geoarchaeological survey to look at the history and formation of the Worth and Aire Valleys and to establish if there is a potential for early prehistoric remains to be present.
- Castle Road, Ilkley. WYJS officers are dealing with public concerns and organising an excavation north of the Roman Fort as part of Yorkshire Water's new sewage scheme for the town.
- Apperley Bridge in respect to the River Aire flood alleviation scheme. The Service has been undertaking monitoring work and archaeological recording on the Tudor and later stone bridge during strengthening work.

Other project work involves monitoring the condition of Low Mill Keighley which is listed grade II structure. This was probably the first textile mill in West Yorkshire to use a steam engine but has been in a poor condition for many years. At the time of writing an excavation exploring Low Mill's mill pond off Gresley Road is imminent.

The photograph below shows Low Mill in its current condition.



The Service has also been advising on the extent of historic building recording required at Keighley Railway Station before a proposed upgrade. Officers also reviewed proposals for a new train depot at Shipley, provided advice to BMDC regarding the impact of a ground source heat pump and other changes to the grounds of a Tudor hunting lodge at Myddleton Lodge, Ilkley and issued advice to the White Rose Forest regarding tree planting sites in the district.

Portable Antiquities Scheme

The WYJS Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) held 4 'Finds Surgeries' within the Bradford District in the last twelve months. These surgeries are opportunities for finders of archaeological objects to bring them in for examination and identification, and if they meet the criteria, the finds are recorded onto the Portable Antiquities Scheme database in order to better understand and preserve our shared heritage.

The Finds Liaison Officer is supported by a team of volunteers to help identify, photograph and record archaeological finds submitted to the Service. In the last twelve months, 450 finds submitted at the 'find surgeries' have been processed and recorded. These finds cover the Mesolithic, Roman, Medieval and Post Medieval periods.

FLOs have a statutory role in the administration of the 1996 Treasure Act. The officers advise finders on their legal responsibilities and as an expert witness, they write curatorial reports for the coroner. A silver ingot found in Bradford and reported to WYJS was declared Treasure at an inquest in May 2023 and Bradford Museum Service are hoping to acquire it.

In the last twelve months, four new cases of potential Treasure have been reported to WYJS by Bradford residents including a rare early Bronze Age lunula (neck ornament) which was found in North Yorkshire (as shown in the photograph below). It is made of very thin sheet gold and has traces of incised decoration still present. It is one of only five recorded on the PAS database of 1.6 million objects and is one of the most complete examples. The FLOs report on the find has been submitted and the inquest is expected to be held next year.



Archive Service

The mission of the WYJS Archive Team for the Bradford District is to preserve and make accessible the unique documentary heritage of the region and help members of the public to use and enjoy these records. During 2022-23, the Bradford Archive team produced over 3,000 historical documents from the archive stores and engaged with over 2,500 people, answering their enquiries, responding to Freedom of Information requests and promoting the district's rich heritage resources to a global audience. WYJS supports BMDC to manage their corporate memory by ensuring that its records are preserved and managed appropriately in accordance with recognised standards and relevant legislation. The Archives team continues to facilitate access to the records held by the Service not only to the public but colleagues in BMDC. These include representatives from Legal, Architectural, Planning and Parks departments.

The Archive team are engaging with partner organisations and BMDC to ensure that the archives of the Year of Culture, Bradford 2025 are preserved for future generations. There will be a hugely significant digital archive and these records will enable residents to reflect on the long-term impact and success of the Year of Culture and will capture a pivotal point in the District's history.

The Bradford Archive team have been working with Bradford Theatres as part of their most recent heritage project, 'Heritage Centre Stage.' The project aims to bring the heritage of Bradford's landmark theatres, St George's Hall and the Alhambra, to a wider range of people. As part of the project the Bradford team collected a substantial new deposit of records for the theatres which includes some amazing photographs, scrapbooks, and programmes. This deposit complements and brings up to date existing holdings for Bradford theatres and allows greater public awareness of, and access to, the unique theatrical history of the area. In addition, as part of the project, a student volunteer has been box listing the huge number of programmes received with the deposit which will help make the collection accessible sooner.

In September 2023, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Bradford City Hall the Bradford Archive office created an online exhibition exploring the foundations of City Hall through the archives held by the Service. Particular focus was made on the competition to design the building which was launched in May 1869 and architects around the country were invited to submit entries. The competition was eventually won by local architects, Lockwood and Mawson.

Recently, the Archives team worked with Bradford Libraries team to transfer the records of North Bierley Board of Guardians from Keighley Library into the WYJS Archive. The collection falls outside of Keighley's area and covers much of the wider district not covered by the Bradford Board of Guardians records already held by the Service. Board of Guardian's records cover the period from the 1830s to the 1930s and are a particularly important research resource for social history as the records document the lives of individuals who may not be represented in other sources.

The Bradford team are currently working with Maya Productions on 'Routes to Roots,' a South Asian arts project working with communities across Croydon, Sheffield and Bradford to explore their stories through workshops, culminating in performances developed from the stories. The Bradford element is due to be delivered in 2025. As the project will be collecting stories from participants, Maya Productions has recruited an archivist to facilitate the deposit of material in local archive services. WYAS have been supporting the recruitment of a qualified archivist, as well as advising Maya Productions on the information they will need to collect alongside records to ensure they are properly documented when deposited with WYAS. Most importantly, additional records from Bradford's South Asian community will be a welcome addition to the archive service and their work to reflect the communities WYJS serves.

At the beginning of the year Bradford Family History Society (BFHS) were awarded a grant from Bradford Council to build a new online transcription database. Some of the records they will be using are from collections held by the Service, including the Bradford Board of Guardians records. Their bid included funding for an induction session with the Archive Service, to help contextualise the records and the processes they will need to follow. By working with BFHS on the grant, records are brought to a larger audience via a local 'champion,' which will in turn signpost researchers to other local records and organisations.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

It is hoped that this item will enhance existing relationships between Bradford Metropolitan District Council and WYJS, raise awareness of the services they provide and highlight the positive work done in the District.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

There are no specific financial and resource implications associated with this report. Any implications would be raised via the WYJS Joint Services Committee.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

There are no specific risk management and governance issues associated with this report. Any issues would be raised via the WYJS Joint Services Committee.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

There are no specific legal issues associated with this report. Any issues would be raised via the WYJS Joint Services Committee.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.2 TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

- Refer to the guidance contained in: 'Deciding Rights - Applying the Human Rights Act to Good Practice in Local Authority Decision-Making' published by the Local Government Association (<https://www.local.gov.uk>).
- Consult the lawyer who normally offers advice in relation to the matters covered in the report.

7.5 TRADE UNION

None.

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.7 AREA COMMITTEE LOCALITY PLAN IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

None.

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

Undertake a Privacy Impact Assessment to determine whether you need to deal with data protection and information security matters arising from the proposal/decision.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

- a) Members note the content of the report and consider any future scrutiny actions that could arise from this item; and
- b) Note the breadth of work undertaken by WYJS in the Bradford District and raise any questions related to these services in the district.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) Members note the content of the report and appendix and consider any future scrutiny actions that could arise from this item; and
- b) Note the breadth of work undertaken by WYJS in the Bradford District and raise any questions related to these services in the district.

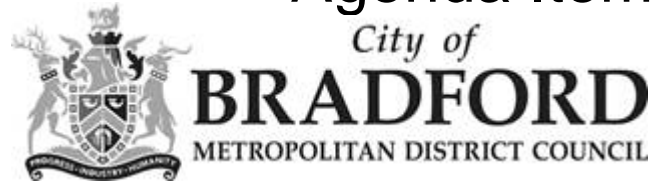
11. APPENDICES

None.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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Report of the Assistant Director of Office of the Chief Executive to the meeting of Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 11 January 2024

Y

Subject:

Progress report on work to implement the Armed Forces Covenant locally and to meet the Council's Covenant duties.

Summary statement:

The report provides an update on work undertaken and ongoing to implement the Armed Forces Covenant locally and to meet the Council's duties under the Armed Forces Covenant Duty contained within the Armed Forces Act 2021.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

The Armed Forces Community is present across all the protected characteristics but is not a protected characteristic in its own right. However, the Council, and all other local authorities, voluntarily signed promises to support the community in having equal access to council services, that their contribution, sacrifice, and service is recognised and celebrated, that mutual respect is engendered between the military and civilian communities, and that if appropriate special consideration is given to those who have given the most as a result of their service.

Under the Armed Forces Covenant Duty, all local authorities now have legal obligations to have due regard to the community related to housing and education.

Work to implement the Covenant contributes to our equality objectives 2,3 and 4.

Noreen Akhtar
Assistant Director Neighbourhood

Portfolio:
Leader and Corporate

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Corporate

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides an update on work undertaken and ongoing to implement the Armed Forces Covenant locally and to meet the Council's duties under the Armed Forces Covenant Duty contained within the Armed Forces Act 2021.
- 1.2 In response to members requests when the update report was last presented to this Committee on 11 November 2021:
 - An update on Op COURAGE
 - Access to support by other nationals who have become 'Bradford Citizens'

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Armed Forces Covenant is led by national Government. It is a promise from the nation that no one who serves or has served in the forces or their families should face disadvantage when accessing public and commercial services. That the service and sacrifice of those who have served should be recognised and celebrated, and that mutual respect should be engendered between the military and civilian communities. The Covenant further outlines that in some cases special consideration may be appropriate for those who have given the most, such as the injured or the bereaved.
- 2.2 In November 2022, legal duties were also placed on local authorities through the Armed Forces Act 2021: Armed Forces Covenant Duty to have due regard to the needs of the Armed Forces community in housing and education services.
- 2.3 The Armed Forces Covenant applies to serving personnel, reservists, their families, and ex-service personnel (also known as Veterans).
- 2.4 The Council signed its Armed Forces Covenant, along with local partners, on 30 January 2012 and formed and has subsequently led the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership. The Council re-committed to its pledges in 2022, when our Armed Forces Elected Member Champion re-signed our Covenant Pledge at the annual West and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce dinner.

The following appendices provide information about membership of the local partnership, the Covenant Pledge and the partnership's terms of reference:

Appendix 1 - Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partner Membership

Appendix 2 - Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Pledge

Appendix 3 - Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Terms of Reference

- 2.5 Our new Council strategic lead, Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods and Community Services, will commence 'Covenant' duties in the new year, joining Cllr Joanne Dodds, the Elected Member Armed Forces Champion and officers from the Office of the Chief Executive's Policy Team.

- 2.6 Our previous military liaison officer retired and was replaced by the Ministry of Defence's Mick Lynch who has a wider area to cover.
- 2.7 Local response to the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the ability of the Council and its partners to further implement the Covenant locally. It also negatively impacted the ability of the Armed Forces community to maintain their local Armed Forces and veterans Breakfast Clubs – with the Keighley Club currently not meeting. Post pandemic, a vibrant club has set up in Ilkley.
- 2.8 Activity undertaken to implement the Covenant and Covenant duty locally during 2023:

- **Armed Forces Week 2023 events**

In addition to the raising of the Flag at City Park, the Veterans' lunch in City Hall, the Drum Head Service and Armed Forces Day event at Norfolk Gardens, Keighley Town Council also hosted the **Keighley Veterans Awareness event at the Drill Hall, Keighley**. Driven by Keighley Town Council' Armed Forces Champion and Airedale NHS Foundation Trust's Veterans' Advocate, with support from the Bradford Armed Forces Champion, Council's Area Office and Office of the Chief Executive, the event saw up to 15 district services and forces charitable organisations offering advice and support to local veterans. Attended by the local MP, Robbie Moore, the event generated positive press coverage and raised awareness of what support is available locally for the community.

BRI announced their accreditation as Veteran Aware during Armed Forces week and started recruitment of veteran volunteers to meet and greet those from the Armed Forces Community entering the hospital.

Bradford Bulls Armed Forces Day Event took place on Sunday 18 June. Several Armed Forces associations, cadets and forces Charities attended along with Airedale NHS Trust, and a Partnership Stall joined the Submariners Association stall. Cllr Dodds, Martin Flint-Johnson and Helen Johnston attended.

A NAAFI Break took place on Reservists Day 21 June at Airedale NHS Trust Foundation. All were welcomed. The Trust also encouraged reservists to wear uniform on the day and declare their involvement as reservists.

- **Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Clubs**

Support provided to Shipley Armed Forces and Veterans' Breakfast Club, by Bradford Armed Forces Elected Member Champion, Council officers, Shipley Library and staff and Councillors from Shipley Town Council, to re-align their offer to local members of the Armed Forces community. Attendance at the local Breakfast Club had waned post-pandemic and the club's active members sought support from the respective councils to widen their appeal. This resulted in the club reducing their pub breakfast club to once a month and offering a drop-in session at Shipley Library once a month.

Members have been joined by Shipley Town Councillor Mike Connors and Cllr Joanne Dodds at events to promote the new offer. They have also received advice from the Voluntary and Community Infrastructure Advice worker about how to become a constituted body capable of applying for grant funding.

In addition, active members are exploring with the Councillors how they might develop their offer to sessions with activities. This is ongoing.

Shipley, Ilkley, and Bradford Breakfast Clubs regularly attended, through invitation, by our Armed Forces Champion and Council officers to provide a means for those attending to raise issues directly with the Council. The Shipley Club is also attended by Town Councillor Mike Connors.

- **Remembrance Services**

Offered throughout the district, with the city centre service well attended by participants from diverse backgrounds.

- **Commonwealth Memorial – Special service in planning**

The community-led project that is supported by the Council is now nearing completion. The memorial commemorates the contribution, sacrifice and loss experienced by those from other nations who have supported British Forces. Thought to be the first such memorial outside of London, a special service is planned for its unveiling at its site in the Cenotaph Memorial Garden.

Initial work with Wakefield Council officers to consider how the West Yorkshire Best Practice Forum could be supported. This work is ongoing.

- **Assessment of nationally available Covenant training materials** for use by the Council. This is ongoing.
- **Work with Housing Strategy** to ensure the Covenant Duty is implemented. This work has been completed.
- **Supporting Children’s Services** to comply with our education Covenant Duty is now being supported by our internal Legal Assurance Group.

2.9 The Council has retained its Silver Armed Forces Employer Recognition (ERS) Award and is working towards attaining Gold.

New processes are in now place through the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA) and regional and national award panels to support the ERS Awards and the signing of the Covenant Pledge.

2.10 Our Armed Forces Champion, Cllr Joanne Dodds, during this financial year has supported 15 members of the Armed Forces Community with a range of issues, often complex - from accessing Council services to appealing against decisions about their benefit entitlements. Cllr Dodds has worked alongside charitable partners and others, such as The Royal British Legion, SSAFA, Airedale NHS Teaching Hospitals Foundation Trust.

- 2.11 We are considering how learnings from her work can be captured to inform improvements in service delivery to the community from the Council and across the District Partnership.

Work with AgeUK

- 2.12 Our Armed Forces Champion also had the privilege of working for Age UK from January 2022 until May 2023 on a project called Reconnecting Veteran, funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust. It reached out to veterans and assessed their needs, and sign posting to existing provision, and developed new engagement.
- 2.13 The project uncovered that many veterans were struggling with loneliness and isolation, some with multiple complex needs. Covid exacerbated this.
- 2.14 Working on this project enabled Cllr Dodds to deepening her understanding of the needs of veterans, what support is out there, identify gaps, and raise awareness of needs to ensure veterans are at the forefront of services and people's minds.
- 2.15 Cllr Dodds said: 'I found that veterans like to meet with other veterans. There is the mutual respect, camaraderie that they will never have with civilians. It was good to support the existing breakfast clubs and help them to develop and also setting up new clubs, for example Ilkley now have a good breakfast club. Not every veteran wants to meet in a pub though, so the groups established were a mixture, venues such as Wibsey and Shipley Libraries, the Alhambra. Although I have left working for Age UK I still support the veterans groups and work.

'Working across the district enabled me to develop partnerships and work in communities I wouldn't normally get to work in, such as Keighley. I developed a good partnership with the Armed Forces Champion at Keighley Town Council, Keighley Area Co-ordinators Office, the Veterans Advocate at Airedale Hospital Trust and our own Covenant Officer to organise a veteran's information and advice drop in event. I also worked with Bradford College and Bradford Bulls on a weekly veterans drop in.

'It was sad that the project didn't receive funding to continue, as there is certainly much more to be done to support our veterans. Top of the list would be to have somewhere for veterans to drop in like the Royal British Legion used to have in Leeds prior to Covid. I did find it hard to reach those veterans that are not already accessing services or groups and those that do reach out are normally out of desperation because of pride or all things mentioned in the 2018 report.

'It was beneficial working for AgeUK because some referrals came through their advice workers, and the care navigators, all of these had complex needs and had struggled for many years, it was only through my knowledge and my Armed Forces Champion Role that these were resolved.

My role definitely complimented my work with AgeUK and this in turn has enriched my understanding of veterans' needs.'

- 2.16 The West Yorkshire Implementation Project came to an abrupt end in August 2023. We are working with other West Yorkshire local authorities with the aim of mainstreaming responsibilities for activities formerly provided through the project, such as sharing best practice, across all five local councils.

Appendix 4 provides the Council's Covenant action plan.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 **Post pandemic issues** – Re-invigorating our District Partnership will be a key activity for 2024-25, with both interest and capacity to engage impacted by the pandemic response.
- 3.2 **Bradford's Local Housing Allocation Policy** has been amended to reflect that bereaved spouses and civil partners having to leave Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner will be allocated to Band 1 – Urgent Need, as will any other relevant family members as prescribed by the Armed Forces Covenant Regulations 2022.
- 3.3 **Data on our local armed forces community** – Appendix 5 provides the data we hold about our local community. Changes to the Census questions has resulted in us gaining information about the numbers of veterans in our District but has also seen the removal of the question relating to those who are currently serving.

Service Pupil Premium is no longer reported separately to Pupil Premium.

Adult Social Care client data - A system update and change of staff has resulted in data about clients' Armed Forces service not being recorded. This has an implication on our ability to accurately assess the potential cost implications of the Council adopting the Royal British Legion's Credit their Service campaign where local authorities and others are asked to disregard Forces compensation and pensions when undertaking social care financial assessments. It also has an implication in regards to other sources of funding being sought where a client is unable to currently access public funds to support their care.

Urgent work will be undertaken in the new year to start to address this issue.

Appendix 5 provides the data we have about our local Armed Forces Community.

- 3.4 **Airedale Hospital Veterans Advocate role**
The Armed Forces Advocate role within Airedale NHS Foundation Trust ensures the Trust complies with the Armed Forces Covenant and Armed Forces Act 2021 statutory duty.

There are 17k Veterans within the Airedale reach area. If a veteran's medical record notes they have served, on arrival at Airedale Hospital for an appointment or admission the Veterans' Advocate is alerted and makes contact with them. The Advocate ensures that the veteran is aware of services available to support them and speaks to them about their needs – to ensure arrangements are in place to support them.

The Veterans' Advocate, Martin Flint-Johnson recently won a Bronze Award from English Veterans Award, for Inspiration of the Year in recognition of his work supporting veterans at the hospital. Martin was also nominated for Celebrate as One: Bradford District and Craven Health and Care Partnership Awards Tackling inequalities - meeting the needs of our communities.

Based on its success, Airedale NHS Foundation Trust will seek Bradford Partnership's support in seeking continuation funding to maintain the role. In addition, the spring meeting of the Partnership will be considering how the advocates role could operate in the district's other hospitals.

To support the role and veterans accessing medical services, an information pack has been produced to support veterans aimed at helping them to access services and support. With NHS Veteran Specific support for both physician and mental health, Government housing support, support for prison release and LGBT+ veteran community (following Independent Review by Lord Etherton containing recommendations supported by Government) and over 2000+ Armed Forces characters available. The Advocate role has :

Over the past 12 months

- 600+ Trust staff have received Veteran Aware and Armed Forces Covenant/Act Training
- 190+ Veterans visited within Airedale
- Over 130+ Veteran Information packs have been given
- Identified and made 7 Safeguarding referrals
- Advocated for 6 Complaints from Veterans referred to PALS
- Supported 8 Veterans to refer to OpRestore (NHS Veteran specific Physical Health)
- Supported 9 Veterans to refer to OpCourage (NHS Veteran specific Mental Health)
- Supported 3 Veterans to refer to OpFortitude (Veteran housing support)
- Signposted 2 Veterans to OpSterling (LGBT+ Veteran support)
- Supported 1 Serving Soldier to refer to OpCommunity (NHS Armed Forces SPA)
- Successfully applied for £8.5k charity funding for Housing, furniture, adaptations and specialist bed (at no cost to NHS or Local Authority)

The role has also supported:

- the health and wellbeing of staff members providing specialist advice, signposting and referrals
- successfully reaccredited Employment Recognition Scheme (ERS Silver) and Veterans Covenant Healthcare Alliance (VCHA) Veteran Aware

Since the role started, there has been:

- A 400 percent increase in patients declaring as veterans (as we are now asking and recording their answers)
- 90 veterans have been supported by Veterans' advocate
- 260 staff trained in veterans' awareness and this is now included as part of induction training.

The Advocate, who is also veteran, is working closely with primary care and social prescribers on veterans awareness. Veterans awareness training will be offered at the next Partnership development session.

3.5 **Employer Recognition Scheme Awards**

Bradford Council retained its Silver Award in 2023 and will be starting work early in the new year to prepare for its Gold submission. Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, Bradford Bulls, Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are also Silver Award holders.

For Gold we will need to provide evidence of: ten extra paid days leave for reservists, supportive HR policies in place for reservists, veterans, Cadet Force adult volunteers and the spouses and partners of those serving in the Armed Forces. In addition, we will also need to evidence that we advocate the benefits of supporting those within the Armed Forces community by encouraging other organisations to sign the Armed Forces Covenant and engage with the Employer Recognition Scheme.

There is a commitment across the Partnership that Award holders will support other partners in their endeavours to attain these awards.

An event at Bradford Bulls Stadium in October 2023 was supported by the Council and others where the RFCA invited companies to re-sign, sign or consider signing a Covenant Pledge. At the event the Council presented the benefits it had enjoyed by employing members of the Armed Forces community.

3.6 **Self-Directed Staff Networks – Armed Forces Community**

Initial discussions have taken place with some Armed Forces staff with a view to creating a safe space where they can meet to discuss issues and seek support for issues that affect them. This is in its very early stages.

3.7 **Resigning the covenant pledge**

RFCA are meeting with the Council at the end of January 2024 to look at our re-signing event. Interest has been shown within the Partnership to also resign a joint Pledge. The original Pledge can be viewed in the Civic Reception Rooms in City Hall. The Council and partners will also have to sign their own individual Covenant Pledges. New arrangements that organisations will need to renew their Pledges at least once every five years.

Regardless of what is in the Pledge, the Council and others with functions covered by the Covenant Duty will need to evidence their compliance with the Duty.

3.8 **An update on Op COURAGE**

A national NHS service that provides mental health information and support for veterans, service leavers, families, and carers.

Support includes help to: transition to civilian life, recognise and treat early signs of mental health issues and more advanced conditions and psychological trauma, deal with and treat substance misuse and addictions, access other NHS mental health services, access charities and local organisations to support wider mental health and other needs such as with housing, relationships, and finance, enable families affected by mental health issues to access local services.

Split into regions, those in Bradford and West Yorkshire access via the North of England contacts. Access is via self or other referral. Support can be accessed regardless of how long ago someone left the forces. With eligibility based on being a UK resident, in the forces for at least one day, being registered with a GP service, and willingness to provide their military service number.

- 3.9 Access to support by other nationals who have become ‘Bradford Citizens’**
Bradford Council’s Armed Forces Champion and officers will support those who have served alongside British Armed Forces such as the Ghurkas as part of our Covenant offer and in line with our legal duty.

Others who have supported the British Armed Forces in civilian roles are not covered by the Covenant (excepting where the civilian is a spouse, civil partner, child, financially dependent or a bereaved family member).

Other services in the Council do offer direct support to civilians who have supported our Armed Forces who relocate to the UK, such as through Stronger Communities Team and Revenues and Benefits Service.

If the Council wish to make local arrangements to ensure support is available through the ‘Covenant’ to these civilians, this could be worked through in the same way that the Council decided to make ‘low income’ and ‘care leavers’ locally agreed protected characteristics in regard to equality impact assessments.

- 3.10 Armed Forces Day Event 2024**

Recent years saw this event dislodged from its venue outside the main entrance to City Hall, more recently locating to Norfolk Garden. Not seen as an ideal venue, and with some complaints from our main partner, The Royal British Legion, discussions are underway aimed at securing a more prominent location – such as the square outside the new Darley Street Market, alongside the Mirror Pool or on a concourse in the city centre.

A meeting has been arranged for late January to discuss options for the Mirror Pool with Bradford Literature Festival. At this point we should know if the square at Darley Street Market will be available – this being the preferred venue.

Contact has been made with the military by Cllr Dodds to seek vehicles and personnel to support the event. Our own climbing wall has been secured, as this has proved popular at past events.

Once we have the venue secured, an application for funding will be developed with partners and submitted through the MOD Armed Forces Day Event funding process. However, whilst this will cover up to £10k of eligible spend, any grant awarded needs to be matched.

- 3.11 Training for staff and front line staff**

Nationally available free e-learning courses are currently being assessed for use by all staff and front line staff in Bradford.

- 3.12 Education – Covenant Duty**

Legal Assurance Group are working with Children’s Services to ensure compliance with the Covenant Duty regarding education.

3.13 **Website and intranet content**

We have benefitted from an undergraduate placement from Bradford University which has enabled us to have our web pages and intranet content about our Armed Forces Community offer reviewed with recommendations for change.

Early indications are that we provide more information and sign posting via our web pages than other local authorities. However, a gap has been identified that we do not promote our excellent Armed Forces Champion.

The project is due to conclude at the end of January when we receive a written report about the review findings along with recommendations on how we might amend our content.

3.14 **Reservist call-up – protocol for managers in development**

Through the Reserve Forces and Cadet Association supporting the Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme, we have been informed, for the first time, that we currently employ six reserves.

We have also been alerted through one of our managers of a call to deploy one of those reserves in January 2024.

Office of the Chief Executive officers along with colleagues in our Human Resources Service are now working to provide a protocol for managers to use in the event they are informed of a call to deploy. Once the protocol is drafted, we will ensure it is consulted on and then adopted through the appropriate Council decision-making channels. At the outset, the default on receiving a call to deploy will be to comply with the request.

We are proud that we have Reserves and Veterans within our staff body and are working to identify and provide the support they need to succeed in the Council.

3.15 **Bradford District Partnership Development session**

A session is in planning for Spring 2024 where the Council's new Strategic Lead, Noreen Akhtar, will be introduced to partners and where the Partnership will revisit its role and activities. The outcome from the event will be reviewed terms of reference and action plan.

4. **FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 Work to implement the Armed Forces Covenant and duty by the Council is undertaken within existing resources.

5. **RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES**

- 5.1 None directly arising from this report.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 This is a progress report on the Bradford Armed Forces Covenant.

6.2 The Armed Forces Act 2021 – Armed Forces Duty came into force in November 2022. It places legal obligations on the Council to have due regard to the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant relating to the:

- a) Unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces
- b) Principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces.
- c) Principle that special provision for service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces.

The new duty applies to specified persons or bodies, including councils, when exercising certain housing, education, or healthcare functions.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report.

7.2 Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

None directly arising from this report.

7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report.

7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None directly arising from this report.

7.5 TRADE UNION

None directly arising from this report.

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report. The Armed Forces community is dispersed across the district.

7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

None directly arising from this report. However, take-up of Pupil Premium related to service children could positively impact support in schools for service children.

7.8 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

There are no issues arising from the privacy impact assessment.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

This is a progress report on the Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant and for the contents to be noted.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

To note and comment on the contents of the progress report on work to implement the Armed Forces Covenant locally and to meet the Council's Covenant duties.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partner Membership

Appendix 2 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Pledge

Appendix 3 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Terms of Reference

Appendix 4 Bradford Council's Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan

Appendix 5 – Data about our Armed Forces Community

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[COSC report 11 November 2021 - Annual progress report on the local implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant](#)

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/housing/policies-and-reports/bradford-housing-allocations-policy/>

[Armed Forces Covenant Duty Statutory Guidance November 2022](#)

[MOD Armed Forces Covenant information](#)

Appendix 1 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partner Membership

The Partnership will be jointly chaired by the Council's Armed Forces Champion and the Armed Forces representative. Membership will include:

- Armed Forces representative
- Elected Member Armed Forces Champion
- The Royal British Legion
- Yorkshire and Humber Veterans Pensions and Advisory Committee
- West Yorkshire SSAFA
- Bradford District Care Trust
- Airedale NHS Foundation Trust
- Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Airedale, Bradford and Leeds NHS Cluster
- Job Centre Plus • Incommunities
- Bradford District Credit Union
- Community Action Bradford & District (X3)
- West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- West Yorkshire Police Service
- Local Councils representatives – Town and Parish Councils (x2)
- Assistant Director of Neighbourhood and Community Services
- Yorkshire Housing
- Representative for the Lord-Lieutenants

Other representative organisations that sign the Covenant Pledge will be invited to join the Partnership and provide representatives as appropriate.

Appendix 2 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Pledge

THE BRADFORD DISTRICT COMMUNITY COVENANT 30th JANUARY 2012

The People of the United Kingdom Her Majesty's Government

And

All those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces of the Crown And their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District: it includes NHS organisations, voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the District and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

Appendix 3 Bradford District Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The Armed Forces Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.

The purpose of this Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in Bradford District and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er)s in Bradford District.

For the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and partner organisations, the Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work.

For the Armed Forces Community, the Covenant encourages the integration from Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces Community to help their local community.

2. Purpose and responsibility of the Partnership

The Armed Forces Covenant Partnership will:

- i. Seek to promote the signing of the Covenant by partner organisations and members of the charitable and voluntary sectors and ensure that the commitments made are adhered to.
- ii. Establish a joint action plan and identify resources to support projects and work which strengthen the ties between members of the Armed Forces Community and the wider community in Bradford District.
- iii. Monitor the impact of the Covenant locally and ensure that its aims are met.
- iv. Work to ensure that members of the Armed Forces Community have equal access to services and are treated with respect and in an equitable manner throughout the District.
- v. Create sub-groups as appropriate to support implementation of the Covenant and assign decision-making responsibility to those sub-groups in line with delegated tasks. Sub-groups will be supported with specific terms of reference to support their role. Appendix 1 – The Council's Armed Forces Covenant Working Group ToRs are provided as an example of such a sub-group.
- vi. Use Armed Forces celebratory events across the District to promote the Covenant.
- vii. Produce an annual progress report for submission to the Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as requested.

3. Responsibility of all partner organisations

The commitment of any specific organisation's resources can only be made by that organisation's representative.

- i. Ensure their own organisation and staff are aware of the Covenant and take action as appropriate to meet decisions made through the Partnership.
- ii. Provide awareness and training sessions for their own staff.
- iii. Provide resources as they have agreed to support the operation of the Partnership.
- iv. Be advocates for the Armed Forces Covenant both within their own organisations and externally - raising awareness and context of the Covenant.
- v. Draft their own Covenant action plan aimed at supporting them to meet their own Covenant pledge, any statutory requirements attached to the Covenant and their contribution to the overall partnership action plan
- vi. Monitor their action plan and report progress back through the partnership and contribute to partnership reports, for instance, the Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4. Frequency of Meetings

To meet at least three times per year and ranged to support preparations for Armed Forces Day and also Remembrance Day.

5. Membership

The Partnership will be jointly chaired by the Council's Armed Forces Champion and the Armed Forces representative. Membership will include:

- Armed Forces Liaison
- Armed Forces representatives:
 - Local units – Belle Vue Barracks
 - Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club
- Elected Member Armed Forces Champion
- The Royal British Legion
- Yorkshire and Humber Veterans Pensions and Advisory Committee
- West Yorkshire SSAFA
- Bradford District Care Trust
- Airedale NHS Foundation Trust
- Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
- Job Centre Plus
- Incommunities
- Bradford District Credit Union
- Community Action Bradford & District (X3)
- West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service

- West Yorkshire Police Service
- Local Councils representatives – Town and Parish Councils (x2)
- Council - Assistant Director of Neighbourhood and Customer Services
- Council – Corporate Policy Officer
- Yorkshire Housing
- The monarch’s representative – Deputy Lord-Lieutenant

As appropriate, other organisations that sign the Covenant Pledge may be invited to join the Partnership and provide representatives.

6. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will support the Partnership by:

- Setting the agendas for Partnership meetings
- Dealing with ad hoc issues as they arise within parameters agreed by the Partnership
- Reporting back on activities to Partnership meetings
- Tasking the Bradford Council Working Group as required between Partnership meetings
- Seeking progress reports from any sub-groups as necessary between Partnership meetings
- Providing advice as requested to the Bradford Council Working Group and any other sub-groups that the Partnership creates
- Determining and calling extraordinary meetings of the Partnership as deemed necessary

Membership of the Executive Committee

- Armed Forces representative
- Council Armed Forces Champion
- Council - Assistant Director of Neighbourhood and Community Services
- Council – Corporate Policy Officer

The Executive may seek advice and support from any other representatives from the Partnership as and when required.

7. Reporting arrangements

The Partnership and its members will report to:

- District Partnerships
- The Council Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other Council committees for information and to inform them about current Armed Forces Community issues
- To the local Armed Forces Community
- Within their own organisation and structures.

8. Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Partners subject to the Duty must ensure they discharge their duty in relation to the

Covenant regardless of the Partnership and its Terms of Reference. In particular they must have due regard to the:

- a) Unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the armed forces
- b) Principle that it is desirable to remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the armed forces
- c) Principle that special provision for Service people may be justified by the effects on such people of membership, or former membership, of the armed forces.

Partners who are subject to the Duty (specified bodies):

Organisation	Department/Service
Bradford Council	Education
	Housing
	Healthcare services (such as healthcare for children with SEND, through the Health Care Act 2006, through Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014)
NHS	NHS Foundation Trusts
	NHS Trust

Full Statutory Guidance available via: [Armed Forces Covenant Duty Statutory Guidance.pdf](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/411111/Armed_Forces_Covenant_Duty_Statutory_Guidance.pdf) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

end

Appendix 4 Bradford Council's Armed Forces Covenant Action Plan

Bradford Council Armed Forces Covenant Implementation – Action Plan tracker October 2023

This plan describes the specific actions that the Council will undertake to support the Armed Forces Community.

	Area/Theme	Lead	Required actions	Progress/Comments	Date completed
1	RFCA event 18 October		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes for address including case studies – benefits of employing AFC staff 	Note out to new AFC recruits via Karen Hoyle asking for their input 5 October 2023 RFCA Poster doesn't need further distribution	16/10/23
2	Prepare new Council strategic lead		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up new meeting with Neighbourhood Services AD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After 12 October 231102 - Meeting rearranged for 14 November 	Ongoing
3	Council re-signing of the Covenant		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up meeting with RFCA in City Hall Civic Reception meeting room 2 after the 18 to float idea of joint Partnership resigning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with RFCA booked for 22 January 2024 to discuss individual and partnership re-sign 	
	ERS Silver and Gold		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> if retained Silver, plan to go for Gold, if not retained Silver, work to regain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete RFCA workshop in January 2024 Meeting with RFCA in January 2024 to discuss Council requirements 	6/11/23
	Education Duty		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New note to Sue Lowndes – with guidance Update Legal Assurance template via Jan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal Assurance Group supporting 	
	AFD Event/s 2024		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey Meeting Report with recommendations Joint application for grant funding to support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Dodds in touch with BID and Markets (re opening of new Market in City Centre) Meeting with Bradford Literature Festival in January 2024 (alternative venues) 	
	Action Planning Day for the Partnership		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check membership of Partnership Check ToRs Create inputs Output needed – Partnership Plan of Action (things we need to work on together) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set date for early Spring 2024 	

	Area/Theme	Lead	Required actions	Progress/Comments	Date completed
	Disregard of pensions/compensation for social care costs		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up meeting with adult services to explore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up on data requirements with Adults 	
	Sport and Leisure concession		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to show how administering, get data re: take up and definitive rationale for not extending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awaiting data 	
	Armed Forces Remembrance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supply names to Lord Mayor's Officer re additional invitees to City Centre service Note out to partnership when arrangements set 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional names forwarded from partnership 	02/10/23
	Check web content on Council Pages		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bradford University student supporting via a 100 hour project over 11 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefed 2/10/23 – expected completion January 2024 231102 - On track to deliver end of January 2024 	
	Progress report for COSC 11 Jan 2024		Follow-up with Airedale NHS Trust re Advocacy work and success (link to sign-posting into BMDC and other partners)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thursday, 11th January 2024 at City Hall, Bradford. Chair's briefing 21/12/23. Report deadline 28/12/23. 2) Armed Forces Covenant 	
	Training for staff and Elected Members		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing e-learning available – due to complete in December 2023 	
	Meet with new CX		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cllr Dodds/AD Lead/OCX policy leads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To arrange 	

Appendix 5 – data about our Armed Forces

Metric	Number	Date	Data point Source
Pensions and Compensations			
Bradford District recipients of UK Armed Forces pensions and compensation	1,552	To 31 March 2023	Location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients: 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Bradford District recipients of Widows War Pensions	44	To 31 March 2023	Location of armed forces pension and compensation recipients: 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Families and Children			
Pupils eligible for service child pupil premium in Bradford LA	209	To December 2023	Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2023-24 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Service child pupil premium allocation (across Bradford LA)	£70,015	To December 2023	Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2023-24 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Population			
People in the district who have served in the regular UK Armed Forces	9,412	Census 2021 Released 10 November 2022	UK armed forces veterans, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
People in the district who have served in the Reserve UK Armed Forces	2,461	Census 2021 Released 10 November 2022	UK armed forces veterans, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)
Housing Options			
Homeless cases - where their reason for loss of last settled home was that they were a member of the armed services	7	Since October 2019	In-house data collection
	1	During 2023 to date	In-house data collection
Accessing the housing register who state they have served (all placed in Priority Band 1).	21	Since 2021	In-house data collection
Council recruitment			

Applicants for roles from the Armed Forces – serving or veterans	75	31 January to 31 July 2023	In-house data collection
Shortlisted – Armed Forces – Serving or veterans	39		
Contracts in progress – Armed Forces applicants	4		
Contracts sent – Armed Forces applicants	8		



Report of the Strategic Director Place to the meeting of Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 11th January 2024. **Z**

Subject: HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE SERVICE.

Summary statement:

This report is to provide an update to the committee on how the service is working towards achieving a high performing, customer focused hackney carriage and private hire service. How it analyses information to drive improvements in service delivery to the benefit of trade and employees.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

We believe that any service performs at its best when it is reflective of the community it serves. We will work hard to promote vacancies across a range of media and provide clear information and advice about how to prepare for interview so that it is a transparent level playing field throughout the recruitment process.

All staff are respectful towards all of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act and enjoy embracing the many religious festivals and days of celebration the service shares with our customers and staff.

When considering the Equality Act 2010, the Council will also have regard for the Public Sector Equality Duty, which places a duty on the Council to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster or encourage good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Through the Policy, the Council seeks to deliver on the duties placed upon it through the Equality Act. The Council will have regard for the above measures in dealing with the licensing objectives, by protecting the public and licensed drivers from discrimination and ensuring that any unlawful discrimination is dealt with appropriately, working with representatives of the trade and the Police.

David Shepherd
Strategic Director
Department of Place.
Report Contact: Carol Stos
Licensing Service Manager
Phone: 07582 101569
E-mail: carol.stos@bradford.gov.uk

Portfolio: Cllr Sarah Ferriby

Health & Wellbeing

Overview & Scrutiny Area: Corporate

1. SUMMARY

This report provides an update on how the service is working towards achieving a high performing, customer focused hackney carriage and private hire service.

The aim of the Licensing regime is to only issues licences to drivers of good character and with sufficient driving ability and competence. Private Hire Operators should also pose no threat to the public nor should they have any links to criminality. Vehicles are to be of a sound mechanical condition, be comfortable and clean.

The service focuses on an educational approach to the trade, providing new and existing driver training. Provide regular email updates with any relevant information and newsletters. Meetings are held regularly with the trade associations and private hire operators.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Council Responsibility

Bradford Council is the body responsible for carrying out the function of hackney carriage and private hire licensing in the Bradford District. The hackney carriage and private hire service (HCPH) carries out this function on behalf of the Council.

Bradford Council has currently licensed:

6498	Private hire drivers
4663	Private hire vehicles
120	Private hire operators
301	Hackney carriage drivers
213	Hackney carriage vehicles

2.2 Finance – Legal obligations

The setting of fees for taxi licences is a non-executive function pursuant to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, sections 53 and 70. There is a legal procedure which must be followed when setting such fees and failure to adhere to this would render the fees invalid.

The Act states that the taxi and private hire licensing fees can only be used as defined within the Act and cannot be used to generate revenue for a district council. To vary the fees, either to increase or reduce, the Council must follow a set procedure and calculate fees based on allowable expenditure.

There is recent relevant case law which directly impacts on fee setting and the potential for legal challenge.

2.3 Provide excellent customer service

Drivers deserve and should expect to always be treated with the respect and dignity associated with high standards of customer service.

Overall, the Service is very encouraged by the comments received; it is traditionally difficult to receive positive feedback some detailed quotes are included in the customer survey report.

Report on the Customer Surveys is at Appendix B

2.4 Renewal Applications

The licence renewal process allows 42 days (6 weeks) to complete, allowing time for any potential queries to be resolved.

A renewal invitation is emailed to the applicant 6 weeks prior to expiry.

The customer is invited to apply online, submit documentation and make payment at their convenience, 24 hours a day. Once the checks are completed the licence is issued with no loss of time/licence fee to the licensee.

Below is a table which details the number of applications submitted for processing, followed by the number of days it took for the applicant to submit the application from the date the renewal invitation was sent. Next is the number of days it took for an officer to pick-up the application and begin to process it. The final number is the total number of days taken to process and issue a driver licence, in the case of a vehicle application it shows the number of days until the vehicle is booked in for test.

2.5 Licensing Process Statistics. 1st November 2022 to 31st October 2023

Licence Type	Number of Applications		Number Issued		Average Days to Apply		Average Days to Assign		Average Processing Days	
	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23	2021/22	2022/23
New Drivers	2834	3211	1582	1464	n/a	n/a	58.4	58.35	272	218
Driver renewals	1668	1962	1623	1891	20.28	22.3	4.68	3.9	11.02	11
New Vehicles	2483	2127	2326	1941	n/a	n/a	1.9	1.9	15	28
Vehicle Renewals	2221	3389	2131	3285	13.31	12.2	3.77	3.07	25.28	32

2.5.1 Driver Renewal

The number of driver renewals remains similar each year with the number of days it takes the driver to submit their renewal showing a slight increase this year. The number of days it takes officers to commence work on the applications and issue the renewed licence have both reduced this year.

2.5.2 Vehicle Renewal

There has been a decrease in the number of days taken by proprietors to submit their renewal application and a slight reduction in the time taken for an officer to commence work on the case. There is an increase in processing time, this is due to the longer waiting time for vehicles to have their mechanical inspection prior to the licence being issued.

2.5.3 New Driver

New driver applications are still increasing. Overall, less licences have been issued in the past year although the time to assign to an officer and once progress has started this time frame has improved.

2.5.4 New Vehicle

New vehicle applications are increasing. This is to be expected with the overall increase in drivers seen over the past two years that need a vehicle to drive.

The longer processing time for new vehicles due to the service prioritising renewal vehicle testing of existing licenced vehicles.

2.6 Regulatory and Compliance Team

The Regulatory and Compliance Team carry out a variety of tasks, a table highlighting the main tasks is shown below.

Enforcement Action 31st Oct 2022 – 1st Nov 2023	Total	
Complaints received from members of the public about licensees	388	
Proactive patrols (Inspection & Compliance Officers conduct random vehicle/driver compliance inspections, base visits or working with partners).	58	
Operator Audits (annual renewals/5 year mid-licence/new applications)	180	
Officer Review investigations	380	
Warning notices issued	295	
Driver applications refused	79	
Driver Licences Revoked	60	
Court appeals	Total 37	
All appeals listed with the Court in 2023 where an individual has been aggrieved by a decision to refuse or revoke a licence and has exercised their right to appeal. Pending cases are now listed for dates in 2024	Concluded 16	
	Pending 21	
	Cases upheld against the Council	0

2.7 Email Enquiries

All queries, issues and concerns will be acknowledged and where possible a response will be provided within 3 working days. For longer more complex cases the customer will receive regular updates on the progress being made on their case.

The number of emails currently coming into the service's main inbox is an average of 1200 per week. This is a significant increase as expected due to the increase in licensees.

In addition to this we have introduced an enhanced system where by the standard documents requested by the processes are received directly into the case officers email in box. This avoids double handling and is much more efficient. This has resulted in slightly improved processing times for officers. These are known as 'smart forms'. The service received 402 smart forms w/c 4th December 2023.

2.8 Telephone Contact

The number of calls received during the period 1st November 2022 and 31st October 2023 is 1704, which is an average of 33 per week.

The majority of calls from customers enquiring about new applications for drivers and vehicles. Any specific licencing queries are fed back to the licencing team for a response. Callers with general inquiries are being referred to the website.

2.9 Complaints and compliments received by the service

The service ensures it creates a clear pathway for customers/elected members to submit any complaints/compliments to the service.

Complaints received regarding the service during the period 1st November 2022 and 31st October 2023 was approx. 70. The majority of these were regarding New Applicant processing times and vehicle test dates. We currently have no outstanding complaints.

3. None.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 Financial Analysis

The requirements at section 2.2 summarises the legal basis for accounting of income and expenditure for the licensing service.

The last time that fees were increased in Bradford was in 2008. Since that time there has been a reduction in true terms for vehicle licensing fees as in 2015 the requirement for vehicles over the age of 6 to have two vehicle tests per year was removed, being replaced with a requirement to carry out a sample of random vehicle testing at no additional cost to those who are tested.

Any year end surpluses or deficits are managed through a ring-fenced reserve. Work is currently on-going with finance to ensure that income is clearly defined within the 5 work streams, drivers hackney carriage and private hire, vehicles hackney carriage and private hire and operators. There is still work to be undertaken in the apportionment of services costs and overheads, resources have been identified and this work is planned to be undertaken in time for the start of the new financial year in 2024.

The current predicted financial position is that the service is budgeted to make a reasonable surplus, the reason for this is that new driver and vehicle applications are above the anticipated numbers and continue to increase.

A review of fees and their makeup is being undertaken.

4.2 Licence Fees

In providing the licensing function, the Council, under the provisions of the 1976 Act, is entitled to levy fees to recover the reasonable cost associated with:

- recovering the costs of the issue and administration of drivers' licences
- the inspection of vehicles for the purposes of determining whether any such licence should be granted or renewed
- the provision of hackney carriage stands
- any administrative or other costs in connection with the control and supervision of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

There are five work streams covering these activities, those being private hire driver and vehicle Hackney carriage driver and vehicle and operators.

Details of the relevant legislation can be found at Appendix A.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

If there are no significant risks arising out of the implementation of the proposed recommendations it should be stated but only on advice of the Assistant Director Finance and Procurement and the City Solicitor.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

All licensing Policy and Conditions of Licence are subject legal approval.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.2 TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None

7.5 TRADE UNION

None

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None

7.7 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS

None

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

None

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

None

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended - That the Committee consider and comment on the report.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 - Fees
Appendix B – Customer Survey Feedback

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and 1889
Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022
Transport Act 1985 and 2000
Crime and Disorder Act 1998
Environmental Protection Act 1990
Equality Act 2010
Road Traffic Acts 1988/ 1991.
Health Act 2006
Human Rights Act 1998

Appendix A – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 - Fees

53 Drivers' licences for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Act of 1847, a district council may demand and recover for the grant to any person of a licence to drive a hackney carriage, or a private hire vehicle, as the case may be, such a fee as they consider reasonable with a view to recovering the costs of issue and administration and may remit the whole or part of the fee in respect of a private hire vehicle in any case in which they think it appropriate to do so.

70 Fees for vehicle and operators' licences.

(1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (2) of this section, a district council may charge such fees for the grant of vehicle and operators' licences as may be resolved by them from time to time and as may be sufficient in the aggregate to cover in whole or in part—

(a) the reasonable cost of the carrying out by or on behalf of the district council of inspections of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles for the purpose of determining whether any such licence should be granted or renewed;

(b) the reasonable cost of providing hackney carriage stands; and

(c) any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection with the foregoing and with the control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

(2) The fees chargeable under this section shall not exceed—

(a) for the grant of a vehicle licence in respect of a hackney carriage, twenty-five pounds;

(b) for the grant of a vehicle licence in respect of a private hire vehicle, twenty-five pounds; and

(c) for the grant of an operator's licence, twenty-five pounds per annum;

or, in any such case, such other sums as a district council may, subject to the following provisions of this section, from time to time determine.

(3)(a) If a district council determine that the maximum fees specified in subsection (2) of this section should be varied they shall publish in at least one local newspaper circulating in the district a notice setting out the variation proposed, drawing attention to the provisions of paragraph (b) of this subsection and specifying the period, which shall not be less than twenty-eight days from the date of the first publication of the notice, within which and the manner in which objections to the variation can be made.

(b) A copy of the notice referred to in paragraph (a) of this subsection shall for the period of twenty-eight days from the date of the first publication thereof be deposited at the offices of the council which published the notice and shall at all reasonable hours be open to public inspection without payment.

(4) If no objection to a variation is duly made within the period specified in the notice referred to in subsection (3) of this section, or if all objections so made are withdrawn, the variation shall come into operation on the date of the expiration of the period specified in the notice or the date of withdrawal of the objection or, if more than one, of the last objection, whichever date is the later.

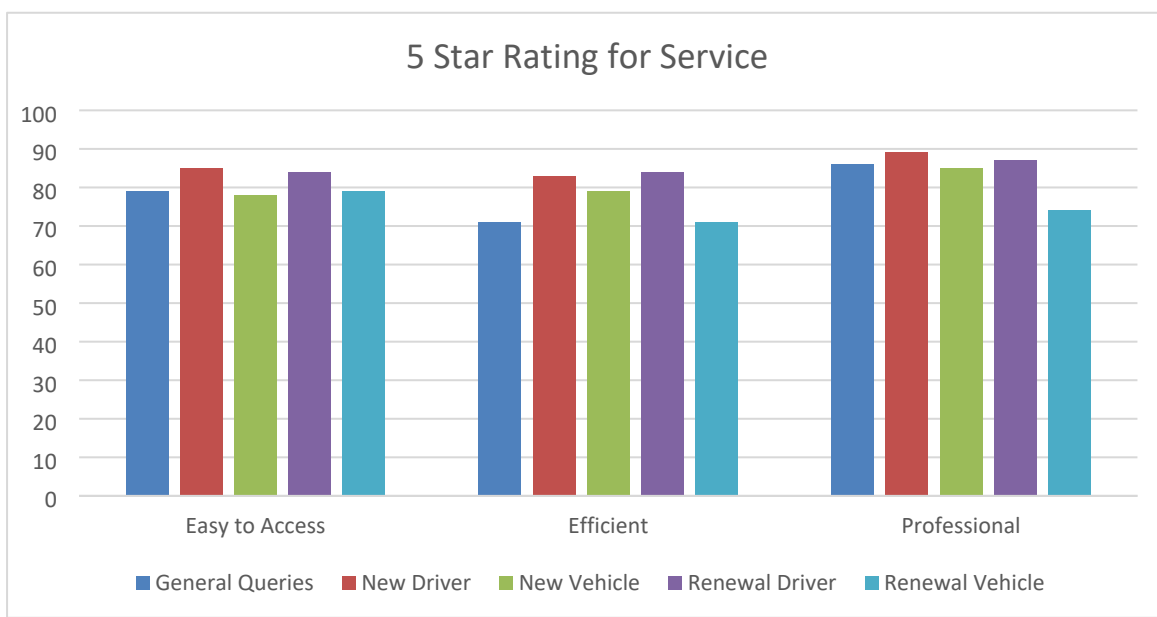
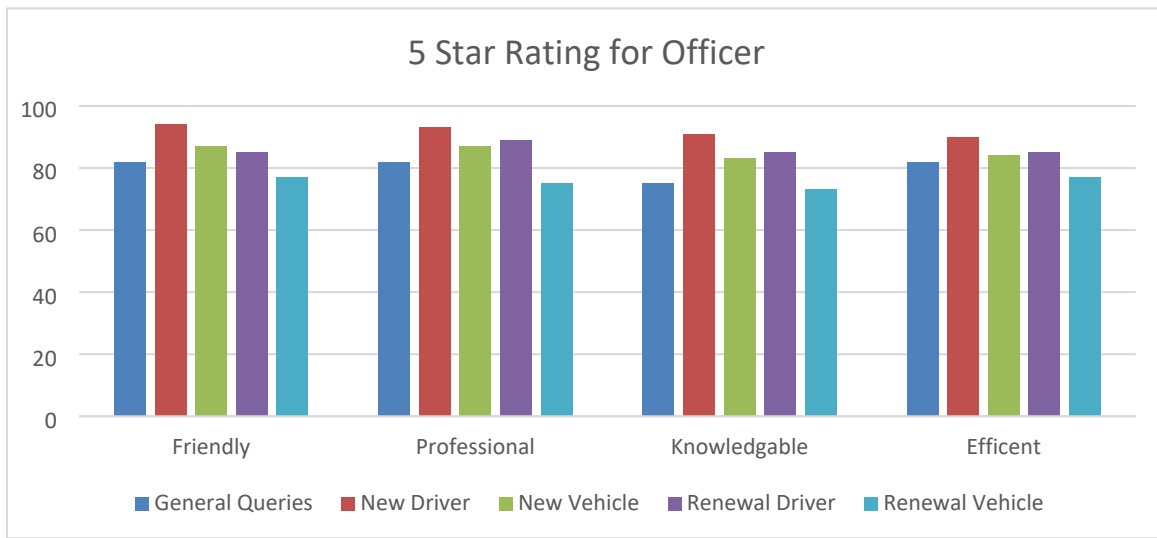
(5) If objection is duly made as aforesaid and is not withdrawn, the district council shall set a further date, not later than two months after the first specified date, on which the variation shall come into force with or without modification as decided by the district council after consideration of the objections.

(6) A district council may remit the whole or part of any fee chargeable in pursuance of this section for the grant of a licence under section 48 or 55 of this Act in any case in which they think it appropriate to do so.

Appendix B– Customer Survey Feedback

Customer satisfaction survey results for period 1st November 2022 to 31st October 2023

Survey Type	Sent	Received
General Queries	597	31
New Driver	1198	224
New Vehicle	1515	106
Renewal Driver	1392	177
Renewal Vehicle	2544	145



Positive Comments received on the surveys for Renewal Drivers

“Quick response very fast service”

“All good and very helpful”

“Really appreciated very good service”

“Very easy to complete

Positive Comments received on the surveys for New Drivers

“My whole experience was amazing. The person who guide me was very professional and helpful.”

“Yes top quality professional services throughout the whole application process”

“Very Very Very nice service thank you very much”

“Really helpful staff. The application process was straightforward and easy to do.”

Positive Comments received on the surveys for Renewal Vehicles

“Brilliant service thanks”

“Excellent service a lot better than the older days”

“Excellent service a lot better than the older days”

“Thank you being so helpful. You guys always help me and motivate me to do the same to others.”

Positive Comments received on the surveys for New Vehicles

“I think with taxi service being so busy they are doing very good job”

“Thanks for helping me and you are answering my emails also I’m happy with it Thanks!”

“I am very pleased with the service u received. Thank you very much”

“Very helpful”

Positive Comments received on the surveys for General Queries

“It's perfect”

“Keep working hard the way u are already.”

“each time I have spoken to staff, they have been amazing and great help”

“Brilliant, professional helpful Team of Shearbridge Bradford Council well done to the whole team”



Report of the Director of Finance to the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 11th January 2024

AA

Subject:

2024-25 Budget Proposals - Financial Analysis, Initial Financial Outlook and Budget proposals for 2024-25 and beyond

Summary statement:

The 2024-25 budget will be the most difficult that the Council has experienced to date and even harder than those in the earliest stages of austerity because:

- As reported to the Executive in December there is a structural budget gap of c£120m in 2023-24 inclusive of a c£73m overspend on a budget that already includes c£48m of one off reserves – in other words current expenditure is above the resources available by at least this amount;
- It is imperative for the Council to develop and realise a plan to attain financial sustainability. The emergency response work carried out since then has identified that this will require significant transformation to all aspects of the Council's activities and is likely to take up to 5 years to deliver.
- This report is the first stage of the development of the plan and further updates will be required.
- The Council has already exhausted its usable reserves meaning that it is unable to balance the budget for next year without Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) from Government, as reported to the Executive in December 2023;
- This report sets out a programme of service spending reductions for consultation that are part of budget setting for 2024-25 in order to consult the public, interested parties, staff and Trade Unions

Equality & Diversity

The report sets out clearly the need for consideration of equality impacts to be carried out as part of the Budget Strategy. As in previous years, Equality Impact Assessments have been produced for the budget proposals which have potential equality implications and full consultation with relevant stakeholder groups will be undertaken. The outcome of consultation will be considered and reported upon before the 2024-25 budget is approved.

Christopher Kinsella
Director of Finance & IT

Portfolio:
Leader of Council and Corporate

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– Head of Finance
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Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Corporate

Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council's financial position is such that the budget setting process for 2024-25 will differ significantly from previous years and requires support from Government.
- 1.2 Normally the Council works up a draft, balanced budget for consultation and then sets a final budget taking account of the consultation responses and any other changes such as from the final settlement (usually minimal).
- 1.3 The main financial pressure facing the Council is a structural overspend. High level analysis suggests that the structural funding gap is currently approximately £120m. Whilst further work is needed to assure this figure, it is likely to be a conservative estimate of spending above the level of resources available in future. Latest forecasts for 2024-25 are presented in the report.
- 1.4 The 2024-25 budget will be the most difficult that the Council has experienced to date and even harder than those in the earliest stages of austerity because;
 - Of the size of the structural budget gap, (a structural budget gap means that current expenditure is above the resources available by at least this amount). To put this in context, it represents almost the whole of the adult social care budget or the equivalent of the Department of Place and Corporate Resources budgets combined.
 - It is imperative for the Council to develop and realise a plan to attain financial sustainability as reported to Executive in November 2023. The emergency response work carried out since then has identified that this will require significant transformation to all aspects of the Council's activities and it is estimated that it could take up to 5 years to deliver.
 - The Council has already exhausted its reserves meaning that it is unable to balance the budget for next year without Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) from Government, as reported to the Executive in December 2023.
 - EFS, contrary to much press reporting, is not an injection of additional cash but simply permission(s) by Government to enable councils' to treat revenue costs as capital costs i.e. a temporary change to the financial rules that apply to councils, that are specific to the council in question and require detailed negotiations with the Department of Levelling up Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
 - The main cause of the Council's financial pressures, over several years, is demand and cost pressures in children's social care. A new, wholly owned company, managed by an independent board and subject to a direction by the SoS for Education was established in April 2023, at the most volatile period in the market for children's services.
 - Timing presents two further challenges: firstly, the clear articulation of the structural budget gap and the realisation of the limited resource options available making the run-up to the 2024-25 budget setting particularly difficult; and secondly, significant positive Government decisions for Bradford such as City of Culture 2025 designation and the development of

plans for a new city centre railway station all of which must be worked on at the same time as developing the plan for financial sustainability.

- The Council currently lacks sufficient capability and capacity to develop and implement the transformation required without significant external support.

From survival to sustainability

- 1.5 It has been reported so many times that the challenges facing local government are unprecedented that this statement has probably lost its impact both locally and nationally. However, it is still true.
- 1.6 All representative bodies such as the LGA, CCN, SIGOMA *et al* report significant gaps in the funding available if councils' are to continue to meet their statutory duties, much less the aspirations of their residents who tend to recognise and value non-statutory services such as those that maintain and improve the public realm and those that contribute to the sense of place and community, such as culture and leisure.
- 1.7 At the same time, DLUHC report increases in Core Spending Power (CSP) which includes the contribution from Council Tax increases. Whilst this is true, there is however a large gap between what has been provided and amounts required to meet demand.
- 1.8 This creates a real communication and public expectation challenge. Residents across the country can be confused about why their council taxes continue to rise, whilst services they see as important are being reduced and are simultaneously being told that more funding is being made available by Government to councils'.
- 1.9 Demand pressures on social care are well documented and national policy requires ever greater proportions of the cost of this demand to be met locally, through Council Tax. Unless this model changes, councils' will need to continue to reduce their level of service provision, ensuring that the services that they continue to provide become as high performing as possible whilst reducing the number of staff employed. The medium-term forecast by the Institute of Fiscal Studies projects that funding for local government services will continue to be reduced in real terms.
- 1.10 It would therefore be an unrealistic expectation that sufficient money will be made available for local government in general and for Bradford to continue to deliver the current level of service provision. The 2024-25 and future year budgets must be developed in this context.
- 1.11 Bradford's main financial pressure has been caused by significantly increased demand for and cost of children's social care, which is now projected to consume an unprecedented proportion of the Council's spending (almost half). This is clearly unsustainable and tackling this must form a major part of the Council's route to financial sustainability.

- 1.12 The causes of this are complex involving both national and local factors. Time and resources need to be focused on developing a solution from where we are now, rather than to apportion blame.
- 1.13 Since 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) has, through the appointment of a commissioner and more recently the establishment of the Bradford Children's and Families Trust (BCFT), co-directed the delivery arrangements for the Council to discharge its statutory responsibilities for children's social care services. Whilst there are promising signs of performance improvement potential, referenced in the recent Ofsted monitoring reports, costs have continued to escalate under the new arrangements.
- 1.14 **The Commissioner, the Council and the Trust are united in their wishes to see performance improvement accelerate whilst bringing costs down in a safe and managed way.**
- 1.15 The Council has exhausted its reserves, using c£110 million in 2022-23 and has underpinned the 2023-24 budget with £48 million of reserves. This was effectively a strategy to survive from year to year but is clearly not sustainable. Nor is it sustainable to replace the use of reserves with an EFS request that simply balances the funding gaps in future years. By its very nature of allowing the use of non recurrent capital receipts and borrowing as a temporary measure, EFS has to be replaced by bringing the budget back into a balanced recurrent position as soon as possible.
- 1.16 **High level analysis suggests that the structural funding gap is c£120m in 2023-24, as reported to Executive in December 2023. Whilst further work is needed to assure this figure, it is likely to be a conservative estimate of spending above the level of resources available in future.**
- 1.17 The Council must develop a plan to reduce expenditure and increase income by at least £120 million. This is the first step in developing that plan. Since the Council's net revenue expenditure (NRE) for 2023-24 is £453 million (underpinned by £48 million of reserves), this represents a significant proportion of the Council's budget. Such a reduction is not possible in a single year and it will require significant transformation of all of the Council's activities to bring down spend to this degree.
- 1.18 **Effectively the Council will require re-shaping to become affordable within the resources that are available. There will be a reduction in the level of services provided and the number of staff employed by the Council. The Council doesn't have sufficient capability and capacity, without external support, to develop and implement a transformation programme of this scale. Therefore, the council must include in its request for EFS the investment needed to implement the transformation required. This requires further work to finalise.**

- 1.19 Identification of the structural budget gap late in the current financial year clearly presents a major challenge to the development of the budget for 2024-25 and to the negotiation of the EFS. There is a need for strong caveats or health warnings to be attached to the projections of future demand pressures. Similarly, the savings proposals have been developed at pace and require further assurance to be carried out. However, the severity of the financial position requires that consultation commence at once on the proposals such that assurances can be worked on in parallel with community consultation.
- 1.20 The Council's plans for economic growth have been supported by Government decisions such as to choose Bradford to be the City of Culture for 2025 and to build a new station in the city. These will therefore need to be factored into the negotiations for and onward monitoring of the EFS in order to secure long term benefits whilst developing and delivering the plan for financial sustainability.

Becoming Financially Sustainable

- 1.21 An approach to strategic financial management is required based on the following objectives:
- An absolute focus on attaining financial sustainability through bringing expenditure in line with resources in the medium term.
 - Transform and reduce levels of service provision, ensuring that services that continue are as high performing as possible.
 - Attempt to secure community leadership priorities in particular in the areas that will build Bradford's economic growth e.g. City of Culture and the new railway station.
 - Minimise impacts on prevention services that are reducing demand.
 - Work with BCFT to improve services for children and young people whilst bringing the cost of children's social care down.
 - Openness and transparency in financial reporting.

Development of a sustainable plan requires:

- More timely and accurate forecasting of future pressures.
- A realistic plan for spending reductions and income generation for which there is evidence-based assurance of delivery to time and funding targets. This will be a significant challenge given the scale of the financial gap.
- Close, professional working with BCFT based on high challenge, high support principles such that the Turning the Curve transformation strategy for children's social care is delivered.
- Incorporation of good governance practice in the changed operational environment in which the Council is working with BCFT, the Bradford Culture Company Ltd and the evolving relationship with West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA).
- Refreshing the vision for the Council and the City and District and streamlining the plans that underpin delivery and partnership working

- Resetting the culture of the organisation, ensuring that a necessarily reduced workforce is supported to be high performing.
 - Intelligent use of data and sector good practice to identify how to deliver the highest performance within the available resources
 - Investing in core corporate services which require additional capacity and capability.
 - Developing the analytical and programme management capacity to drive transformation.
 - Ensuring that there are appropriate, resourced strategies to drive improvement in the areas that will enable transformation e.g. asset management, ICT, procurement etc.
 - Reviewing the structure of the organisation to ensure that it is as lean as possible whilst resourced to deliver the Council's ambitions including transformation.
 - A programme of strategic service reviews to reduce demand and cost
- 1.22 Without Government support, the Council would be forced to make sudden, unplanned changes that would not be in the best interests of residents. The strategy for financial sustainability, set out at high level in this report, whilst requiring difficult decisions and changes, is to reshape the Council over time to become financially sustainable. The main request of Government is for the permissions that would allow the time and investment required to make this transformation.
- 1.23 There is a three-fold approach to addressing the structural gap:
- Spending reductions for Council services set out in this report to reach c£40 million within three years. Given the scale of reductions this will be challenging.
 - A revision of the draft BCFT Business Plan to reduce spend within three years. This is also challenging, given the newness of the Trust, legacy issues and the market context of children's social care.
 - The remaining gap to be bridged by the design and delivery of a significant transformation programme including a comprehensive asset disposal strategy, with appropriate lead-in times to delivery.
- 1.24 Shaping the transformation programme will require 3 stages:
- Accurately sizing the degree of change required. It is vital that the Council uses the opportunity of 'fresh eyes' to complete this as soon as practicable.
 - Ensuring that the Council does the basics well.
 - Re-shaping the organisation within the available resources.
- 1.25 Developing and monitoring the plan will require updates to the Executive and Council committees. Expenditure reductions identified in this report are the beginning of that process, and considerably more than this will be required in for next year and future years. Further reports will be provided as the plan develops.

2. Update on the MTFS

- 2.1 This Financial plan updates the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) adopted by the Executive on November 5th 2023 and the Budget Update report approved by the Executive on 21st December 2023. It sets out the impact of the local government provisional settlement, and the budget proposals recommended for consultation and the context in which they have been developed. It includes new proposals for consultation with the public, interested parties, staff and Trade Unions for 2024-25.
- 2.2 The proposals have been developed under an unprecedented level of financial pressure due mostly to the continued significant increases in Children's and Adult Social Care demand and cost pressures that are consuming an ever-greater proportion of the Council's resources.
- 2.3 In 2023-24 the Council used c£48m of one off reserves to help balance the budget and pay for Children's Social Care and other pressures. Costs have however continued to grow, and the Council is forecast to overspend by c£73m in 2023-24. This therefore results in a c£121m ongoing budget gap in 2023-24 which is not financially sustainable.
- 2.4 This is against a backdrop of the Council having already budgeted for £350m of savings since 2011 to account for reduced funding, inflation, demographic growth and transformation. It is also the case that funding reforms such as Business Rates reset and the Fair Funding review have been delayed, and it is likely that such reform would benefit Bradford.
- 2.5 The proposals seek to meet cost pressures arising from inflation and growing demand; and invest in support to the most vulnerable. To fund these increases, the Council will have to implement a significant budget savings and transformation programme and deliver a range of mitigating actions to stop overspends recurring as outlined in the report, however, the scale of the additional demands is so significant that the Council will not be able to meet that challenge without additional support from Government. The Council is in close dialogue with the Department of Levelling up Housing & Communities (DLUHC) and the Department for Education (DfE) about its financial challenges over the last year. The Council will not be able to deliver a balanced budget in 2024-25 without additional support.
- 2.6 Given the financial pressures and the volatility of the external environment the focus of this report is on the 2024-25 budget that the Council is legally obliged to set. Medium Term assumptions will be revisited when the funding position from Government becomes clearer.
- 2.7 Budget proposals include:
- £24.9m to meet cost pressures arising from inflation and increases in pay and the National Living Wage. Given the volatility of energy prices this may be subject to change before Budget Council in February 2024.
 - £2.0m to meet the cost of demographic growth in Adult Social Care and

Waste Services.

- Additional support for Adult Social Care of £4m. Adult Social Care is forecast to overspend in 2023-24 by c.£8.1m and will face further pressures in 2024-25. Some of the 2023-24 pressures are non-recurring and a programme of £10m of mitigating actions has been established to prevent the overspend recurring in 2024-25.
- £32.3m to take account of other recurring pressures including Treasury management costs that include the estimated interest and MRP costs associated with a requested Exceptional Financial Support; Children's Social Care related transport and legal costs, and estate rent income reductions following asset disposals, winter maintenance, the adding back of underdelivered savings, and staffing related costs as outlined in Appendix B.
- £15.8m of new budgeted savings in 2024-25 rising to £37.9m by 2026-27. These derive from cuts to services, efficiencies, making greater use of financing flexibilities, and additional income as outlined in Appendix D.
- £1.0m of previously approved savings that have the full year impact in 2024-25.
- The Council is working on a significant Transformation Plan that would be funded by asset disposals under the flexible use of capital receipts directive. Costs are likely to include transformation activity, redundancy costs, and requirement for IT upgrades which will be subject to business case approval. An indicative estimate of £10m for 2024-25 and 2025-26 has been included however this is subject to change, and an update on the Transformation Plan will be provided in the near term.
- 4.99% increase in Council tax and Social Care Precept. When combined with a net increase in the Council Tax base of 970 as outlined in the 9th January Council Tax base report, this raises an additional £13.3m for vital local services.
- £42m of additional investment into Children's Social Care which is delivered by the Bradford Children and Families Trust. The Trust is forecast to exceed the initial contract sum by c£49m in 2023-24, and spend levels are higher than benchmarks. The Trust recognise this and have produced a 3-year business plan that will seek to reduce spend to 2023-24 contract sum levels adjusted for inflation by 2027-28. This will however result in a cost of c£42m inclusive of c£12m of inflationary pressures in 2024-25. It should however be noted that the Business Plan is not yet agreed, and the Council, the Trust and Government will continue to work on ways to reduce requirement prior to the start of 2024-25.
- Proposals for new investments to be added to the Capital Investment Plan (CIP) include £1m for General Contingency and £2m for IT equipment upgrades. These will add to the capital financing budget but there are also proposals for a number of schemes to be removed from the CIP as detailed in section 10.
- Proposals for the ring fenced Housing Revenue Account are also outlined in section 11. The Housing Revenue account is outside of the Council's General Fund and consequently has no impact on the Council's revenue budget.
- The Schools budget is being proposed to the Schools Forum in January 2024, and the Forum's decisions and recommendations will form part of the suite of Budget Council reports in February 2024. As outlined in the MTFS (November

2023 Executive), the planned Schools budget currently estimates that the majority of the existing Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) surplus will be used in 2024-25 and that there is a substantial risk that our DSG will be cumulatively in deficit at the end of the 2025-26 financial year. The impact of this is forecasted overspending within the High Needs Block. This is a national issue as outlined in prior reports.

- 2.8 Having accounted for all of the above factors, there will still however be a remaining overall Council budget gap of c£92.8m in 2024-25.
- 2.9 As the Council's available reserve levels will be exhausted by the end of 2023-24, the Council has applied to the Government for Exceptional Financial Support for 2023-24, and to bridge the remaining gap in 2024-25. The Council is liaising with the Government about this, and although a decision will be required in 2023-24 and before the 2024-25 budget is set. The Council will not receive a decision prior to the publication of this Budget Proposals report.
- 2.10 As outlined in the Budget Update – Exceptional Financial Support Request report that was provided to the Executive on the 21st December, should the government support the Council through a capitalisation directive, the Council would then seek to use capital receipts from the disposal of assets not required for transformation purposes to minimise any borrowing requirement associated with the directive.
- 2.11 The Council is developing an asset disposal programme of c£60m and this will be reported to the Executive in February 2024. A significant proportion of this will be required for transformation costs including redundancies, but this will be subject to further quantification as the Transformation Plan is developed in the near term.

Context

- 2.12 The extraordinary scale of the funding gap is driven by a combination of issues, many of which are being experienced by councils' of all types in all parts of the country. Contributory factors include cost and demand pressures in children's and adults social care, high levels of inflation and interest rates, the ongoing impact of previous funding reductions and the depletion of reserves.
- 2.13 The Local Government Association (LGA) estimates that the sector will need an extra £4bn over the next two years simply to stand still. These widespread issues have prompted Parliament's Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee to undertake an inquiry into "Financial Distress in Local Authorities."
- 2.14 **Children's Social Care.** Soaring growth in demand for, and the costs of children's social care is a national phenomenon which is being experienced particularly acutely in Bradford where it represents the biggest single financial pressure.

- 2.15 Recently published Government statistics demonstrated that nationally, Council spending on Children's Social Care doubled in the decade to 2022-23 from £6.6bn to £12.8bn. The Children's Funding Alliance have identified a £1.6bn annual shortfall in funding, while the Independent Review of Children's Social Care has called for an additional £2.6bn over five years to deliver much needed reform and highlighted a system under extreme stress. The Competitions and Markets Authority identified a dysfunctional market for children's residential care in which a small number of providers can make excessive profits as local authorities compete for limited spaces. According to the Special Interest Group of Metropolitan Authorities (SIGOMA) councils' expenditure on children's social care is now almost double what it was in 2011-12 with the most deprived councils' most affected.
- 2.16 **The Bradford Children and Families Trust** is an independent company, with a Board and Chair appointed by Government, wholly owned by the Council and managed by respected leaders in the sector. It was established following a directive from the Secretary of State and the Department for Education (DfE) after a period since 2018 where the Council had been supported by DfE appointed advisors and Commissioners. The Trust is a new company operating in a particularly challenging environment in which market pressures for residential placements are leading to high costs across the sector.
- 2.17 In Bradford, demand for services, the complexity of cases and associated costs continue to grow. The Council recognised the need to invest in children's social care to drive improvements to services following inadequate Ofsted judgements. However, high levels of deprivation – 39% of Bradford's children live in poverty – continue to drive demand and costs while children's residential fees have increased from c£3,600 per child per week in 2020-21 to c£6,000 (£312k per year) in 2023-24.
- 2.18 On-going challenges in recruitment and retention requiring the use of expensive agency staff are causing further financial pressure.
- 2.19 As outlined in the Qtr 2 Finance Position Statement (November Executive) the BCFT was forecast to overspend the £172m contract price by c£45m in 2023-24. This has subsequently increased to over £49m due mainly to further increases in costly residential care placements.
- 2.20 Overall Gross Expenditure on Children's Social Care has increased by over £150m per year since 2019-20 and is likely to be over £250m in 2023-24 – an amount that exceeds the £233m raised in Council Tax. As the Trust business plan outlines, this level of cost is well in excess of pro rata spend levels at comparable other councils', and getting spend back to comparable levels will be a key determining factor in the Council achieving financial sustainability.
- 2.21 **Adult Social Care.** Nationally adult social care faces cost, demand and workforce capacity pressures. Increasing demand sits alongside challenges in recruitment and retention as competitive wages for care workers are increasingly unaffordable for councils'. These issues are reflected in Bradford where services are relatively low cost but there is considerable rising demand

driven by population growth, complexity of cases and deprivation. Large numbers of children with high care and support needs are making the transition from children's social care to adult services with future cost implications for Adult Social Care.

- 2.22 As a measure of the extraordinary pressures facing the Council, forecast spend on Children's Services and Adult Social Care would be equivalent to over 87% of the Council's approved budget in 2023-24.
- 2.23 **Inflation.** Inflationary pressures on both pay and prices have occurred on a scale not seen since the 1970s, impacting on all councils' and requiring Bradford to factor an additional £58m into the budget for 2023-24. Council and Trust pay and inflation requirements for 2024-25 total c£37m. The Office for Budget Responsibility expects inflation to return to more normal levels by 2025-26.
- 2.24 **Austerity and the shift from national to local funding.** The impact of funding reductions has made it increasingly difficult for local authorities to keep pace with rising demand and costs. Analysis by SIGOMA demonstrated the disproportionate cuts suffered by the most deprived authorities compared to more affluent authorities and specifically highlighted the disparity between cuts seen in Bradford (28%) and Surrey (8%).
- 2.25 Bradford Council has had c£350m of budget reductions since 2011 because of national austerity measures, increasing demand for social care services and rising costs. The cumulative impact is in the region of £2bn over the period.
- 2.26 National Policy has seen big increases in the proportion of the Council budgets funded via Council tax compared to Government grants. However, Bradford's ability to keep pace with rising costs is compounded by its low tax base – Band D council tax is £135 below the Metropolitan average and £400 below the highest. Revenues are approximately £20m below the average of other Metropolitan councils' on a pro rata basis. This means that Bradford Council can raise less money for vital services than wealthier parts of the country.
- 2.27 National Funding Reforms. According to independent analysis, Fair Funding reforms and business rates re-sets would have benefited Bradford by up to £32m a year if implemented. These reforms have been repeatedly delayed and will now not take place in this Parliament.
- 2.28 **Autumn Statement.** The Chancellor's 2023 Autumn Statement provided no new funding for Local Authorities in 2024-25 beyond those amounts that had been announced in last year's Autumn Statement, nor did it make reference to the pressures on children's social care. However, the increase in National Living Wage to £11.44 was higher than had been factored into inflation estimates, and it will add c£5m of pressures to Bradford's contract expenditure.

- 2.29 The Local Government Finance Policy Statement 2024-25 confirmed that there will once again be a council tax referendum principle of a maximum 3% and that local authorities responsible for adult social care will be able to add a precept of 2%. The statement also confirmed the Government's view that this is not the appropriate time to implement fair funding or business rates re-set. The Government have again encouraged councils' to use reserves where possible. Following the settlement, funding assumptions have been revised down by c£2.5m as detailed in section 3.3.
- 2.30 Many councils' are now experiencing very severe financial challenges, primarily because of inflation and social care demand, and this is reflected in the increasing numbers of Finance Directors who are warning that they will run out of reserves and will potentially issue a Section 114 (s114) report unless they can secure additional support.
- 2.31 A s114 report under the Local Government Finance Act 1988 is issued when the Chief Finance Officer determines that the expenditure proposed to be incurred exceeds the resources likely to be available, with the consequence that no new expenditure is permitted other than that funding statutory services and honouring existing commitments and contracts. See legal appraisal below for exact terms of s114.
- 2.32 S114 reports have historically been rare, but recent research by the LGA found that one in five council chief executives and leaders believe that their chief finance officers will potentially issue a s114 report in this or the next financial year and specific s114 warnings have been provided by a diverse range of councils'.
- 2.33 The scale of the challenge both in Bradford and nationally is without historic precedent and reflects a sector in dire need of funding reform.
- 2.34 **Growth** – the Council remains ambitious for the district and has recently made significant headway towards unlocking the true economic potential of the Bradford district. Bradford is a major UK city offering unrivalled potential for growth and home to a pipeline of transformational projects currently in delivery and some recently completed including:
- City of Culture 2025 – Bradford has been named as UK City of Culture in 2025. Since winning the bid it has attracted significant funding to deliver a significant programme of national and international cultural events.
 - One City Park – Since recently completing this Grade A Office development in the heart of the city centre a significant anchor tenant has already been secured to be announced in Q1 2024.
 - Bradford Live – The former Odeon cinema is in the final stages of being transformed into a new 4,000 capacity indoor entertainment venue. It will be operated by NEC group, launch on Autumn 2024 and is expected to attract 300,000 visitors each year, hosting more than 200 events.
 - Northern Powerhouse Rail (Network North) – Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced a further £2bn rail infrastructure for Bradford city centre. Department for Transport, Network Rail and other key stakeholders are now

collaborating to develop the business cases for the release of funding for a new electrified through line and city centre rail station.

- Bradford Forster Square – Significant investment has been secured via Department for Transport to extend rail platforms and operate more frequent LNER services to and from London. This scheme also has secured funding for the extensive refurbishment of the station concourse, pedestrian access and the station retail facilities.
- Transforming Cities Fund schemes already in delivery including a £50m city centre modernisation programme to be completed by 2025. This scheme includes the pedestrianisation of city streets such as Hall Ings as well as the demolition of the former NCP car park and will bring about substantial improvements to the Bradford Interchange Plaza.
- New Darley Street market – this scheme is under construction for opening in 2024 as a modern, indoor market, incorporating a vibrant international food court and live outdoor event space.
- City Village – A collaboration with English Cities Fund to demolish Kirkgate and Oastler markets to develop a new 1,000 dwelling city centre residential community including a mixture of modern, sustainable homes and enhanced public realm.
- Bradford City Centre is a major part of Government’s newly announced West Yorkshire Investment Zone.
- Significant progress is underway to deliver the £33m Keighley and £26m Shipley Towns Fund investment projects which consist of numerous projects and schemes.
- Multiple, major strategic housing schemes are set to be delivered including Burley In Wharfedale (Sun Lane), Esholt and the former HMRC site in Shipley, and Canal Road.
- An ambitious set of new levelling up funded projects for Keighley have recently been announced including the potential for a new Robotics and Engineering centre in the town centre.

2.35 Delivery of these regeneration projects will help grow our local resource base, create jobs, reduce demand for services, and improve prosperity in the district.

Impact of the Chancellor’s 22nd November Autumn Statement and the Provisional Local Government Settlement published on 19th December

3.1 The Chancellor’s Autumn Statement on 22rd November, made very few announcements related to Local Authorities. There were however some announcements that have impacted on the financial forecasts. These included:

- An increase in the National Living Wage from £10.42 to £11.44. This is higher than the amounts that had been factored in to the MTFs, and will add additional cost pressures to Council suppliers – particularly in Adult Social Care. This will add c£5m of additional pressure.

- The Government reaffirmed its commitment to provide additional funding for Adult Social Care. Though welcome, this had already been factored into the MTFS.
- Funding for Local Government would increase by allowing for a 1% increase in the referendum limit for Council Tax to 3%, and a 2% Adult Social Care precept. This was however expected and was included in the MTFS.
- After many years of freezing the Business Rates Multiplier which is part of the formula the government use for calculating Business Rates bills, the Government will increase the Multiplier in 2024-25 in line with inflation for larger companies, whilst continuing to freeze it for smaller companies, and provide continued reliefs to the hospitality, retail and leisure sectors. As the Government provides S31 grant compensation when it freezes the multiplier, the net impact on the Council's budget in comparison to the MTFS will be negligible. The Council will collect more from Business Rates bills, but will receive less S31 compensation. As Council services are also Business Rates payers however, this will result in additional costs which have been factored into inflation calculations.

3.2 The Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement was published on 19th December 2023. The settlement provides individual councils' with their provisional allocations of funding from DLUHC, and solidifies spending power assumptions that had previously had to be estimated using available data.

3.3 The revised estimates following publication of the Provisional Settlement is an increase in the financial gap of c£2.5m, which primarily derives from some differences between grant level assumptions. The main change is in relation to Services grant which has reduced significantly more than expected. There have also been some other grants that have been rolled into Core Spending power, but the impact of this is currently unclear.

£000s	MTFS Assumption	Revised assumptions following Provisional Settlement	Difference
Social Care Grant (incl. former Adult / Social Care Support Grant)	46,440	47,235	795
New Homes Bonus (incl. returned funding)	590	767	177
Services Grant (incl. 2016/17 and 2017/18 transition grant)	5,632	886	(4,746)
Grants rolled into Core Spending Power	2,669	3,493	(0.824)
RSG	42,723	42,975	252
Compensation for under-indexing the business rates multiplier	33,605	28,407	(5.198)
Top up Grant	76,365	78,579	2,214
Local Rates incl S31	59,653	64,470	4,817
			(2,513)

- 3.4 Overall, DLUHC estimate the increases in Council funding using a calculation called Core Spending Power. With it, they estimate the amounts that councils' will receive from government or be able to generate locally from Council Tax and Business Rates. The Core Spending power calculation includes the Settlement Funding Assessment (the collective sum of Locally raised Business Rates, Top up Grant and Revenue Support Grant); Council Tax, and a range of Government provided grants including Social Care Grants, S31 Business Rates compensation, New Homes Bonus and others.
- 3.5 Overall, the Core Spending Power increase is estimated by DLUHC at c£32m, which equates to a 6.1% increase, and is less than was included in the MTFS for the reasons outlined above.
- 3.6 Independent analysis shows that the Council does appear to have had a comparatively low increase in Core Spending Power as part of this settlement.
- 3.7 The average for Metropolitan councils' for example was 6.6%, and 6.7% for Shire Counties.
- 3.8 Indicatively, had the Council's Core Spending Power also increased by 6.6%, the increase would be c£2.4m higher than the £32m. Work is ongoing to understand why, and the Council will provide a response to DLUHC's consultation about this, however at the time of writing the reasons for this comparatively low increase are not fully understood.

Revenue Budget Proposals

- 4.1 The financial and demand-led operational environment requires significant funding to be set aside to meet the costs of inflation, address demand pressures in adults and children's social care. It is proposed that these pressures and priorities be addressed through a combination of measures, including increasing council tax in line with government's expectations, financial controls and adjustments, securing additional external income and making savings. As previously outlined, the scale of the gap, and the effective exhaustion of Council's reserves in 2023-24, means that the Council will only be able to balance its 2024-25 budget by accessing Exceptional Financial Support from Government.

Inflationary pressures

- 4.2 The proposed budget includes £25m to cover the estimated costs of non-Trust inflation. This is inclusive of an estimated 4% pay award for 2024-25 and a catch up for a higher than budgeted pay award in 2023-24. There are also inflationary increases on contracts linked mainly to CPI and amounts to cover the increase in National Living Wage increases for Social Care and other workers (an increase from £10.42 to £11.44 per hour).
- 4.3 The additional costs are however partly mitigated by estimated lower energy costs for Council buildings and street lighting following the partial fall back in prices from the extraordinary increases in 2022-23 and 2023-24. A 6%

standard increase in Fees and Charges are also factored in, however it should be noted that some service areas are intending on increasing prices by more than 6%, and the net additionality of this is reflected in the budget savings proposals.

New Recurring Investment

4.4 A number of critical and essential investments are also proposed for non-BCFT related Council Services that would cost c£36.3m in 2024-25 to help cover existing and future pressures as follows:

- **Capital Financing and Treasury Management Costs (£8.4m).** As a result of a significant increase in interest rates and the Council borrowing more, Minimum Revenue Provision and Treasury management costs will increase by a further c£8.4m in 2024-25 – this is on top of the £4m increase for 2024-25 that had already been outlined in the 2023-24 budget. This increase includes the estimated cost of financing 2023-24 and 2024-25 budget gap costs under a capitalisation directive in 2024-25.
- **Underdelivered Vacancy and Abatement Factor Savings (£5m).** In 2023-24 the Council approved a £10m vacancy and abatement factor saving. Based on current forecasts this is likely to be underachieved by c£5m, and the underachievement would likely recur in 2024-25 unless added back.
- **Adults Social Care Pressures (£4m)** – Adult Social Care is currently forecast to overspend by c£8.1m in 2023-24, and will face a range of demand and other pressures that would result in a c£14m overspend in 2024-25 unless mitigated. The Department has identified c£10m of mitigations to offset that pressure, but a £4m gap remains. This investment would consequently help bridge the remaining gap and help stop an overspend recurring in 2024-25. Since this gap was included in the MTFs, Adult Social Care have proposed further savings for 2024-25.
- **Home to School Transport Pressures (c£1.1m)** – The Home to School Transport service is forecast to overspend by c£2m in 2023-24 as a result of increased demand. The Department has identified c£0.9m of cost mitigations to offset that pressure, but a £1.1m gap remains. This investment would consequently help bridge the remaining gap and meet demand.
- **Children’s Social Care Transport (£1m)** – Children’s Social Care transport is commissioned by BCFT but provided by the Council’s passenger transport service. As a result of additional demand, the service is overspending by c£1m in 2023-24, and it requires additional budget to meet demand in 2024-25.

- **Children’s Social Care related Legal costs (£1.5m)**– Children’s Social Care related legal costs are commissioned by BCFT but provided by the Council’s Legal Services. As a result of additional demand, the service is overspending by c£1.5m, and it requires additional budget to stop the meet demand in 2024-25
- **Grading review (£10m in 2024-25)** The Council is undertaking a review of grading to ensure we have the best possible grading infrastructure in place to deliver a sustainable workforce and ensure that the way we remunerate people is modern, competitive, sustainable, flexible, equitable and fit for the future. This is subject to further analysis and due diligence.
- **Street Lighting Prudential Borrowing (£1m)** – The Street Lighting service has embarked on a major infrastructure upgrade to the districts Street Lights over recent years. The capital investment was planned to largely pay for itself through energy costs and maintenance savings, whilst also attracting low-cost finance through SALIX loans. As energy costs have increased however, the Council is now paying significantly higher amounts for electricity, and there is no longer a budget saving to pay for the borrowing. Interest rates have increased resulting in additional costs of borrowing. It should however be noted that had the Council not proceeded with the upgrade, street lighting energy costs would have been higher still.
- **Museums and Libraries underdelivered savings (£0.9m).** In 2020-21 the Council approved budget savings in Museums and Libraries. The Covid pandemic disrupted the delivery of this service enormously meaning these savings proposals could not be achieved. Other mitigating actions were taken in the intervening years, but these savings are now rendered undeliverable, and this investment is to reverse this prior savings target.
- **Markets (£0.6m).** Markets has seen a reduction in retail rental values over several years and the number of vacant stall/shops has increased. The service is in the process of driving vacant possession in two of its large city centre markets in preparation for the delivery of City Village and the opening of the new Darley Street Market. The reduction and modernisation of the Council’s markets holdings will result in an ongoing budget pressure.
- **Elections (£0.2m).** Additional funding is required to cover the increased cost over recent years of district elections due primarily to the significant increase in postal voting (up from 60,000 in 2019 to 86,000 in 2023) and also in roll numbers (up 10,000 since 2019) resulting in a rise in associated costs such as printing & mail and the time spent on postal vote counting itself. This has outstripped past increases in the budget, leaving a permanent pressures on the service which is un-mitigatable by other means.

- **Rent roll (£2m)** – The Council has a small investment estate that generates rental income. As part of the Asset Disposal strategy required to help fund transformation costs and reductions in the levels of borrowing that would be required under a potential capitalisation directive following the application for Exceptional Financial Support, the Council will be disposing of much of its investment estate. This will however result in rental income reductions, and the associated income budgets will need to be reduced accordingly.
- **Winter Maintenance (£0.6m)** – The service has had a recurring overspend above its c£1m budget, and this will need to be addressed to stop the overspend recurring.

New Burdens

- 4.5 **New Burdens** - The Government is also looking at Waste reforms to incorporate food waste and move towards consistent collection in the near term. The financial consequences of this are not yet known, and it is currently assumed that new burdens would also result in new funding.

New Time Limited Investment

- 4.6 **Costs of Transformation.** To get to a lower cost base the Council will need to transform services including investing in ICT; in core corporate services, and paying for the cost of redundancies associated with budget savings proposals. These costs would however be funded under the flexible use of capital receipts directive which is open to all councils' up to 2030. The cost of transformation has an initial estimate of c£10m in 2024-25 and 2025-26, however this is being worked on, and will be subject to change as the Transformation Plan develops. Further updates will be provided in the near term.

Financial and central budget adjustments

- 4.7 A range of financing and central budget adjustments will add £4.4m of pressures in 2024-25.
- 4.8 c£4m of this was linked to additional MRP costs and was highlighted in the 2023-24 budget report.
- 4.9 Additionally, c£0.5m of budgeted savings linked to the prepayment of pension contributions to the West Yorkshire Pension Fund will also have to be added back, as they are not deliverable as the Council no longer has the cash balances to pre-pay.

New Savings Proposals

4.10 New savings and income generation proposals total £15.8m in 2024-25, rising to £37.9m by 2026-27 as outlined in the departmental summary table and following narrative below. Appendix D provides a full breakdown of all Department savings proposals.

Departmental Summary	Indicative Saving 24-25 (£000k)	Indicative Saving 25-26 (£000k)	Indicative Saving 26-27 (£000k)
Adult Social Care	-5,000	-10,000	-20,000
Children's Services	-200	-400	-400
Corporate Resources	-1,856	-3,583	-3,883
OCX	-1,110	-435	-435
Place	-5,182	-8,126	-8,126
Cross Cutting and Central Budget Adjustment	-2,462	-4,913	-5,013
GRAND TOTAL	-15,810	-27,457	-37,857

Adult Social Care

- 4.11 **Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy - Older People's Services - £2.5m in 2024-25 rising to £7.5m by 2026-27.** A three-year programme of work that will ensure all older people who are eligible for adult social care have those needs met and all opportunities for prevention, including promoting their health and wellbeing, short-term interventions to rehabilitate and recover people and opportunities to connect them to their support network are explored. Our Independence Advice Hub will make use of new technology to signpost people more efficiently, we will invest in information, advice and guidance services including in our website and front-facing customer service options for people.
- 4.12 All older people supported by adult social care will have an individual strengths-based care review over the period, to ensure they are receiving the right level of care and support, funded in the most appropriate way. We will transform our short-term enablement offer to people, with less bed-based intermediate care funded by the council and more community enablement support by our BEST service in people's own homes. Through protecting our offer of preventative services, offering more flexible ways of accessing care and with greater support for families, we will marginally reduce the care budget annually in line with our local authority comparators.
- 4.13 We will review all care contracts and seek to negotiate where better value for money could be achieved. We will work closely with Bradford Care Association to continue to work towards the fair cost of care, with better terms and conditions for our care workers. We are examining investment in family carer's services to ensure they are supported to maintain their caring role.
- 4.14 **Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy – Adults with Disabilities - £2.5m in 2024-25 rising to £7.5m by 2026-27.** A programme of work that will ensure all adults with disabilities who are eligible for adult social care have those needs met, and we will work with disabled people to enable them to be full citizens in

the Bradford district including giving back to their community, working, voting and having a say over the services they need. We have launched projects to seek employment for disabled young people who wish to work, are modernising our day service offer to put people who use those services in control. We will commission more supported living accommodation with integrated technology to support people in place of traditional residential care and will use our strengths and rights-based approach to help people live ordinary lives with social care as one element of their support.

- 4.15 We are creating a new Adult with Disabilities social work service – a long-term case management model to support disabled people throughout their lives. This will include people with care needs who have a learning disability and/or physical disability, with mental health problems or with neurodiversity. Every person in receipt of support will receive a individual strengths-based, rights-based care review to ensure we are pursuing these avenues of greater independence with them, that they are receiving the right level of care, funded in the most appropriate way. This service will work closely with Bradford Children & Families Trust to transition young people with disabilities or who have other eligible care needs to adult social care with appropriate care and plans for their future.
- 4.16 We have a programme of work with social care commissioners working alongside social workers to review all contracts and accommodation offers to seek to negotiate where better value for money could be achieved without affecting people’s care and support. Through seeking more independent alternatives for people than statutory social care, we will reduce the care budget annually in line with our local authority comparators.
- 4.17 **Transforming Our Service Offer - £0 in 2024-25 rising to £5m in 2026-27.** Adult Social Care intends to modernise for the future including using the latest technology and a new case management system, linked to the NHS record and those of our care providers. In the first two years of our transformation programme, we will implement a new more efficient IT case management system to eliminate duplication in administration and management decisions. Through vacancy management and natural turnover over those years, we will carefully reduce staff numbers across the department overall and monitor team workloads. We will also look to develop more joint roles with the NHS and share efficiency savings and shrink our office footprint.
- 4.18 In addition to the budget reductions outlined above. Adult Social Care are also undertaking a number of mitigating actions to address existing pressures.

Children’s Services

- 4.19 The proposal would see the closure and disposal of Ingleborough Hall Outdoor Centre. Ingleborough Hall, along with Buckden House, is a traded service with a deficit that is currently funded from the Council’s core budget. Following a recent condition survey, high levels of backlog maintenance have been identified to bring Ingleborough Hall up to the required standards. Due to the scale of the works outlined, it is proposed that the building should be disposed of. Bookings

would transition to Buckden House which would then run as a fully traded service. This would generate savings related to staffing.

- 4.20 The retention of Buckden also enables provision of Respite and Short Breaks at a significantly reduced rate compared to the open market. This will support cost avoidance of the growing financial pressure being experienced in the Trust via the provision of Short Breaks and holiday respite provision.
- 4.21 In addition to the budget reductions outlined above. Children's Services are also undertaking a number of mitigating actions to address existing pressures previously outlined. These will not result in budget reductions, but would stop overspends recurring and reduce future pressures on Adult Social Care.

Department of Place

- 4.22 **Mandatory HMO Licencing - covering staff costs.** The Housing Operations Service is responsible for administering the statutory / mandatory licencing scheme for houses in multiple occupation (HMO) under the Housing Act 2004. Fees generated through the administration of the mandatory licencing scheme can only be retained for use in supporting and delivering the HMO Licencing function. It is proposed that the fee income will be used to fund the staffing resources in the HMO Licencing function creating a revenue saving for the Council. Savings Value, £160,000 per year from 2023/2024
- 4.23 **Economic Development Service.** A review of how regeneration and economic development activities can be delivered more effectively across the Council, specifically looking at realignment opportunities and how efficiencies of scale can be obtained across multi-disciplinary teams. Savings Value, £200,000 per year from 2024/2025
- 4.24 **Stronger Communities team.** The proposal would result in the reduction of eleven FTE roles within the Stronger Communities team, this will provide an anticipated saving of £220,000 in 2024-25 rising to £445,000 2025-26.
- 4.25 **Car Parking – Revised staff parking Scheme (Completed as of Jan 2024).** In November 2021 temporary free parking was introduced in Sharpe Street car park for Children's Social Care Staff. This was then extended to other staff in Children and Adult Services and to include all the Council car parks included in the employee parking scheme.

A decision has been taken to withdraw all free parking permits for previously eligible staff with effect from 1 January 2024. BCFT has also confirmed it will not continue subsidising the free parking permits for its staff creating an anticipated revenue saving of £140,000 per year.

4.26 **Car Parking - Standardisation of off-street parking charges in all Towns and Villages across the Bradford district.**

Towns & Villages - Implementation of a standard district wide £1 per hour charge bringing Shipley and Keighley into line with places such as Bingley, Saltaire and Haworth. It also includes villages such as Silsden, Wilsden, Baildon.

High Demand Car Parks – The hourly charge in high demand car parks will increase from £1 to £1.50 per hour. This includes car parks such as South Hawksworth Street -Ilkley, Sharpe St – city centre, Exhibition Road - Saltaire and the Parsonage Museum Car Park – Haworth, amongst others where there is a spread of heavily utilised car parks across the Bradford District.

Expand day-time charging hours in high demand car parks - Extension of daytime charging hours from 08.00 – 18.00 to 08.00 - 22.00. This effectively replaces the 18:00 evening charge.

Additional Pay and Display car parking capacity – introduced at new Council sites including Addingham, Steeton, Leeds Rd, Idle, Burley and Wibsey.

4.27 **Car Parking Permits - Standardisation of Charges: Charges for resident and visitor parking permits, business and workers permits and health and social care visitor permit costs.** Currently there are 13,887 live resident and visitor permits in the Bradford District, there are no charges for a resident's permit or for the first visitors permit, this is out of sync with neighbouring Local Authorities.

This proposal is to introduce charges for resident and visitor permits. A charge of £35 per permit is proposed to be applied. The proposal is to increase the cost of a health and social care visitor permit (private providers) from £10 per annum to £25 per annum and to increase the cost of a business and worker permit from £150 per annum to £250 per annum.

4.28 **Car Parking Charges – Review of on-street charges.** This proposal is to introduce a standard £1 per hour parking charge for existing designated on street parking areas.

4.29 **VCS Infrastructure Support Contract – full withdrawal.** A £460k reduction in in the contribution the Council makes to the infrastructure support contract delivered by the VCS sector. This represents a full withdrawal from the Department of Place contribution to this contract, and will be phased accordingly

4.30 **Youth Services Teams.** The proposal is to rationalise current activities within the youth service team. This would include combining the Shipley and Keighley team impacting on two FTE roles. This will create a revenue saving of £50,000 in 2024-25 rising to £100,000 in 2025-26.

4.31 **Neighbourhood Teams.** We will review ways of locality working specifically related to more efficient delivery of back-office process and systems which in turn will realign support staff. This will create a revenue saving of £109,000 in 2024-25 rising to £218,000 in 2025-26.

- 4.32 **Capitalisation of Staff Support for Transport Fund schemes in Planning Transport & Highways.** The scope of this proposal covers the capitalisation of staff costs to provide the necessary input into externally funded transportation schemes from key support roles to assist the delivery of these schemes. Depending on the scheme this would include input from development management, building control, drainage, highways development management, transport planning, planning policy, heritage, and landscape design staff. This proposal has an indicative value of £236,000.
- 4.33 **Highways Services - Discretionary Fees Increase.** This proposal reviews charges for highway services in line with neighbouring authorities. Revised charges relate to charging for skips, erection of scaffolding on the highway, hoardings on the highway, depositing items on the highway, charges for cranes, dropped crossings, roadwork excavation and café pavement licences. This proposal has an indicative value of £42,345.
- 4.34 **Sports & Leisure Fees and Charges increase** Bradford Council's fees and charges have historically been low compared to other West Yorkshire and UK Local Authorities, with a generous subsidy for our 'passport to leisure' users. However – in line with most UK Local Authorities charges must be increased. This proposal aims to apply above inflation price increases to sports facilities fees and charges from April 2024. This proposal is to increase general sports facility prices by a total of 15% The Council's gyms and fitness membership operates in a competitive marketplace and it is proposed to increase the monthly gym membership price by 10% This will generate a £200,000 above the corporate expected 6% increase.
- 4.35 **Strategic Review of Libraries (£0 in 2024-25 rising to £175,000 by 2025-26)** The Council is undertaking a strategic review of its libraries to identify how overall operating costs can be reduced. This review will focus on the overall costs of the library services which are mainly contained within the council run libraries and specifically review facility operating costs, usage data, property and asset stock-condition and the potential for alternative operating models to be adopted.
- 4.36 **Bradford City Centre Visitor Information Centre Closure.** This is a proposal to close the Bradford city centre Visitor Information Centre. This proposal will effectively close the Visitor Information Centre in Bradford from 1st June 2024 saving £41,000 in 2024-25. Options to relocate to the City Centre Library will be explored.
- 4.37 **Strategic Review of Sport and Leisure facilities (£60k in 2024-25 rising to £1.25m by 2025-26)** – The Council is undertaking a strategic review of its sports and leisure facilities to identify how operating costs can be reduced. Reductions of this scale are likely to impact on the overall number of swimming pools, gyms and indoor recreation centres. The review will focus on facility operating costs, usage data, income generation, property and asset stock-condition and the potential for alternative operating models to be adopted. The review will also consider if the Squire Lane project should go ahead.

- 4.38 **Car parking - Ilkley Lido car park - introduction of charges.** This is a proposal to introduce car park charging at Ilkley Pool and Lido car park from 2024-25. The proposal will generate an estimated £25,000 of income, there are however some ongoing costs associated with operating parking charges which will need to be met from the income.
- 4.39 **Review of Cultural Grant Funding.** The discretionary grants scheme which facilitated large and small grants for cultural events and organisations will be ceased in 2024-25. This will create a £155,000 saving.
- 4.40 **Museums - 'pay what you think' admission charge (implemented Dec 23).** This proposal would see the introduction of voluntary 'Pay what you think' admission to all Bradford Museums venues with effect from 1st April 2024. This scheme would be based on maintaining free access with a payment being encouraged but not a requirement for entry. In addition, the proposal addresses the realistic potential to increase the level of directly donated income through an increased targeted, and engaged, 'case for support' being made across the venues with cashless donation terminals operational at all four venues. Forecasted income generation target of £63,000 is anticipated.
- 4.41 **Museums - review of schools learning charges.** Review of charges to schools for Learning activity at Bradford Museums resulting in additional £12,000 annual income.
- 4.42 **3 x Household Waste Recycling Centre - full closures of Sugden End, Ford Hill and Golden Butts HWRCs.** The service currently operates eight household waste recycling centres (HWRCs), spread across the district. Full closure of 3 x HWRCs would allow up to £0.9m saving in staffing, site maintenance costs and haulage. The identified sites to close would be Ford Hill (Queensbury), Sugden End (Keighley) and Golden Butts (Ilkley). This proposal has an indicative savings value of £900,000.
- 4.43 **Household Waste Recycling Centre – Monday closures (Trial Commenced Dec 23).** The service currently operates eight household waste recycling centres (HWRCs), spread across the district. Each site is open for up to 60 hours per week over 7 days. The two main HWRCs at Bradford and Keighley – containing transfer loading stations would remain open 7 days a week. Monday closure of six of the eight HWRCs would allow savings in staffing, site costs and haulage. This proposal has an indicative value of £225,000 to be pro-rata dependant on the outcome from the HWRC closures proposal.
- 4.44 **Permit Refresh – HWRC Sites.** In order to tighten controls on eligible usage we propose to introduce a new permit and monitoring system from April 2024 to ensure compliance with policy and legislation. This would include a new permit being issued to residents which could be linked to Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) at each site and limitations on the number of permitted vehicles and visits per resident. This proposal has an indicative value of £500,000.

- 4.45 **Fly Tipping Fees and charges increases (change in national policy 2023).** We propose to revise charges, in-line with recent changes to The Environmental Regulations 2023, allowing councils' to increase the maximum levels of Fixed Penalty Notices for certain environmental offences such as fly tipping, littering and Householder Duty of care offences, to introduce revised charges in line with neighbouring authorities. This proposal has an indicative value of £25,000.
- 4.46 **Recycling disposal – Dry Mix Recycling new contract.** A published tender in 2023 resulted in AWM being awarded the contract with a slightly lower processing cost and different processing techniques. The contract is in place for up to 5 years and tracks the DMR market closely. This will provide savings in the future. This proposal has an indicative value of £200,000.
- 4.47 **Bulk Collection Fees and Charges increase.** Due to the changes in legislation regarding POPS (Persistent Organic Pollutants) the operating costs for this service have increased recently. The costs for bulk collections will change from 5 items for £30 to 3 items for £50. This proposal has an indicative value of £200,000.
- 4.48 **Garden waste - Fees and Charges uplift and amended discounts.** We propose to restructure the opt-in service and increase charges to £53 per year (£50 if booked early) and £40 per additional bin. The service runs with four collection vehicles for 11 months of the year, pausing only for Christmas through to late January. Due to this being opt in-service there may be changes to the collection structure. This proposal has an indicative value of £486,000.
- 4.49 **Charity bulk collection - change of operation and funding.** The Council proposes to cease arrangements with three charitable organisations which submit invoices for re-use credits for household items they divert from landfill. This proposal has an indicative value of £20,000.
- 4.50 **Waste Collection Reduction of rounds.** The introduction of a more efficient routing system and optimisation of collection vehicles. There would be no impact for residents and collection frequencies would remain the same. This proposal has an indicative value of £300,000.

Corporate Resources

- 4.51 **Estates and Property.** These proposals will deliver further energy efficiency savings through changes to existing energy infrastructure. In addition, planning is underway to reduce estate occupation further where possible, by rationalising existing occupation which in turn will reduce running costs, the details of these proposals will be developed further and agreed as part of the Corporate Landlord arrangements/board.
- 4.52 **FM catering & cleaning** The proposal is to increase traded income and to restructure three areas Head Office, FIPC production unit and Civic Catering to create further efficiencies including ceasing the provision for internal meetings. Consultation on these proposals is currently on-going.

- 4.53 **Revenue Benefits and Customer Services.** The main proposals are covered within the Council Tax base for 2024-25 and relate to changes in legislation relating to empty and second homes, further detail is included at para 5.5. A further proposal to restructure and reduce headcount in service is being developed to address existing pressures.
- 4.54 **Workforce and Human Resources.** Proposals will deliver savings from the Human Resources Workforce Learning and Development budget, which will reduce by £149k, and will be delivered by changing to internal delivery of the Council staff survey and internal delivery of leadership, management and cultural workforce learning and development. The annual employee long service awards ceremony will be delivered through alternative sponsorship methods, and the staff networks and respect budget will cease. The Employee Health and Wellbeing budget will reduce with a re-focussed counselling offer making savings on the current counselling contract. The PACT HR Traded Service income generation target will increase to deliver further income for the Council.
- 4.55 Cross cutting Workforce and Human Resources proposals will deliver savings across all Departments by reducing, recruitment advertising costs, of counselling costs from the charge back to the referring service which will cease through the refocussing of counselling service delivery. In addition work has started to review workforce benefits and more general terms and conditions of employment to ensure they are streamlined and simplified, and provide modern, competitive, and fit for future employee benefits.
- 4.56 Additionally, there are a number of cross cutting and central budget adjustment proposed as outlined at Appendix D.

Impact on Jobs

- 4.57 The Council issued a Section 188 Notice on 5th December relating to on-going workforce change. This stated that a total number of 85 employees were at risk of redundancy (as defined under section 195 TULRCA 1992). This is from a total of 7,411 employees, excluding school based staff.
- 4.58 In addition, 113 further employees have been identified as directly impacted by the budget proposals for 2024-25 and therefore may be at risk of redundancy. Every effort will be made in line with Council policy to ensure that staff affected will be re-deployed.
- 4.59 Furthermore, the Council is currently operating a vacancy freeze which may further reduce staffing numbers due to natural turnover. This will result in a significant reduction in overall capacity.

Council Tax and Business Rates

- 5.1 To help meet increasing demands for and costs of children's and adult social care, it is proposed that Council Tax is increased by 2.99% in 2024-25 and that the Social Care Precept be increased by a further 2%. In total therefore it is

proposed that Council tax will increase by 4.99%. This is in line with national Government's assumptions set out in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement.

- 5.2 The overall increase will raise an additional £11.6m and add £80.89 a year or £1.56 a week to bills for Band D properties.
- 5.3 Overall, Council Tax would still remain very low compared to other West Yorkshire councils' and Metropolitan councils'.
- 5.4 As detailed in the Council Tax Base report (January 9th 2024 Executive) the Council Tax base is also forecast to grow by 970 to 144,890 Band D equivalent properties in the Council Tax base raising an extra c£1.6m. The increase is mainly due to housing growth and policy changes in relation to houses of multiple occupancy, and empty homes premium. When combined with the proposed Council tax increase this would raise £13.3m in 2024-25.
- 5.5 The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 introduces two important reforms to Council Tax; a new premium on second homes and reducing the period after which a premium can be applied to empty homes from two years to one year. The Second Home Premium provision requires the Authority to give property owners twelve months' notice of the imposition of the additional charge. Therefore, although Budget Council will be asked in February 2024 to determine that the charge be applied, additional income will not be generated until 2025-26. The changes to the Long Term Empty Premium will be recommended to the Executive on February 20th 2024, to be approved at Budget Council.
- 5.6 As outlined in the Council Tax base report the Council also has a c£3.4m higher Council Tax surplus from 2022-23 and 2023-24 than had been budgeted, and this will provide a one off benefit to the Council's budget in 2024-25.
- 5.7 In relation to Business Rates there is a significant amount of uncertainty in relation to the impact of recent changes to the Business Rates multiplier announces as part of the Chancellors Autumn Statement. The implications are currently being worked on and will be included in the NNDR1 form that the S151 officer provides to Government at the end of January.
- 5.8 At the time of writing the expectation is that the Council will bill and collect higher amounts of Business Rates, but will receive an equivalently less amount of S31 grant compensation. Overall, we are therefore not currently estimating any material change from that included in the MTFs overall.
- 5.9 In 2023-24 the Council is a member of the Leeds City Region Business Rates pool with 50% business rates retention. Under the 50% scheme the advantage of forming a business rates pool is the retention of levy payments within the region that would otherwise have to be made to government.
- 5.10 In early October 2023 the Government invited authorities to apply to continue their pooling arrangement into 2024-25. This report requests approval to continue with the pooling arrangements with Leeds City Council being the lead

authority. The continuation of the Pool will be dependent on none of the member authorities choosing to withdraw within the statutory period after designation.

Bradford Children & Families Trust

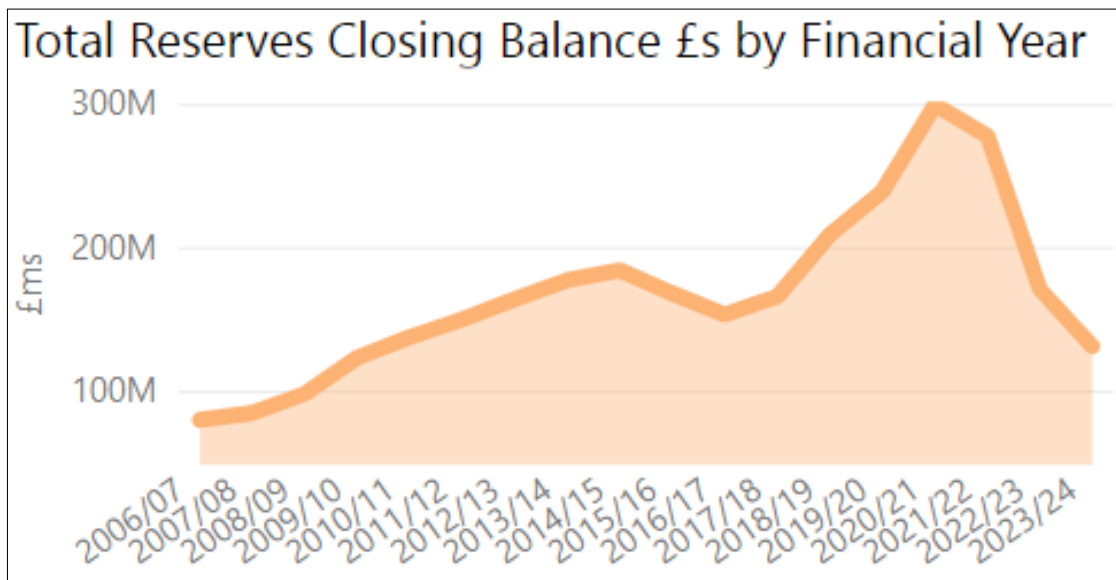
- 6.1 The Bradford Children and Families Trust (BCFT) commenced operations on the 1st April 2023 following a Directive from the Secretary of State for Education. An initial contract price of c£170m was agreed, and the DFE provided a one-off grant of c£10.8m for 2023-24. As outlined in the Qtr 2 Finance Position Statement (November Executive) the BCFT was forecast to overspend by c£45m in 2023-24. This has since increased further to c£49m due mainly to continued increases in costly residential care placements.
- 6.2 Overall Gross Expenditure on Children's Social Care has increased by over £150m per year since 2019-20 to c£250m in 2023-24.
- 6.3 As a result of the significant increase in costs, benchmark spend per head of child population has increased rapidly, and has gone from relatively low, to very high over a short period. The scale of growth dwarfs the increases in government funding and council tax increases and is the main reason why the Council has run through its previously robust reserve levels and is now experiencing exceptional financial challenges.
- 6.4 Benchmark data from other councils' for 2022-23 (published in December 2023) and 2023-24 is not yet available but given the rapid growth in both spend and spend per child in Bradford in 2022-23 (£1,335) and 2023-24 (£1,648) per the Trust's Quarter 2 forecast, this excess spend in comparison to benchmarks could realistically be in excess of £50m per year.
- 6.5 The Trust recognise that spend levels are significantly above benchmark levels, and have produced a 3 year business plan that has the stated aim of both improving care, and getting spend levels back to 2023-24 contract (adjusted for inflation) and closer to benchmarks over the next 3 years.
- 6.6 As the Trust is already forecast to overspend by c£49m in 2023-24, and will have inflationary pressures in 2024-25, the Trust's Business Plan for 2024-25 also assumes that costs will be c£42m above current c£172m contract price in 2024-25. As the Trust will have c£12m of inflationary pressures in 2024-25, this means that it has committed to deliver c£20m of real terms reductions in spend in 2024-25 in comparison to the 2023-24 forecast spend level.
- 6.7 The main financial elements of the Trust's business plan are outlined in Section 4 and Appendix 1 Section 3 of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (November 2023 Executive), but in summary, the Trust aim to get back closer to benchmark levels of spend over the next 3 years by reducing reliance on Agency staff; reducing the numbers of children in care per 10,000 population back down to benchmark levels and reducing the numbers of Children Looked After in costly Residential Care placements.

- 6.8 The Trust's business plan remains subject to revision and negotiation prior to the contract for services being agreed for 2024-25, and BCFT and the Council are working with the Government on ways to transform Children's Social Care services.
- 6.9 Following publication of the Quarter two budget and MTFS reports in October 2023 which included the financial projections of Bradford Children and Families Trust and the strategy and rationale behind them, the Trust is working to update those projections linked to progress made in key areas of work, continued development of the analysis of the needs and issues that exist and the opportunities to address them, and the development of more detailed plans and projections for the next stages of that work. The work in development includes the following:
- The next stage of implementation of the Placement Sufficiency Strategy including phase two plans for further development of our residential care offer and further development of our fostering service with the aim of positively reducing the need for children to be placed in external residential care outside of Bradford.
 - A review of and amendments to our commissioning and contract management arrangements for residential placements to maximise quality linked to the needs of children, plus value for money in very challenging market circumstances.
 - Opportunities to develop inhouse offers to replace some spot purchased support for children at reduced cost but high quality.
 - A strong focus on earlier and more intensive family help to reduce the need for social work involvement and support more families to stay together. Early evaluation of increased family support since September is positive and there is potential for invest to save business cases to increase the impact for families and see further reductions in financial pressures.
 - Implementation of new organisational arrangements that will support financial decision making and monitoring and forecasting.
 - Continued development of relational and restorative social work practice and intensive work on recruitment based on the success of filling more senior roles.
 - Intensive partnership work with health colleagues to maximise opportunities to work together that are mutually beneficial.
- 6.10 The Trust is working through the associated reductions in the financial pressures for the next three years linked to the anticipated impact of this work. Discussions with the Trust are focussing on c£36m of additional savings over the next three years in addition to the £39m BCFT committed to in the MTFS in October. The Trust and Trust Board are actively considering what is achievable based on current analysis, forecasts and plans and are clear that there is a strong interdependency with the council if some of the commitments are to be delivered in accordance with the Trust's existing MTFS projections. New opportunities for

reducing costs and increasing impact are being sought constantly with the emphasis on reducing the needs of children through more effective support. In-year mitigations are being tracked for cost avoidance and actual savings in order to stem the tide of increased costs and the early signs are showing a reduction in the need for children to come into care and a reduction in children needing to be subject to a child protection plan.

Use of Reserves

7.1 The chart and table below summarises the Council’s reserve levels. At 30th November 2023 reserves stood at £131m (Council £80.4m and Schools £50.6m). The Council currently has £32m of General Fund reserves.



	Closing Balance 2020-21 £m	Closing Balance 2021-22 £m	Closing Balance 2022-23 £m	Net Movement	Balance as at 30 th November 2023 £m
Council reserves	256.5	231.1	120.5	-40.1	80.4
Schools Delegated budget	42.9	46.6	50.7	0.1	50.6
Total	299.4	277.7	171.1	-40.2	131.0

7.2 The Council keeps the allocation and use of reserves under regular review and has undertaken an exercise to use previously earmarked but as yet un-committed Departmental reserves to support extraordinary inflation and Children’s Social Care costs.

- 7.3 While the use of reserves to balance Council budgets in the face of extraordinary pressures is in line with Government expectations, these resources can only be spent once. Reserves are not a sustainable solution to the Council's current financial challenges and face rapid depletion.
- 7.4 Of the remaining £80.4m of non-School reserves, c£32m are general fund balances and c£14.5m are Grant reserves that have been provided for specific purposes.

Reserve Type	Total Reserves Opening Balance £s	In year reserve Movements £s	Total Reserves Closing Balance £s
General Fund Balance	22,001,000	9,961,911	31,962,911
Service Earmarked Reserves	45,345,686	-19,210,009	26,135,677
Grant Reserves	17,400,500	-2,870,700	14,529,800
Corporate Earmarked Reserve	35,274,080	-27,975,402	7,298,678
Corporate Capital Reserves	442,700	0	442,700
Total	120,463,966	-40,094,200	80,369,766

- 7.5 Regarding Corporate and Service earmarked reserves, the Council has conducted 4 reserve reviews over the last 2 years to repurpose reserves to help the Council's overall financial pressures, and of the remaining c£33m, a further £4m has been identified as being available to support the Council's overspend in 2023-24. The remainder are committed.
- 7.6 When the £4m is added to the c£10m of reserves that are held in the General fund reserve that are above the c£22m minimum General Fund balance, there are c£14m of reserves that could help mitigate the c£73m of forecast 2023-24 overspend. However, the final recommendations on the use of reserves will be subject to the EFS negotiations.
- 7.7 This will however exhaust remaining unallocated reserves prior to the end of 2023-24, and hence the Council has submitted an application to Government for Exceptional Financial Support to help balance the 2023-24 budget and set a balanced budget in 2024-25.

Exceptional Financial Support

- 8.1 The scale of the current financial pressures particularly those relating to Children's Social Care, is such that a balanced budget cannot be delivered for 2023-24 or set for 2024-25 without access to additional resources to help bridge the financial gaps in those years.
- 8.2 The Council has been in close dialogue with DLUHC and the DfE about its financial challenges over the last year, and Exceptional Financial Support is the only mechanism available to support the Council through a difficult financial position.

- 8.3 The Chartered Institute for Public Finance Accountants (CIPFA) revised guidance to section 151 Officers is that they should seek support from Government before issuing a s114 report. Should Exceptional Financial Support not be provided for 2023-24 or 2024-25 as requested, then the Council's Section 151 Officer will have to issue a s114 notice recognising that a balanced budget cannot be achieved and imposing new spending restrictions.
- 8.4 The Government has previously allowed several councils to access Exceptional Financial Support by allowing them to capitalise revenue costs to enable them to get to a sustainable position.
- 8.5 A capitalisation directive allows councils to fund revenue expenditure up to a maximum value in a given year via capital financing methods including the application of capital receipts from the disposal of assets or borrowing.
- 8.6 The Council is developing a significant asset disposal programme which will be outlined in a report to the Executive in February 2024, however, the scale will be insufficient to bridge the gap, and the Council would therefore have to borrow. Some of the capital receipts would also be required to fund a revised transformation programme through flexible use. It is therefore likely that the Council would therefore have to borrow to fund capitalisation.
- 8.7 Borrowing under a capitalisation directive does however typically have a number of stipulations, including that loans must be from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) and be repaid over a 20 year period at prevailing PWLB interest rates + 1%.
- 8.8 Every effort will need to be made to minimise the scale of the Exceptional Financial Support request by reducing costs and increasing income in 2024-25, however, Exceptional Financial Support will be required for 2024-25 and it will be in addition to the c£58m request in 2023-24.
- 8.9 Based on the estimates outlined in the report, the Council would seek Exceptional Financial Support of c£58m in 2023-24, and with the amount of support requested in 2024-25 to be agreed following completion of the work to shape the transformation programme and the revised projections from the BCFT. This will be subject to discussions and agreement with DLUHC.

Asset Disposal Programme

- 9.1 To pay for transformation costs and minimise borrowing, the Council is developing an asset disposal programme that could generate c£60m. However, this requires considerable work on due diligence. A significant proportion of this will however be required to fund transformational activity under the flexible use of capital receipts directive, with the remaining amounts to be used to reduce any borrowing required under the Exceptional Financial Support request.

- 9.2 It should however be noted that c£30m of the assets are currently rent generating, and disposing of these would mean that the Council would also lose c£2m of annual rental income, which would then become a pressure to add to the gap, which underlines the importance of further due diligence.
- 9.3 A report outlining the Asset Disposal Programme will be provided to the Executive in February 2024.

Capital Investment Plan and new Capital Investment Proposals

- 10.1 The Capital Investment Plan (CIP) shows budget spend on infrastructure items, such as housing, roads, Council land and buildings, sports centres and vehicles. Technically, the definition for inclusion in the CIP is that the spend delivers a service benefit lasting more than one year: for example, a new-build sports centre or school extension.
- 10.2 The CIP differs from the other (revenue) budget items listed in this report, which relate to day to day spend. An example of day to day spend are the salaries of employees who run sports centres. Being periodic, these costs fit easily into an annual budget cycle.
- 10.3 In contrast, individual projects in the CIP tend to be one-off and sometimes the build phase cuts across annual budget cycles so are planned over multi-year periods, updated incrementally at each annual budget for any changes. The current CIP position (prior to any update for the 2024-25 budget cycle), was reported in the Council's 2023-24 quarter 2 Finance Report and is shown below:

Table A – Capital Investment Plan Quarter 2 2023-24

Directorate	Budget 23-24	Budget 24-25	Budget 25-26	Budget 26-27 onwards	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care	4.3	5.3	5.7	1.7	17.0
Children's Services	19.8	15.8	10.1	3.9	49.6
Place - Economy & Development Services	51.4	32.2	26.2	4.1	113.9
Place - Planning, Transport & Highways	68.5	39.6	20.9	104.1	233.1
Place – Other	18.6	29.9	15.8	1.1	65.4
Corp Service – Estates & Property Services	19.3	12.4	4.9	2.0	38.6
TOTAL	181.9	135.2	83.6	116.9	517.6
Reserve Schemes & Contingencies	30.4	98.8	41.3	36.2	206.7
TOTAL – General Fund Services	212.3	234.0	124.9	153.1	724.3
HRA	2.8	14.5	10.0	8.2	35.5
TOTAL CIP	215.1	248.5	134.9	161.3	759.8

- 10.4 The CIP is funded from several different sources, with the remainder leaving a borrowing requirement, as set out below:

Table B – Capital Investment Plan Quarter 2 2023-24 Funding

	Grants, sec 106, reserves £m	Capital Receipts £m	Borrowing £m	Total £m
Total	439.0	0	320.8	759.8

- 10.5 Some funding sources, such as specific capital grants and capital receipts, directly fund the expenditure in the CIP; this avoids borrowing and has no implication for the revenue budget. However, a small element of the CIP is funded directly from Revenue budget, which does have direct cost implication for the revenue budget. Revenue budgets funding capital spend have been removed in 2023-24 and this will continue in 2024-25.
- 10.6 A larger funding element is provided from borrowing which generates Capital Financing costs. It is here that there are additional costs within the revenue budget - allocated to Nonservice, in other lines of this report.
- 10.7 Capital Financing costs include the allocation of the borrowing amount across revenue budget years: the borrowing amount is usually apportioned over future revenue budgets in equal amounts, for as long as the building or vehicle is expected to be in use - this is known generally as depreciation but is called the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) within Local Government.
- 10.8 Capital Financing costs also include interest on the borrowing amount. These costs are time specific and charged to revenue as they fall.
- 10.9 Incremental changes to the CIP for the 2024-25 budget cycle will include the continuation of on-going capital programmes. The changes also include new proposals relating to priority outcomes in the Council Plan.
- 10.10 Proposals for inclusion in the Council's revised Capital Programme comprises:
- The rolling programme - this includes the on-going investment that is needed to continue existing services and commitments. The following amounts have been included in the 2027-28 programme:
- General contingency for unforeseen capital expenditure - £1m
 - IT Device Refresh Programme - £2m
- 10.11 Although there are no new schemes to be added to the CIP, there are other possible schemes that are at a very early stage of development. The budget position means only invest to save schemes should be considered for further capital investment. Further work and investigations will be completed during 2024-25 and they will be brought to Executive for approval.

- 10.12 Also, the Council could consider foregoing some further capital investment and take a revenue saving instead. Previous analysis of the CIP has indicated that there are several schemes that have either not started or have only partially progressed. There is the potential to free up resources in the CIP by either deleting or delaying some of these projects.
- 10.13 The current proposals include the removal / reduction of budget for several schemes. A description of these schemes is provided in the table below and further work is required to identify any others.

Scheme	Proposed Budget reductions £'000	Current Position
Children's Service		
Area office accommodation	800	Remove in full. Originally included to invest in a new office accommodation. Now being considered as part of the full Estate Strategy review.
Laptops	400	Remove in full. Originally included to invest capital funding in Digital Inclusion for Disadvantaged Children & Young People by investing in an infrastructure to support the programme.
Place		
Goitside	178	Currently no plans are in place for this scheme, so it is proposed that it is removed completely from the CIP.
City Centre Growth Zone	1,300	Remove in full. Will be considered as part of the development of the City Centre scheme.
Bradford Beck	1,891	Currently no plans are in place for this scheme, so it is proposed that it is removed completely from the CIP. It will be revisited once plans are developed.
Canal Road Land Assembly	450	Currently no plans are in place for this scheme, so it is proposed that it is removed completely from the CIP.
Depots	3,000	Currently no plans are in place for this scheme, so it is proposed that it is removed completely from the CIP. It will be revisited once plans are developed.
Electric vehicles/ New street cleansing	300	Reduction in budget for new street cleansing plant and equipment.
Total	8,319	

Housing Revenue Account

- 11.1 The Housing Revenue Account is a ring fenced account that sits outside the Council's General fund and is subject to HRA regulations. One of the main regulations is that the HRA is self sustaining via rents.
- 11.2 An increase in accordance with the Government's Rent Standard of CPI (6.7% as at September 2023) +1% is proposed across the stock. This overall 7.7% rise equates to approximately £174K in additional rental income, when taking into account stock reductions for Right to Buy sales (RTB).
- 11.3 The Council is still committed to replacing homes lost through RTB, but any planned investment in new homes will be in the longer term when interest rates and business case demonstrates it is affordable.
- 11.4 Although income is forecast to increase with rent increases in line with the rent standard, there are inflationary pressures and significant variations as outlined in the key movement areas outlined below. Legislation requires that the HRA balances. In order to do this, all budget headings have been examined to achieve efficiencies and improved targeting of resources together with the use of reserves, RTB receipts and borrowing to fund the HRA capital programme.
- 11.5 In addition to rent increases, Service Charges apply for Tenants in Extra Care for additional services such as cleaning and maintenance of communal areas, lounges, dining rooms, heat and lighting of communal areas, lifts, and management overheads of 10%. These are on a cost recovery basis only. It is proposed that an increase of CPI (September 2023 rate) is made to those service charges for extra care.
- 11.6 Capital investment and Council House Growth Programme. The Council remains committed longer term to replace homes lost through RTB by the planned investment in new homes when interest rates and business case allows.

HRA Reserve

- 11.7 The HRA has a revenue reserve of £503k, some of this will be used in 2023-24 to help with the transition to establishing a sustainable HRA.
- 11.8 The void level has been identified as a key area for improvement.

12 BUDGET ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION, AND EQUALITY IMPACT

- 12.1 The intention of this consultation is to provide the people of the district and other interested parties with opportunities to provide their views on the budget proposals, to help shape and inform final decisions. The budget consultation will seek comments on proposals for the financial year 2024-2025.
- 12.2 This report sets out clearly the context in which budget proposals for 2024-2025 have been developed. Since 2010 Bradford Council has had to take out £350m from services. During this time the Council has continued to prioritise

front line services to all communities across the district. The reduction of this scale, and the further proposals contained within this report mean that difficult decisions must be made, and these decisions will have an impact on the lives of Bradford's residents.

- 12.3 Even when difficult decisions need to be made, it is important they remain underpinned by an understanding of who will be affected, and how. Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken on all budget proposals to understand the potential equality impact of the proposed changes on different groups of residents and to reduce these as much as is possible.
- 12.4 Initial equality impact assessments have been developed on all proposals. Those showing , potential negative impacts against the protected characteristics, and the locally agreed protected characteristics of low income and care leavers, will be published on the Council's website here [Equality Impact Assessments | Bradford Council](#). A link will also be available to the [budget consultation survey questionnaire](#).
- 12.5 The process of the budget consultation will provide the people of the district, staff and other interested parties, with opportunities to provide their views on the budget proposals, to help shape and inform final decisions and to understand the impact that these proposals may have. The budget consultation will seek comments on proposals for the financial year 2024-2025.
- 12.6 Where possible arrangements will be made to reduce any negative impacts of the proposals. These mitigations are set out in the equality impact assessments and the Council will continue to look for ways to reduce negative impact from the proposed changes.
- 12.7 The consultation will be open from 11 January 2024 to 17 February 2024. The consultation will comprise of a survey enabling individuals and organisations to comment on the proposals and direct engagement with focus groups from the voluntary and community sector and other stakeholders.
- 12.8 Responses can be provided online or by writing to the Council using a freepost address. Social media (X (formerly known as Twitter and Facebook) and the Council's app will also be used to promote the consultation.
- 12.9 Consultees will be encouraged to comment on the proposals and any impacts they believe might be felt by particular groups of people (in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty).
- 12.10 The outcome of the consultation will be presented to the Council's Executive on 20 February 2024. The Executive will then give consideration to the feedback and any equality impacts as they finalise their budget proposals on 20 February 2024 in advance of Budget Council on 22 February 2024. In addition to the current formal budget consultation, other engagement and consultation activities will continue to be run separately by Council services on budget changes agreed in previous years.

- 12.11 For proposals accepted at the Council's Budget meeting on the 22 February 2024, equality impact assessments will continue to be reviewed as part of their delivery. Additional consultation may also be required against some accepted proposals prior to their implementation.
- 12.12 The Council is applying for Exceptional Financial Support from Government, and this will be required to set a balanced budget for 2024-25. The EFS process may mean that the date of Budget Council would need to be revised.

13. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 13.1 The financial plan assumes that remaining savings that are currently behind plan and do not feature in these proposals will be either fully back on track by 2024-25 or mitigated through proposals in this report.
- 13.2 The Final Local Government Financial Settlement will have an effect on the current assumptions underpinning this financial plan. There could be changes to the assumptions about the value of specific grants or a revision to the assumptions.
- 13.3 Investment into Children's Social Care to fund the Bradford Children's & Families Trust remains subject to negotiation and agreement with both the Trust leadership and the Department for Education.
- 13.4 The budget proposals include a number of amendments to financing, including using capital funding flexibilities to cover qualifying costs previously funded by revenue expenditure. An Asset Disposal plan has been developed, however the Council will have to dispose of sufficient assets through its disposal programme to fund the transformation activity planned to be funded by using capital receipts flexibilities.
- 13.5 Additionally, the impact of any changes to international trading conditions and the national economy could feed through into additional pressures for the Council.
- 13.6 Consultation outcomes may mean that specific proposals cannot be delivered or need adjusting.
- 13.7 The planned Schools budget currently estimates that the majority of the existing Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) surplus will be used in 2024-25 and that there is a substantial risk that our DSG will be cumulatively in deficit at the end of the 2025-26 financial year. The cause of this is forecasted overspending within the High Needs Block. This is a national issue as outlined in prior reports. A statutory accounting override is currently in place meaning that deficits do not impact on the councils' general fund.
- 13.8 Setting a balanced budget for 2024-25 is dependent on a request for Exceptional Financial Support request that has been made to DHLUC.

14. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 14.1 The Council is under a duty to calculate the budget in accordance with Section 32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must make three calculations namely: an estimate of the Council's gross revenue expenditure; an estimate of anticipated income; and a calculation of the difference between the two. The amount of the budget requirement must be sufficient to meet the Council's budget commitments and ensure a balanced budget. The amount of the budget requirement must leave the Council with adequate financial reserves. The level of budget requirement must not be unreasonable having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its Council Tax payers and non-domestic rate payers.
- 14.2 Failure to make a lawful Council Tax on or before 11 March could have serious financial results for the Council and make the Council vulnerable to an Order from the Courts requiring it to make a specified increase in Council Tax.
- 14.3 Information must be published and included in the Council Tax demand notice. The Secretary of State has made regulations, which require charging authorities to issue demand notices in a form and with contents prescribed by these regulations.
- 14.4 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 places a general duty on local authorities to make arrangements for 'the proper administration of their financial affairs'.
- 14.5 The Local Government Act 2003 s25(2) imposes a duty on authorities when making a budget calculation to have regard to a report of the chief finance officer as to the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the proposed reserves. This is the "S151 officer report" which will be presented to Executive on 20 February 2024.
- 14.6 Authorities are required to monitor and review from time to time during the year their income and expenditure against their budget, using the same figure for financial reserves. If having conducted this review, it appears to the authority that there has been a deterioration in its financial position, it must take such action, if any, as it considers necessary to deal with the situation, and be ready to take action if overspends or shortfalls in income emerge. This is a statutory duty. If monitoring establishes that the budgetary situation has deteriorated, authorities are required to take such action as they consider necessary.
- 14.7 Section 114(3) Local Government Finance Act 1988 provides that the chief finance officer of a relevant authority shall make a report if it appears to him that the expenditure of the authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure. The chief finance officer is required to send a copy of the report to the Council's auditors and to all elected members, and a meeting of Council must take place within

21 days to consider the report. Section 115 provides that during that period the Council may not enter into any new agreement which may involve the incurring of expenditure at any time unless the chief finance officer authorises it to do so. The chief finance officer may only give such authority if he considers that the agreement concerned is likely to prevent the situation that led him to make the report getting worse, improve the situation or prevent the situation from recurring.

- 14.8 There is also a duty under Section 65 of the 1992 Act to consult persons or bodies appearing to be representative of persons subject to non-domestic rates in each area about proposals for expenditure (including capital expenditure) for each financial year.
- 14.9 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the public sector equality duty) provides that:
- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (2) A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1).
- (3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—
- (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
 - (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- (4) The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

(5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—

- (a) tackle prejudice, and
- (b) promote understanding.

(6) Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act.

(7) The relevant protected characteristics are—

age;
 disability;
 gender reassignment;
 pregnancy and maternity;
 race;
 religion or belief;
 sex;
 sexual orientation.

Officers have prepared equality impact assessments on those proposals which may have an impact on people with particular protected characteristics to assist elected members in having regard to this duty.

14.10 Section 3(1) Local Government Act 1999 imposes a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Section 3(2) requires local authorities to consult representatives of

- persons liable to pay any tax in respect of the authority.
- persons liable to pay non-domestic rates
- persons who use or who are likely to use services provided by the authority,
- persons appearing to the authority to have an interest in any area within which the authority carries out functions

for the purpose of deciding how to fulfil the duty imposed by Section 3(1).

14.11 Pursuant to Section 188 Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (TULRCA 1992) the Council as employer is required to consult the recognised Trade Unions where there is a proposal to dismiss by reason of redundancy (which includes voluntary redundancy) 20 or more employees at an establishment within a period of 90 days or less. If 100 or more employees are at risk of dismissal by reason of redundancy at any one establishment within

a period of 90 days or less the consultation must begin at least 45 days before the first of the dismissals takes effect . The consultation must include ways of avoiding the dismissals, reducing the numbers of employees to be dismissed, and mitigating the consequences of the dismissals.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

15 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

SUMMARY OF THE EQUALITY IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES.

- 15.1 The Council's budget will continue to prioritise the delivery of services to the most vulnerable children and adults in the district.
- 15.2 Overall, when the impacts are looked at together, people on low incomes and with disabilities are subject to the largest numbers of medium and high equality impacts. There are also high and medium impacts noted on some proposals in relation to impacts on age and race.
- 15.3 Bradford's council tax remains lower than in other areas, but the proposed increases will impact disproportionately on low income households. There are arrangements in place to support residents who are on low income with council tax bills.
- 15.4 There are proposals in the budget that will potentially impact on both older and younger residents. Changes to the adult social care budgets will have more services in place earlier to prevent adults needing expensive care at a later date. Bradford continues to invest in a youth service while many other areas have not done so, but there are proposals that will reduce some of the sessions offered across the district.
- 15.5 There are proposals which may impact more on some communities in the district. This includes some reductions in culture grants, in neighbourhood teams and in the Stronger Communities Team. There is a proposal to reduce funding for the voluntary sector organisation who provide support to many charities in the district, and this may impact smaller groups who work with them.
- 15.6 There is a proposal to review swimming pools, sports centres and libraries in the district. This may inevitably impact a number of communities that share a protected characteristic. We will develop Equality Impact Assessments further as this review progresses and firm proposals are developed.
- 15.7 There are proposals to reduce the time that the household waste sites are open and to reduce the number that are in the district. There will be sites available to all residents, but these may be further to travel, and this may have an impact on older residents and those who are on lower income.
- 15.8 There are proposed reductions in staff numbers at the council and in some of the services that the council offers to staff such as long service and counselling. Depending on which services are reduced there may be a

disproportionate reduction for staff from some groups in terms of staffing reductions. The equality impact of changes will be reviewed throughout the process.

- 15.9 Detail on these impacts and mitigations for each proposal are set out in the Equality Impact Assessments. Initial equality impact assessments have been developed on all proposals. Those showing , potential negative impacts against the protected characteristics, and the locally agreed protected characteristics of low income and care leavers, will be published on the Council's website here [Equality Impact Assessments | Bradford Council. A link will also be available to the budget consultation survey questionnaire.](#)

16 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Addressing and prioritising investment and action on the Climate Emergency is central to creating a more prosperous, healthy and resilient district. This reflects one strand of the Council and District's response to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Ensuring the long-term well-being of the district is a central objective of the Council.

Significant transformation will be required across the organisation, in our partnership working and across the district's communities to act rapidly and wisely over the next five to 20 years. We will need to learn to live and work differently, to create a district fit for our children and grandchildren. The Council is committed to partnership working that supports and protects the most vulnerable in our society as we build an inclusive and prosperous district. The budget and the resources it allocates to our core priorities and services and the specific allocation for environmental action is part of the Council's commitment to community involvement and supporting a more just and resilient district.

17 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Where there are any community safety implications arising from individual budget proposals these will be covered in the consultation exercise. Any implications arising from the consultation will be presented to subsequent meetings of the Executive.

18 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

There are no direct human rights implications arising from this report.

19 TRADE UNION

- 19.1 The Leader will brief the recognised Trade Unions on 3 January 2024 on the budget proposals.
- 19.2 A HR1 form to Government and a S188 letter to the recognised Trade Unions detailing which posts are at risk of redundancy because of the budget proposals

will also be issued on 3 January. This will be in addition to the S188 issued on 5 December as a result of departmental restructures.

- 19.3 All staff directly impacted by the proposals will be briefed by service managers on 3 January and an all staff briefing will take place on the same day.
- 19.4 The Executive will meet on 11 January 2024 where the decision will be made as to which proposals will go forward to formal consultation. This will be followed by an extraordinary OJC1 meeting with the recognised Trade Unions. Consultation on the proposals will then continue at OJC2 (department level) and/or OJC3 (service level) meetings until 17 February. The purpose of the consultation is to examine ways of avoiding dismissals, look at how to reduce the numbers affected and mitigate the consequences of redundancy/dismissals. The council is committed to working with the Trade Unions to mitigate the impact of the proposals on staff.
- 19.5 The proposals will then be considered by the Council Executive Committee on 20 February, taking into account all Trade Union and staff feedback, including any alternative proposals. The final budget proposals will be approved at a Full Council meeting on 22 February.
- 19.6 All employees will be briefed on the budget proposals through line management and key communications/Bradnet that will be cascaded accordingly.

20 WARD IMPLICATIONS

In general terms the impact will typically be felt across all wards. Some proposals could potentially have a more direct local impact on individual organisations and/or communities. It is expected that the consultation process will allow an analysis of local impacts to inform final decisions.

21. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

22. Recommendations for the Executive

- 22.1 It is recommended that Executive, having considered the Council's public sector equality duty as set out above:
 - Approve for consultation as required with the public, interested parties, staff and Trade Unions the proposed Council Tax and Social Care precept for 2024-25 set out in section 5.1.
 - Note the recurring pressures as set out in Appendix B
 - Note the savings previously consulted on as set out in Appendix C
 - Approve for consultation as required with the public, interested parties, staff and Trade Unions the new savings proposals as set out in Appendix D
 - Note the Financing and central budget adjustments Appendix E.

- Note the proposed new capital schemes and removals from the Capital investment plan as set out in section 10.
- Approve a HRA rent increase in accordance with the Government's Rent Standard of CPI (6.7% as at September 2023) + 1%, in total 7.7%, for Council housing stock from 1 April 2024
- Approve an increase to HRA service charges for Tenants in Extra Care of CPI (6.7% as at September 2023) that is 6.7% from 1 April 2024
- Approve the consultation mechanisms and processes set out in section 12.
- Approve to join the LCR Business Rates pool as outlined in section 5.10, noting that the continuation of the Pool will be dependent on none of the member authorities choosing to withdraw within the statutory period after designation.

Recommendations to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 22.2 Note the report and the recommendations to the Executive.
- 22.3 To feed back any comments on the budget proposals into the consultation process.

23. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Proposed Council Revenue Budget 2024 – 25

Appendix B: Recurring pressures

Appendix C: Existing approved savings

Appendix D: Schedule of proposed savings for consultation

Appendix E: Schedule of financing and central budget adjustments

24. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- Budget Update – Exceptional Financial Support Request 21st December 2023
- Qtr. 2 Finance Position Statement 2023-24– Executive - 5th November 2023
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-25 to 2026-27 – Executive – 5th November 2023
- The Council's Revenue Estimates for 2023-24 – updated – Budget Council 23th Feb 2023

Appendix A- REVENUE BUDGET 2024-25

1.1 The table below shows the 2024-25 budget requirement based on the budget proposals outlined within this report and an analysis of changes since the Medium-Term Financial Strategy was reported to the Executive in November 2023. Further detail explaining the changes are provided in Table 1

Table 1

	2024-25 Per MTFS	Changes Since	2024-25 per Budget Proposals
Cumulative gap			
2023-24 Net Expenditure Requirement	453,159		453,159
Recurring Pressures	4,000	32,300	36,300
Time limited Transformation investment		10,000	10,000
Reversal of time limited investment CoC25 & Regen Op	(3,250)		(3,250)
Inflation and Pay	20,099	4,794	24,893
Demographic Growth	2,054		2,054
Funding Changes	(24,060)	10,145	(13,915)
Base Net Expenditure Requirement	452,002	57,239	509,241
Capital financing and central budget adjustments	4,403	(120)	4,283
Full year impact of savings approved in 2023-24	(1,159)	120	(1,039)
Proposed Savings for 2024-25		(15,810)	(15,810)
Time limited Savings - Flexible use of Capital receipts		(10,000)	(10,000)
2024-25 Net Expenditure Requirement	455,246	31,430	486,676
RESOURCES			
Localised Business Rates	(59,653)	(4,817)	(64,470)
Top Up Business Rates Grant	(76,365)	(2,214)	(78,579)
Revenue Support Grant	(42,723)	(252)	(42,975)
Approved use of reserve (CoC25)	(1,000)	1,000	0
Council Tax Income	(246,208)	(188)	(246,583)
Council Tax Surplus from 2022-23 and 2023-24		(3,394)	(3,394)
Total resources	(425,950)	(10,052)	(436,001)
Council MTFS Gap excl Children's Trust	29,297	21,378	50,675
Bradford Children's Trust Business Plan MTFS Gap	30,000		30,000
Bradford Children's Trust inflation	12,100		12,100
Total Children's Trust MTFS Gap	42,100		42,100
Council MTFS Gap including Trust Gap to be filled by EFS or other	71,397	21,378	92,775 (92,775) 0

*EFS = Exceptional Financial Support

Reconciliation of major changes from the MTFS

1.2 The table below provides a reconciliation of the major changes from the £71.4m Financial gap outlined in the MTFS in November 2023.

£71.4m	Financial Gap per the MTFS in November 2023.
+£32.3	Recurring Pressures – Treasury Management costs, Ongoing costs of Pay and Grading review, Adult Social care Pressures, Children’s Social Care Transport and Legal Costs, Street Lighting Prudential Borrowing costs and other pressured highlighted in section
+£4.8m	Inflation and Pay - The estimated impact of National Living Wage increases on contract prices
+£10.1m	Funding Changes. – reduction due to changes in the way that funding will be received in the Provisional Local Government Settlement. There will be reductions to Services Grant (£4.7m), and lower S31 grants (c£5m), and other grants that have been rolled into Core Spending Power. Note that these reductions will be offset by c£7.5m of higher Top up Grant, RSG and Localised Business Rates shown in the Resources section.
-£15.8m	New Proposed Savings as outlined in Appendix D
-£6.3m	Resources – Higher locally raised Business Rates resulting from increase in multiplier by CPI for larger organisations(c£4.8m), this will however be revised again when the Council submits the NNDR1 form to Government in early January. Higher Top Up Grant linked to CPI (£2.2m), Higher Revenue Support Grant (£0.3m), £1m assumed reduction in reserve use,
-£0.2m	Resources – the Council Tax base is higher than previously estimated as outlined in the Council Tax base setting report in early January 2024.
-£3.4m	Resources – Prior year Council Tax has transpired to be higher than previously budgeted, meaning that the Council had a higher prior year surplus which would impact in 2024-25
-£92.8m	Gap required to be filled by Exceptional Financial Support or other
£0	2024-25 Financial Gap after above.

Appendix B – Existing pressures (for reference only)

Appendix Costs and Savings are shown for both 2024-25 and 2025-26 in comparison to the 2023-24 Budget

Existing Pressures not for consultation		2024-25
		£'000
	Adults Pressures	4,000
	Grading review	10,000
	Additional Treasury Management Costs (subject to EFS)	8,400
	Street Lighting Prudential Borrowing	1,000
	Museums & Libraries undelivered savings	900
	Vacancy and Abatement undelivered savings	5,000
	Elections	200
	Markets	600
	Home to school transport (unmitigated amount)	1,100
	Children's Social Care Transport	1,000
	Children's Social Care Legal costs	1,500
	Reduced Rent Roll following Investment Estate Asset Disposals	2,000
	Winter Maintenance pressures	600
	Total	36,300

Appendix C - Schedule of agreed savings previously consulted on (for reference only)

Recurring Savings for 2022-23 previously consulted on (For reference only)		2024-25	2025-26
		£'000	£'000
	Estates - Closure of Argus and Margaret Macmillan Tower	-561	-561
	Car Parking - Implement consistent parking regime	-90	-90
	Waste Review - Development of Mechanical Recycling Facility (pending government consultation), review of food waste, recycling processing, consistent collections, fuel, re-routing of rounds and some reduced weekend opening hours at all HWRCs	-388	-388
	Total	-1,039	-1,039

Appendix D - Schedule of proposed savings open for Consultation until 17 February 2024

Ref	Service Area	Proposal Detail	2024-25 (£000k)	2025-26 (£000k)	2026-27 (£000k)
ADULT SOCIAL CARE (not including mitigations)					
ASC1	OP	ASC Prevention Strategy - Older People's Services	-2,500	-5,000	-7,500
ASC2	ADS	ASC Prevention Strategy - Adults with Disabilities	-2,500	-5,000	-7,500
ASC3	ASC	Transforming Our Service Offer	0	0	-5,000
TOTAL			-5,000	-10,000	-20,000

Ref	Service Area	Proposal Detail	2024-25 (£000k)	2025-26 (£000k)	2026-27 (£000k)
CHILDREN'S (not including mitigations)					
CH1	Children's	Outdoor Centres – Closure or Sale	-200	-400	-400
TOTAL			-200	-400	-400

Ref	Service Area	Proposal Detail	2024-25 (£000k)	2025-26 (£000k)	2026-27 (£000k)
CORPORATE RESOURCES					
CR1	Estates & Property	Further Estate Rationalisation to deliver Estate Running Cost Savings	-385	-1,387	-1,387
CR2	Estates & Property	Renewable energy - Solar PV building installations on retained estate (NB not Solar Farms)	0	0	-300
CR3	Estates & Property	Traded Services. Catering/Cleaning & Other Catering	-518	-1,118	-1,118
CR4	Estates & Property	Continue to charge rent during Community Asset Transfer application process	-10	-10	-10
CR5	Estates & Property	Allotments – removal of subsidy	-27	-27	-27
CR6	FITP	Expand the Purchasing Card Rebate Scheme with Lloyds	-180	-180	-180
CR7	HR	Sustaining workforce and learning development by bringing in house the staff survey and optimising internal L&D provision.	-100	-100	-100
CR8	HR	Increase income in HR Traded Services through delivery of service to Schools - based on volume increases rather than rate increases.	-20	-20	-20
CR9	HR	Remodel annual Long Service Awards (seek sponsorship)	-18	-18	-18

CR10	HR	Review Staff Network Budget and RESPECT	-49	-49	-49
CR11	HR	Cease the paid-for Council Counselling Service when the contract ends (Nov 2025), and optimise use of other free counselling service provisions in operation.	0	-125	-125
CR12	Legal	Increased charges for external (non-Bradford) residents for non-invasive scans at the mortuary: Increase charges from £450 to £550 from 24-25	-8	-8	-8
CR13	Revs, Bens & Customer	Funding for Assisted Purchase Scheme & Fuel top ups to be entirely externally funded (both the delivery of support and the staffing resource required to administer it) – otherwise cease service or offer to partners to deliver. No current external funding has been identified for 2024-25. The £140k represents staff resourcing costs.	-140	-140	-140
CR14	Revs, Bens & Customer	Increase court costs for Business Rates and Council Tax from £110 and £85 respectively to £125 and £100.). This increase will be reported as normal in the Qtr 4 budget report and is set out here for information only.	-400	-400	-400
CR15	Revs, Bens & Customer	Empty Homes Premium - The £840k has now been factored into estimates for the Council Tax Base for 2024-25 and is here for information only. Apply local discretion to allow for a 100% premium for long term empty and unoccupied properties after the property has been empty for 1 year rather than the current 2 years.			
TOTAL			-1,856	-3,583	-3,883

Ref	Service Area	Proposal Detail	2024-25 (£000k)	2025-26 (£000k)	2026-27 (£000k)
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE					
OCX1	OCX	OCX Efficiencies (staff & print)	-205	-255	-255
OCX2	OCX	Better Use of Grants - One off only in 24-25	-575	0	0
OCX3	OCX	Sponsorship	-30	-30	-30
OCX4	OCX	HDRC Substitute base positions	-150	-150	-150
OCX5	OCX	Public Health – Tobacco reduction fund	-150	0	0
TOTAL			-1,110	-435	-435

Ref	Service Area	Proposal Detail	2024-25 (£000k)	2025-26 (£000k)	2026-27 (£000k)
DEPARTMENT OF PLACE					
P1	E&D	Mandatory HMO Licensing covering staff costs	-160	-160	-160
P2	E&D	Economic Development Service – Service review	-200	-200	-200
P3	NCS	Stronger Communities team – Service review	-220	-445	-445
P4	NCS	Car Parking – revised staff parking scheme (completed as of Jan 24)	-140	-140	-140
P5	NCS	Car Parks Standardisation of Charges: Towns and villages High demand car parks Extend charging from 8-10pm Additional car parks	-57	-285	-285
P6	NCS	Car Parking Permits - Standardisation of Charges: Charges for resident and visitor parking permits Business and workers permits / Health visitor permit costs	-34	-352	-352
P7	NCS	Car Parking Charges – Review of on-street charges		-657	-657
P8	NCS	VCS Infrastructure Support Contract - full withdrawal	-322	-460	-460
P9	NCS	Youth Services Teams – Service review	-50	-100	-100
P10	NCS	Neighbourhood Teams – Service review (relationship to locality working transformation programme)	-109	-218	-218
P11	PTH	Capitalisation of staff support for Transport Fund Schemes in PTH	-236	-236	-236
P12	PTH	Highways Services - Discretionary Fees Increase	-42	-42	-42
P13	S&C	Sports & Leisure Fees and Charges increase	-200	-200	-200
P14	S&C	Strategic Review of Libraries	0	-175	-175
P15	S&C	Bradford City Centre Visitor Information Centre Closure and move tourist information to City Library *subject to due diligence on energy, FM, disposal, security costs etc.	-41	-50	-50
P16	S&C	Strategic Review of Sport & Leisure Facilities	-60	-1,250	-1,250
P17	S&C	Car parking - Ilkley Lido car park - introduction of charges	-25	-25	-25
P18	S&C	Review of Cultural Grant Funding	-155	0	0
P19	S&C	Museums - 'pay what you think' admission charge (implemented Dec 23)	-63	-63	-63
P20	S&C	Museums - review of schools learning charges	-12	-12	-12
P21	S&C	Booking fee uplift - theatres (implemented from 1st Dec 2023)	-200	-200	-200

P22	Waste Services	3 x Household Waste Recycling Centre - full closures of Sugden End, Ford Hill and Golden Butts HWRCs	-900	-900	-900
P23	Waste Services	Household Waste Recycling Centre - Monday closures (Trial) (commenced pilot Dec 2023)	-225	-225	-225
P24	Waste Services	Permit Refresh – HWRC sites	-500	-500	-500
P25	Waste Services	Fly Tipping Fees and charges increase (change in national policy July 2023)	-25	-25	-25
P26	Waste Services	Recycling Disposal - Dry Mixed Recycling New Contract	-200	-200	-200
P27	Waste Services	Bulk collection - fees and charges increase.	-200	-200	-200
P28	Waste Services	Garden waste- fees and charges uplift and amended discounts	-486	-486	-486
P29	Waste Services	Charity bulk collection - change of operation and funding	-20	-20	-20
P30	Waste Services	Waste collections - reduction of rounds	-300	-300	-300
TOTAL			-5,182	-8,126	-8,126

Ref	Service Area	Proposal Detail	2024-25 (£000k)	2025-26 (£000k)	2026-27 (£000k)
CROSS-CUTTING & CENTRAL BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS					
X1	OCX	Maximising Grant Funding	-200	-200	-200
X2	OCX	Departmental advertising	-150	-150	-150
X3	HR	Stop Placing Recruitment Adverts - costs based on Media.com spend only	-75	-75	-75
X4	HR	Review of workforce T&Cs and benefits. Streamline and simplify workforce allowances and benefits.	-63	-814	-814
X5	Revs, Bens & Payroll	Contact Management	0	-1600	-1600
X6	MTFS	Business Rates Related Distributions	-500	-500	-500
X7	MTFS	LCR Revolving Investment Fund Dividend	-50	-50	-50
X8	MTFS	Reduced added years pension contributions	-800	-900	-1000
X9	MTFS	Capital Scheme Review (outcome from 13th July Review)	-624	-624	-624
TOTAL			-2,462	-4,913	-5,013

Appendix E – Financing and central budget adjustments (for reference only)

Financing and Central budget adjustments (For reference only)		2024-25	2025-26
		£'000	£'000
	Additional MRP and Interest Costs (excludes capitalisation directive cost)	4,000	4,000
	Maximise funding from WYCA – add back of underachieved saving from 2023-24	380	380
	Pension Pre Payment - add back of underachieved saving from 2023-24	500	500
	Reduce Pension contribution rate per WYPF	-597	-1,194
	Total	4,403	3,806



Report of the Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the meeting to be held on Thursday 11 January 2024

AB

Subject:

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme 2023/24.

Summary statement:

This report includes the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2023/24.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:

Community Cohesion and Equalities related issues are part of the work remit for this Committee.

Cllr Nazam Azam
Chair – Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

Portfolio:

**Corporate
Community Safety**

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Corporate

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report includes the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2023/24, which are attached as appendix 1 to this report.
- 1.2 Also attached as appendix 2 to this report, is a list of unscheduled topics for 2023-24.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council constitution requires all Overview and Scrutiny Committees to produce a work programme.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the responsibility for “the strategies, plans, policies, functions and services directly relevant to the corporate priority about customer services and e-government, that improve the Councils ability to deliver, govern and change, community cohesion and all other corporate matters not falling within the responsibility of any other Overview and Scrutiny Committee.” (Council Constitution, Part 2, 6.2.1).
- 3.2 The remit of this Committee also includes:
 - the co-ordination of the discharge of the Overview and Scrutiny role within the Council and in relation to external bodies;
 - supporting the Executive through its contribution towards the improvement of the Council’s performance;
 - co-ordinating the development of the Overview and Scrutiny role within the Council.
- 3.3 Best practice published by the Centre for Public Scrutiny suggests that “work programming should be a continuous process”. It is important to review work programmes, so that important or urgent issues that arise during the year are able to be scrutinised. Furthermore, at a time of limited resources, it should also be possible to remove areas of work which have become less relevant or timely. For this reason, it is proposed that the Committee’s work programme be regularly reviewed by members of the committee throughout the municipal year.
- 3.4 The work programme as agreed by the Committee will form the basis for the Committee’s work during the year, but will be amended as issues arise during the year.
- 3.5 As well as this, Corporate Overview & Scrutiny members are currently undertaking a Call for Action inquiry in relation to, Anti-Social Behaviour across the District.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 None.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 None.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.2 None.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.2 TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

A key priority of work for this Committee related to the Overview and Scrutiny of the strategies, plans, policies, functions and services directly relevant to the priority of Safer and Stronger Communities.

As well as this, the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is also the authority's Crime and Disorder Committee under the provisions of Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None.

7.5 TRADE UNION

None.

7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS

Work of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee has ward implications, but this depends on that nature of the topic.

7.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

None.

7.8 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None.

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

9. OPTIONS

9.1 The Committee may choose to add to or amend the topics included in the 2023-24 work programme for the committee.

9.2 Members may wish to choose any detailed scrutiny reviews that it may wish to conduct.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That Committee may consider to add to or amend the topics included in the 2023-24 work programme for the committee.

10.2 That members consider any detailed scrutiny reviews that they may wish to conduct.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix One – 2023-24 Work Programme for the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Appendix Two – Unscheduled Topics.

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Council Constitution.
2022-23 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme.

Democratic Services - Overview and Scrutiny

Corporate O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Mustansir Butt tel - 43 2574

Work Programme

Agenda Items	Description	Report Author	Comments
<p>Tuesday, 27th June 2023 at City Hall, Bradford. Chair's briefing 07/06/23. Report deadline 13/06/23.</p> <p>1) ISG.</p> <p>recommendation from</p> <p>postponed meeting on Thursday 9</p>	<p>To also specifically focuses on the apprenticeship offer</p> <p>disabled staff, supporting them to develop</p> <p>Which also specifically focuses on the apprenticeship offer from ISG, for its disabled staff, supportin</p>	<p>Matthew Seed.</p> <p>Danielle King.</p> <p>Mustansir Butt.</p>	<p>Corporate Overview & Scrutiny from ISG, for its Committee</p> <p>Thursday 10 February 2022. Deferred their skills and experience. from</p> <p>March 2023, due to adverse weather conditions.</p> <p>Deferred from the meeting on Thursday 9 February 2023.</p> <p>Includes recommendations that the Committee made in the last municipal year.</p>
<p>2) Prevent.</p> <p>3) Draft 2023-24 Work Programme.</p>	<p>The proposed areas of work to be considered in this municipal year.</p>	<p>Ruth Davison/Jenny Cryer.</p> <p>Chris Kinsella/Andrew Cross.</p> <p>Chris Kinsella/Andrew Cross.</p> <p>John Sharp/Andrew Whittles/Matthew Seed.</p>	<p>Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 9 February 2023.</p> <p>Constiutional requirement.</p>
<p>Tuesday, 25th July 2023 at City Hall, Bradford. Chair's briefing 06/07/23. Report deadline 13/07/23.</p> <p>1) 2022-23 Annual Performance Outturn.</p> <p>2) Finance Position Statament for 2022-23.</p> <p>3) First Quarter Financial Position Statement.</p> <p>4) £2m Procurement Contract - Council procurement of energy via a district heat network</p> <p>5) Work Planning.</p>	<p>To include the Council's Locality Plan and full Council Performance.</p> <p>There is a need to regularlry review the work programme, in order to priotitise and manage the work.</p>	<p>Mustansir Butt.</p>	<p>Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 9 February 2023.</p>

Corporate O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Mustansir Butt tel - 43 2574

Work Programme

Agenda Items	Description	Report Author	Comments
Thursday, 7th September 2023 at City Hall, Bradford.			
Chair's briefing 16/08/23. Report deadline 24/08/23.			
1) Progress against the Hate Crime Scrutiny Review recommendations.	That a more detailed response to the recommendations contained in Document "W", particularly in terms of some of the specific measures taken to reduce hate crime, be provided to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee in three months' time.	Neena Punnu/Charles Dacres.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 8 December 2022. Deferred from the meeting on Thursday 9 March 2023.
2) Draft Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23.		Mustansir Butt.	Constitutional requirement.
3) Work Planning.	There is a need to regularly review the work programme, in order to prioritise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	
Monday, 18th September 2023 at .			
1) Call for Action Enquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour.	Informal information gathering session with Young People at the Grange Interlink Centre, Bradford.	Mustansir Butt.	
Thursday, 28th September 2023 at .			
1) Call for Action Enquiry into Anti-Social Behaviour.	Informal information gathering session with residents at The Clarke Foley Centre, Ilkley, LS29 9Z.	Mustansir Butt.	
Thursday, 5th October 2023 at City Hall, Bradford.			
Chair's briefing 14/09/23. Report deadline 21/09/23.			
1) Progress against the Fireworks Scrutiny Review recommendations.	Report to also include the approaches being used to address the anti-social use of fireworks and the effectiveness of those approaches.	Michael Churley.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 12 January 2023.
2) Anti-Poverty Strategy.		Ruth Davison/Kevin Brain/Iain Macbeath.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 25 October 2022.

Corporate O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Mustansir Butt tel - 43 2574

Work Programme

Agenda Items	Description	Report Author	Comments
Thursday, 5th October 2023 at City Hall, Bradford.			
Chair's briefing 14/09/23. Report deadline 21/09/23.			
3) Bradford Council Workforce Development Strategy.	Progress report to also focus on: Professional career development spend on Council Departments, with a breakdown of grades.	Anne Lloyd/Emma Lawer/Catherine Warrener.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 25 October 2022.
4) Refresh of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan 2022-25/Equalities.	Progress against the plan. Report to be presented in 12 months which specifically focuses on: Key Outcomes: Performance Indicators: Activities of each of the staff Networks: Also quarterly performance reports to be circulated.	Anne Lloyd/Khalida Ahsrafi.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 13 October 2022. At the request of officers, deferred to the new Municipal Year.
5) Work Planning.	There is a need to regularly review the work programme, in order to prioritise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	
Thursday, 2nd November 2023 at Unknown.			
1) Call for Action Inquiry - Anti Social Behaviour.	Informal information gathering session with residents.	Mustansir Butt.	Being held at St Johns.
Thursday, 9th November 2023 at City Hall, Bradford.			
Chair's briefing 19/10/23. Report deadline 26/10/23.			
1) Road Safety.	To include outputs and outcomes on driver enforcement and driver behaviour as well as details relating to zero tolerance. Reprerntatives from the Police to also be requested to attend.	Simon D'Vali.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 10 November 2022.
2) Second Quarter Financial Position Statement.		Chris Kinsella/Andrew Cross.	Member Request.
3) Work Planning.	There is a need to regularly review the work programme, in order to prioritise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	

Corporate O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Mustansir Butt tel - 43 2574

Work Programme

Agenda Items	Description	Report Author	Comments
Thursday, 14th December 2023 at City Hall, Bradford.			
Chair's briefing 23/11/23. Report deadline 30/11/23.			
1) Safer Communities Plan Performance.		Michael Churley.	Corpoarte Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 8 December 2022.
2) Volunteering.	Focusing on an update on the impact of	Mahmood Mohammed.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny the VCSE Service Improvement
2022.Moved from	Committee Recommendation from Programme and the		Volunteer Co- Thursday 10 March
	ordinator to support volunteering across the		cancelled meeting on Thursday 6 April District. 2023.
3) Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Fund.	Request that a report to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny on the District's progress in tackling ASB and options for any new approaches and learning from other areas to build on our measures to tackle ASB and its casues.	Noreen Akhtar/Michael Churley.	Council resolution from Tuesday 11 July 2023.
4) Work Planning.	There is a need to regularlry review the work programme, in order to priotitise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	
Thursday, 11th January 2024 at City Hall, Bradford.			
Chair's briefing 19/12/23. Report deadline 21/12/23.			
1) West Yorkshire Joint Services		Karen Pearce/Andy Robson.	
2) Armed Forces Covenant.	To report on progress and to also focuse on:	Helen Johnston/Jahanara	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Begum-Ali. Committee
recommendation from	the expected legislative changes;	Impacts of	Thursday 11 November 2021.Moved - Development in relation to the Armed
	from cancelled meeting on Thursday 6 Forces Hub;		April 2023.
	- The work being provided through the Health Service.		
3) Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Service.		Carol Stos.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from

Corporate O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Mustansir Butt tel - 43 2574

Work Programme

Agenda Items	Description	Report Author	Comments
Thursday, 11th January 2024 at City Hall, Bradford. Chair's briefing 19/12/23. Report deadline 21/12/23.			
4) Bradford Council Budget.		Chris Kinsella/Andrew Cross.	Request fro the Chief Executive and Leader.
5) Work Planning.	There is a need to regularlry review the work programme, in order to priotitise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	
Tuesday, 27th February 2024 at City Hall, Bradford. Chair's briefing 08/02/24. Report deadline 15/02/24.			
1) Third Quarter Financial Position Statement.		Chris Kinsella/Andrew Cross.	Member request.
2) Implementation of Universal Credit across the District.	Report to not only include details of the implementayion of Universal Credit across the District, but also the additional support offered by the Council to residents, in relation to the cost of living crisis.	Caroline Lee.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 9 February 2023.
3) Council Tax and Business Rates.		Caroline Lee.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 9 February 2023.
4) Bradford Everyone Stratergy, (Previously known as Stronger Communities Strategy).		Mahmood Mohammed.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 8 December 2022.
5) Work Planning.	There is a need to regularlry review the work programme, in order to priotitise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	

Corporate O&S Committee

Scrutiny Lead: Mustansir Butt tel - 43 2574

Work Programme

Agenda Items

Thursday, 21st March 2024 at City Hall, Bradford.

Chair's briefing 29/02/24. Report deadline 07/03/24.

Agenda Items	Description	Report Author	Comments
1) Gambling.	To include the progress against the Gambling Cross Departmental action plan, specifically focusing on clear outcomes; with representatives from Gamcare to also be invited to attend the meeting.	Sarah Exall.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 12 January 2023.
2) £2m Procurement Contract - Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV).		Sarah Possingham.	Constitutional requirement.
3) Call for Action Enquiry - Anti Social Behaviour.	Key findings and recommendations.	Mustansir Butt.	
4) Work Planning.	There is a need to regularly review the work programme, in order to prioritise and manage the work.	Mustansir Butt.	

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Democratic Services - Overview and Scrutiny

Scrutiny Committees Forward Plan

Unscheduled Items

Corporate O&S Committee

Agenda item	Item description	Author	Comments
1 Councillor Call for Action - Anti Social Behaviour.		Mustansir Butt.	The Committee agreed to undertake an enquiry into abti-social behaviour, across the whole District.
2 The Social Value and Procurement Policy.	That the new Social Value and Inclusive Growth Rationale and Procurement Policy be considered by members.	Kashi Akhtar.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 10 November 2022.
3 District Plan.	Performance against the District Plan together with outcomes delivered, be presented to the Committee in 12 months. The consultation findings to also be presented to this Committee, when they are available.	Ruth Davison/Jenny Cryer.	Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommendation from Thursday 13 January 2022. Deferred from Thursday 9 February 2023. To be considered in June 2024.

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