

Report of the Interim Director of Finance to the meeting of the Executive to be held on 5th November 2024

V

Subject: 2025/26 Revenue Budget Savings Proposals

Summary statement:

The report provides Members with details of the Council's initial proposed revenue savings for 2025/26.

The savings total £33.840m across 47 proposals outline in this report and are considered to be deliverable in 2025/26. Of these savings:

- 2 proposals relating to school transport totalling £0.500m for which specific consultation will be undertaken.
- 5 proposals totalling £16.200m relate to BCFT and are for noting.
- 18 proposals totalling £5.988m to be consulted upon
- 22 proposals totalling £11.152m that Executive previously considered in March 2024 and recommended to Full Council for approval which are for noting.

An engagement on budget proposals will open on 5 November 2024 allowing residents and organisations to complete a survey and comment on proposals. This can be completed online or via a freepost address. The intention of this engagement is to provide the people of the district and other interested parties with opportunities to provide their views on a range of budget proposals.

Specific consultations on the two proposals relating to school transport will open on 11 and 18 November 2024 as set out in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3

Following these consultations, a report will be brought to a meeting of Executive Committee in February 2025 to provide consultation feedback and for Executive to make a decision.

All proposals which have potential equality considerations are supported by an Equality Impact Assessment which can be accessed through this link [Budget EIAs - 2025-26 | Bradford Council](#).

Further savings proposals to bridge the gap of £6.160m are being developed and will be brought to the Executive in December 2024.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Corporate

Equality & Diversity:

The report sets out clearly the need for equality to be considered as part of the Budget Strategy. As in previous years Equality Impact Assessments have been produced for the budget proposals which have potential equality considerations.

The revenue budget supports the delivery of Council priorities including significant action to address inequalities in health, income, opportunity and environmental quality.

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council faces severe financial challenges, among the most significant in local government nationally. The 2023/24 budget was overspent by £80m, requiring an in-principle capitalisation direction from Government. Along with the use of reserves in 2023/24, this led to a structural budget gap of £120m. For 2024/25, there is an estimated budget deficit of £140m which the Council has agreement in principle for a further capitalisation direction to address this. A capitalisation directive permits the Council to borrow money to fund its day to day running costs as it seeks to reduce its overall expenditure to a sustainable financial level.
- 1.2 It is currently forecast that it will take at least another 5 years (to 2029/30) for the Council to become financially sustainable which at this stage is likely to require a total capitalisation direction of £573m. This will require the Council to deliver circa £40m of additional savings each year over that period, along with many other financial actions.
- 1.3 There are four fundamental reasons why this has arisen:
- exceptional growth in the cost of Children’s Social Care from around £100m per year in 2019/20 to around £250m in 2023/24.
 - the Council is generally poorly funded:
 - Funding reductions have disproportionately affected Bradford, as identified by SIGOMA
 - Bradford’s band D Council Tax is £145 lower than the average for Metropolitan Districts and 80% of its households are below band D
 - Government reforms to local council funding, taking greater account of needs and local resources, have been repeatedly delayed. Independent analysis indicates that implementation of the reforms would have benefited Bradford by around £32m per year by now.
 - the Council has used large amounts of one-off reserves in recent years to fund recurrent revenue costs without an appropriate plan to deal with this in future. In 2023/24, around £48m of reserves were used and the Council only has £39.6m of general reserves as at the end of March.
 - capacity, capability and organisational cultural challenges within the Council.
- 1.4 To address the challenge the Council is:
- bringing forward savings proposals of circa £40m for 2025/26 and subsequent years;
 - developing a continuous rolling programme of identifying efficiencies and savings which will be brought to Executive for approval throughout the year;
 - reducing the Capital Programme to reduce the cost of borrowing;
 - seeking to generate initial asset sales of £100m to generate capital receipts to pay down debt;
 - ensuring a complete grip on expenditure through Spending Control Panels;
 - investing in corporate capacity in order to ensure that financial sustainability can be supported and delivered across the Council.

- 1.5 It will be critical that the Council delivers the savings programme to time, budget and quality to retain the confidence and support of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and avoid a s114 notice being issued, which would potentially result in Commissioners being appointed to run the Council.
- 1.6 As part of this challenge the Council must consider and take forward revenue savings which will contribute to seeking to secure its long-term financial sustainability which are the subject of this report.
- 1.7 To date, £33.840m of savings proposals towards the target of £40m for 2025/26 have been identified. Further savings proposals to bridge the gap of £6.160m will be identified for the 2025/26 budget and these proposals will be brought to the next Executive meeting in December 2024.
- 1.8 Every effort is also being made to bring forward further savings now and in-year in 2025/26 and that these will be used to achieve a mix of contingency against any in-year overspends, non-achievement of planned savings, replenishing reserves or contributing to the start of savings for 2026/27.
- 1.9 It should be noted that the planned savings for 2024/25 of £49m combined with the noted £40m for 2025/26 represent a very significant level of financial contributions to the Council's financial stability and a considerable increase on previous years

2 SAVINGS PROPOSALS REQUIRING SPECIFIC CONSULTATION £0.500m)

1.10 The following section summarises the proposed savings for each portfolio.

Children and Families – Cllr Sue Duffy £0.500m

1.11 Proposed Amendments to Post 16 Transport Policy £0.300m

All councils must produce a Transport Statement setting out the arrangements for enabling eligible post-16 learners to access education. It is to support eligible post-16 learners with SEND and supports those pupils who, due to exceptional circumstances, need transport assistance.

Following a review of non-statutory transport packages for post-16 young people, a public consultation on travel assistance for post-16 learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is being sought out.

This is to ensure that the transport assistance provided is the most appropriate for young people and their families, promotes independence and offers choice. It will aim to empower more families and young people to find their own transport solution as an alternative to the council doing this for them, while at the same time delivering a financially sustainable model of transport support.

The forecast for post-16 transport 24-25 is £1,316,500 and as of September 2024 there are 216 post 16 learners receiving a travel service (applications are still being received therefore this number is expected to increase).

Currently, any young person receiving council arranged transport by Bradford contributes £370 per year towards the cost of transport. Under the proposed Post 16 policy this would remain the same where it is necessary for a young person to receive council-organised transport (taxi, minibus) due to the complexity of a learner's needs, or because it is assessed to be the most cost-effective option to arrange transport.

Under the proposed arrangements, post-16 learners with SEND would receive a yearly flat-rate Personal Transport Allowance (PTA) based on distance from home to their learning setting, to enable them to make their own travel arrangements, as follows:

- Between 3 and 10 miles - £1,000 per year
- Between 10.01 and 20 miles - £2,000 per year
- Over 20.01 miles - £3,000 per year

Personal Transport Allowances enable a young person, or their family, to make their own travel arrangements rather than Council arranged minibuses and taxis. Some families already choose to receive a Personal Travel Allowance, and this works well for them. The proposal, if implemented, aims to support independence for children, young people and their families whilst maximising the efficient use of available council resources.

As a public organisation, there is a need to ensure that money is spent in a way that is the most cost-effective. Therefore, for some young people it may mean

that council-arranged transport is the most cost-effective form of travel assistance.

For some young people with the most complex needs, council-organised transport arrangements, such as a taxi or a minibus, will be the most effective arrangements for them so in these instances, a Personal Travel Allowance may not be offered.

If the proposed changes are agreed, this would take effect from April 2025 for any new applications for Post 16 travel assistance or where re-assessment is required due to a change in circumstances, such as a change in needs, change of address, change in learning setting etc. Existing users of the service would remain on the current policy until September 2025 at which point the new policy would be applied to all users of the service.

1.12 Dedicated Bus Service £0.200m

The Council pays WYCA to run 35 dedicated school buses to 6 schools. Funding for these services is provided by the Council. This agreement has been in place for many years and exists because the policy at the time created a high demand for them and they were full of eligible pupils. The Council changed its transport policy in 2016 and there has been a steady decline in the number of eligible pupils going to some of these schools.

The existence of these services has enabled parents, in many instances, to choose a particular school that is not their local one and the Council is now subsidising transport of fare paying pupils to some schools as the ticket price does not cover the cost of the service. The continued provision of these bus services means the Council incurs large costs for non-statutory provision.

As of September 2024, there are 56 pupils eligible for travel subsidy attending the two schools this document addresses and utilising the 18 dedicated buses. Some dedicated school buses transport very few eligible pupils. The balance is made up of 1209 fare paying pupils who are not eligible for travel subsidies support. There are an additional 43 eligible pupils who travel by commercial route to these schools with the provision of a bus pass.

The proposal is to remove the dedicated bus services to St Bede's and St Joseph's and Bingley Grammar School from September 2025 and implement current Home to School travel policy. Pupils eligible for travel assistance will be provided with travel passes for trains/buses or alternative transport (e.g. minibus, taxi) arranged where necessary.

3 SAVINGS PROPOSALS FOR BRADFORD CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TRUST (BCFT) £16.200m

- 1.13 The Children's Trust has developed savings proposals totalling £16.200m and a further £0.600m are in development.
- 1.14 The Executive is asked to note the proposals and the impact on the contract price for 2025/26 which will be incorporated into the overall budget for 2025/26.

Children and Families – Cllr Sue Duffy £16.200m

1.15 Agency Staffing Reductions £3.200m

The medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) Projection based on assumption of reduction in social work-related agency staff from 353 (March 24) to 231 (Mar 25) to 114 (Mar 26).

Currently exceeding the 24/25 projection; end of Mar 24 the Council had 301 social care agency roles based on current forecast at the end of August it is now estimated to reduce to 176 by March 25, and to 65 by March 26.

Additional savings will be delivered by moving staff onto new agency rates over time linked to a regional memorandum of agreement and in negotiation with agency providers. This process has already started.

1.16 Safe Reduction of Children Needing to be in Care £7.600m

This proposal is linked to the further development of early and family help to continue to reduce the need for children to come into care and the reunification of children with their families where appropriate.

Projection based on average reduction of 9 per month leading to a reduction in use of high-cost placements and a focus family first and local placements through the sufficiency strategy.

The current numbers at the end of August are 1,398 with an anticipated reduction to 1,335 by March 25

Continued development of early and family help to continue to reduce the need for children to come into care

Increased focus on permanence to reduce length of time in care and promote family reunification where appropriate.

1.17 Supporting Care Leavers' Transition £1.300m

Care leavers needs assessment and review to ensure appropriate accommodation and support, with an increased use of Housing Benefit for accommodation costs; timely transition to Adult Social Care where appropriate with a focus on earlier joint planning and preparation from 16 to maximise independence opportunities in adult life.

1.18 Family Help Model £1.300m

Family Group Conferencing (FGC), Family Help Model & Preventative Services to reduce need for SW intervention

Family reunification and wrap around support in line with needs; enable children to return home from care.

1.19 Children with complex health and disabilities £2.800m

Focus on multi-agency prevention providing an enhanced service and thus reducing the need for children to come into care due to their complex health and disability needs; short breaks development; support for families

4 SAVINGS PROPOSALS TO BE CONSULTED UPON AS PART OF THE PROPOSALS ENGAGEMENT (£5.988m)

Leader of the Council & Corporate Portfolio Area - Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe - £1.100m

1.20 IT 3rd Party Contracts - £0.300m

The saving will be made through consolidating / reducing IT Contracts.

1.21 OCX Additional Efficiencies £0.150m

This saving will be delivered by centralising and rationalising communications resources and performance resources across the organisation.

1.22 IT Microsoft 365 Licence Reduction £0.150m

The saving will be achieved through a review of use of licences and transitioning a significant proportion of users to cheaper banding options for staff who do not require the full suite of features.

1.23 Third Party Spend £0.500m

The Council currently spends c£435m on third party suppliers each year to support the delivery of front-line services. This spend includes highways, leisure, social care, waste collection etc. This saving will be delivered by reviewing corporate contracts and making proposals on delivering cost reductions.

Economy, Employment and Skills - Cllr Imran Khan £0.750m (one-off)

1.24 Skills Grant (one-off) £0.750m

Additional one-off grant income for the Employment and Skills Service. This is an opportunity to realise a one-off budget reduction in 2025/26 achieved through a forecast surplus on income generated by the Employment and Skills Service in 2025/26 and reviewed annually thereafter.

Regeneration, Planning and Transport – Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw £0.840m

1.25 Mass Transit Capitalisation - £0.100m

Savings will come through capitalisation of staffing costs.

1.26 Tackling Dangerous Driving £0.580m

A roll out of additional enforcement sites over the next 4 years following changes to Part 6 Traffic Management Act, which conferred new powers to Bradford from June 2023 will be applied to ease traffic congestion and reduce accidents on highways.

The 2 initial pilot sites are:

- Junction of Godwin Street and Sunbridge Road (yellow box infringements)
- Shipley/Airedale Road and Leeds Road – no right turn

1.27 Merger of Planning Panels £0.022m

Efficiencies will come through reviewing and merging planning panels

1.28 Managing Street Lighting Energy £0.138m

Savings will come through further reduction and dimming of LED streetlights. A risk-based approach will be taken to changes for higher risk sites (for example areas which are close to sheltered housing schemes, affecting vulnerable people, alleyways which are not well lit or areas with operational emergency services such as hospitals and nursing homes).

Healthy People and Places Portfolio Area – Cllr Sarah Ferriby - £3.198m

1.29 Charging for Assessment Beds £0.150m

In addition to provision of non-chargeable intermediate care beds, the Council's in-house short-term beds are also used to a lesser extent for short term periods, which is a permitted chargeable service. Admission into a short-term bed is agreed following a proportionate Care Act Assessment of needs which takes account also of the urgency of those needs. A further assessment would be undertaken to support the person in their long-term care and support needs, such as returning home, returning home with reablement or a support package, and in some cases, the person may need to remain in a long-term placement. This change will bring in £150k additional income from charging. Charging for short-stay residential care is common practice in other Local Authorities.

1.30 **Extra Care £0.237m**

Following the commissioning review of 7 external extra care contracts (completed), redesign the funding approach to a model based on banding rather than individual support plans. This will reduce costs by £137k (7%) on current contract prices and reduce administrative burden for providers and the Council. Additionally, for the 5 in house extra care homes the Council will update the chargeable hourly rate in line with external provision and as per the charging policy which will bring in additional income of £100k. The Council will undertake further reviews of in-house extra care provision and bring forward plans to achieve efficiencies during 25/26 following the outcomes of a consultation that is being conducted.

1.31 **Street Scene and Parks £1.500m**

This proposal will remodel the Street Cleansing and Parks Service to deliver a better service, address some of the common challenges faced across the district and improve overall legislative compliance. The proposal draws upon evidence provided via a review of service and consumption data collected over the last twelve months. Among other matters it will support the recent uplift of the City Centre cleansing regime, the potential to continue providing main gateways and city centre cleansing seven days per week, continue to make street sweeping more efficient, continue to reduce number of small bins and replace with larger volume bins in city and urban centres, avoid duplication and delays, increase productivity amongst staff and plant and allow the Council to blend skill sets meaning it eradicates the need for multi-site visits. It will also continue supporting community litter picks and encourage community engagement in addressing district litter issues.

1.32 **Garden Waste Fees and Charges £0.400m**

This saving will be delivered by increasing garden waste charging in 2025/26. This will involve a review and adjustment to fees for commercial and/or non-statutory work to ensure full cost recovery. The service currently collects "Garden Waste" through an "opt-in" subscription which is charged at £53 per year and this service is provided over 11 months (pausing only Christmas through to late January). Based on a 4-week collection cycle, properties are serviced 12 times per year. Following benchmarking with several other local authorities and internal financial modelling, an option to increase the annual subscription is proposed to charge £62.01.

1.33 **Voluntary & Community Service Grants Review £0.336m**

This proposal is to reduce funding available through two Adult Social Care discretionary early help and prevention grant programmes by 21%. The grants are designed to provide start-up funding to local and smaller VCSE organisations to develop projects that demonstrably support social care outcomes and enable an increased VSCE offer to grow in the district over time. In this grant round there will be increased emphasis and support for organisations to become self-sustaining beyond the life of the grant funding, wherever possible.

1.34 Review of Learning Disability Care Home Block Contracts £0.250m

Attaining full cost recovery for people that are eligible for continuing health care that is funded by the NHS.

1.35 Develop Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Partnerships £0.150m

To implement a social prescribing model of ABCD partnerships across Adult Social Care Locality teams, building on the approach taken by other LAs. This will complement and be enhanced by other initiatives such as Bradford's further development of localities and neighbourhoods' approach and the distribution of Local Community Partnership Grants by Adult Social Care. ABCD targeted at people with social care needs will support community resilience and strengthen the capacities and asset of individuals, carers and /or families, reducing the need for formal social care provision. This seeks to secure £150k of savings through the reduction in demand.

1.36 Strategic Review of Libraries - £0.175m

Savings will be made through a reduction in opening hours of Libraries as previously reported to and agreed by Executive.

Children and Families – Cllr Sue Duffy £0.100m

1.37 Increase Income Generation Education Psychologists Service £0.100m

Income would be generated through a plan to grow additional business across these areas rather than increasing fees and charges, which would then be used to assist with funding the service.

5 SAVINGS PROPOSALS PREVIOUSLY AGREED BY FULL COUNCIL (£11.152m)

1.38 The following section summarises savings proposals for noting that Executive have previously considered and recommended to Full Council for approval.

Leader of the Council & Corporate Portfolio Area - Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe - £2.621m

1.39 Contact Management £1.600m

This proposal is the first stage of a wider review of Customer Services and Contact Management transformation across the Council. It delivers cross-council staffing savings by introducing voice automation and robotic process automation and other digital technology. It aims to improve the experience for the residents of Bradford District by reducing avoidable contact, removing fragmented and inconsistent processes and using our resources more effectively. This business case sets out the rationale for creating budget savings of £1.6m in Customer Contact across six key service areas. The savings will be delivered incrementally over the year. The target operating model for Customer Services across the

whole Council will be subject to a further business case later in the year after learning from good practise. Creating the new operating model will provide the opportunity for the staffing savings to be delivered. Work is underway to identify affected teams and to lockdown current vacancies in those areas.

1.40 Review of workforce T&Cs and benefits - £0.750m

This proposal delivers savings through streamlining and simplifying workforce allowances, terms and conditions and benefits to deliver a newly defined suite of allowances, terms and conditions of employment ensuring they are equitable and consistent for our employees. Any proposals that impact on employees will be subject to consultation or negotiation through established processes.

1.41 Reduced added years pension contributions - £0.101m

Savings result from reductions over time in the numbers of former employees/pensioners that are in receipt of added years pension payments that were agreed as part of redundancy and other exist packages many years ago.

1.42 Office of the Chief Executive Efficiencies (staffing, budget & printing efficiencies) - £0.045m

The savings represent the full year effect of a staffing restructure, efficiencies and printing reductions being implemented in 2024/25.

1.43 Cease Counselling Service - £0.125m

The council has an established counselling contract with an external partner that is due to expire in November 2025 and consideration is now being given to ceasing this contract ahead of this period for a saving whilst utilising other support services, such as government-led support (Maximus).

Neighbourhoods and Community Safety Portfolio Area – Cllr Kamran Hussain
£0.522m

1.44 VCS Infrastructure Support Contract - Phase 2 - full withdrawal - £0.138m

This saving represents the full year effect of reductions to contracts awarded to VCS partners made in 2024/25. The Council continues to make significant investments in the VCS to deliver a range of services.

1.45 Stronger Communities team - Overall Reduction - £0.225m

This saving represents the full year effect of a restructure and headcount reduction made in 2024/25.

1.46 Neighbourhood Teams Headcount Reduction - £0.109m

This saving represents the full year effect of a restructure and headcount reduction made in 2024/25

1.47 Youth Services Teams - Headcount reduction - £0.050m

This saving represents the full year effect of a restructure and headcount reduction made in 2024/25

Regeneration, Planning and Transport – Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw - £2.805m

1.48 Traded Services. Catering/Cleaning & Other Catering - £0.600m

The savings represent the full year effect of a staffing restructure, cost reductions and increased income that are being implemented in 24/25.

1.49 Estate Rationalisation Revenue Holding Savings - £1.002m

Revenue savings will be made through building closures/disposals linked to the Council's Disposal Programme. As the Council disposes of assets it makes a saving on revenue costs for holding the asset such as security, critical H&S maintenance, insurance and business rates.

1.50 Car Parking - £1.203m

Savings will be made through increasing, standardising and introducing fees in a range of car parks and on-street parking, and parking permits, across the district to raise income.

Healthy People and Places Portfolio Area – Cllr Sarah Ferriby - £5.004m

1.51 Bradford City Centre Visitor Information Centre Closure - £0.009m

This saving represents the full year effect of the closure of the Bradford City Centre Visitor Information Centre resulting in reductions in staffing and costs (e.g. print, products and running of the centre) made in 2024/25. While the current Visitor Information Centre will close the Council will provide visitor information from the City Centre library.

1.52 Adults with Disabilities Reviews (direct payments, high-cost packages in residential, nursing supported living, home support and demand management) - £2.500m

Savings will be made through care reviews which will identify if needs continue to be met by current support plans or whether a new assessment and care plan should be created.

1.53 Adult Social Preventing Strategy

The proposals below provide a breakdown of how these savings are planned to be delivered in 2025/26.

1.54 Mental Health Services Review £0.250m

There are approximately 472 people with an active support plan with Adult Social Care who have not had a review of their care and support plan in over 12

months. By reviewing these service users in line with current best practice, the outcome is expected to be that improved care plans can be delivered that improve outcomes at lower cost. These individual reviews will be undertaken in a way which makes no assumptions as to the likely outcome and complies with the Care Act 2014. The £250k saving is a 2% reduction on the £12.5m total gross expenditure budget for Mental Health services.

1.55 Older People – Bradford Enablement Support Team (BEST) New Pathways - £0.250m

Savings will be made through further implementation of improved BEST pathways, ensuring that those people who will benefit from reablement can access the service in a timely way, achieve improved independence, therefore preventing, delaying and reducing the need for commissioned care and support on a long-term basis.

1.56 Older People - Fewer High-Cost Residential and Nursing Placements - £0.500m

Savings will be made through strengths-based care planning supporting people to access universal services and community assets, utilising their existing networks and ensuring the use of equipment and technology is maximised, therefore enabling more Older People to remain at home.

1.57 Older People – Reductions to Residential & Nursing - £0.500m

Savings will be made through undertaking strength-based assessments which maximise independence and outcomes, utilise community assets/universal services and optimises the use of equipment and technology can delay and reduce the need for residential care placements.

1.58 Older People – Review of Multiple Carer Packages - £0.500m

Savings will be made through the safe reduction of the number of carers following review of packages with multiple (2 or more) carers

1.59 Older People – Review of Low-Cost Packages - £0.250m

Savings will be made through re-assessing needs of people on low-cost (10 hrs and less) packages. The review will re-assess the needs of people and consider alternative service and support options, alongside where support may no longer be required

1.60 Older People S117 Reviews - £0.245m

The proposal is to implement a structured process with an additional resource to reduce the circumstances that require s117 Aftercare being applied and combined with a detailed review plan for current Older People in receipt of S117 Aftercare. The additional resource will enable a more robust, person-centred service which offers a better opportunity to prevent S117 Aftercare processes and ensure a timely review process for people already in receipt.

Children and Families – Cllr Sue Duffy £0.200m

1.61 Teachers Pensions £0.200m

Savings result from reductions over time in the numbers of former employees/pensioners that are in receipt of added years pension payments that were agreed as part of redundancy and other exist packages many years ago. There is no impact on teachers.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

1.62 The Council's budget carries several risks with it.

1.63 There are uncertainties regarding the funding that will be available to the Council, these are being monitored, addressed and reported as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and will be discussed further in the Section 151 Officer's Report in the March Executive Budget report and in the MTFS in December

1.64 The overall budget savings target is challenging and is being mitigated with a greater focus on robust financial planning and budget proposal preparation, by seeking to develop proposals beyond the £40m to provide a mix of contingency against any in-year overspends, replenishing reserves or contributing to the start of savings for 2026/27 and by regular more enhanced corporate monitoring.

1.65 Inevitably as with all budgets there will be variations in delivery throughout the financial year. This is being mitigated as set out in paragraph 5.3 above and will be supplemented by the earlier agreement to the proposals to allow quicker implementation, by the issuing of budget information sooner and in more detail than previously and by Strategic Directors identifying compensating savings in year if issues arise with those proposed.

1.66 These are all governed through the officer Bradford Budget Emergency Response Team (BBERT) arrangements and through regular monitoring and budget reports to the Executive and Scrutiny.

7 LEGAL APPRAISAL

1.67 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".

1.68 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.

1.69 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.

1.70 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. Assessments have also taken into account consideration of the locally adopted protected characteristics of low income and care experience.

- 1.71 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).

2. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 **COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS** - The Street Lighting proposal sets out that a risk-based approach will be taken to changes for higher risk sites
- 2.2 **HUMAN RIGHTS ACT** - Any human rights implications resulting from this report are referred to in the Equality Impact Assessments
- 2.3 **TRADE UNIONS**

As this report details, the Council is facing significant budget challenges and as a result, the Council will have to make changes to how services are delivered to ensure future sustainability. Some of those proposals will have workforce change implications, and this may regrettably mean that some employees become at risk of redundancy. The Council remains committed to minimising and avoiding redundancy wherever possible and has a number of measures in place to support employees through workforce change. The position will be kept continually under review and if it appears in the future that there are redundancy implications, the Council would then commence consultation with the trade unions in good time.

At this stage there is no need for the Council to issue a Section 188. For Members information should this arise the Council will follow the appropriate process which is that 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 dismissal.

2.4 BUDGET ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION, AND EQUALITY IMPACT

The engagement on budget proposals will seek comments for the financial year 2025-2026. The intention of this engagement is to provide the people of the district and other interested parties with opportunities to provide their views on a range of budget proposals. Additional budget engagement may be necessary to reflect government funding decisions impacting the Council's budget. In this

case, a further period of engagement may be needed to allow the public and other interested parties to comment on those proposals.

This budget proposals engagement will be open from 5 November 2024 and will comprise of a survey enabling individuals and organisations to comment on the proposals of their choosing. Responses can be provided online or by writing to the Council using a freepost address. Social media (Twitter and Facebook) and the Council's app will also be used to promote engagement.

All participants will be encouraged to comment on the proposals and on any impacts, they feel might be felt by particular groups of people (in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty). The Council has carried out equality impact assessments on proposals. Those showing potential impacts against the protected characteristics, and against the locally agreed protected characteristics of low income, and care leavers will be published on the Council's website here [Budget EIAs - 2025-26 | Bradford Council](#)

Should the proposed budget be accepted at the Council's Budget meeting on the 6 March 2025, equality impact assessments will continue to be reviewed as part of their delivery.

In relation to the two proposals relating to school transport referred to at paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 above, there will be specific targeted consultation as follows. Communications will go out to stakeholders following this meeting, if Executive accept the recommendations to release these proposals for consultation. Consultation with stakeholders will then take place as follows.

In relation to paragraph 2.2:

Proposed amendments to Post 16 transport policy: all parties will be communicated with from the week commencing 11th November with consultation starting 18th November until 8th January (extra time allowed for school holidays)

In relation to paragraph 2.3:

Dedicated Bus Service: all parties will be communicated with week commencing 4th November with consultation starting 11th November until 18th December.

The outcome of the consultation will be presented to the Council's Executive on 18 February 2025. The Executive will then give consideration to the feedback and any equality impacts as they finalise their budget proposals in advance of Budget Council on 4 March 2025.

It is worth noting that 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 in relation to specific changes to services or provision that require a separate consultation process.

8.5 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - Implications for Children and Young people resulting from this report are referred to in the Equality Impact Assessments of the associated savings proposals.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Executive is requested to:

- note the financial challenges the Council faces and the need to deliver significant savings over the next 5-year period;
- approve the commencement of consultation on the savings proposals totalling £0.500m as set out in Section 2;
- require a report back to the Executive in February 2025 on the outcome of consultations;
- note the savings proposals for BCFT totalling £16.200m as set out in Section 3;
- approve the savings totalling £5.988m as set out in Section 4 to progress for implementation subject to budget engagement;
- note the savings proposals in section 5 relating to 2025/26 totalling £11.152m that were previously considered and recommended for approval by Full Council in March 2024;
- note that further savings proposals to bridge the gap will be brought to the next meeting of the Executive Committee on 3 December 2024 and that savings beyond this gap are also being worked on;
- note that these proposals will be presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny on 14 November 2024 and additional proposals presented at the meeting on 23 January 2025;
- note the savings form part of the wider budget setting process and that the overall 2025/26 budget will be reported for Full Council Approval in March 2025.

10 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[The Council's Revenue Estimates for 2024/25 \(General Fund and Housing Revenue Account\), Council, 7 March 2024](#)

[Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2029/30, Executive, 17 July 2024](#)

Various working papers including individual business cases to support each budget saving proposal have been produced in a new format for the first time and these form part of the normal background underlying financial working papers to developing a budget which is presented to Members to review and consider for approval. As this process develops further as part of the Council's overall improvement plan, consideration will be given to making these working papers available to the public for the 2026/27 budget setting process, subject to the normal rules and arrangements regarding exemptions for publication of information that relates to individuals or has commercial sensitivities