

Substantive proposal for a Council Tax Freeze

The local government finance settlement includes new council tax freeze grants for 2015/16 equivalent to a 1% increase in council tax for those councils who agreed to freeze their council tax in 2015/16. The grant for Brighton & Hove is estimated to be £1.267m.

The savings package required to deliver a freeze budget, taking into account the freeze grant, is £25.770m. The savings identified within the Referendum and substitute budget proposals total £24.852m as shown in Appendices 7 and 8, therefore the additional savings required to deliver a freeze budget are £0.918m.

However, if Council was to agree a freeze budget this would release one off resources of £1.178m that would otherwise be required to hold a referendum or implement a substitute budget, largely due to timing delays.

These include: -

One off costs avoided	£'000
Estimate one off costs of holding the referendum vote	100
Additional staffing costs associated with maintaining the collection rate set in the council tax base report agreed at January P&R	194
The additional costs of re-billing, refunds and adjusting council tax accounts including additional staff costs.	157
Subtotal	451
The timing delay of implementing savings within the substitute budget as below:	
Learning Disabilities (LD) - Residential. Community Care Services provided by the Independent Sector to meet assessed needs.	156
Learning Disabilities (LD) - Home Care, Day Care & Direct Payments. Community Care Services provided by the Independent Sector to meet assessed needs.	103
Home Care. (6 services including Independence at Home)	100
Early Years (Early Help) - Children's Centres. City-wide service integrated with health visiting which aims to improve outcomes for children under 5. 12 designated Children's Centre's plus a further 9 linked sites. Statutory duties to ensure sufficient children's centres and improve early years outcomes. Presumption against closure and requirement to consult on changes / closures.	261
Early Years - Childcare - support for childminders, out of school childcare, childcare workforce training, business support for childcare, inclusion funding for children under 2, management and administration of free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds	9
Public Conveniences - The service provides 42 traditional public toilets across the city. The contract for cleaning, attending and opening and closing the site is run by Wettons. The contract is due for renewal in March 2017. Many of the sites require investment and are currently being assessed by Property & Design.	40
City Parks Trees - The Arboriculture Team are responsible for the inspection and maintenance of trees in the city. There are an estimated 12,000 street trees. Some of the maintenance work is sub contracted out.	20
Private Sector Housing Team	19

Housing Benefits / CTR administration costs. Housing benefit administration is a statutory function. Involves the award of benefits to approximately 20% of the households in the city. Naturally this tends to include a large percentage of elderly and vulnerable customers.	19
Total	1,178

The following table includes savings proposals totalling £0.918m sufficient to enable members to opt for a Council Tax Freeze. This will require £0.372m one off resources to cover the timing delay of implementation. If these proposals are accepted this will reduce the above one off resources to £0.806m.

Service	Gross Budget £'000	Net Budget £'000	Description of Saving Opportunity	Saving Type	Impact on Outcomes / Priorities	Equalities Impact	Savings identified 2015/16 £'000	Full Year effect of 2015/16 savings £'000
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE								
Corporate Policy & Communities								
Equality and Cohesion - Centralised team ensuring council meets legal duties including delivery of our Equality and Inclusion Policy & Action Plan, Equality Impact Assessments (incl Budget), Stonewall Index & diversity workers forums.	243	243	Deletion of budget for direct delivery of equalities events and move to an enabling role supporting others to access other funding for activities/events. Mainstreaming of diversity mentoring scheme into council's learning and development programme.	Other Efficiency Gains	A potential reduction in support for equality and diversity initiatives that benefit our staff and the city's communities.	45	20	20
Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) enables the authority to meet statutory scrutiny requirements. As part of the council's decision making processes it a) checks & reviews policy b) monitors performance c) holds the council, its partners & external agencies to account. The service also supports the Older People's Council (OPC), Tenant Scrutiny & the Health & Wellbeing Board.	220	213	Provision of a further reduced Overview and Scrutiny function, dissolving the Older People's Council and replacing this with an Older People's consultative forum.	Other Efficiency Gains	Work will be required to ensure the authority is able to meet its statutory responsibilities as they relate to scrutiny. Work undertaken by O&S for vulnerable/disadvantaged groups and key strategic issues (e.g. Trans, Sea Front, Bullying, Autism) will, where possible, need to be addressed by other teams in the council. By ensuring the OPC is replaced with a new Consultative Forum impacts on older people should be minimised.	12b	30	30
Corporate Policy & Communities Total							50	50
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE TOTAL							50	50

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Stronger Families, Youth & Communities

Youth Service - Integrated support service for children aged 13-19 plus Youth Participation and Youth Employability services	2,073	1,915	Reducing the £400k commissioned contract for the delivery of universal Youth Work with community and voluntary sector youth work organisations. Provision is currently delivered by 8 organisations forming the Brighton & Hove Youth Collective led by Impact Initiatives.	Commissioning	Targeting remaining resources on those most in need supports the children's service Early Help Strategy and the priorities of the Corporate Plan. The Youth work team will have increased flexibility to adapt delivery and interventions to who, where and when it will be most effective. Reduction in youth work capacity will reduce opportunities for children, young people and their families to participate in some community based activities currently free or low cost at the point of delivery. Families can access other activities provided by the council, voluntary sector or commercial providers. Some of those activities may incur a charge which will put financial pressure on families on low incomes. Impact of the changes to Youth Employability Service will be minimal. Via increased use of social media platforms, a reconfiguration of delivery will be initiated to ensure that there is minimal disruption.	38	83	136
Early Years - Nurseries. Statutory duties to secure sufficient free early education for 4, 3 and low income 2 year olds. Statutory duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents. Part of Children's Centre service so there is a requirement to consult.	1,621	608	Review and consult on options to remove the subsidy for Council run nurseries and Tarnerland Nursery School. This will include identifying in-house efficiencies where possible and in the longer term, considering alternative providers including schools, staff mutuals and the private and voluntary sector, no longer providing full day care and focussing on free early education for low income 2 year olds and 3 and 4 year olds, reducing opening hours, increasing fees, changes to staffing and the potential for combining with other services. It is likely that different options will be developed for each nursery and that the implementation of changes across all of the nurseries may need to be staggered.	Other Efficiency Gains	The impact will depend on the options chosen. The review will consider the Council's priority to secure free childcare places for two year olds in low income families and the particular issues for each nursery. Any changes to nursery provision will have a significant impact on young children and their families. The best time to make changes to minimise impact is September when 4 year olds leave to start school. A change in provider would have a significant impact on the 150 staff employed by the Council. This number does not include staff employed by Tarnerland Nursery School. Most of the nurseries are part of the children's centre service so there also needs to be a public consultation on any changes to services.	17	33	100

Stronger Families, Youth & Communities Total

116

236

CHILDREN'S SERVICES TOTAL

116

236

ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING

City Clean and Parks

City Clean and Parks service	13,585	13,187	We have commenced a comprehensive service redesign across City Clean and Parks informed by customer feedback and designed to improve efficiency and integration across all aspects of these services. The increased savings levels will require some fundamental changes to how the service operates including further mechanisation of street cleaning and thereby reducing manual street cleansing activities as well as reduced service levels in some lower priority areas. The proposal includes a reduction in gardening provision of approximately 8%.	Commissioning	There will be some reductions in the scope of scale of manual street sweeping across the city replaced by mechanical sweeping. The model for supporting and maintaining parks and open spaces will change by a refocused ranger service and a proposed reduction in gardener related activities.	41, S18 &S19	200	400
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City Clean and Parks Total

200 400

Transport

Public Transport - the team's primary function is to manage the council's supported bus network and general bus related measures which aim at increasing bus patronage in the city such as multi modal ticketing. They are also charged with managing the Quality Bus Partnership involving the 5 private bus operators. There is also a customer facing element including bus promotion and dealing with customer enquires.	1,367	1,196	Reduction of expenditure by early termination of a further 5 Supported Bus Contracts. The specific reductions are 38A Monday to Saturday evenings and winter Sunday evenings; 21 winter Sunday evenings; 21A Sundays and Public Holidays; 84 Monday to Friday.	Commissioning / Procurement	Will impact on Priorities - Tackling inequality and Creating a more sustainable city. The cumulative impact of these service reductions may lead to other services becoming unviable and their further termination by the Bus Operators, Council officers will engage with Operators to mitigate these impacts and investigate the possibility that some of these routes or parts of routes could run commercially.	23	37	89
Parking - On Street On-street pay & display, pay-by-phone, permits, enforcement, penalty charge notices, penalty processing and appeals, customer services	6,788	-13,026	Reduction in support to Community Events Budget including provision of free parking bay suspensions and associated direct contractual costs.	Commissioning / Procurement	Community events reliant on provision of free parking bays will need to rationalise the use of free bays and consider alternative locations with less impact on city centre parking. Potential Impacts on external visitor related events. These proposals will not impact on Remembrance Day or Pride Events.	24	41	41
Transport Strategy & Projects - Development and co-ordination high level policy and strategic issues involving transport; development and delivery of major transport projects; assessment of transport implications of development proposals; management of transport model; monitoring of capital programme.	193	193	Net saving from service redesign within the Transport Planning Team to support essential delivery of LTP policies and schemes.	Other Efficiency Gains	None. Service redesign completed	Not required	3	3

Transport Total							81	133
Housing General Fund								
Housing Options/Statutory Homelessness Preventing homelessness by finding alternative housing for people who are about to become homeless and to whom the council would otherwise have a duty to provide accommodation - this includes some specialist options workers to understand the needs of specific client groups e.g. Learning Disabilities, Domestic Violence. In addition Options managers assist in finding accommodation for those people who present significant risk to the public if they aren't accommodated, and have a Prison Officer Accommodation Liaison Officer (POAL) who assists people leaving prison to find accommodation and hence reduce potential to re-offend. Assessing homeless applications from those households who do become homeless to determine what housing duty the Council has, and dealing with reviews of such decisions to minimise Court proceedings.	1,143	1,142	Reduction of 1x Housing Options Officer and 1.5 x admin support to front line statutory homeless service	Other Efficiency Gains	Potential reduction in the amount of homelessness prevention we are able to deliver and resulting increase in statutory homelessness	26 & S21	69	69
Temporary Accommodation Providing a range of emergency and longer term leased temporary accommodation to statutory homeless and also corporately on behalf of Adult Services (Mental health, Learning Disabilities, Physical Disabilities, HIV team) and Children's Services (young people and families). In addition the team manages Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes properties.	19,886	1,558	1) Increased income of £30k from Seaside Homes management fee and so apportion GF staff against these budgets.		Managing temporary accommodation within existing resources while funding staff from Seaside Homes management fee will enable savings to be achieved from the General Fund whilst still being able to deliver management to our lease providers and tenants/licences.	Not required	30	30
Housing General Fund Total							99	99
ENVIRONMENT, DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING TOTAL							380	632
GENERAL FUND TOTAL							546	918