

Extract from Budget Consultation:

Economy and Growth Committee proposals

Details about the purpose and responsibilities of the Economy and Growth Committee can be found [here](#).

The Economy and Growth Committee Budget for 2023/24 is £25.0 million. Expenditure is forecast to increase by £4.9 million next year. Approximately 80% of this increase is required to maintain, or provide utilities to, council assets such as buildings used as community assets, public rights of way or council offices. The remainder relates to other inflation factors such as pay.

When reviewing the Council's funding from 1 April 2024 Councillors agreed that the affordable budget for Economy and Growth could increase by £2.0 million. This means savings of £2.9 million would have to be identified. Subsidy reductions to Tatton Park and the Visitor Centre operating model are already set to deliver savings for 2024/25 of £0.07m. Pensions costs have reduced and Councillors have also approved the closure of the Council's offices in Sandbach. These items reduce expenditure by £0.77 million. But this still means savings of £2.1 million are required to mitigate the increasing expenditure. Managing large scale change presents financial risks, but the Council has very low reserves to protect against risk. The Council should therefore aim to over-achieve savings targets where possible.

A total of 2 savings proposals have been put forward from services overseen by the Economy and Growth Committee, totalling £0.8 million of savings for 2024/25, and brief detail of each of these proposals are given below.

More details of how these savings will be delivered will be presented in High level business cases that will be considered by committees in January and February 2024.

Proposal EG1: Service Restructures within Place based Services

Use vacancy management to slow down or not fill posts across Place in non-statutory services and non-income generating posts. Reductions in staffing could result in statutory services responding more slowly where we can. This is a cross cutting proposal across Place Services so actual figures may change from one committee to another.

Potential savings for 2024/25 = £0.8 million

Generally speaking, do you support or oppose this proposal? *Tick one box only*
Your support or opposition for a proposal does not constitute a 'vote' for or against - this consultation informs a decision making process - as such it is important that you provide additional information about why you support, oppose or are not sure.

- Support
- Oppose
- Not sure

Do you have any comments about this proposal? *Write in below*

Proposal EG2: Reduce opening hours for main offices

Close our main offices on a Friday or Monday (option 1) to save energy costs, with staff working remotely instead. Or apply alternate closures, offices operate on a rolling three-day week (for example Crewe Mon-Wed, Macclesfield Wed-Fri) (option 2). Additionally aim to close Council buildings between the hours of 6pm and 8am.

Potential savings for 2024/25 = £0.05 million

Generally speaking, do you support or oppose this proposal? *Tick one box only*

Your support or opposition for a proposal does not constitute a 'vote' for or against - this consultation informs a decision making process - as such it is important that you provide additional information about why you support, oppose or are not sure.

- Support
- Oppose
- Not sure

Do you have any comments about this proposal? *Write in below*

Appendix A – Economy and Growth Budget Consultation proposals

Detailed list of proposals:

Reference	Item	Description	2024/25 budget change £m
EG1	Service Restructures within Place based Services	As per consultation extract	(0.787)
EG2	Reduce opening hours for main offices	As per consultation extract	(0.050)
Saving included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Office estate rationalisation	Rationalisation of the Council's Office space buildings to reflect increased hybrid working, and to secure reduction of business rates and holding costs. Also targeting additional Carbon benefits in retained buildings. Key assets in the North and South of the borough will be retained and invested in to provide modern workplaces for staff, Members and stakeholders. Surplus assets will be considered for alternative use to generate income through rental or a capital receipt	(0.550)
Saving included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Tatton Park	These planned savings result from income and efficiencies generated through the investment programme in the facilities at Tatton Park, which will improve the visitor experience and reduce the overall subsidy the Council makes to Tatton Park.	(0.046)
Saving included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Transfer of Congleton Visitor Information Centre	Cheshire East Council has agreed a new operating model for Congleton Visitor Information Centre, with Congleton Town Council managing and operating the centre through the transfer of Visitor Information provision.	(0.020)
Saving included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Pension costs adjustment	This item relates to pension contributions funded by the Council. Contributions can be reduced from 2023/24. This results from a successful financial strategy to secure stability in the funding of future pension liabilities. The effect is a reduction in overheads in pay cost budgets following a change in the employer's contribution rate confirmed by the Cheshire Pension Fund	(0.157)
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Tatton Park ticketing and electronic point of sale (EPOeS) upgrade (revenue implications of capital)	Tatton Park has been operating its current EPOS system since 2017. The contract ends in August 2024 and this is an opportunity to source an alternative maintenance and support contract and a hardware upgrade. It will future proof both revenue collections, management and financial analysis, and provide better customer insight and targeting capabilities. Streamlining customer transactions will better enable us to maximise revenue capture at all customer interaction points.	+0.005

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Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Cultural	Provision of costs to support cultural framework required for regeneration projects across the borough, and safeguarding museum collections	+0.020
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Property Information and Management System - Estates – Revenue Adjustment	Underpinning the management of the Council's operational and non-operational estate is a property information and management system, which contains all site and tenancy information, provides an interface for managing a responsive repairs service, as well as related revenue and capital programme expenditure, and allows effective case management of the high volume and frequently protracted property transactions and queries. A review of the current contracting framework shows hosting and support costs have increased since the system was last procured. This proposal adjusts the revenue budget to align with these increased costs ready for a new procurement period.	+0.030
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Housing	Resources required to support Government initiative on new support for affordable housing scheme known as First Homes.	+0.035
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Environmental Hub Waste Transfer Station (revenue implications of capital)	The replacement of bay 1 in the Residual Waste Transfer Station building with push walls to a new design more likely to provide long-term resilience to wear and tear, to enable the continuation of waste processing at the transfer station.	+0.040
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Rural and Visitor Economy	Provides additional funding to manage increased costs. This reflects inflation in the price of materials and the staffing required to maintain a statutory standard of upkeep to existing public rights of way, and to maintain heritage buildings within Tatton Park	+0.045
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) - Estates - Revenue Adjustment	All the Council's leased out properties will be required to meet new/phased Energy Efficiency Legislation from 1st April 2023 up to 1st April 2030. This means that to continue to lease out properties the Estates Service will need to improve the energy performance certificate (EPC) rating in line with the Government recommendations. After assessment, and in order to obtain a certificate, identified improvements will need carrying out prior to properties being leased out. Cost estimates are based on average current improvement costs, the list of identified properties requiring new EPC certificates, and phasing as determined by the legislation.	+0.079
Growth included in narrative section (see	Public Rights of Way Income Realignment	Current income forecasts within the Public Rights of Way budget are not being met for a number of reasons and are unrealistic. A growth bid is required to revise income budget in line with	+0.115

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consultation extract)		forecasts to achieve the setting of a balanced budget and meet statutory requirements.	
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Pay inflation (including additional pay inflation required for 2023/24 shortfall)	This proposal includes incremental increases for eligible staff and nationally negotiated pay awards. Average increases are forecast at c.3% for 2024/25. This may not apply evenly across pay bands due to implications of the Living Wage. The proposal also recognises the additional impact of the higher than budgeted 2023/24 final pay award.	+0.732
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Crewe town centre maintenance and operation	New revenue budgets are required to ensure that new facilities/assets/spaces being created in Crewe town centre can be operated and maintained to a reasonable standard to meet user expectations, ensure compliance with statutory requirements and ensure that they are operable for their expected lifespan without the need for closure/removal/replacement. Without this the new bus station and car park will not be fully operational (no cleaning, no toilets, daytime hours opening only and no response to any faults/issues).	+0.650
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Assets - Buildings and Operational	The cost of managing and maintaining the Council's buildings is increasing, particularly due to national inflation in utility bills. Cost increases cannot be avoided entirely, but to reduce the impact the Council will only spend on maintenance where there is a specific Health and Safety risk that must be mitigated. A review of occupancy levels will also restrict access to floors of buildings that can be left vacant to achieve further savings	+3.119
Overall Committee Target			+1.907
Total growth proposals			+4.870
Total savings proposals			(1.610)
Shortfall against Target			(1.353)