

Extract from Budget Consultation:

Highways and Transport Committee proposals

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

The Highways and Transport Committee Budget for 2023/24 is £11.0m. Expenditure is forecast to increase by £5.8 million next year. 86% of this increase is evenly split between the increasing bus services and increasing safety requirements to maintain the Council's highways. Further large growth items relate to deferring savings from parking changes. These are running through due process before delivery can begin and removal of savings relating to street lighting energy as the necessary capital investment is not affordable at present. Flood and water management systems and other inflation factors, such as pay awards, contribute to additional cost pressures.

When reviewing the Council's funding from 1 April 2024 Councillors agreed that the affordable budget for Highways and Transport could increase by £1.2m. As a result Highways and Transport would need to find savings of £4.6 million to reduce the £5.8 million growth pressures to an affordable level of £1.2 million.

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.

Two savings proposals have been put forward from services overseen by the Highways and Transport Committee, totalling £0.9 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

Proposal HT1: Highway maintenance savings

The Highways service has a net budget of £9.6 million to maintain and improve the road network. The budget plans for 2024/25 include growth of £2.5 million reflecting increasing costs to address: safety-related defects (predominantly potholes); safety assessments of highway trees; increased gully cleansing to reduce flooding; and the costs of dealing with complaints and meeting corporate policy. Highways can achieve savings by revising maintenance practices in winter service, grass cutting, gully emptying and weed treatment, along with the repair of carriageways, footways, highway structures and trees. Savings can be achieved through the reduction of service levels, which means spending less on fuel, maintenance, staffing and materials. Statutory responsibilities will be considered in these revisions.

Potential savings for 2024/25 = £0.75 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

Appendix A – Highways and Transport Budget Consultation proposals

- Not sure

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

Proposal HT2: Introduce annual increases to car parking charges

Running costs of the Council's car parks, such as business rates and maintenance, increases each year because of inflation. Changes are being considered to our car parking strategy. Annual increases could also be introduced to increase income alongside other the potential changes.

Potential additional income for 2024/25 = £0.15 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 – Highways and Transport Budget Consultation proposals

Detailed list of proposals:

Reference	Item	Description	2024/25 budget change £m
HT1	Highway maintenance savings	Highways will look to deliver savings through revising maintenance practices in winter service, grass cutting, gully emptying and weed treatment, along with the repair of carriageways, footways, highway structures and trees. Savings will be sought through the reduction of service levels. Statutory responsibilities will be considered in these revisions.	(0.750)
HT2	Introduce annual increases to car parking charges	Running costs of the Council's car parks, such as business rates and maintenance, increases each year because of inflation. Changes are being considered to our car parking strategy. Annual increases could also be introduced to increase income alongside other the potential changes.	(0.150)
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	(0.052)
Saving included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Highways	Increased time to respond to highway safety-critical incidents, allowing fewer response teams to be required.	(0.031)
Saving included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Safe Haven outside schools (Parking)	Introduction of CCTV systems to ensure that school gate parking restrictions are effectively and continuously enforced to create Safe Haven outside schools. This approach will begin on a trial basis with the scope to roll out more widely if it proves successful in improving road safety and reducing environmental impacts.	(0.023)
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Transport and Infrastructure Strategy Team - Restructure	Implementing a revised structure for the Transport and Infrastructure Strategy Team to meet the requirements updated Government guidelines on local transport planning, Bus Improvement Plans, carbon reduction strategies and alternative technologies including Electric Vehicles. The team will also ensure the Council is best placed to secure specific funding opportunities for local projects through the preparation of business cases and bids.	+0.120
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	+0.312

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Reference	Item	Description	2024/25 budget change £m
consultation extract)		recognises the additional impact of the higher than budgeted 2023/24 final pay award.	
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Parking - PDA / Back Office System contract	New contract for services to provide modernised Back Office System and supporting technology for Parking Enforcement. These systems enable the Council to issue, process and secure payments of fees for car parking. Updating and maintaining these systems is business critical for Parking Services.	+0.100
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Flood and Water Management Act 2010 SuDS & SABs Schedule 3 Implementation (revenue implications of capital)	Creating a Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Approval Body (SAB) to operate a chargeable pre-application service for planning applications as part of the council's Lead Local Flood Authority duties. The HLBC requires a combination of growth in rev and capital funding for the required staff to deliver the new statutory duties and deliver eventual savings identified.	+0.100
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Energy saving measures from streetlights	Delivering substantial energy savings from street lighting will require significant capital funding that is not available at this stage. Undertaking public consultation on the necessary lighting policy changes at this point is not advised. Options for delivering savings are therefore being reviewed.	+0.242
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Parking	The Council must meet unprecedented and complex challenges with increasing customer expectations to provide a modern, responsive and equitable parking service. The proposals for parking must align operational arrangements and tariffs with corporate priority outcomes for fairness and transparency, including supporting our Town Centres to recover after the pandemic. These proposals will include options for zonal parking charges. The implementation plan will include further consultation. Options are expected to align to an increase in income, or reduction in costs, over the next two years to maintain the ongoing sustainability of the service.	+0.970 (0.725)
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Highways Revenue Services	Increase in costs to address: - Safety-related defects (predominantly potholes) required to be addressed under the safety inspection policy; - Safety assessments of highway trees; - Increased gully cleansing to reduce flooding on roads and pavements; - Consequential costs of dealing with complaints and requirements of corporate policy.	+2.479
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Local Bus	Forecast cost pressure on local bus services is approximately £3.5m, which was partially mitigated in 2023/24 from Council Reserves. This is unsustainable and the Council cannot afford to fund local bus services at this level. This initiative seeks savings in the level of supported local bus services that must mitigate the impact of inflation and is a direct response to the loss of Central Government grant. These efficiency savings are considered to be	+2.500 (0.250)

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Reference	Item	Description	2024/25 budget change £m
		achievable but there are expected to be negative impacts on residents and service-users due to a reduction in the extent of revenue-supported services in the Cheshire East bus network.	
	Overall Committee Target		+1.272
	Total growth proposals		+5.848
	Total savings proposals		(1.006)
	Shortfall against Target		(3.570)