

Extract from Budget Consultation:

Corporate Policy Committee proposals

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

The Corporate Policy Committee Budget for 2023/24 is £41 million. Expenditure is forecast to increase by £2.5 million next year. This increase is split evenly between additional capacity requirements in Legal Service, support to the ICT needs of the Council and other inflation factors such as pay.

When reviewing the Council's funding from 1 April 2024 Councillors agreed that the affordable budget for Corporate Policy could increase by £0.2 million. This means savings of £2.3 million would have to be identified. Pensions costs have reduced by £0.3 million, which still means savings of £2.0 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 7 savings proposals have been put forward from services overseen by the Corporate Policy Committee, totalling £4.8 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 CP1: Reduce leadership and management costs

Reduce expenditure on leadership, supervision and associated support costs within Corporate Services. Savings are being achieved through temporarily leaving senior leadership posts vacant. Due to a reduction in senior employees, executive support should be similarly reviewed for senior staff across the Council, this includes removal of under-utilised support service budgets. Budgets associated with employees leaving the Council by mutual resignation will be removed from Corporate Services budgets where practical.

Potential savings for 2024/25 = £0.5 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 CP2: Close the Emergency Assistance Scheme

Reduce the amount of money spent on emergency help for people, by closing the emergency assistance scheme. This scheme supports vulnerable members of society but no longer receives direct government funding.

Potential savings for 2024/25 = £0.2 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 CP3: Reduce election costs and increase charges where possible

Ensure full cost recovery for all elections carried out by the Council on behalf of other organisations, including charging Parishes for all Parish related election costs. Cut overall election costs through an efficiency review that considers all aspects of the resources required for polling and counting of votes.

Potential savings 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*

Proposal CP4: Accelerate Digital and other ICT Transformation

Adopt a series of measures to maximise the use of technology:

- Accelerate digital transformation and realise the related savings in staffing, equipment and system costs.

Appendix A – Corporate Policy Budget Consultation proposals

- Review the opportunity to introduce commercial advertising on the council website.
- Use more artificial intelligence to respond to customers.
- Make efficiencies from new ways of working to contribute savings from contracts and staff resource.
- Minimise spending on ICT devices and licensing.

Potential savings for 2024/25 = £0.25 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 CP5: Enforce prompt debt recovery and increase charges for costs

Review the enforcement processes linked to payment of outstanding debts to increase the speed and percentage of income collected, whilst continuing the positive support of vulnerable debtors. Reduce overall costs through automation of processes. Increase charges to debtors to ensure this reflects actual costs of the debt collection process, thereby further reducing net costs to the Council

Potential savings 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*

Proposal CP6: Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services

- Continue the review of current provision across workforce and organisational development to deliver differently with reduced costs.

Appendix A – Corporate Policy Budget Consultation proposals

- Across the board efficiencies from procurement and income generation including introducing more venues for registrar services.
- Cease all external design and printing.
- Remove school subsidies through price increases or service reductions.
- Savings through additional hybrid working practices.

Potential savings for 2024/25 = £0.31 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 CP7: Reduce additional spending on staffing and agency costs

Aim to eliminate agency spending as far as possible. Reduce overtime or additional hours payments for employees. The impact of this approach across all services may reduce response times or flexibility in some areas but the intention is to reduce the cost of overheads that may be incurred above the costs normally associated with full-time permanent employment.

Potential savings for 2024/25 = £3.2 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 – Corporate Policy Budget Consultation proposals

Detailed list of proposals:

Reference	Item	Description	2024/25 budget change £m
CP1	Reduce leadership and management costs	As per consultation extract	(0.540)
CP2	Close the Emergency Assistance Scheme	Reduce the amount of money spent on emergency help for people, by closing the emergency assistance scheme and signposting residents to alternative voluntary and charitable support resources. This scheme supports vulnerable members of society but no longer receives direct government funding	(0.220)
CP3	Reduce election costs and increase charges where possible	As per consultation extract	(0.150)
CP4	Accelerate Digital and other ICT Transformation	As per consultation extract	(0.250)
CP5	Enforce prompt debt recovery and increase charges for costs	Increase charges to debtors to ensure this reflects actual costs of the debt collection process, thereby further reducing net costs to the Council.	(0.150)
CP6	Other efficiencies and reductions across Corporate Services	As per consultation extract	(0.310)
CP7	Reduce additional spending on staffing and agency costs	As per consultation extract	(3.200)
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	(0.378)
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Mitigation of reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant	Mitigation of reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant received from the DfE.	+0.136

Appendix A – Corporate Policy Budget Consultation proposals

Reference	Item	Description	2024/25 budget change £m
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	+1.446
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	Legal Services Capacity	Additional capacity in Legal Services to match increasing demand and manage workloads	+0.455
Growth included in narrative section (see consultation extract)	ICT Review 1	ICT Improvement programme – Delivery of an updated ICT Shared Services working model. This requires joint investment alongside Cheshire West and Chester Council (CEC £343,000). Savings are achieved from reduced resource requirements from 2025/26. Funding is also provided from capital investment. Additional funding of £84,000 is also required for Application Lifecycle Management (ALM). The benefits will be modern business systems that are secure, supportable and compliant. The Infrastructure Investment Programme requires £23,000 of investment to enable modern business architecture, including core infrastructure platforms that underpin and support innovation, frontline services and secure a modern workplace that is protected against increased cyber threats. Operational efficiencies from new ways of working will contribute savings from contracts and staff resource.	+0.450
Overall Committee Target			+0.239
Total growth proposals			+2.487
Total savings proposals			(5.198)
Exceeding against Target			+2.950