



BUDGET SCRUTINY 2023/24 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

01 DECEMBER 2022

OVERVIEW

- The Chief Operating Officer directorate has a 2022/23 budget (as at period 6 / September 2022) of a net £20.261m, comprised of a gross controlled expenditure budget of £23.757m and a gross income budget of £3.496m
- As part of the budget for 2022/23, the directorate set a savings target of £1.772m. The current projected achievement against this target is £1.772m
- The forecast outturn for 2022/23 as at period 6 is an underspend of £1.366m
- The directorate is proposing £1.155m of savings towards the Council's overall target for 2023/24 for review by the Scrutiny Committee
- EIAs have been prepared and made available in respect of these proposals, and of these, two are assessed to have equalities impacts which require a full assessment to be undertaken

2022/23 – KEY ISSUES FACED

The key issues currently faced by the directorate are as follows:

- Current need to cut back on support services. Balancing additional savings against resourcing a fit for purpose corporate function supporting the front facing directorates to deliver their services to the residents
- Uncertainty around the future operating model of the Council
- Reduction in resources in the back office impact the level of demand and resolution performance
- Stability of the network is adversely impacting on performance
- Ensuring stability in service delivery with high staff turnover and delays in replacing staff
- Risks surrounding achievement and on time delivery of savings
- Performance and service expectations are not aligned to reductions resulting from savings

EMERGING PRESSURES AND MITIGATIONS IN **2022/23**

The following are the key issues that the directorate will be dealing with in 2022/23:

- Challenge in attracting skilled personnel on permanent contract as well as interim workers
- Increasing demand on services without corresponding increase in resources
- The need to find more savings within an already stretched budget which adversely impacts performance and service expectations
- Surrounding boroughs offering better remuneration for similar posts
- Support services offer is dependent on understanding the business needs of the organisation moving forward
- Over reliance on interim staff to plug resource gaps which results in premium costs, lack of knowledge transfer which destabilise the service

EMERGING PRESSURES AND MITIGATIONS IN **2022/23**

MITIGATION in 2022/23 onwards:

- More collaborative / joined up working/ early communication with service departments to inform of any revised support services offer
- Redesigning interim operating models to manage demand and reduce over reliance on interim staff which requires investment in support services
- Maintain a reasonable base level of investment in the back-office services
- The creation of the Transformation team amongst others to ensure the creation of formal return on investment models that demonstrate the longer-term payback of any investments made
- To have close engagement with transformation activity and to have time to assess the impact of any future proposed ways of working
- Review of systems and processes to streamline them to ensure speedy processing of information

2023/24 – KEY ISSUES ANTICIPATED

The key issues currently faced by the directorate are as follows:

- Continuous necessity to find savings within an already challenged budget envelope while stabilising and improving services
- Increasing cost of services, products and components. Costs are expected to keep climbing rapidly well into next financial year
- Challenge in recruiting skilled permanent staff and not having to employ interim staff
- Expectation on services to deliver higher standards of service with reducing resources
- Competing with London Boroughs for skilled staff as the grading of SBC is lower in comparison
- Ongoing customer dissatisfaction / reputation damage as the council continues to resolve the current financial resources

2022/23 – BUDGET BY SERVICE AREA

Service Area	Expenditure £m	Income £m	Net £m
A) Business Services	5.327	(1.837)	3.490
B) Communications	0.633	(0.303)	0.330
C) Customer	2.579	(0.836)	1.743
D) Democratic Services	1.451	(0.021)	1.430
E) Electoral Services	0.458	(0.003)	0.456
F) HR	2.618	(0.291)	2.327
G) IT	9.820	(0.206)	9.615
H) Strategy & Innovation	0.871	0	0.871
TOTAL BUDGET 2022/23	23.757	(3.496)	20.261

2023/24 – BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS (1)

The following savings proposals have been put forward for delivery to contribute towards the 2023/24 budget target:

Business administration, staffing and other budgets - RES-2324-11 - £0.150m

- Combination of initiatives consisting of reduction in staff, cessation of some corporate outdoor events and the Slough citizen newspaper for residents

IT Contract Savings - RES-2324-47 - £0.505m

- Various initiatives including termination and / or reduction in licences and re-procurement of some IT contracts at lower cost

Vacancy Factor - RES-2324-18a - £0.500m

- Combination of initiatives consisting of reduction in staff, ongoing assessment of structures, reduction in telephony as a substitute for cutting staffing budget

2023/24 – BUDGET PROPOSALS SUMMARY

Ref. No.	Saving title	2023/24 Saving (£m)
RES-2324-11a-d	Various - business administration, staffing and other budgets	0.150*
RES-2324-18a	Vacancy Factor	0.500
RES-2324-47a-g	IT contract savings	0.505
	TOTAL	1.155

* Savings RES-2324-11c and RES-2324-11d have been assessed to require full EIAs, which have been provided with the presentation.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

None required