

Resources Scrutiny Commission - Budget Scrutiny Questions and Responses

No	From	Service Area	Question	Portfolio Holder/ Executive Director/ Director Finance	Response
Capital Programme					
1	Budget Task & Finish Group	Investment Pressures 22/23	Which areas do you see providing the most challenge in terms of spending pressures for 22/23?	Stephen Peacock	In relation to investments the challenge is attributed to the additional investment requirement for decarbonising the property estate.
2	Budget Task & Finish Group	Investment Mitigations	What actions are you taking to mitigate those?	Stephen Peacock	We will identify and prioritise spend, ensuring maximum VFM is achieved and impact on the carbon load monitored.
3	Budget Task & Finish Group	Capital Pressures 22/23	Which areas do you see providing the most challenge in terms of spending pressures for 22/23?	Stephen Peacock	In delivering the Capital Programme the biggest risk are inflationary pressures in the supply chain and end-to-end sustainability across the capital project lifecycle.
4	Budget Task & Finish Group	Capital Mitigations 22/23	What actions are you taking to mitigate those?	Stephen Peacock	Working with our Capital Strategic Partner we will be robust in managing the Capital Programme, embracing the new governance model to ensure effective due diligence at each stage of the process (mandate, outline and final business case); aligning project design and financing to drive action throughout the value chain; and building sustainability metrics into project reporting and better risk management, including an appropriate level of contingency to mitigate known and unknown cost pressures.
5	Budget Task & Finish Group	Capital Programme	Are there carbon saving projects in the capital pipeline that could be funded if capital borrowing was increased?	Stephen Peacock	There is always more that can be done with the availability of additional funding. The pipeline of capital projects includes opportunities for carbon saving as illustrated below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in the Council property estate and vehicle fleet to reduce the Council's carbon footprint. • Pending business cases contain a number of projects with carbon savings, including a de-carbonisation fund of £19 million • Opportunities to leverage in further external investment.
6	Budget Task & Finish Group	Capital Programme	Why is the Council investing £8m in Heat Networks if it is moving over to City Leap in the near future?	Stephen Peacock	The Council's Capital Programme contains commitments attributed to the expansion of Heat Networks, which it is anticipated will transfer to BHN and/or (subject to the outcome of the procurement) further de-carbonisation expected through City Leap.
Directorate: Growth & Regeneration					
7	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Budget	Will services be cut with this level of savings? How much would you need to reduce savings by to not cut services?	Stephen Peacock	It is not possible to answer this question at a directorate level, some propositions may go beyond a single service or directorate and as such must be considered as a whole. Every effort has been made to minimise the impact on services and each saving and efficiency proposal includes an EQIA, to inform decision making. Impact assessment is an iterative process and where required the EQIA will continue to be considered as the propositions are further developed.
8	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Which areas do you see providing the most challenge in terms of spending pressures for 22/23?	Stephen Peacock	We anticipate potential ongoing Covid-19 impact on temporary accommodation costs and income streams being the most challenging pressure on budgets.
9	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Mitigations 22/23	What actions are you taking to mitigate those?	Stephen Peacock	We are considering block contracts for temporary accommodation and over the medium to longer term have a proposal to evaluate and implement more cost effective models of providing temporary accommodation. In addition the services that are impacted by income losses will closely monitor income levels, workload, performance and seek to identify new sources of funding.
10	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 21/22	Which spending pressures from 21/22 have proved most challenging to budget for in 22/23 and are you able to assure members that the budget is robust?	Stephen Peacock	Reduced income due to Covid-19 and associated restrictions has been a challenge to forecast during 21/22. This is particularly acute in parking revenue. It is expected that some recovery will occur in 22/23 as restrictions lift but it is difficult to predict future local confidence, new variants and restrictive measures. The figures therefore represent our best estimates of income loss but could be subject to change should confidence and recovery differ to forecasted.
11	Budget Task & Finish Group	Companies	Goram Homes: Documents state that Goram Homes will make a profit by 2025. So does that mean that it will be in deficit until end of 2024?	Cllr Craig Cheney / Stephen Peacock	By their nature housing developments require investment costs to be incurred before properties can be sold and profits generated. Goram Homes' annual operating costs to 2024 are covered by a repayable working capital loan facility provided by the Council at market rates. The loan facility has a contractual repayment date (of principal plus interest) of March 2024.

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Reserves					
12	Budget Task & Finish Group	Reserves	City Leap reserves – what is the business case for this money? Why is it going in to reserves to then be spent? Will this funding still go through the usual decision-making process and business case before being spent?	Stephen Peacock	<p>New Priority Investments (such as City Leap implementation).</p> <p>The current approved funding for City Leap will take the procurement through to Cabinet approval of contract award in Spring 2022. Should the procurement be successful additional funding will be necessary to enable the set-up of the City Leap Energy Partnership joint venture. This provides a fund (indicative only and held in a reserve) to support the next stage in the process, noting that the extent of the actual funding required will be confirmed once the winning bidder's proposed corporate structure for the City Leap Energy Partnership (which must include a joint venture company that is 50% owned by the Council) and business plan proposition is confirmed. Any draw down of these funds will be subject to a business case and Cabinet approval.</p>
Directorate: People					
13	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Budget	Will services be cut with this level of savings? How much would you need to reduce savings by to not cut services?	Hugh Evans	<p>It is not possible to answer this question at a directorate level, some propositions may go beyond a single service or directorate and as such must be considered as a whole. Every effort has been made to minimise the impact on services and each saving and efficiency proposal includes an EQIA, to inform decision making. Impact assessment is an iterative process and where required the EQIA will continue to be considered as the propositions are further developed.</p> <p>It is necessary to add that we have a statutory obligation under the Care Act to ensure that people's assessed needs are met, and that there is a sufficient level of service provision available to us to do that. We will continue to work to these ends. Should there be opportunities to meet the needs of the population in different ways, we will consider these subject to consultation as required. We do not intend to 'cut' frontline services. We aim to find efficient ways of delivering services at a sufficient level to fulfil our statutory duty to meet the assessed needs of the population.</p>
People: Adults Social Care					
14	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Please clarify whether continued Covid-19 implications have been accounted for in the 22/23 budget	Cllr Helen Holland / Hugh Evans	<p>The full impact of Covid-19 is difficult to quantify, given that the situation is ongoing and further new variants may yet emerge. The pressures that are currently being experienced in Adult Social Care (ASC) budgets are being covered, but significant workforce challenges and inflationary cost pressures are being faced by care providers and this is a risk. We hope that government continues to offer support in the future via Covid-19 funding (e.g. workforce and retention funding, infection control funding, etc.) but this is not guaranteed.</p>
15	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 21/22	Please highlight the 5 areas of service delivery that show the biggest monetary variance from budget at Period 8 and advise what actions will be undertaken to reduce the variance by period 12.	Cllr Helen Holland / Hugh Evans	<p>The areas of biggest variance are as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Nursing home placements - £6m •Residential care home placements - £4.8m •Accommodation based support - £3.8m •Other adult purchasing - £0.4m <p>Purchased services for adults with long term conditions (enduring needs) shows the biggest variance (total c.£11m, as part of the areas above). This financial pressure is as a product of significant increases in demographic demand, which has been exacerbated by the recent and ongoing Covid-19 situation, particularly in regard to the cost of services for people with learning disabilities, and the increased incidence of mental ill health.</p> <p>We do not anticipate that the variance will be reduced by the end of the financial year. We have an ongoing programme of short, medium and long term actions that will mitigate this additional spend. Shorter term intentions (e.g. work to regularise prices paid for services purchased from third party care market providers) are featured in the budget proposals.</p>
16	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 21/22	Are you satisfied that these measures can be undertaken without damaging the service provided?	Cllr Helen Holland / Hugh Evans	<p>Yes. We are in the midst of a transformation process that will rebalance the model of care delivery in the city (and more broadly in BNSSG), and ensure that people who need care and support can receive it closer to their homes and communities in a cost-effective manner and in ways that will enable them to aspire to better circumstances in the longer term. Whilst there has been a partial hiatus in this transformation programme due to the Covid-19 pandemic, much good progress has been made, and we are committed to ensuring that services in the future continue to improve.</p>
17	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Do you see the pressures continuing in these areas in 22/23?	Cllr Helen Holland / Hugh Evans	<p>We have always understood that pressures will continue into 2022/23 and beyond, due to the additional and changing demand that we face as a council with adult social services responsibilities: patterns of demand that are mirrored in many other parts of the country. We do have established transformational plans that will address this additional and changing demand, which, in conjunction with these savings plans, will mitigate cost pressures in future years.</p>

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18	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Given continuing and increasing demand for services, do you anticipate other emerging pressures for 22/23? If so, what are they?	Cllr Helen Holland / Hugh Evans	<p>It is not possible to predict in detail the patterns of demand that will emerge in upcoming years. This is especially evident given the changing complexion of demand that we have witnessed as a product of the ongoing Covid-19 period. Suffice to say, we anticipate that the recent shift in demand showing a proportional increase in the number of younger adults with enduring needs requiring services and the cost of support for them will continue, and we are planning accordingly.</p>
19	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Page 18 showed that 65% of Peoples targeted savings for 21/22 were at risk. What impact would this shortfall have on 22/23 and are there any additional savings in the 22/23 budget that are also at risk?	Cllr Helen Holland / Hugh Evans	<p>Prior savings targets (2021/22) have not been fully met due to increased demand and the ongoing Covid-19 situation, both of which have overtaken the operational and financial transformational gains that have been delivered so far. Savings that remain to be delivered are reflected in the Adult Social Care (ASC) purchasing overspends that have been described in prior questions: overspends that will be eased by additional funding granted to the ASC budget for 2022/23. Whilst we are confident that significant inroads will be made into the ASC budget overspends in upcoming years through proposed MTFP savings and transformational work, there remains a risk that issues such as Covid-19 and increased demand will continue to be present.</p>
20	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Is there scope for spend to save projects to help provide for in authority area care and support for adults?	Cllr Helen Holland / Hugh Evans	<p>Certainly. We are looking to invest locally to develop better and more flexible care and support for adults in a range of ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with our Housing colleagues, we are looking to access a significant number of 'general needs' units of accommodation for people with adult social care needs, and to invest in 'Specialist Supported Accommodation' to enable people to 'step down' from more institutional care settings. • In tandem with this, we are looking to work in partnership with excellent service providers to expand the available provision of 'progressive' services for adults with enduring needs in the city. • We are working with the voluntary and community sectors in Bristol to inspire the development of local services that directly meet the diverse needs of people and communities of the city. <p>Developing such accommodation and services in Bristol will help people who live in placements out of the area to return back to the city.</p>
21	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	What areas, if any, do you see as being able to contribute additional savings in 22/23?	Cllr Helen Holland / Hugh Evans	We are confident that the areas of saving that have been proposed reflect a balanced set of deliverable goals that are achievable in 2022/23. At this stage, we do not intend to offer areas of additional savings.
22	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Can you assure Members that you are satisfied the budget for 22/23 is robust?	Cllr Helen Holland / Hugh Evans	We are confident that the savings that the Adult Social Care division has proposed for the 2022/23 budget are deliverable, and that the capability and expertise is available in the division to drive real transformational change in upcoming years.
People: Children and Families					
23	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Is there scope for spend to save projects to help provide for in authority area care and support for children?	Cllr Asher Craig / Hugh Evans	<p>We need to <u>invest in and develop the staff in our residential children's homes</u>. This will assist with professionalising the workforce, recruitment and retention of quality staff, and develop career pathways into social care. It will also assist with support or equality and diversity outcomes. Significantly, it will create more impactful and sustaining outcomes for our children in care, and improve the trajectory of children and young people being placed from residential into foster families or reunification.</p> <p>We need to <u>remunerate our foster carers better</u>, to be competitive with Independent Fostering Agency (IFAs), attract more people to become foster carers, and champion them as city VIPs. Other previous suggestions that would still need to be appropriately costed are that foster carers (with children) could receive a council tax discount of up to 100% and to further embed an inclusive and respectful culture towards our children in care. We could also become a foster friendly employer – this would also need to be costed as base budget growth.</p> <p>Any investment into prevention /early intervention is a valuable investment. The development of family hubs will enable an integrated, partnership approach to supporting children and their families throughout their life course. The significant change here will be services to older young people.</p>
24	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Please clarify whether continued Covid-19 implications have been accounted for in the 22/23 budget	Cllr Asher Craig / Hugh Evans	<p>It is very hard to judge what the ongoing Covid-19 impacts will be for Children's Services as we do not know whether the effects will continue and have an ongoing impact on demand and cost pressures. As outlined in the budget proposals to Cabinet, we have included an additional £7m in the budget of which £4.8m is for children's placements demand and cost pressures. We trust this will be sufficient to deal with pressure in placement numbers and costs but we are dealing with a level of uncertainty in relation to the ongoing Covid-19 situation which is very difficult to predict.</p>

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25	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 21/22	Please highlight the 5 areas of service delivery that show the biggest monetary variance from budget at Period 8 and advise what actions will be undertaken to reduce the variance by period 12.	Cllr Asher Craig / Hugh Evans	<p>Top 5 pressures at P8 (shown net of 21/22 growth funding and COMF and adjusted for miscoded UASC):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Externally-provided residential placements (termed Out of Authority but the majority are within Bristol) £4.2m 2. External Supported Accommodation £1.5m 3. Residence Orders (RO) & Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) £1.4m 4. Independent Fostering Agencies £1.2m 5. Asylum Seeker support where no recourse to public funds £531k <p>This will not be mitigated in 21/22 and as such Covid-19 grants are being applied where appropriate. The £4.8m agreed 22/23 placement growth is anticipated to offset these pressures, subject to the uncertainty outlined above.</p>
26	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 21/22	Are you satisfied that these measures can be undertaken without damaging the service provided?	Cllr Asher Craig / Hugh Evans	<p>See response to the question above.</p> <p>In relation to mitigations, as outlined above, any investment into prevention /early intervention is a valuable investment. The development of family hubs will enable an integrated, partnership approach to supporting children and their families throughout their life course. The significant change here will be services to older young people.</p>
27	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Do you see the pressures continuing in these areas in 22/23?	Cllr Asher Craig / Hugh Evans	<p>Yes - the trajectory of children entering care spiked during the first year of the pandemic. Whilst this has now slowed down, nationally it is predicted that the numbers of children entering care will remain higher than pre pandemic trends. This has a knock on impact in several areas:</p> <p>Firstly, those children and families remain in the system for many years. A slow down in children entering care does not relieve pressure – the increased number of children pressures the market and pushes up costs, it places demand on social work teams, where we need to increase capacity in order to undertake our children focused statutory work, and places demand on reunification teams, who will need to prioritise children who could be on the pathway to being supported at home.</p> <p>The ongoing impact of the pandemic has affected children's physical and mental health, education attendance and outcomes. This will impact their outlook, functioning, decision making and behaviours for years to come. This is why we are working tirelessly, with our partners, to integrate services and ensure they are as impactful as possible.</p> <p>The 'actual' cost effect of Covid-19, such as placements of children, can be forecasted fairly accurately, with key assumptions (such as we do not go back to full national lockdown as in March 2020), however the wider impact of ongoing effects on children's and parents health and wellbeing, is less accurately predicted and will be constantly monitored, and informed by data and performance locally and nationally.</p>
28	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Given continuing and increasing demand for services, do you anticipate other emerging pressures for 22/23? If so, what are they?	Cllr Asher Craig / Hugh Evans	See response above. Investment in our staff, services and partnerships has provided dogmatic focus on meeting the collective needs of our children and families. We are managing many pressures well here in Bristol – for example the recruitment and retention of social work staff. We have the foundation and processes to identify and respond to demands as they ebb and flow, however, a significant 'spike', force majeure or critical occurrence (locally or nationally) could impact our ability to flex with demands.
29	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	What areas, if any, do you see as being able to contribute additional savings in 22/23?	Cllr Asher Craig / Hugh Evans	We are confident that the areas of savings that have been proposed reflect a balanced set of deliverable goals that are achievable in 2022/23. At this stage, we do not intend to offer areas of additional savings.
30	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Can you assure Members that you are satisfied the budget for 22/23 is robust?	Cllr Asher Craig / Hugh Evans	The forecast pressures reflect our best estimates subject to the uncertainty referenced above. We are confident that the savings that the Children and Families division has proposed for the 2022/23 budget are deliverable, and that the capability and expertise is available in the division to drive real transformational change in upcoming years.

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Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)					
31	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	Are other councils holding reserves to cover the SEND deficit?	Director Finance	<p>Each authority will make their own decisions on their financial planning arrangements, measures implemented and accounting treatments in relation to usable reserves, provisions and contingencies (which may or may not be visible) to ensure their sustainability. We know from the resilience index outlined in the MTFP that Bristol's level of usable reserves is lower than statistical neighbours, core cities and many other authorities.</p> <p>There is no statutory undertaking to underwrite the DSG deficit and currently no arrangements in place to extend the Statutory Instrument beyond 2022/23, therefore good financial planning requires the Council to ensure that the level of usable reserves is appropriate for the risks (both internal and external) to which the Council is exposed or have procedures in place to manage those risks.</p> <p>We are committed to working with the DfE to find a longterm solution and whilst the Statutory Instrument is in place no specific earmarked reserve has been created, as this would require further savings within the general fund or redirection of other earmarked funds set aside for alternative purposes which would also need to be replenished.</p>
Directorate: Resources					
32	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Budget	Will services be cut with this level of savings? How much would you need to reduce savings by to not cut services?	Mike Jackson	<p>It is not possible to answer this question at a directorate level. Some propositions may go beyond a single service or directorate and as such must be considered as a whole. Every effort has been made to minimise the impact on services and each saving and efficiency proposal includes an EQIA, to inform decision making. Impact assessment is an iterative process and where required the EQIA will continue to be considered as the propositions are further developed.</p>
33	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 21/22	Please explain what recurrent contract licensing pressure means in Digital Transformation.	Cllr Craig Cheney / Mike Jackson	<p>This is a result of two things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change to working practises resulting from Covid-19 and more officers working from home – this has resulted in a need for more BCC computer/laptops and thus a Microsoft license. 2. A move from physical to virtual hardware resulting in a change of cost base from capital (for hardware/physical kit) to revenue for software/virtual equipment.
34	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Pressures 22/23	How has this pressure been quantified for the 22/23 budget?	Cllr Craig Cheney / Mike Jackson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The first uplift has been recognised as an additional pressure on the DT budget as a result of Covid-19 and we are currently working to mitigate this via our transformation programme. 2. The second is to be addressed by identifying efficiencies across the team.
35	Budget Task & Finish Group	Revenue Mitigations 21/22	What steps have been taken to reduce the pressure?	Cllr Craig Cheney / Mike Jackson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We operate directorate cashlimits and a range of efficiencies have been identified across the Resources directorate to mitigate the 21/22 pressures. 2. Processes are in place to ensure we control and manage licenses better as they are now subscription based instead of enterprise.
36		Revenue Pressures 21/22	Please explain what is the summons and overpayment income that is lost? Is this in line with ethical debt collection?	Cllr Craig Cheney / Mike Jackson	<p>Summons Income - after a series of non-payment reminders have been issued a summons gives notice of the Council's intent to ask the court to grant a liability order for the amount of debt outstanding and the costs of recovery action (summons income) is added to the bill.</p> <p>Overpayment Income - this relates to the Council's recovery of overpaid housing benefit.</p> <p>The main reason for the losses in these income streams is the pause of recovery activity due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This continues to be curtailed due to court backlogs and necessary prioritisation of urgent work thereby reducing the level of summons or overpayment income to the Council. The Council is working with colleagues at HM Courts and Tribunal Service to formulate a future recovery schedule for local taxation work with the first cases likely to be heard late April 2022. A degree of government support is available for in-year loss of income (including summons income) for 2021/22, however no further support in this manner is anticipated in 2022/23.</p> <p>The losses on income in these two areas are not aligned to the Council's ethical approach to debt collection, more specifically linked to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. We will continue with our ethical approach to supporting indebted customers in 22/23, whilst also ensuring that people that can pay do pay.</p>

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Savings					
37	Budget Task & Finish Group	Savings: Pest Control	<p>Q. The review of the Pest Control service shows a proposed saving of £95,000. Is this the current cost to the council of running the service?</p> <p>We note that the equalities assessment states:</p> <p>If the review of the service results in the ending of the current reduced cost service for persons in the Council Tax Reduction Scheme then this will have a negative impact on people in low income households. Furthermore, a significant part of the service is providing a pest control service for council tenants so again this would need to be taken into consideration.</p> <p>Q. Do we know how competitive the current service is compared to the Private Sector for those who do not receive a discount? Q.</p> <p>Will the review look at how we could make the service more profitable rather than simply closing it down, so that services to Council tenants and those on low incomes can be maintained?</p>	Clr Nicola Beech / Stephen Peacock	<p>The net 21/22 annual cost to the Council for running the Pest Control service is £95,000.</p> <p>The Pest Control service review will take place in 22/23 and will include a consideration of how competitive the service is within the sector, the impact of pest control services to Council tenants and persons on the council tax reduction scheme and look at options as to how the benefits, if demonstrated, can be maintained.</p>
38	Budget Task & Finish Group	Savings: Bus Shelter Advertising	Bus stop advertisement: The value of this contract is increasing significantly – is this due to increased value or more sites?	Clr Don Alexander / Stephen Peacock	This is due to increased value from the contract through digital advertising at bus stops replacing standard paper based advertising - not more sites. It may result in less advertising locations overall at bus stops.
39	Budget Task & Finish Group	Savings: Library Book Budget	The library book budget will be cut by £100k, how much will remain in the budget?	Clr Ellie King / Stephen Peacock	The library material fund will be reduced by £50k and the Supplies and Service budget will also be reduced by £50k. The material fund is currently £560,000 and will be reduced to £510,000. The Supplies and Services budget is currently £435k and will be reduced to £385k.
40	Budget Task & Finish Group	Savings: Youth Services	<p>Reduce the contractual value of the council's commissioned youth services:</p> <p>The budget states "ensuring we maximise other sources of funding so that youth services can continue for children and young people in the city, including statutory parts of the service like the post 16 education and training guarantee and young carer assessments".</p> <p>Q. Do we know for certain that these other sources of funding are available or is there a real possibility that youth services will suffer a funding cut as a result?</p>	Clr Asher Craig / Hugh Evans	<p>From 23/24, the current commissioned arrangements will end and there is ongoing work with the wider sector to review our combined total resource and to point this towards new, co-produced outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>The Council currently funds 30% of the activity in the sector, and a more collaborative way of working will enable the sector to grow their income. In addition, the Youth Zone should open in 2024, bringing significant investment in youth services through a partnership with the Council, Onside and Youth Moves. The estimated value of this annually is £900,000 such that this represents a budget increase in Bristol's commitment and investment to youth services.</p>
41	Budget Task & Finish Group	Savings: Local Crisis Prevention Fund	Half of the local crisis fund will be earmarked for council tenants. Can I check what proportion was allocated to council tenants last year? And have we considered the impact on those struggling in private rental (who already have much higher rent to deal with).	Clr Craig Cheney / Mike Jackson	<p>It is estimated that the Local Crisis and Prevention Fund (LCPF) spends around 65% of its 2021/22 budget on council tenants as a large proportion of the LCPF budget is allocated to household goods and especially new tenancies. Private rental sector demand is smaller as properties are more likely to be part or fully furnished in this area. This split will be higher for Emergency Payment awards, but awards are less in value.</p> <p>Housing Payments (DHP) are also available to assist those in the private rental sector. In 2021/22, 26% of the £2m budget has been allocated to this sector to date. This is higher, in recognition of the ending of the Covid-19 related stay on evictions. Full consideration will continue to be given to those struggling in the private sector, both within the Local Crisis and Prevention Fund and wider discretionary areas such as Discretionary Housing Payments, and the earmarking of 50% of the LCPF budget is not expected to have any negative impacts in any other sectors.</p>
42	Budget Task & Finish Group	Savings: Discretionary Giving	CEN06 – what is meant by discretionary giving? Can you give an example of what this might be and how it will fund core activity?	Clr Craig Cheney / Mike Jackson	<p>'Discretionary giving' means members of the public choosing to give money without there being any legal or statutory obligation to do so; for example donating to charity. In this context, we intend to test the hypothesis that people may be willing to donate towards good causes via the Council, in ways which relate to the city's key challenges and the Council's priorities (identified in its Corporate Strategy 2022-27). It is possible this could help fund core activity that has a social purpose.</p> <p>The idea is at a very early stage and this is reflected in the relatively small indicative targets contained within the budget proposals. Whilst this type of giving would mainly raise money 'over and above' Council spending, there may be some limited circumstances where it could be possible that a portion of proceeds offsets Council spending or – more likely - helps prevent the need for expenditure. Examples of discretionary giving include the use of crowd-funding platforms (like GoFundMe), 'tap to give' points for contactless monetary donations, charitable partnership collections (such as the Lord Mayor's Appeal) and more.</p> <p>As identified in the EQIA, the precise nature of the giving, the terms and conditions and the use of resulting funds would need to be made very clear and publicised to potential givers to ensure transparency. Also noted in the EQIA is a desire to avoid direct competition with the charitable sector, and to consider how partnerships with VCSE organisations might produce mutual and/or social benefits.</p>

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43	Budget Task & Finish Group	Savings: Trade Union	<p>Questions on the trade union facility time savings:</p> <p>I am concerned whether the budget saving having been drafted before agreeing a new agreement is the right approach and anticipates savings that might not be achievable, and may in fact be destructive in terms of staff relations and bringing staff along with changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How are departments expected to cover the costs of duties that are supporting staff across the council on their own? <p>It seems the result will be whichever department happens to contain the members elected to branch positions will be burdened with the cost. This will lead to managers discouraging trade union engagement so as to save potential costs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What is the goal for the new agreement? •Does the council expect to see a reduction in facilities time as a result of this change? 	Mike Jackson	<p>The Council is fully committed to trade union membership, however it is recognised that the trade union facility time funding has not been reviewed for many years. During this period there has been large workforce reductions across the Council and trade union membership has fallen significantly in the same period. There is a requirement to review budgets across all areas of the Council and as a result it is proposed the facilities time budget be adjusted accordingly and this will be accompanied by a modernised facilities time agreement.</p> <p>Once the budget for trade union facility time has been approved, we will produce a draft facilities time agreement for consultation based on the amount approved in the budget. The present arrangements are based on block release for some trade union representatives whilst other representatives do not have centrally funded time off. Whatever budget is approved there needs to be consistent arrangements in place across the Council that are clear and transparent for both trade union representatives and managers. This will allow for all services to have equal representation across all areas and enable managers to ensure service delivery is not affected; the new arrangements will reflect those principals.</p> <p>When we produce our draft proposals they will be designed to support workplace trade union representation across the whole Council which will negate the need to have a small number of trade union representatives receiving block release. Departments will be expected to cover the costs of release but there will be clear guidance and rules on the amount of time that will be permitted per representative, additionally it is intended to recommend putting in place trade union facility time to cover attendance at corporate consultation meetings with the employer. A draft facilities time agreement will be produced once Full Council sets the budget and consultation will commence shortly after.</p>