

HR Committee

15 December 2022



Report of:	Director: Workforce & Change
Title:	Potential workforce implications of the 2023-24 budget saving proposals
Ward:	City-wide
Officers Presenting Report:	Steph Griffin (Director: Workforce & Change) and James Brereton (Head of Human Resources)
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Recommendation

That the Committee notes the report.

Summary

The report briefs the Committee on the potential workforce implications arising from the 2023/24 budget saving proposals.

The significant issues in the report are:

- The council is currently consulting the public on a range of budget saving proposals to balance a budget gap. This will require a review of the staffing structure in some teams and a reduction in number of posts. Heads of Service briefed staff on the 2023/24 budget saving proposals before the public consultation went live.
- Workforce consultation continues as necessary in relation to savings approved in previous budgets and for any required by local issues (eg, pressures within existing service budgets).
- Provisional estimates indicate up to 300 redundancies (voluntary or compulsory) are possible. The spread of redundancies across and within directorates, services and teams will be variable depending upon the availability of vacancies that can be deleted and turnover rates.
- The number of redundancies required will be minimised through the deletion of vacancies arising from natural turnover, the use of the Succession Planning Policy (as appropriate) and the return to a pro-active approach to redeployment.
- Where approved by Full Council and/or Cabinet as required, savings that have a workforce impact will be subject to consultation and selection processes as set out in the Council's Managing Change Policy.
- An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and will be supplemented by local assessments as appropriate. Staff outcomes will be monitored, and any concerns highlighted.

Policy

1. Workforce changes take place in line with the Council's Managing Change Policy.

Consultation

2. Internal

Not required as this report is for information only.

3. External

Not required.

Context

4. The Council has a requirement to balance budget through savings ranging between £37.5m and £87.6m worst case scenario resulting from several factors creating financial uncertainty for the council; Inflation in the UK, changes in local government funding and increasing demand on services.
5. A public consultation on the 2023-28 budget is currently underway and includes a range of saving proposals to balance the budget.
6. The scale of the financial challenge we are facing means that colleagues across the organisation are likely to be impacted by some of the proposals.
7. Ahead of the public consultation going live, Heads of Service briefed their staff so that their teams had a chance to hear about proposals in their area and discuss what it means for them. This briefing included explaining the context of the budget gap, as well as savings proposed for their own services.
8. Workforce consultation continues as necessary in relation to savings approved in previous budgets and for any changes required by local issues (eg, pressures within existing service budgets).
9. Provisional estimates indicate up to 300 redundancies (voluntary or compulsory) are possible. The spread of redundancies across and within directorates, services and teams will be variable depending upon the availability of vacancies that can be deleted and turnover rates.
10. The number of redundancies required will be minimised through the deletion of vacancies arising from natural turnover, the use of the Succession Planning Policy (as appropriate) and the return to a pro-active approach to redeployment.
11. The notices required by law have been issued to the relevant government department and to representatives of the Single Status trade unions (ie, GMB, UNISON and Unite the Union) to begin collective consultation. These are attached for information. A weekly consultation meeting with TU reps and HR have been introduced to discuss the proposals and how we approach the change process.

12. Where approved by Full Council and/or Cabinet as required, savings that have a workforce impact will be subject to consultation and selection processes as set out in the Council's Managing Change Policy.
13. A draft Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and is attached for information; it will be published along with the January budget Cabinet papers. Any service restructures will be accompanied by a service-specific Equality Impact Assessment assessments as part of our Managing Change policy. Staff outcomes will be monitored, and any concerns highlighted.
14. To support colleagues through an uncertain and difficult period when potentially significant changes to the organisation are proposed, we have put in place a range of wellbeing support. This includes a range of resources on our staff intranet, wellbeing workshops and our Employee Assistance Programme.

Proposal

15. That the Committee notes the report.

Other Options Considered

16. None because this report is for information only.

Risk Assessment

17. Not required because this report is for information only.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 18a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
 - i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);

- encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

18b) An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached for information.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

Not required because this report is for information only.

Financial

(a) Revenue

(b) Capital

Not required because this report is for information only.

Land

Not applicable.

Personnel

Not required because this report is for information only.

Appendices:

A – HR1 Form

B – Section 188 Notice

C – Equality Impact Assessment

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None.