

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Universal Services
Date:	18 September 2023
Title:	Savings Programme to 2025 – Revenue Savings Proposals
Report From:	Director of Universal Services and Director of Corporate Operations

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to outline the detailed savings proposals for Universal Services that have been developed as part of the Savings to 2025 (SP2025) Programme.

Recommendation(s)

2. To approve the submission of the proposed savings options contained in this report and Appendix 1 to the Cabinet.

Executive Summary

3. This report outlines the detailed savings proposals for Universal Services that have been developed as part of the Savings to 2025 (SP2025) Programme. The report also provides details of the Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) that have been produced in respect of these proposals and highlights where applicable, any key issues arising from the public consultation exercise that was carried out over the summer and how these have impacted on the final proposals presented in this report.
4. The Executive Member is requested to approve the detailed savings proposals for submission to Cabinet in October and then full County Council in November, recognising that there will be further public consultation for some proposals.

Contextual Information

5. In February 2023, Cabinet and Council were updated on the budget gap position and the early work undertaken by the Corporate Management Team to identify the available options to balance the budget to 2025/26. The Council expects to face a budget gap of at least £132m after taking account of annual Council tax increases at the maximum permitted level of 4.99% and additional grant funding expected to be provided by the government in 2024/25.
6. The early publication of a government policy paper on local authority funding for 2024/25 was welcomed. However, with 2024/25 representing the last year of the current parliament and spending review period, there remains considerable uncertainty as to the resources available to the Council from 2025/26 onwards. It is clear, however, that the landscape for the public finances remains challenging following the pandemic, considering current economic and geopolitical factors. Given the lack of any certainty from 2025/26, the County Council has had no choice but to assume that savings required to meet a gap of at least £132m will be required by April 2025, as we cannot take the risk of assuming further government financial support will be forthcoming. Furthermore, the financial constraints on the Council mean that there will be no funding available to cash flow a savings programme beyond April 2025.
7. In recognition of the size of the financial challenge, coming after a decade of savings totalling £640m, directorates were not issued with 'straight line' savings targets as per previous savings programmes but were instead instructed to review what savings might be achievable if we were to move towards a 'bare minimum' provision of services. This approach aimed to maximise the potential for savings across the organisation whilst ensuring that the Council can continue to target resources on the most vulnerable adults and children and deliver other vital core services.
8. The early work undertaken by directorates consisted of a detailed review of each budget line to understand where:
 - Further efficiencies could be achieved, for example due to changes to working practices following the pandemic or through changes to service management arrangements following the Fit for The Future organisational structure review.
 - Investment in new equipment or IT technology could enable us to deliver services differently.
 - Income generation could be increased through expanding the scope of existing sales, fees and charges or introducing new charges for some services.
 - Non-statutory or discretionary services could be scaled back or ceased.

9. Following the initial scoping exercise undertaken at directorate level, the savings options were subject to a detailed and robust scrutiny process, consisting of peer reviews within the Corporate Management Team and scrutiny by Executive Members, the Leader and Deputy Leader. The review process aimed to ensure that:
 - The available savings opportunities for each key service line have been maximised and directorates have considered how the implementation of savings can be accelerated where possible to maximise early delivery.
 - There is a shared understanding across directorates of any risks or dependencies linked to savings in other areas to eliminate any unintended consequences of savings delivery, for example possible cost and/or demand increases for other services.
 - The cumulative impacts of savings across all directorates on specific service user groups have been assessed and minimised as far as possible.

10. This detailed work has identified a total of £90.4m savings across all directorates, of which £75.0m are expected to be delivered by 2025/26, leaving an unmet budget gap of £57.0m in 2025/26. It is not surprising that this position has been reached given the £640m savings already removed from the budget since 2010. In the absence of any further government funding to 2025/26, the Council will be reliant on reserves to temporarily bridge the budget gap pending fundamental reform to the funding system and legislative framework for local government. Additionally, a budget shortfall of £86m is currently expected for 2024/25 which will also need to be met from reserves.

11. A review of the Council's reserve balances was undertaken at the end of the 2022/23 financial year and the results were reported to Cabinet and Full Council in July. The review identified most of the additional funding required to bridge the gap for 2024/25, albeit a small deficit of £2.4m still remains in addition to the significant shortfall of £57.0m in 2025/26. It is therefore not possible to continue with the Council's usual financial approach of allowing directorates to retain any early achievement of savings for reinvestment in service delivery. All savings delivered in 2023/24 and 2024/25 will instead be transferred to the budget bridging reserve to help balance the budget in 2025/26.

12. As part of the Council's Fit for The Future Programme, a series of detailed reviews of key functions which are common across all directorates will be undertaken with the aim of maximising consistency, efficiency and effectiveness in the following areas:
 - how the Council engages with its customers when they contact the County Council directly
 - how transformation and business support activity is defined and delivered

- how senior management structures, roles and responsibilities align between directorates
 - how the Council provides core enabling services such as Finance, IT and HR; ensuring these are delivered from the centre of the organisation
13. As well as delivering operational benefits for the Council, these reviews are expected to help reduce costs through removing duplication, enabling more effective prioritisation of resources and improving retention of specialist skillsets. Whilst the financial benefits are expected to supplement the £90.4m savings identified by individual directorates, they will not be sufficient to meet the remaining budget gap to 2025/26.
14. As we seek to establish a long-term sustainable funding solution through on-going lobbying and discussions with central government, our options to meet the predicted annual budget shortfall (of at least £132m) by 2025 are limited. It is considered that there will be very few ways in which the County Council can continue to meet the legal duty to balance the budget without any impact on the residents of Hampshire. To help understand how people could be affected by the proposals being considered, the County Council undertook an open public consultation '*Making the most of your money*', which ran for six weeks between 12 June and 23 July. The consultation was widely promoted to residents and stakeholders, and asked for views on a range of high-level options that could help to address the shortfall, so that the County Council could take residents' needs in to account when considering the way forward.
15. The consultation provided an overview of the anticipated budget gap by 2025 and explained the range of options likely to be needed to enable the County Council to continue to deliver statutory service obligations.
16. The consultation feedback confirmed that a number of approaches are likely to still be needed to meet the scale of the financial challenge. Consequently, the County Council will seek to:
- **continue with its financial strategy**, which includes:
 - **targeting resources** on the most vulnerable adults and children
 - **using reserves carefully** to help meet one-off demand pressures
 - **continue to lobby central government** for fundamental changes to the way local government is funded, as well as a number of other ways to help address the funding gap including increasing funding for growth in social care services and for highways maintenance, and allowing new charges to be levied for some services;
 - **help to minimise reductions and changes to local services** by raising council tax by 4.99% in line with the maximum level permitted by government without a public referendum;
 - **generate additional income** to help sustain services;

- **introduce and increase charges** for some services;
 - consider further the opportunities for **changing local government arrangements** in Hampshire.
17. Executive Lead Members and Chief Officers have been provided with the key findings from the consultation to help in their consideration of the final savings proposals for this report, and a summary of these is provided at Appendix 3. Responses to the consultation will similarly help to inform the decision making by Cabinet and Full Council in October and November of 2023 on options for delivering a balanced budget up to 2025/26, which the Authority is required by law to do.
18. In addition, Equality Impact Assessments have also been produced for each savings proposal, and these together with the broad outcomes of the consultation and the development work on the overall SP2025 Programme have helped to inform and shape the final proposals presented for approval in this report.

Savings Programme to 2025 – Directorate Context/Approach

19. The Universal Services directorate is responsible for a broad range of public facing services that are accessible to all, such as: Hampshire Outdoor Centres, Country Parks and public Rights of Way; registration of citizenship, births, marriages and deaths; Trading Standards; building and maintenance of roads, footways and cycleways; streetlighting; traffic management and road safety; on-street parking, household waste disposal and recycling centres; planning control; flood risk management; public and community transport subsidies; and facilities management. Many of these services are required by law with a need to maintain a base level of funding to meet statutory requirements. Others are non-statutory or 'choose to use' services, for which income generation is critical to ensure these services are self-sustaining over the long term.
20. The directorate was established at the beginning of 2023, as part of a larger restructuring of the organisation. It brought together many of the delivery functions of the former Economy, Transport & Environment (ETE) department and significant elements of the former Culture, Communities and Business Services department (CCBS).
21. As Universal Services is a new directorate, specific historic savings data prior to Savings Programme to 2023 (SP2023) is not available. However, the annual savings programmes from 2011 (up to, but excluding SP2023 savings) of the former ETE and CCBS departments (from which the majority of services were transferred into the new Universal Services directorate) plus SP2023 savings for Universal Services, total £105m. These total savings included real term reductions in operational budgets, re-negotiation of

external contracts, reductions in core full time equivalent (FTE) posts and a significant focus on driving a commercial approach to maximising public value, reducing core-funding to income-generating services and cost recovery.

22. To date this strategy has broadly been successful; much of the historic savings have been found through efficiencies in external spend whilst still delivering good services, and commercial endeavours have resulted in increased demand for paid for services and a lower cost to serve. However almost £8m of the Transformation to 2021 savings programme (Tt21) is yet to be realised, due to delays to moving to a new approach in waste and recycling with district and borough councils. Additionally, 15% of the directorate's SP2023 (£1.8m) is yet to be delivered. Achieving further savings is even more challenging; the major external contracts have already been re-negotiated as part of previous savings programmes and many of the directorate's income-based services are working in an increasingly competitive market with reducing margins. Further still, significant inflationary pressures driven by external factors are being acutely felt across service delivery and require the achievement of revenue increases and cost savings simply to remain within existing budgets.
23. Against this backdrop, and with the organisation as a whole facing significant financial pressures, the directorate has reviewed all possible approaches to providing further savings from 2025/26 by scrutinising each service through the lens of what is the **statutory minimum provision**. This has resulted in a proposed Universal Services SP2025 programme totalling £19.279m across sixteen proposals. These proposals require savings to be made through service reductions, the implementation of alternative non-County Council funded delivery models, service efficiencies, organisational efficiencies, and further specific income / cost recovery initiatives where possible. The income / cost recovery initiatives refer to generating new income to contribute towards overheads through cost recovery and ensuring existing charges are sufficient to fully recover costs. However, this would not preclude consideration of establishing a trading company where scope exists to generate income above cost recovery.
24. It is estimated that the delivery of these proposals would result in the loss of around 140 FTE, (approximately 8% of the Universal Services workforce FTE). The intention would be to meet this reduction from vacancies and natural turnover as far as possible. In addition, voluntary redundancy may also be considered alongside this to further mitigate the impact.
25. Proposals have been put forward from each of the four branches that make up the Universal Services directorate. For ease of reading, the sixteen Universal Services SP25 proposals have been grouped below by branch, with the exception of two proposals, which are cross-cutting in nature and reach across multiple branches, and so are detailed separately below.

26. Equalities impact assessments have been undertaken for each of these proposals, as set out in Appendix 2. These are initial assessments and further assessments may be undertaken as proposals develop. At this stage the impacts take account of the feedback from the stage one budget consultation responses. Where potential negative impacts have been identified these will be considered and mitigated where possible.

Highways, Engineering & Transport

27. The majority, £12.810m (66%), of the directorate's individual proposed savings are to be achieved through initiatives undertaken within the Highways, Engineering & Transport (HET) branch with over half of this (£7.5m) to be achieved through reductions in the Highways maintenance budget.
28. The SP2025 savings proposal would reduce planned maintenance funding by £7.5m, with planned maintenance activity continuing at reduced levels until government funding allows it to be reinstated. This proposal for a reduction in the budget does not affect the additional £22.5m for the three-year Stronger Roads Today campaign agreed by County Council in July 2023 for increased reactive maintenance, the final year of which is 2025/26.
29. Over time unless there is an increase in government funding for the maintenance of local roads, the reduction in maintenance spend will result in the road network becoming more fragile and less resilient to the impacts of winter weather, climate change and traffic, leading to an accelerated deterioration in the overall health of the highway asset. Initiatives will be investigated to try to mitigate these impacts, including revised operational working practices and the use of smart, innovative technology.
30. Further savings are proposed through budget reductions (£1.0m) for winter maintenance, by reviewing the current service provision against statutory requirements. This will include reviewing and updating the road networks currently treated with precautionary salting in advance of freezing conditions, the road networks treated during freezing conditions and other treatment routes, e.g. community routes. Work would be undertaken with the County Council's service provider to identify further business efficiencies and new innovations to reduce the cost of providing this service.
31. The proposals include up to £1.1m of savings from the review of the School Crossing Patrols (SCP) service. This proposal includes undertaking assessments of each SCP controlled site to determine whether alternative safe measures could be put in place which would enable the SCP provision to be safely withdrawn. The resulting measures may include the delivery of local highway measures to improve facilities for pedestrians to safely cross roads, or the determination of new safer routes to school. The assessments may

also identify existing routes where an SCP is no longer required as the route is already safe; or routes that cannot be made safe and will therefore continue to require an HCC-funded SCP for the time being. Where the HCC-funded SCP provision is withdrawn through this process, schools and other bodies will be able to pay for SCP provision at full cost through a service level agreement with the County Council.

32. Building on savings secured from previous rounds, a proposal is looking to secure further savings (£0.5m) through the use of more energy efficient LED bulbs, additional dimming of street lights to lower levels during the night, and part-night lighting of street lights in specific areas.
33. There is a proposal to make further savings of £1.7m through eliminating all spend on non-statutory public transport provision. This includes funds the County Council spends on subsidising non-commercially viable local bus routes and on providing community transport services such as Dial-a-Ride and Call and Go. A review will be undertaken to look at any knock-on impact on the Home to School Transport (HTST) service in Children's Services as a result of any bus route reductions so that this proposal can be considered in the wider context, such that removal of funding for some routes does not simply create a corresponding budget pressure in HTST. The directorate will engage with third sector partners and other stakeholders to consider how the impact can be minimised.
34. The final proposal for this branch is £1.01m of increased income generation across various services by reviewing existing charges, expanding current income streams and through the development of new income streams. This may include, for example, increased charges for an expedited service, selling specialist services and developing sponsorship and advertising opportunities. Wherever possible the branch will look to grow income beyond £1.01m, to alleviate savings pressures.

Waste and Environmental Services

35. The Waste and Environmental Services (WES) branch of the Universal Services directorate is responsible for the delivery of two of the sixteen SP25 Universal Services proposals totalling £1.473m.
36. The majority of this saving (£1.2m) is to be achieved through undertaking a review of the existing 24 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) service provision to inform a revised strategy for service delivery, taking account of best practice across the country and national guidance, and enabling the provision of more modern, accessible sites. The revised service could include varying the opening hours of HWRCs, reducing the number of existing HWRCs, building new HWRCs or extending capacity of existing HWRCs, and/or introducing new charges for discretionary services at

HWRCs. Early outputs of the review may identify new ways of working that provide savings prior to April 2025, wherever this is the case the branch will look to implement changes sooner.

37. The remainder (£0.273m) of the Waste and Environmental Services requirement will be achieved through various measures that will move applicable services towards a cash limit neutral position, mainly through increased income and further service efficiencies.

Recreation, Information & Business Services

38. The Recreation, Information & Business Services (RIBS) branch of the Universal Services directorate has individual proposals totalling £0.831m. Reflecting the nature of the services within the branch, the proposals are made up of income and service efficiencies.
39. Hampshire Outdoor Centres (HOC) will focus on building on commercial and efficiency initiatives that have been successful in the past few years to grow earned income through customer growth and retention (£0.193m), including the development of a core educational offer, positioning Calshot Activities Centre as a destination for visitors to the South Coast, and broadening public access to the facilities at weekends and during the school holidays.
40. The Countryside Service is proposing £0.280m of savings through increasing income and realising cost efficiencies. An integrated ranger service across the 3,000 mile Rights of Way network and 80 countryside sites would reduce contracted services, reduce travel, increase resilience and bring together specialist teams that could generate income from sold services. Income generation will focus on price increases and a new membership and ticketing system within the five Country Parks.
41. A further £0.358m of savings from within the branch is due to be delivered by the Registration and Archives services with both services investigating multiple potential new areas of income, including charging for storage, cataloguing, conservation, training, licensing of premises, funeral celebrant services, and fee increases.

Property, Business Development & Transformation

42. The Property, Business Development and Transformation (PBD&T) branch is proposing £0.516m of savings, and will also provide project and programme leadership and support to other branches within Universal Services and Hampshire 2050 directorates to enable the delivery of their planned savings.

43. Within PBD&T, £0.2m savings is proposed through streamlining the feasibility activity within the Property Services capital programme, through implementation of tighter controls and rationalised viability/feasibility studies.
44. Also within this branch, a further £0.2m will be secured from unlocking facilities management (FM) savings from office accommodation rationalisation, through vacancy management and natural turnover. Post-pandemic, ways of working have changed across the built estate meaning a less intensive reliance on FM services, and some buildings have been released meaning there is less space to cover. As such the staffing requirement is now reduced and savings can be delivered with minimal impact on any staff group.
45. Finally for this branch, £0.116m of savings are proposed from reductions in directorate non-pay budgets including learning & development and postage & printing. These savings are possible with limited impact on colleagues or services, due to the change in ways of working since the pandemic, an internal restructure bringing together parts of two former departments, and more use of the Apprenticeship Levy funding.

Cross-directorate proposals

46. The directorate's SP25 proposals include a combined saving of £0.315m to be enabled from undertaking a wide-ranging review of the approach to charging and enforcing parking across Hampshire. This review will include identification of additional locations (e.g. on/off road, beach front, countryside) suitable for charging, a review of charges currently in force, and development of alternative approaches to paid-for parking.
47. The directorate proposals also include a cross-directorate organisational redesign proposal (£3.334m). This will involve a review across all the directorate's branches, to achieve further savings from streamlining services, changes of the removal of non-statutory services that cannot be funded through income generation, and efficiencies from service synergies afforded following the corporate restructure. 80 of the estimated 140 FTEs referred to in paragraph 24 above relate to the organisational redesign proposal in Universal Services. The intention would be to meet this reduction from vacancies and natural turnover as far as possible. In addition, voluntary redundancy may also be considered alongside this to further mitigate the impact.

Key challenges, risks, issues and interdependencies

48. The savings proposed by Universal Services equate to 13% of the directorate's cash limit, and will be extremely challenging to achieve,

particularly against the backdrop of continuing to deliver complex operational services at this scale, all of which carry individual and collective levels of risk to the public.

49. The directorate's income proposals rely on growing the demand for our choose-to-use discretionary services such as the Hampshire Outdoor Centres and aspects of our Country Parks. This demand will be driven through strong customer engagement and proposition development, including targeted infrastructure investment that is currently not secured. By their nature, many of the directorate's income generating and cost-recovery activities are impacted by demand changes that are outside of the directorate's control.
50. Inflation will continue to be a key risk for the directorate as increasing levels of income need to be achieved just to keep the status-quo with cash limits only able to deliver a reduced service.
51. The directorate's ability to recruit and retain colleagues across services is also a very significant risk, exacerbated by the continuing pressure on public sector wages and budgets at a time when the private sector is increasing financial incentives to attract the best people. We will need to continue to reinforce our compelling narrative of why working for an organisation with the calibre of the people we have, and delivering such diverse services that make a huge difference to residents, is so attractive.
52. Implementation of elements of the proposals will likely require greater digital innovation. For example, through an effective web presence enabling customers to transact with services easily online, creating new ways to reduce the time from road defect reporting to repair, and reducing the cost to serve through automation and enhanced data utilisation.
53. Delivery of all proposals will require the strong capability of colleagues across the directorate, as well as sufficient people resources to successfully implement the changes required. This may result in a slightly later timing of delivery of the staffing elements to some of the proposals.
54. These proposals also impact services provided by other directorates within Hampshire County Council, for example the proposed reduction in public transport would likely result in increased demand for home to school transport services operated by Childrens Services directorate. The proposals may additionally make it more challenging to deliver strategies developed by the organisation's Hampshire 2050 directorate, for example strategies concerning local transport or climate plans.
55. The savings proposals may also potentially have a wider impact than the cash limit reduction, as it is possible they could also negatively impact

external funding that matches or supports County Council funding, much of which will come from central government.

Summary Financial Implications

56. The total value of the savings opportunities identified for the directorate is £19.279m. The expected cashflow profile for implementation of the savings is set out in the table below.

2024/25	2025/26	Full Year Impact
£'000	£'000	£'000
1,160	19,279	19,279

57. Of the £19.279m total savings, £2.086m is proposed through additional income generation by expanding the scope of existing fees and charges or introducing new fees and charges, with £17.193m achieved through reductions to expenditure budgets from service efficiencies and reductions.

58. The detailed savings proposals that are being put forward by the directorate are contained in Appendix 1.

Workforce Implications

59. Appendix 1 also provides information on the estimated number of reductions in staffing as a result of implementing the proposals. For the estimated 140 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts that may be affected, the intention would be to meet this reduction from vacancies and natural turnover as far as possible.

60. The County Council's approach to managing down staff levels in a planned and sensitive way through the use of managed recruitment, redeployment of staff where possible and voluntary redundancy where appropriate will be continued.

Climate Implications

61. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.

62. Given that this report deals with savings proposals it is difficult to assess any specific climate change impacts at this stage, but assessments will be undertaken for individual proposals, if appropriate as part of the implementation process.

Consultation, Decision Making and Equality Impact Assessments

63. As part of its prudent financial strategy, the County Council has been planning since March 2022 how it might tackle the anticipated deficit in its budget by 2025/26. As part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which was last approved by the County Council in September 2022 and updated as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24, initial assumptions have been made about inflation, pressures, council tax levels and the use of reserves. Total anticipated savings of £132m are required and directorates were tasked with reviewing all possible opportunities to contribute to bridging this gap.
64. The County Council undertook an open public consultation '*Making the most of your money*' which ran for six weeks from 12 June to 23 July 2023. The consultation was promoted to residents and stakeholders, and asked for views on a range of high-level options that could help to address the shortfall, so that the County Council could take residents' needs into account when considering the way forward.
65. The consultation explained that given the considerable size of the budget gap by 2025, it was likely a combination of the potential options being considered would be needed, given the limited ability the County Council has to generate income and the need to continue to deliver statutory service obligations. For example, the supporting Information Pack explained that the £132m budget forecast took into account an assumed increase in council tax of 4.99% (of which 2% must be spent on Adult social care services), and illustrated the amount of savings that would still be required even if council tax was increased by up to 10%. The Pack also explained that if central government were to support a change to the structure of local government in Hampshire, it would still take several years to fully realise any savings. Residents were similarly made aware that the use of the County Council's reserves (which are retained for service investment and to help manage financial risk) would not provide a sustainable solution to address ongoing financial pressures. The Pack further explained that if these were used to meet service delivery these would be used up very quickly, and so only temporarily delaying the point at which other savings would need to be found.
66. Executive Lead Members and Chief Officers have been provided with the key findings from the consultation to help in their consideration of the final savings proposals. As the consultation feedback confirms, a number of different approaches are likely to be needed to meet the scale of the financial challenge. Consequently, the County Council will seek to:

- **continue with its financial strategy**, which includes:
 - **targeting resources** on the most vulnerable adults and children
 - **using reserves carefully** to help meet one-off demand pressures
- **continue to lobby central government** for fundamental changes to the way local government is funded, as well as a number of other ways to help address the funding gap including increasing funding for growth in social care services and for highways maintenance, and allowing new charges to be levied for some services;
- **help to minimise reductions and changes to local services** by raising council tax by 4.99% in line with the maximum level permitted by government without a public referendum;
- **generate additional income** to help sustain services;
- introduce and increase charges for some services;
- consider further the opportunities for **changing local government arrangements** in Hampshire.

67. The proposals set out in this paper represent suggested ways in which directorate savings could be generated to maximise the contribution to the SP2025 Programme and have, wherever possible, been developed in line with the principles set out above. Where possible the proposals are either income-led or cost-recovery-led, or have an element of income generation. However, to support the organisation's financial strategy of targeting resources on the most vulnerable adults and children in Hampshire, reductions in non-statutory universal services have had to be proposed.

68. The *'Making the most of your money'* consultation received 627 comments on, or alternative suggestions to, the budget options proposed in the consultation relating specifically to services delivered by the Universal Services directorate. Many of these reflected residents' and stakeholders' concerns regarding reductions in universal services. For example,

- of those respondents mentioning the Highways service (118), 70% cited concerns for the overall state of the highway if budget reductions were to be made.
- of those providing comments on public transport (33), 40% cited concerns about a decline in bus services.
- of those responding with comments regarding changes to HWRC provision (119), 59% cited a perceived potential result being an increase in fly-tipping.

69. The consultation also asked for residents' and stakeholders' views on potential impacts that might result from the implementation of the proposed budget options. 227 of the comments submitted related to services within the Universal Services directorate. These potential impact comments generally

concluded with the general comments received although there were also 12 comments raising potential child safety impacts from a reduction in the budget for school crossing patrols, and 33 comments suggesting increased and new car parking charges would have various adverse impacts. Of note, a larger number of respondents commented on potential negative public transport impacts (111) resulting from transport reductions or transport price increases, than had commented within the general comments section. These comments will be considered as part of the proposed reviews of these services and any future stage two consultations.

70. Not all responses raised concerns, for example some respondents were supportive of income and commercial efficiencies as well as energy-saving streetlighting measures. There were however some respondents who suggested that these proposals could result in job losses within the directorate.
71. The '*Making the most of your money*' consultation also invited written submissions. These primarily came from organisations (such as district councils and other partners of the County Council). Written responses specific to the Universal Services directorate were generally consistent with those received through the structured response forms. This included suggesting the council increases income where possible to reduce the need for service reductions, as well as highlighting concerns over potential service reductions, including reductions relating to school crossing patrols, highways maintenance, and public transport.
72. Where applicable, detailed proposals for making savings will be subject to further, more detailed Phase 2 consultations before any final decisions on service specific changes are made.
73. Individual Executive Members cannot make decisions on strategic issues such as council tax levels and use of reserves and therefore, these proposals, together with the outcomes of the *Making the most of your money* consultation exercise outlined in appendix 3, will go forward to Cabinet and County Council and will be considered in light of all the options that are available to balance the budget by 2025/26.
74. Following the Executive Member Decision Days, all final savings proposals will go on to be considered by the Cabinet and Full Council in October and November – providing further opportunity for the overall options for balancing the budget to be considered as a whole and in view of the consultation findings. Further to ratification by Cabinet and Full Council, some proposals may be subject to further, more detailed consultation.
75. In addition to the consultation exercise, Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been produced for each of the savings proposals outlined in Appendix 1

and these have been provided for information in Appendix 2. These will be considered further and alongside a cumulative EIA by Cabinet and Full Council. The cumulative assessment provides an opportunity to consider the multiple impacts across proposals as a whole and, therefore, identify any potential areas of multiple disadvantage where mitigating action(s) may be needed.

76. Together the *Making the most of your money* consultation and Equality Impact Assessments have helped to shape the final proposals presented for approval in this report.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes/No
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes/No
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes/No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes/No

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Developing a Medium Term Financial Strategy Template County Council Part I report (hants.gov.uk)	Cabinet - 19 July 2022 County Council – 29 September 2022
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken for each of the savings options and these are included as a separate appendix to this report (Appendix 2).