

# Budget consultation 2024 to 2025

We are asking for your views on our draft spending plans for the next financial year, 2024 to 2025.

## What we are consulting on

This consultation is about the ongoing “operational” spend on our day-to-day services, known as the revenue budget. It does not refer to one-off spending on infrastructure such as transport projects, known as capital schemes. These two budgets are treated quite separately, and we are not allowed to pay for revenue spending from the capital budget. Our proposed capital programme will be included in the budget papers being presented to cabinet and Council in February.

We are currently drawing up our budget proposals for the next financial year (2024 to 2025).

- For the current financial year (2023 to 2024), we set a net budget of £131.03m
- For the next financial year (2024 to 2025), we are proposing a net budget of £138.73m

These proposals will set out the changes we need to make to last year’s budget in order for us to produce a balanced budget for the following year, which we are legally obliged to do.

The changes will include any:

- emerging savings and income generation plans
- increases in the Council Tax precept levied by Bath & North East Somerset

Before more detailed budget proposals are considered by cabinet and Full Council in February 2024, we are seeking your views on:

- emerging savings and income generation items
- the level of increase in Bath & North East Somerset’s Council Tax precept

The final budget proposals for 2024 to 2025 which we bring forward will also reflect any other changes to our finances, including the level of central government funding, which should be confirmed later in December.

## Our challenge for the 2024 to 2025 budget

We face a significant budget challenge for 2024 to 2025 due to inflationary impacts and rising demands for services, particularly in children’s social care.

These challenges are set out in our [Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2028/29](#).

## Our plans

We are currently proposing to set a budget of £138.73m for 2024 to 2025.

These proposals include:

- a Council Tax rise of 2.99% plus an additional 2% for Adult Social Care, making a total rise of 4.99%
- additional fees and charges and commercial income of £6.51m
- savings of £10.31m
- growth of £24.53m

We have now published the income and savings proposals that will contribute to balancing the budget and are asking for your views on them.

## Emerging savings and income generation items

We have currently identified £16.82m as emerging opportunities to generate additional income and make savings. We are seeking views on these items and the tables below show the items we want your views on. They are grouped by Cabinet Portfolio.

Each saving and income item in this consultation identifies the proposal's impact. Equality Impact Assessments are being developed for each proposal and an Equality Impact Assessment document, including identification of cumulative impacts, will be included in the documents put before cabinet and Council when decisions are made on the budget.

## Adult services

### Adult services

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
<b>Social care package review</b>	Review of care packages so that they match user needs in an affordable way	Service user needs will be met by alternative provision	£270,000 saving	£18,100,000
<b>Community Resource Centres</b>	Redesign in-house services so that they match areas of high demand for care	New structure in place as part of the redesign of services	£300,000 saving	£8,356,000
<b>Commissioning</b>	Commission local services to match users	Service user needs will be met by local provision	£280,000 saving	£15,312,000

## Adult services

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
	needs in an affordable way			
<b>Review of Better Care Fund</b>	Improved Better Care Fund with enhanced allocation process whilst protecting social care expenditure	No impact to service delivery	£200,000 saving	£4,803,000
<b>Commissioning review</b>	Planned review of commissioning model across Adult and Children's Services	Ensure there is capacity across commissioning to deliver a robust contract management and quality assurance	£250,000 saving	£1,352,000
<b>Community Support Contracts</b>	Review and recommission community support contracts	Impacts to service users will be reviewed, assessed, and where possible mitigated through the recommissioning process	£802,000 saving	£3,747,000
<b>Royal Victoria Park leisure facilities</b>	Procurement of new operator for RVP café, tennis, adventure golf, and event spaces (incl. ice rink) presents opportunity to increase income	Improved service via contract including added benefits to our other priorities. Project Officer time to deliver and monitor.	£10,000 income	£65,000
<b>Health and Wellbeing Services</b>	Health improvement projects re-evaluation	Minimal negative impact expected	£200,000 saving	£9,292,000

## Children's services

## Children's services

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
<b>Early Help contract redesign</b>	Recommissioning Early Help contracts and internal service review to deliver in a different way	This will not impact negatively on service delivery	£50,000 saving	£1,241,000
<b>Specialist commissioning</b>	Rebasing of contracts as part of the commissioning review	This will not impact negatively on service delivery	£500,000 saving	£12,593,000
<b>Reprofiled transformation savings</b>	Remodelling of service delivery to increase in house provision	This will not impact negatively on service delivery	£460,000 saving	£12,593,000
<b>Reduce Children's Services discretionary spend</b>	Reduce discretionary spending in areas including family support	Service users will need to be consulted where there are changes to existing support	£250,000 saving	£12,593,000

## Climate emergency and sustainable travel

### Climate emergency and sustainable travel

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
<b>Corporate Strategy priority projects</b>	Swap recurring revenue funding for draw down from a policy reserve to fund individual time-limited projects related to delivering the Corporate Strategy where external funding is likely to be secured. Overall funding for Green Transformation being maintained over the next three years (2024-27).	Projects will demonstrate a sustainable external funding source before reserve funding is agreed	£150,000 income	N/A

## Council priorities and delivery

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Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
<b>Being Our Best programme</b>	The Being Our Best programme is a planned review and rationalisation of our management and operating structures to best serve the authority. Senior management structures will be reviewed first, followed by Heads of Service and service leads. This may result also in savings.	Service delivery risks will be closely monitored and managed at a programme level to enable structural changes to be made without causing undue disruptions to the provision of our services.	£2,500,000 saving	£109,835,000

## Economic and cultural sustainable development

### Economic and cultural sustainable development

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
<b>Business and Skills: recharge officer time to projects</b>	Provide Business and Skills services to employers through external grant funded activity only and reduce additional Council support	Flexibility to add additional services and support for local businesses will reduce and focus will be on external grant funded activity only	£38,000 income	£385,000
<b>Heritage Services additional income</b>	Gross income uplift for 24/25 based on business plan projections	No impact to service delivery	£4,270,000 income	£21,189,000
<b>Corporate landlord: centralisation of facilities management</b>	Centralisation of our facilities management activity to generate efficiency savings in the management of Council-owned buildings, and growing income from construction/project delivery service	Assets may not be required any longer and can be rationalised to reduce running costs. Service impacts will be managed through the asset review process.	£100,000 saving	£3,800,000

## Economic and cultural sustainable development

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
<b>Bath Quays South lettings</b>	New lettings secured for Bath Quays South offices over and above previous financial projections	No impact to service delivery	£600,000 income	N/A
<b>City and Town Centre Management Service redesign</b>	Implement transformational change to deliver services in a different way across City & Town Centre Management, including Events & Film Office	The savings will impact on the resources available and will result in a reduction in the level and breadth of service the City & Town Centre Service will provide	£60,000 saving	£351,000

## Highways

### Highways

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
<b>Parking Services: income rebasing</b>	Review of price and demand across all Highways Services, including Parking, Park and Ride, and Streetworks services	Minor impacts to manage changes to prices and deal with feedback from customers	£1,045,000 income	£13,331,000
<b>Parking charge increases and implementation of new emissions-based parking charges</b>	Inflationary price rises, alongside the introduction of emission-based parking charges for all vehicles to all locations in Bath (on and off street), Keynsham, Saltford, Midsomer Norton, and Radstock	The proposed introduction of parking charges (based on vehicle emissions) to MSN and Radstock, where parking is currently free of charge, to an equivalent level as those in Keynsham is proposed to enable improvements in pedestrian safety through improved air quality and reduced air pollution to the benefit of the most vulnerable especially, whilst also encouraging	£195,000 income	£13,331,000

## Highways

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
		turnover for shoppers and visitors.		
<b>Motorbike permits</b>	Motorbikes will require valid permits in residential parking zones	Minor impacts to manage changes to prices and deal with feedback from customers	£11,000 income	£1,015,000

## Neighbourhood services

### Neighbourhood services

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
<b>Income from new fees and charges for businesses</b>	Introduction of new chargeable services for commercial customers in our fleet workshop, and charge developers for waste & recycling containers to be provided for each new build property	Increased range of services will be available to commercial fleet customers, and the initial provision of waste & recycling containers will be charged to developers of new housing	£89,000 income	£4,550,000
<b>Operational &amp; contract efficiencies</b>	Efficiency savings through changes to operational practices of both council and contractor run services	The majority of changes will have no impact on the service delivery to the public, as changes to operations are in service areas without public interaction, although there will be a reduction in resource to deliver strategic projects. One public toilet will remain closed due to ongoing antisocial behaviour.	£362,000 saving	£12,856,000
<b>Weekday Recycling Centre efficiency savings</b>	Retaining 7 day access to waste recycling sites whilst managing opening times of each most efficiently	Reduced availability of booking slots at Bath & Welton Recycling Centre. No impact on operating	£60,000 saving	£6,910,000

## Neighbourhood services

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
		hours of Keynsham Recycling Centre		
<b>Customer experience programme</b>	Conduct a review of customer experience to support customer channel shift and seek to maximise the use of our channels to manage customer contact more efficiently	Improved processes, better outcomes, more streamlined service delivery	£115,000 saving	£2,549,000
<b>Parks Service redesign</b>	Implement transformational change to deliver services in a different way across Parks & Green Spaces	Changes to Parks delivery model	£40,000 saving	£2,289,000

## Resources

### Resources

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
<b>Thermae Spa income</b>	Adjustments to our income budget to align with the current income performance of the Thermae Spa	No impact to service delivery	£100,000 income	£1,052,000
<b>Capital programme borrowing review</b>	Review all capital programme items that are funded by council borrowing to align the delivery programme with our expenditure cashflow requirements. Based on current capital monitoring and assessment of cash balances this will reduce our revenue budget requirement to fund borrowing costs.	No impact to service delivery as the capital programme will continue to be prioritised to ensure we meet our legal duties.	£2,000,000 saving	£20,777,000



## Resources

Proposal title	Description	Impacts to service delivery	Saving/income amount	Current budget
<b>Consolidation of IT Systems</b>	Rationalisation of our IT systems to enable consolidation and added functionality to the core systems we have adopted. This will remove legacy service specific systems that can be costly to maintain, are at risk of becoming obsolete. and do not enhance reporting or the customer experience.	All impacts to be managed through a transition period from old system to new	£154,000 saving	£5,527,000
<b>Review transport expenditure</b>	Review the level of the Transport Levy and top-up to protect specific supported bus services by reflecting the underspend by WECA. If allowed, we would reallocate this back to protect more services.	Actual spend on concessionary bus fares is lower than projected. No anticipated service impacts.	£160,000 saving	£5,354,000
<b>Corporate overhead rebasing</b>	Economies of scale to be identified from the £2m budget funding corporate overheads within the existing HRCG contract. These functions will be provided by us from April 2024 as part of the in-house delivery model.	Resourcing levels and service requirements will need to be understood during the transition back to us.	£200,000 saving	£1,990,000
<b>Contract management</b>	Review and upgrade the Council's approach to contract management through a phased multi-year programme of improvements	This will introduce an improved management approach to specifying, reprocurring and managing contracts to deliver greater value and recurrent savings	£150,000 saving	£7,022,000
<b>Contract savings</b>	Volume cap or reduce our contract spend by 3%	Service levels will need to be assessed and revised in line with the reduced contract spending	£850,000 saving	£28,403,000

If any items in the list were not to be included in the budget, the amount would need to be identified elsewhere to make up the shortfall.

## Council Tax precept

The government has announced that the same Council Tax precept limits will operate in 2024/25 as were in place for 2023/24, with an increase in general Council Tax of 3% and the Adult Social Care precept of 2%, taking the overall limit to 5%.

By lifting Council Tax by 4.99% in the next financial year (2024 to 2025) it will help fund key services and also help towards the continuing costs of inflation and increases in demand.

For every 1% in Council Tax precept the council raises £1.2m.

The Adult Social Care budget growth for 2024 to 2025 is £5.1m to maintain services. The Adult Social Care element of the 4.99% Council Tax increase is 2% which will generate an additional £2.4m to help fund this growth.

## Take part in the consultation

The consultation is open from Friday 15 December 2023 and will close at **5pm on Monday 15 January 2024**.

### Other ways to take part in the consultation

If you need support, a printed survey, information in another format including audio, braille, large print or in another language, or you would like to feedback on any other aspect of this consultation, please contact [budget@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:budget@bathnes.gov.uk) or call **01225 39 69 75**.

You will need to print, complete and return the form to:

**Budget Consultation**  
**Lewis House**  
**Manvers Street**  
**Bath**  
**BA1 1JG**

## What happens next

Budget updates and proposals will be discussed at the following Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel meetings.

- Climate Emergency and Sustainability Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 11 January 2024
- Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 15 January 2024

- Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel on 23 January 2024

The detailed budget proposals will be drawn up for consideration by councillors at the following meetings:

- Cabinet on 8 February 2024
- Council on 20 February 2024

Council makes the final decision on setting Council Tax and the budget.

You can [view information about all budget meetings](#) on our council meeting calendar web page. You are also able to [view meetings on our YouTube channel](#)

### **Thank you for responding to this consultation**

**We strongly recommend that you read our [consultation support material](#) before answering the survey.**

This survey will give you an opportunity to provide comments on our overall proposals, as well as individual savings. You will also be able to state whether you support, partially support, or object to the potential 4.99% increase in Council Tax.

We'll use your answers to help us in our decision about whether to adopt this as our budget. Your comments may be made available in a public report following this consultation.

Completing the survey should take no more than **5 to 15 minutes**, depending on how much extra comment you would like to add.