Bolton Council

Report to:	Council		
Date:	20th February 2019		
Report of:	Director of Corporate Resources	**Report No:**	**CEX011**
Contact Officer:	Sue Johnson	**Tele No:**	x1502

Report Title: **Budget Update and Options 2019-21**

Non-Confidential: This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public

Purpose:

To consolidate service budgets to provide the Council's overall 2019/20 budget
To provide an update on the Council's proposed savings plan for 2019/20 and 2020/21 post consultation
To consider the options for council tax for 2019/20
To report on the Financial Arrangements account for 2019/20

Background Doc(s):

Final local government finance settlement: England, 2019 to 2020
https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/final-local-government-finance-settlement-england-2019-to-2020
The Council Tax demand notices and the adult social care precept 2019 to 2020

Appendices / Attachments

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Recommendations:

That Council, having taken into account the consultation responses and EIA, recommend;

i. The budget for 2019/20
ii. The council tax for 2019/20
iii. The budget reduction programme for 2019-21

Decision:	
Summary:	This report informs members of the outcome of the final local government finance settlement 2019/20, the proposed council tax increase 2019/20 and the proposed savings programme 2019-21

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 2019/20 is the final year of the government's four-year settlement offered to councils as part of the 2016/17 budget, which was accepted in October 2016.

1.2 The 2018/19 budget report approved by Council in February 2018 provided an indication of the likely savings target required in 2019/20 of circa £27.7m. This is largely the result of using one-off reserves to balance the 2018/19 budget, meaning any savings targets are carried over into the following financial year.

1.3 This report updates the information provided at Cabinet in December 2018 and forecasts the likely position for both 2019/20 and 2020/21.

1.4 The report recommends that the savings target for 2019/20 be set at £23.5m. This has reduced from the initial figure last February primarily, as a result of additional business rates income and an increased council tax base.

1.5 Due to the uncertainties outlined below regarding the potential impact of future funding, reserves of £8m are also used to balance the 2019-21 budgets and a further £8m is set aside to provide a cashflow pot to enable savings to be phased in over the two year period.

2 CABINET 11th FEBRUARY 2019

2.1 At the meeting of the Cabinet on the 11th February 2019, Cabinet agreed that in respect of the Revenue Budget 2019/20 to recommend to Council the following;

2.1.1 That the Council Tax for 2019/20 be increased by 2.25%, represented by a 1% increase for Adult Social Care and a 1.25% general increase. This will be funded from the returned Business Rates from GMCA

2.1.2 The savings target of £135k from the proposed review of bowling greens in Neighbourhood Services will be reduced by 50% to £67k. This will be directly offset by an increase in the review of external charging within the Place Directorate.

3 GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT

3.1 The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2019/20 was announced on 13th December 2018 (subsequently ratified in the final settlement in January). As a consequence of the known four year settlement figures and the October Budget, there were few unanticipated changes. Key points to note are:

3.1.1 In early October a one-off £240m funding pot was announced for Adult Social Care "Winter pressures" for 2018/19. Bolton's share of this is £1.4m.

3.1.2 Adult Care Grants – in the October budget a further pot of money was made available by the government of £650m for 2019/20. This was split into two elements:

- £240m for Adult Social Care Winter pressures in 2019/20 – again Bolton's allocation is £1.4m.
- £410m for Adults and Children's Social Care – to "ensure that adult social care pressures do not create additional demand on the NHS", "where necessary". However, councils can use this grant to fund social care services for older people, people with disabilities and children. Bolton's allocation is £2.4m.

3.1.3 Highways funding of £420m specifically to tackle potholes, repair damaged roads, and invest in keeping bridges open and safe. Bolton's allocation is £1.35m.

3.1.4 Business Rates returned funding – as a result of a surplus on the Business Rates account, a surplus of £180m is being re-allocated. Bolton's share is £1m. It remains to be clarified as to whether this will be repaid in 2018/19 or 2019/20.

3.1.5 Police and Crime Commissioners will be allowed to increase their precept by up to £24 (maximum increase was £12 in 2018-19).

3.1.6 Additional business rate reliefs were also announced in the retail sector, however these are cost neutral, and the relief granted to businesses is offset by additional S31 grants.

4 GOVERNMENT SPENDING PLANS

4.1 As members will be aware, the council has had to find significant savings over the last 8 years totalling around £155m. Adding in the proposed 2019/20 savings target takes the figure to almost £190m. The four-year settlement offer provided some assurance to councils as to the amount of resources they would receive over the 4-year period, but it has nevertheless resulted in continued savings needing to be found.

4.2 However, beyond 2019/20 there are some key funding issues yet to be confirmed which could impact further on the council.

4.3 Fair Funding Review (FFR)

4.3.1 As part of the 2016/17 finance settlement it was announced that there would be a FFR of authorities' funding needs, initially to be implemented in 2019/20. Due to the 2017 general election, in September 2017, it was announced that such a review would now be implemented in 2020. This in many ways ties in better, as it will come after the current 4-year settlement period. According to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) terms of reference the FFR will:

4.3.2 Set new baseline funding allocations for authorities

4.3.3 Look at an assessment of needs and resources of authorities.

4.3.4 It should be noted, however, that the Children's Services review will not be completed until October 2019, some 6 weeks before the Autumn 2019 budget, which will be the 2020/21 provisional settlement. It is therefore likely that some form of transitional funding will be required for 2020/21.

4.4 Business Rates

4.4.1 Bolton is part of the Greater Manchester 100% business rates retention pilot. Councils retain 100% of their business rates with 1% passed to the Fire Authority. The government has announced that from 2020 business rates retention will be 75%, 1% of this being passed to the Fire Authority and 25% to central government.

4.4.2 From 2020 it is likely there will also be a business rates re-set. This may take the form of either a full re-set or partial re-set. What this means is that any business rates growth that the council is expected to achieve over and above its baseline may either be fully taken or partially taken off the council. The government's rationale is that the overall business rates growth since the previous re-set in 2013 will be circa £2bn (if it is a full re-set), which it can then re-distribute to councils. This makes forecasting business rates beyond 2019/20 extremely difficult to do. In addition, it is not possible to project what the council could receive in some form of re-distributed grant from the potential £2bn available.

4.4.3 It should be noted that some of the business rates growth achieved by the council as a direct result of the GM 100% business rates initiative can be retained locally.

5 EXPENDITURE FORECAST

5.1 Taking into account the above factors this is the expenditure forecast for 2019/20 and 2020/21:

	Original Forecast 2019/20 100% Business Rates £000s	Original Forecast 2020/21 75% Business Rates £000s
Expenditure		
Previous Year's Budget	428,181	414,537
Schools DSG Change	161	0
Inflation	6,522	5,109
WDA/PTA	1,525	1,525
Other Corporate	501	0
Pensions	940	727
Adult Social Care Precept	1,097	0
Adult Social Care Support Grant	-870	0
Insurance	-220	
Housing Benefit/ Council Tax Admin Subsidy Grants	200	
Savings to be identified	-23,500	0
Budget Requirement	414,537	421,898

Resources	Original Forecast 2019/20 100% Business Rates £000s	Original Forecast 2020/21 75% Business Rates £000s
Direct Schools Grant	186,957	186,957
New Homes Bonus	940	400
Use of Reserves	726	7,627
Retained Local Business Rate (incl prev yrs balance)	92,225	70,700
Business Rates Top Up	20,580	40,300
Council Tax Contribution - Base Adjustment (incl Contribution from Collection Fund & prev yrs balance)	110,640	113,670
Council Tax Contribution - Adult Social Care	1,097	0
Council Tax Contribution - General Levy	1,372	2,244
Total	414,537	421,898
Council Tax Increase (subject to Council approval)	2.25%	1.99%

5.2 As a result of deferring £8m of savings over the 2019-21 period and funding part of the council tax from one-off returned business rates from GMCA, the indicative savings target for 2021/22 is £10.7m. However, this is subject to the factors outlined in section 3 above.

5.3 Over the past 12 months the Strategic Commissioning Function has been established to oversee the joint commissioning of health and social care services to adults in Bolton and with the intention to increase the existing pool of monies through the section 75 agreement. The potential pool is approximately £160m which is a joint contribution from the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The financial performance of the pool will be monitored through the People Department's budget reports, the CCG Board and through the Shadow Partnership Board. This will come in to effect from the 1st April 2019.

6 SAVINGS

6.1 As a result of the updated settlement figures, the savings required to balance the budget remain at £23.5m forecast in the 3rd December Cabinet report. In order to do this, reserves of £8m will be used to balance the 2019-21 budgets. Savings have been allocated departmentally as follows;

	Target
	£m
People	13.8
Place	5.7
Chief Executive's / Corporate	4.0
Total	23.5

6.2 It is not possible at this point to accurately identify how many posts will be lost until detailed proposals are developed. Based upon the options outlined in appendix D, a minimum of 124 posts may be affected. The council currently has 336 vacant posts (264 FTE), although around a third of these are considered to be business-critical, and are therefore covered by agency staff. During previous budget rounds the council secured post reductions through voluntary means such as Voluntary Severance and Voluntary Early Retirement where these meet business needs, and we hope to continue with this approach, avoiding compulsory redundancies wherever possible.

7 RESOURCING THE SAVINGS PROGRAMME

7.1 Reserves of £8m have been identified to cash-flow the budget whilst savings are delivered.

8 RESERVES

8.1 The council estimates its reserves balance to be £149m at the end of 2018/19 *(£177m at the end of 2017/18*) as follows;

Type of Reserve	*31/3/18*	31/3/19
	£m	£m
Reserves we cannot touch (schools etc…)	*4*	14
Reserves we must have (audit requirements)	*11*	11
Reserves to support the 19-21 budget process	*25*	16
Reserves for known insurance claims / self insurance	*20*	18
Reserves to fund our existing capital programme	*77*	62
Reserves set aside for revenue commitments (Looked After Children etc…)	*40*	28
Total	*177*	149

8.2 Appendix E outlines the current projected position on reserves as at 31st March 2019, split by category, and provides some information of the implications of not holding these reserves.

9 FINANCIAL RISKS

9.1 Members will be aware that the Director of Corporate Resources has provided advice on the recommended level of Balances to be maintained previously. The full detail, including an identification of financial risks, is set out in Appendix F. However, in summary this advice is as follows:

9.1.1 Currently it is estimated that available Balances as at the 31st March 2019 will be £10.66m. The Director of Corporate Resources' advice to Members is that, as a minimum, Balances of £10.0m or higher should be maintained, based upon the Director of Corporate Resources' understanding of the risks and financial issues facing the Council over the next 3 years, and the proposals around the Budget, as identified in this report. Should Members wish to agree any additional items for growth or for savings not in this report, then the Director of Corporate Resources will need to advise Members as to whether or not those proposals would result in an increase in the financial risk facing the Council, and therefore a need for a higher level of Balances to be set as a minimum.

10 BOLTON COUNCIL'S ELEMENT OF THE COUNCIL TAX

10.1 In 2018/19 councils were able to raise council tax by up to 3% (previously 2%), without having to hold a referendum. The government has stated that the 3% limit will remain for 2019/20.

10.2 In addition, for Adult Social Care (ASC), for the three year period 2016/17 to 2019/20 councils are able to raise an additional 6% over this period, providing no more than 3% is raised in any one year. Bolton's ASC increases have been 3% and 2% in 2017/18 and 2018/19 respectively, meaning a further 1% can be raised solely for ASC in 2019/20.

10.3 A 1% swing in the rate broadly equates to a £1m gain or loss in council tax income. This budget has been prepared as follows:

- the Adult Social Care precept is set at 1% (its maximum) for 2019/20.
- the general levy is set at 1.25% in 2019/20.

10.4 There will be no changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme in 2019/20.

10.5 The table below shows the basic charge per band for Bolton (i.e. excluding Parish and Mayoral precepts)

	Bolton Charge 2018/19	Adult Social Care	General Levy	Bolton Charge 2019/20
		1% Increase	1.25% Increase	Overall 2.25% Increase
Band A	£969.17	£9.69	£12.11	£990.97
Band B	£1,130.70	£11.31	£14.13	£1,156.14
Band C	£1,292.22	£12.92	£16.15	£1,321.29
Band D	£1,453.75	£14.54	£18.17	£1,486.46
Band E	£1,776.80	£17.77	£22.21	£1,816.78
Band F	£2,099.87	£21.00	£26.25	£2,147.12
Band G	£2,422.92	£24.23	£30.28	£2,477.43
Band H	£2,907.50	£29.08	£36.34	£2,972.92

10.6 This equates to an additional 42p per week for Band A properties which are more than 40% of the overall taxbase

11 MAYORAL PRECEPT (tbc 15TH FEBRUARY)

11.1 2018/19 was the first year when the Mayor for Greater Manchester took responsibility for both the GM Police and Crime Commissioner and GM Fire and Rescue Authority services. Greater Manchester Combined Authority now sets two precepts:

- Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept; and
- Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services)

11.2 With regard to the Mayoral General Precept this is used specifically for initiatives to develop and enhance the whole Greater Manchester region.

11.3 Increases in the Mayoral Precepts are added onto the council tax charge set by Bolton. For 2019/20 the amounts are as follows

11.3.1 For the Mayoral General (including Fire Services):

- A £9 increase for the Mayoral General element (13.2% increase)
- A 0% increase for the Fire Services element

11.3.2 A £24 for the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept (a 13.8% increase).

11.4 The table below shows the additional cost on each band for the Mayoral precepts:

	Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services)	Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept
	13.2% Increase	13.8% Increase
Band A	£51.30	£132.20
Band B	£59.85	£154.23
Band C	£68.40	£176.27
Band D	£76.95	£198.30
Band E	£94.05	£242.37
Band F	£111.15	£286.43
Band G	£128.25	£330.50
Band H	£153.90	£396.60

11.5 Should the final decisions of the GMCA be different, then this will be reported to Members at the Council meeting.

12 PARISH PRECEPTS

12.1 The individual parish precepts are shown below with comparative figures for last year.

	2018/19	2019/20
	£	£
Blackrod	64,608	64,847
Horwich	185,836	187,817
Westhoughton	141,890	149,476

12.2 As required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Parish Precepts need to be added to Bolton's budget requirement.

12.3 The Council Tax bases for tax setting purposes for the Town Council areas are as follows:-

	Tax Base in Band D Equivalents
Blackrod	1,897
Horwich	7,395
Westhoughton	8,506

12.4 The resultant additional Council Tax in each Town Council area is as follows:

	Blackrod	Horwich	Westhoughton
Band A	£22.79	£16.93	£11.71
Band B	£26.58	£19.76	£13.67
Band C	£30.38	£22.58	£15.62
Band D	£34.18	£25.40	£17.57
Band E	£41.78	£31.04	£21.47
Band F	£49.37	£36.69	£25.38
Band G	£56.97	£42.33	£29.28
Band H	£68.36	£50.80	£35.14

13 OVERALL COUNCIL TAX

13.1 Taking into account the Bolton Council council tax rise plus Mayoral and Parish precepts, the table below shows the overall charges to Bolton residents:

	Parish of Blackrod	Parish of Horwich	Parish of Westhoughton	All other parts of the Council's area
	£	£	£	£
Band A	£1,197.26	£1,191.40	£1,186.18	£1,174.47
Band B	£1,396.80	£1,389.98	£1,383.89	£1,370.22
Band C	£1,596.34	£1,588.54	£1,581.58	£1,565.96
Band D	£1,795.89	£1,787.11	£1,779.28	£1,761.71
Band E	£2,194.98	£2,184.24	£2,174.67	£2,153.20
Band F	£2,594.07	£2,581.39	£2,570.08	£2,544.70
Band G	£2,993.15	£2,978.51	£2,965.46	£2,936.18
Band H	£3,591.78	£3,574.22	£3,558.56	£3,523.42

13.2 The overall increase equates to 84p per week for a non-Parish Band A property.

13.3 The amount generated from council tax is as follows:

		18/19			19/20	
Band D		£	£		£	£
Basic Council Tax - previous year		1,384.66			1,453.75	
Council Tax General Levy	2.99%	41.40		1.25%	18.17	
Council Tax Rise ASC	2%	27.69		1.00%	14.54	
Basic Council Tax (Band D)			1,453.75			1,486.46
Tax Base			74,822			75,487
Basic Council Tax Collected (£'000s)			108,773			112,209
Add Parish Precepts (£000s)			392			402
Council Tax Collected (£000s)			109,165			112,611

13.4 A Draft Substantive Council Tax Resolution is set out in Appendix H.

14 COUNCIL TAX BILLING

14.1 The Budget contained in this report assumes that the Council Tax is set at the Council meeting on the 20th February 2019. Should the Council not be able to set the Council Tax on that day then a week's delay will put back the processing and distribution of Council Tax bills, which will incur additional costs.

15 BUSINESS RATES

15.1 Whilst the Council is part of the Greater Manchester 100% pilot, it should be noted that the Government determines the rates to be collected - the "multiplier" - and has set these at 49.1 pence in the pound for small businesses and 50.4 pence in the pound for large businesses.

15.2 All non-domestic properties are usually revalued at five-yearly intervals. The most recent listing came into force on 1st April 2017. The rateable value of a property is broadly equivalent to the annual rent that a property could be let for on the open market. These values are set by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). A property's rates bill is calculated by multiplying its rateable value by the NNDR 'multiplier'.

15.3 Bolton Council's 2017 RV list as at 31st December 2018 is £230.6m. This is an increase of 1.05% from the 31st December 2017 list (£228.2m).

16 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

16.1 The EIA is attached at Appendix I. Section 6 above provides a framework to deliver the 2019-21 budgets.

16.2 In terms of staffing, the anticipated impact of the budget on the workforce is outlined in section 6, along with the strategy for managing this. The council retains its objective of seeking to manage all reductions consensually as far as possible, in order to mitigate the impact on staff. We will continue to do so through the use of voluntary early retirement and severance, as well as managing vacancies etc. Effective communications and consultation with staff and their trades unions will continue to be vital to the budget process as a whole, as well as to individual service reviews.

16.3 It is important to recognise that achieving a balanced budget at this level, following the significant reductions that have already been made, will be much more challenging than in previous years. However, the council continues to aim to minimise the impact of budget cuts on front-line service provision. Reductions have once again been sought from each of the council's directorates in a manner which seeks to offer a degree of protection to front-line services, and to protect the borough's most vulnerable people.

17 CONSULTATION

17.1 Consultation was undertaken to ascertain the views of interested parties on the financial challenges faced by the council over the next few years. A **survey form** was made available online, the consultation was sent direct to various stakeholders, and was forwarded to eView, the council's consultation panel. A press release was sent to the Bolton News, which ran a number of articles. A total of 284 responses were received.

17.2 Most respondents agreed with the council's **approach** to making the necessary savings: 88% agreed that the council should protect the most vulnerable as much as possible, 84% agreed that the council should maximise economic prosperity, 68% agreed that the council should seek to minimise the impact on staff and avoid compulsory redundancy where possible, and 88% of respondents agreed that the council should make savings from management and administration where possible, before frontline services.

17.3 Just over half (58%) of respondents agreed with the proposed 2.5% increase in **Council Tax** (including 1% for Adult Social Care) to achieve the savings and avoid even more cuts to services, with 30% disagreeing with this.

17.4 Respondents were then asked if they agreed or disagreed with a series of **proposals:** proposals receiving the greatest support included smarter use of management and leadership, and reviewing every penny we spend. Proposals receiving the least support included charging a bit extra for universal services to protect those in most need, reduced winter gritting, and increased charges for council services such as the use of land and facilities.

17.5 When asked about **managing change,** 64% accepted that budget reductions had to be made**,** 82% were aware of the need for the council to change the way it delivers services, but only 34% felt the council was doing its best under difficult circumstances.

17.6 Respondents were asked to comment on how the proposals would **impact on them or their families**, and for **alternative solutions.** The most commonly raised impact was related to the proposal to review all 28 bowling greens and their usage, and to use Community Asset Transfer Powers, where appropriate, to deliver greenspace functions through a new partnership approach with local communities. Other comments were related to the financial impact on them (e.g. from higher council tax rates), and potential job losses. The most commonly suggested alternatives were to cut costs of councillors / mayor, improved leadership / management and cutting staff costs / benefits.

17.7 Formal responses were also received from …

- Bolton Community and Voluntary Services (CVS)
- Joint response from trade unions – UNISON and GMB
- Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

These responses can be found in full at Appendix J

17.8 Further detail on the consultation can be found in Appendix J

18 RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 That Council, having taken into account the consultation responses and EIA, recommend;

(a) The Budget for 2019/20
(b) The Council Tax for 2019/20
(c) The strategic budget reduction programme for 2019-2021

19 APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

GENERAL FUND SUMMARY

	2019/20	2020/21
	Original Estimate £000	**Original Estimate £000**
Children's Services	232,065	233,281
Adult Services	61,738	63,641
Public Health	17,761	18,107
Environmental Services	18,115	18,653
Development & Regeneration	8,357	8,606
Housing	1,199	1,252
Property Services	6,063	6,240
Central etc	19,393	20,021
Financing and Investing	9,887	10,613
Levies	40,859	42,384
Miscellaneous	-900	-900
Net Exp	**414,537**	**421,898**
Parishes	402	402
Sub Total	**414,939**	**422,300**
Income		
Direct Schools Grant	186,957	186,957
Retained local business rates	92,225	70,700
Business Rates Top-Up	20,580	40,300
Council Tax Contribution - Base Adjustment	110,140	113,170
Council Tax Contribution - Adult Social Care	1,097	0
Council Tax Contribution - General Levy	1,372	2,244
Council Tax contribution - Parishes	402	402
Collection Fund Balance	500	500
New Homes Bonus	941	400
Reserves	725	7,627
Total	**414,939**	**422,300**
Council Tax Increase	2.25%	1.99%

APPENDIX B

SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

	2018/19 Original Estimate	2019/20 Original Estimate
Expenditure		
Employees	241,015	229,941
Premises	30,321	30,027
Transport	18,187	18,365
Supplies and Services	88,753	78,485
Agency / Third Party	110,890	123,585
Transfer Payments	151,900	145,393
Capital Costs	16,581	16,178
Total Expenditure	657,647	641,974
Income		
Grants & Contributions	154,608	149,092
Customer & Client Receipts	63,123	66,781
Rent	6,134	6,121
Interest & Dividends	5,601	5,443
Total Income	**229,466**	**227,437**
Net Expenditure *	428,181	414,537
* Before Direct Schools Grant of	186,797	186,957

APPENDIX C

THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS ACCOUNT

	2018/19 Original £'000s	2019/20 Original £'000s	Comment
Corporate Financing Costs	14,189	14,200	
Transferred Debt	1,507	1,507	
Interest and Contributions	-750	-750	
Airport Dividend	-3,600	-3,600	
Airport Rents	-414	-414	
Airport Loan Interest	-1,076	-1,076	
Debt Management	20	20	
Total Financing and Investing	9,876	9,887	
Levies	40,334	40,859	
Former Employee Pensions	852	852	
Car Parks	-350	-350	
Miscellaneous	-2,755	-1,403	
Use of Reserves	-14,223	-725	Use of reserves to balance the budget
Education Services Grant	0	0	
Adult Support Grant	-869	0	
New Homes Bonus	-1,506	-941	
Total Miscellaneous	-18,851	-2,567	
Total	31,359	48,179	

Appendix D

SAVINGS OPTIONS 2019-20

PEOPLE DIRECTORATE - OPTIONS

Service	Proposed Options – People & Public Health	18 / 19 Controllable Budget	Proposed Savings	Estimated Staff Impact
		£'000	£'000	Total FTE Displaced
Transforming the way we work				
People	Do not apply Non Pay Inflation	0	3,500	0
Children's	Fundamental Review of Early Help both strategic and targeted to impact on demand	26,390	3,500	tbc
Adults	Full Fundamental Review of the Intermediate Tier	16,400	500	tbc
Adults	Review of Income including Charges and Subsidies	0	500	0
Adults	Review and demand management of care and support packages	32,573	1,000	0
	Total	**75,363**	**9,000**	**tbc**

More Targeted Provision				
People	Full staffing review of the Children's portfolio and support services across the Directorate	12,202	1029	33
Public Health	Review of the School Meal Subsidy	264	264	0

Service	Proposed Options – People & Public Health	18 / 19 Controllable Budget	Proposed Savings	Estimated Staff Impact
		£'000	£'000	Total FTE Displaced
Public Health / Children's	Management of Cash Limited Budgets	382	275	0
Adults	Reprioritising of iBCF	10,341	1,000	0
Adults	Review of the Community Meals Service	846	250	3
	Total	**24,035**	**2,818**	**36**

Partnership Working				
People	Review all of the contracts within the People Directorate	21,132	1235	0
Adults	Full staffing review of the Adults and Public Health portfolio	12,023	750	27
	Total	**33,155**	**1,985**	**27**

PEOPLE DIRECTORATE TOTAL	**132,553**	**13,803**	**tbc**

Appendix D (cont'd)

PLACE DIRECTORATE - OPTIONS

Service	Proposed Options- Place	18 / 19 Controllable Budget	Proposed Savings	Estimated Staff Impact Total FTE Displaced
		£'000	£'000	
PARTNERSHIP WORKING				
Neighbourhood Services	The council will review all 28 bowling greens and their usage and will use Community Asset Transfer powers, where appropriate, to deliver greenspace functions through a new partnership approach with local communities.	135	67	3
Highways	Following best practice across the UK, the council is currently installing crossings at priority sites and seeking a variety of appropriate solutions.	248	100	5
	Total	**383**	**167**	**8**

MODERNISATION OF THE COUNCIL				
Cross Cutting	A review of external charging across the directorate	839	1,963	0
Waste	In order to support the council's digital strategy, it is proposed to stop the production of the waste calendar.	27	27	0
Waste	Review staffing, processes and customer contact rationale	7,301	250	2
Cross Cutting	A review of processes and structures focussing on trading services and back office support.	994	774	10

				Estimated Staff Impact
Service	**Proposed Options- Place**	**18 / 19 Controllable Budget**	**Proposed Savings**	**Total FTE Displaced**
		£'000	**£'000**	
Trade Waste	The service will take a more pro-active approach to trade waste and will target more businesses in Bolton & beyond.	-189	75	0
	Total	**8,972**	**3,089**	**12**

MORE TARGETED PROVISION				
Highways	Reduce the standard of the winter gritting service to match the levels provided by other GM authorities	675	100	0
Cross Cutting	More targeted approach for front line services, which will also require a full staffing review.	8,504	1,579	24
Museum, Library and Archives	A review of staffing, specific provision and fees & charges to ensure the Museum, Library and Archive service meets customer needs	3,993	430	5
Leisure	Deliver a new targeted approach which will ensure that customers with greater need have access to facilities in their communities, this will include a re-negotiation of the Leisure contract.	2,801	100	0
	Total	**15,973**	**2,209**	**29**

TRANSFORMING THE WAY WE WORK				
Cross Cutting	Reduce the Climate Change Levy to reflect the Accommodation Rationalisation Programme & the Street Lighting LED Programme.	0	100	0
Cross Cutting	Review of procurement processes	0	135	0

				Estimated Staff Impact
Service	**Proposed Options- Place**	**18 / 19 Controllable Budget**	**Proposed Savings**	**Total FTE Displaced**
		£'000	**£'000**	
	Total	**0**	**235**	**0**

PLACE DIRECTORATE TOTAL:	**25,328**	**5,700**	**49**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTORATE / CORPORATE - OPTIONS

Service	Proposed Options- Chief Executive's / Corporate	18 / 19 Controllable Budget	Proposed Savings	Estimated Staff Impact Total FTE Displaced
		£'000	£'000	
Modernisation of the Council				
CICT	Review of members ICT requirements	28	15	0
Legal & Democratic Services	Review of the fees and charges	-405	15	0
Financial Services	Improve processes and review staffing across Financial Services	1,245	99	5
Cross Cutting	Management of Cash Limited Budgets	212	104	0
Cross Cutting	Better use of digital solutions across the directorate	451	126	0
Corporate	Increased investment interest resulting from bank rate rises	500	250	0
Corporate	Business Rates additional income	78,595	500	0
Corporate	Reduction in Corporate Levies	40,300	1000	0
	Total	**120,926**	**2,109**	**5**
Transforming the way we work				
Cross Cutting	More targeted approach for services, adopting digital solutions and redesigning teams	4,732	194	7
Cross Cutting	Maximise procurement opportunities	0	110	0
	Total	**4,732**	**304**	**7**

Service	Proposed Options- Chief Executive's / Corporate	18 / 19 Controllable Budget	Proposed Savings	Estimated Staff Impact
		£'000	£'000	Total FTE Displaced
More Targeted Provision				
Finance	The review of the financing arrangements, as well as the adoption of a more targeted approach to service priorities, will release efficiencies.	9,875	350	0
Corporate ICT Services	Savings from a review of licences and contract arrangements.	3,328	400	0
	Total	**13,203**	**750**	**0**
Partnership Working				
Legal & Democratic Services	Review of the Election Venue use	35	25	0
Revenues & Benefits Service	Reduction in Local Welfare Provision Budget	1,028	250	0
Cross Cutting	Seek sponsorship for events and activities, such as Bolton Vision	-234	60	0
Legal and Democratic Services	Improved partnership working and adopting a more targeted approach to community engagement and civic responsibility	193	20	0
Policy, Partnerships & Communications	Review council-wide contracts, infrastructure and spend to provide a more consistent and cohesive approach to service delivery	9,709	480	tbc
Legal & Democratic Services	Increased partnership / community working may offer an alternative delivery model for the Halliwell UCAN centre.	70	70	0

				Estimated Staff Impact
Service	**Proposed Options- Chief Executive's / Corporate**	**18 / 19 Controllable Budget**	**Proposed Savings**	**Total FTE Displaced**
		£'000	**£'000**	
	Total	**10,801**	**905**	**tbc**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE's DIRECTORATE / CORPORATE RESOURCES TOTAL	**149,662**	**4,068**	**tbc**

APPENDIX E

RESERVES

Service	Opening 01/04/18	Activity in Year 2018/19	Closing balance 31/03/19	Category of Closing Balance 2018/19					
				Legal requirements	Existing commitments	To cover key areas of future spend	To cover key areas of risk	Service general contingencies	Available for re-allocation
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Adult Services and Public Health	7,545	(5,716)	1,829	161	214	601	632	221	0
Public Health	1,816	(159)	1,657	0	0	28	0	1,629	0
Schools and DSG	8,122	(2,424)	5,698	(1,162)	6,771	0	89	0	0
Children Services	9,359	(3,258)	6,101	2,993	1,083	1,418	473	134	0
Deputy Leader	3,906	(1,425)	2,481	63	124	1,302	983	0	9
Strategic Planning & Housing	227	0	227	81	146				
Environmental Services	5,063	(1,524)	3,539	423	2,209	97	747		63
Culture & Sport	3,500	(358)	3,142	3,023		8	111		
Highways & Transport	2,110	0	2,110				2,110		
Community Issues	934	(292)	642		378	264			
Corporate Resources	8,988	(392)	8,596		236	2,619	5,723	18	
Corporate Accounting	19,722	0	19,722	19,722					
Financial Arrangements	44,032	(10,700)	33,332	138	27,649	2,321	3,224	0	0
General Fund	10,660	0	10,660	10,660	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**125,984**	**(26,248)**	**99,736**	**36,102**	**38,810**	**8,658**	**14,092**	**2,002**	**72**
Total Capital	**50,945**	**(1,684)**	**49,261**	**0**	**49,261**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total of Revenue & Capital Reserves	**176,929**	**(27,932)**	**148,997**	**36,102**	**88,071**	**8,658**	**14,092**	**2,002**	**72**

Revenue Impact of not holding key Reserves

If we were not to hold these reserves then there would be a direct impact on the Revenue Budget in the order of £6m. This would be from having to provide a Contingency Budget to meet certain risks or additional costs that the Council will be facing in the future. These are set out below:-

	£m
ICT replacements (would need an annual contribution to meet these costs)	2.0
Redundancy/redeployment (if we did not hold Reserves we would have to capitalise these costs – if Government agree)	2.0
Equal Pay (if we did not hold Reserves we would have to capitalise these costs – if Government agree)	0.5
Corporate contingencies – Energy etc. (would need a specific Contingency provision)	0.5
Service contingencies (would need a specific contingency provision)	1.0
	6.0

APPENDIX F

GENERAL FUND BALANCES

Report to:	Cabinet		
Date:	11th February 2019		
Report of:	Director of Corporate Resources	**Report No:**	**CEX050**
Contact Officer:	Sue Johnson	**Tele No:**	x1502
Report Title:	**General Fund Balances/Financial Risks**		
Non-Confidential:	This report does **not** contain information which warrants its consideration in the absence of the press or members of the public		
Purpose:	To outline the Director of Corporate Resources' advice on the Financial Risks facing the Council and the appropriate level of Balances to be maintained		
Background Doc(s):			
Appendices / Attachments	None		
Recommendations:	That the minimum level of Balances for 2019/20 should be £10.0m or higher if possible.		
Decision:			
Summary:	To provide information and context in respect of the general fund balances the council should hold for 2019/20		

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Council maintains two types of revenue reserves, earmarked reserves and general reserves (Balances). Earmarked reserves are set aside for specific purposes/ commitments whereas general Balances are maintained to support the overall Council's cash-flow and meet any unforeseen contingencies/demands.

1.2 This report considers the current level of general Balances, evaluates the reasons why Balances are maintained (i.e. the general financial risks facing the Council) and provides advice on the appropriate level of Balances to be maintained by the Council in the light of Guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). Appendix E sets out the Council's current position in respect of Reserves.

2 NEED FOR GENERAL BALANCES

2.1 Whilst the Council's annual Budget provides resources to meet any known liabilities or expenditure requirements, Balances are amounts which are set aside to meet unexpected changes in the Budget and to finance demands for resources which cannot be predicted and are assessed on the basis of the general financial risks facing the Council.

2.2 The requirement for Balances is acknowledged in statute with Section 32 of the 1992 Local Government Finance Act requiring Authorities to have regard to the level of Balances needed to meet estimated future liabilities when calculating their Budget requirement. The Chief Finance Officer has the responsibility to ensure that the Council maintains a balanced Budget with powers under Section 114 of the 1998 Local Government Finance Act to report to the Council should its liabilities be in danger of exceeding its resources. Equally, the External Auditor has a responsibility to review and report on the Council's financial standing. Further requirements within the 2003 Local Government Finance Act reinforce the above with additional monitoring and reporting responsibilities.

2.3 In drawing together the Council's capital and revenue budgets and the Medium Term Financial Statement, the level of general Balances and Financial Risks are always carefully considered. The provision of an appropriate level of Balances is therefore a fundamental part of prudent financial management.

3 MINIMUM LEVEL OF RESERVES

3.1 Authorities should maintain Balances equivalent to 3% of their Budget, for 2019/20 this would amount to approximately £12.5m. However, whilst this is recommended guidance, the decision on the appropriate level of Balances is one for the Council, with advice from the Director of Corporate Resources, to determine. There are several factors/financial risks that need to be taken into account in considering what is a prudent level of Balances:

3.2 Revenue Contingencies

3.2.1 The Council does not maintain a general contingency within its revenue budget but relies on in year savings and Balances to meet any unexpected demands. For example, a pay increase of 0.5% more than that allowed for in the Budget would cost approximately £0.6m, excluding Teachers. A price variation of 0.5% would cost approximately £1m.

3.3 Interest

3.3.1 In recent years the Council has been successful in managing the interest that it pays out/receives and savings in this area have generally added to Balances. Whilst rates hav started to rise, resulting in an increased return on investments, these are historically still low.

3.4 Capital

3.4.1 The Council's capital programme including the Town Hall Strategy is in the order of £185m per annum. Within the capital programme there are no contingencies and whilst the programme is actively monitored and managed, there is the potential for a demand on Balances from any capital overspend. In addition because of the economic climate there may be difficulties in generating the level of Capital Receipts assumed in the capital programme. For 2019/20 this has been included at £2m.

3.5 Economic Climate

3.5.1 The challenging economic climate continues to create pressures for the Council in several ways. Demand for services, particularly those to support the elderly and looked after children is continuing to increase. In addition, several of the income/revenue streams may be affected by reduced demand/take up. Both the above items have been reflected in the budget but the change in demand cannot be absolutely forecast and therefore there may be changes in cost/income levels during the year. Brexit, whilst not having a direct effect in terms of grants received, continues to generate considerable uncertainty around the impact on Local Government which it is not possible to quantify at this stage.

3.6 Council Tax Support Scheme

3.6.1 From 1st April 2013 the Council introduced a Local Council Tax Support Scheme. The full risk of increasing numbers of claimants and greater individual claimant eligibility remains within the Council and is a risk to the Council's resources

3.7 Local Business Rates

3.7.1 Prior to 2013, all business rates collected by local authorities were paid over to the Government. This money was distributed back to local authorities by the Government in the form of grants.

3.7.2 From 2013 local authorities could retain up to 50% of business rates collected (the 'local' share) with the remaining 50% (the 'central' share) paid to the Government. This central share was distributed back to council's in the form of reduced grants. The Government introduced a system of top-ups and tariffs to redistribute income between councils so that councils with higher needs or less capacity to raise their own business rates were compensated.

3.7.3 In April 2017, Greater Manchester local authorities formed the Greater Manchester 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot. There was a corresponding reduction in government grants to reflect the increase in retained business rates.

3.7.4 A move to a 100% retention scheme doubles the risk to a council of a loss of income due to non-collection. In the current economic climate this risk is significant. For 2018/19 Bolton Council's share of the provision set aside and charged against revenue is estimated at £2.3m, with a similar figure projected for 2019/20 (a doubling

of the pre 100% pilot figure). The Government provides an overall safety net that is designed to protect councils if their business rates income falls significantly in the year – however the safety net is set at 97% of a council's baseline funding level (in the case of Bolton Council this represents a loss of approximately £3.1m) – the Council may potentially have to cover losses up to this amount from its General Balances.

3.8 Un-predictable Demand Led Expenditure

3.8.1 Major parts of the Council's Budget, particularly in Social Care Services and Education are "demand led" and as we have seen in previous years, can create significant demands for increased expenditure during the year. Services maintain modest Reserves of their own, to meet minor Budget variations.

3.9 Emergencies

3.9.1 The Council is required to maintain provision to meet the cost of emergencies that cannot be met from main Budgets or by Insurance. Significant costs on emergencies are met by Central Government under the "Bellwin Scheme" but these are only triggered once the Council's expenditure has exceeded a pre-determined limit (0.1% of the revenue budget which is approximately £420k). Costs above this limit are covered by Central Government but only up to 85%.

3.10 Unexpected Demands

3.10.1 Balances also need to provide sufficient resources to meet unexpected demands, particularly those that result from a legal decision, a change in Government legislation or a determination of Government legislation. In the past the Council has had to fund several major issues of this nature.

3.11 Service Deficits

3.11.1 Balances are also required to offset any Budget deficits carried forward or generated during the year by services as allowed under Financial Regulations.

3.12 General Risks

3.12.1 It is also important to weigh up the general risks facing the Council and evaluate what any potential financial impact may result from these risks. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Head of Internal Audit and Risk have undertaken a review of these risks. The areas with a potentially significant financial impact are as follows:

- Economic Climate
- Changes in Government Funding
- Potential Legal Claims
- External Suppliers going into Administration

3.13 These have been taken into account in the overall evaluation of the minimum level of Balances to maintain.

4 REVIEW OF 2019/20 BALANCES POSITION

4.1 The last quarterly report estimated available Balances at 31st March 2019 at £10.7m. The review of the last 12 months does not suggest that there are any additional factors to take into account in 2019/20, other than those referred to in this note,

although it is difficult to predict whether the economic climate will add further to the demands on the Council's services or reduce the income we receive. On this basis I am recommending that the current minimum level of Balances remain at £10.7m in 2018/19.

5 DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES ADVICE ON THE MINIMUM LEVEL OF BALANCES

5.1 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Section 151 Officer (Director of Corporate Resources) to report to the Council when it is setting its Budget/Council Tax on the "robustness of the estimates" and the "adequacy of the reserves".

5.2 Equally the Council should not hold usable Balances at too high a level as this would not be making the most effective use of the Council's overall resources when faced with significant demands for increased levels of service. Even allowing for a recommended level of Balances of £12.5m above, Balances of up to £18m would not be regarded as inappropriate.

5.3 At this point in time, bearing in mind the above and the size of the Council's Budget at approximately £420m, I would recommend that a minimum level of Balances for the Council to maintain would be £10m (but if possible should be at a higher level).

6 USE OF BALANCES

6.1 Any future use of Balances above the recommended level is best used to support "one off" initiatives/investment. Any significant use of Balances to meet the on-going costs of services should only be considered on the basis of providing a Revenue contribution for the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

7 SUMMARY

7.1 The report has set out the various factors that influence the level of Balances which must be maintained to meet any unexpected increases in expenditure or shortfall in income during the year. The Director of Corporate Resource's advice is that as a minimum Balances should be maintained at £10m but if possible should be at a higher level.

APPENDIX G

COUNCIL TAX (NON PARISH AREAS INCLUDING POLICE & FIRE)

	Properties	2018/19	2019/20	Increase
	%			
Band A	44.00	£1,130.67	£1,174.47	3.9%
Band B	18.76	£1,319.12	£1,370.22	3.9%
Band C	17.20	£1,507.55	£1,565.96	3.9%
Band D	10.22	£1,696.00	£1,761.71	3.9%
Band E	5.47	£2,072.88	£2,153.20	3.9%
Band F	2.27	£2,449.79	£2,544.70	3.9%
Band G	1.85	£2,826.67	£2,936.18	3.9%
Band H	0.22	£3,392.00	£3,523.42	3.9%

The Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept in percentage terms equates to 13.8%

The Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services) increase is represented by

- a 0% increase for the Fire Services component and
- a £9 increase for the Mayoral general component
- overall this precept has increased by 13.2%

The tables below show how the cumulative element of the Adult Social Care precept needs to be shown on council tax bills

…

APPENDIX G (cont'd)

Band A	Basic Council Tax	Adult Social Care Precept	Total	% Increase
2018/19 Council Tax Base (excl Precepts)	£907.26		£907.26	
2016/17 Adult Social Care Precept		£17.02	£17.02	
2017/18 Adult Social Care Precept		£26.43	£26.43	
2018/19 Adult Social Care Precept		£18.46	£18.46	
2018/19 Council Tax Base	£907.26	£61.91	£969.17	
General Levy 2019/20	£12.11		£12.11	1.25%
Adult Social Care Precept Levy 2019/20		£9.69	£9.69	1.00%
Total 2019/20 (excluding Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Precepts)	£919.37	£71.60	£990.97	
GMCA Precepts				
Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept			£132.20	
Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services)			£51.30	
Total Charge 2019/20	**£919.37**	**£71.60**	**£1,174.47**	
	This will appear as an item on the Council Tax bill	This will appear as an item on the Council Tax bill		

Band D	Basic Council Tax	Adult Social Care Precept	Total	% Increase
2018/19 Council Tax Base (excl Precepts)	£1,360.89		£1,360.89	
2016/17 Adult Social Care Precept		£25.53	£25.53	
2017/18 Adult Social Care Precept		£39.64	£39.64	
2018/19 Adult Social Care Precept		£27.69	£27.69	
2018/19 Council Tax Base	£1,360.89	£92.86	£1,453.75	
General Levy 2019/20	£18.17		£18.17	1.25%
Adult Social Care Precept Levy 2019/20		£14.54	£14.54	1.00%
Total 2019/20 (excluding Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Precepts)	£1,379.06	£107.40	£1,486.46	
GMCA Precepts				
Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept			£198.30	
Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services)			£76.95	
Total Charge 2019/20	**£1,379.06**	**£107.40**	**£1,761.71**	
	This will appear as an item on the Council Tax bill	This will appear as an item on the Council Tax bill		

APPENDIX H

DRAFT SUBSTANTIVE COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION

(i) That the following recommendations of the Cabinet on 11th February 2019 be approved:-

(a) The Council be recommended to approve the Budget for 2019/20
(b) That the council tax for 2019/20 be increased by 2.25% comprising
- The Adult Social Care Precept at 1%
- The general levy at 1.25%
- This will be funded from the returned Business Rates from GMCA

(c) The savings target of £135k from the proposed review of bowling greens in Neighbourhood Services will be reduced by 50% to £67k. This will be directly offset by an increase in the review of external charging within the Place Directorate.
(d) That Cabinet recommends to the Council the following in respect of the Capital Programme for 2019/20;
- The unallocated resources of £2.0m be used for Residential Roads and Pavements
- That £4m be allocated for further investment in district town centres, principally in Farnworth Town Centre. This will be funded from the Council's share of the available surplus in PSP

(e) The Council be recommended to approve the Capital Programme and Strategy for 2019/20
(f) The Council be recommended to approve the Investment and Prudential Indicators and Treasury Strategies 2019/20 to 2021/22

(ii) It be noted that on 3rd December 2018 the Cabinet calculated

(a) the Council Tax Base 2018/19 for the whole Council area as 75,487 (item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act"); and
(b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as:

Parish Councils

The Parish of Blackrod	1,897	Band D equivalents
The Parish of Horwich	7,395	Band D equivalents
The Parish of Westhoughton	8,506	Band D Equivalents

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax base for the year 2019/20 for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(iii) Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2019/20 (excluding Parish precepts) is £112,208,683

(iv) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2019/20 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act.

(a) £225,416,083 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.

(b)	£112,805,260	being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
(c)	£112,610,823	being the amount by which the aggregate at (iv)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at (iv)(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
(d)	£1,491.79	being the amount at (iv)(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T ((ii)(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
(e)	£402,140.00	being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act, each individual parish precept being: Blackrod £ 64,847 Horwich £187,817 Westhoughton £149.476
(f)	£1,486.46	being the amount at (iv)(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (iv)(e) above by Item T (ii)(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
(g)	Part of the Council's Area	Parish of Blackrod £1,520.64 Parish of Horwich £1,511.86 Parish of Westhoughton £1,504.03

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned at (e) above divided in each case by the amount at (ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(i) Part of the Council's Area

Valuation bands	Parish of Blackrod	Parish of Horwich	Parish of Westhoughton	All other parts of the Council's area
A	£1,013.76	£1,007.90	£1,002.68	£990.97
B	£1,182.72	£1,175.90	£1,169.81	£1,156.14
C	£1,351.67	£1,343.87	£1,336.91	£1,321.29
D	£1,520.64	£1,511.86	£1,504.03	£1,486.46
E	£1,858.56	£1,847.82	£1,838.25	£1,816.78
F	£2,196.49	£2,183.81	£2,172.50	£2,147.12
G	£2,534.40	£2,519.76	£2,506.71	£2,477.43
H	£3,041.28	£3,023.72	£3,008.06	£2,972.92

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (f) and (g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands

- (v) That it be noted that for the year 2019/20 the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept and the Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services) have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Precepting Authority

Valuation Bands	Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services)	Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept
A	£51.30	£132.20
B	£59.85	£154.23
C	£68.40	£176.27
D	£76.95	£198.30
E	£94.05	£242.37
F	£111.15	£286.43
G	£128.25	£330.50
H	£153.90	£396.60

(vi) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (iv), (f), (i), and (v), the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2018/19 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

(i) Part of the Council's Area

Valuation bands	Parish of Blackrod	Parish of Horwich	Parish of Westhoughton	All other parts of the Council's area
A	£1,197.26	£1,191.40	£1,186.18	£1,174.47
B	£1,396.80	£1,389.98	£1,383.89	£1,370.22
C	£1,596.34	£1,588.54	£1,581.58	£1,565.96
D	£1,795.89	£1,787.11	£1,779.28	£1,761.71
E	£2,194.98	£2,184.24	£2,174.67	£2,153.20
F	£2,594.07	£2,581.39	£2,570.08	£2,544.70
G	£2,993.15	£2,978.51	£2,965.46	£2,936.18
H	£3,591.78	£3,574.22	£3,558.56	£3,523.42

(vii) That the Council’s basic amount of Council Tax for 2019/20 at an increase of 2.25% is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(viii) That the Director of Corporate Resources be delegated authority to collect revenues and disburse monies from the relevant accounts.

(ix) That it be noted that the Government have set a National Non-Domestic Rate of 49.1p in the pound for small businesses and 50.4p in the pound for larger businesses for the financial year 2019/20.

(x) That the Council's current policy in respect of discretionary relief for charitable organisations, as approved by the Cabinet on the 11th February 2019, be reaffirmed and that the Director of Corporate Resources be delegated authority to determine applications for such relief.

(xi) That War Disablement Pensions and War Widows' Pensions be disregarded for the purposes of the Council Tax Support Scheme.

(xii) That Council approves the following definition for the 'minimum occupancy period' for Council Tax Discount Class C properties, to apply from 1st April 2019:
"For the purposes of Discount Class C, in considering whether a dwelling has been vacant for any period, any one period, not exceeding six weeks, during which it was not vacant shall be disregarded".

(xiii) That the minutes of the proceedings of the undermentioned Scrutiny Committee regarding their consideration of the budgets be noted:-

Corporate Cultural and External Issues 14th February 2019

Appendix I

STRATEGIC EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

1 Background and Context

7.1 This document provides a strategic Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of the service reductions and changes that the council is proposing to deliver, in order to achieve a balanced budget by the end of 2020/21. It is a strategic analysis only at this stage, as the detail of each option is yet to be worked up. This EIA has been updated to reflect the key issues coming out of the consultation. Individual EIAs will be produced for each option, when developed, as part of an ongoing consultation exercise.

2 Budget Strategy

7.2 The council has a strong track record of budget management, delivering approximately £155m of reductions over the last ten years, and remains committed to its priorities:

7.2.1 Protecting the most vulnerable in the borough;

7.2.2 Supporting economic development.

7.3 It is proposed that the council will again adopt a two-year budget strategy:

7.3.1 That revenue reserves totalling £8m are used to balance the 2019-21 budget, and a further £8m to allow savings to be phased in over the two year period;

7.3.2 that proposals for £23.5m of savings be identified for the two-year budget cycle.

7.4 The £23.5m savings target is based on the following assumptions and considerations:

7.4.1 Inflation – 2% for all categories (2.8% for pay);

7.4.2 2.25% Council Tax increase in 2019/20 (1% ring-fenced for Adult Social Care);

7.4.3 That any changes to the proposed Business Rates Retention Scheme are fiscally neutral.

7.5 It is important to stress that in identifying options to achieve these cuts, the council needs to strike a balance between the impact on the general public of any council tax increase, and the impact on the public in terms of service reductions. A decision to reduce the council tax increase for 2019/20 will require a higher level of cuts or additional funding to be sought to balance the budget.

8 The Approach to Managing and Mitigating Service Impact

8.1 As set out above, the scale of the cuts required, and the restrictions on which parts of the council's budgets these can be made from, means that the council has to make some challenging decisions about service provision in order to deliver a legal budget for 2019/21.

8.2 The council will take the following steps to deliver the best options for Bolton from a very difficult set of choices, and to manage and mitigate the worst of the impacts arising as far as possible:

8.2.1 The council has once again sought proposals over a two-year programme to allow for strategic planning and phased implementation up to 31st March 2021;

8.2.2 The council continues to maintain its strategy to ensure that statutory provision continues to be met, and to limit the impact on the most vulnerable in the borough as much as possible, whilst also supporting economic development.

9 Strategic Approach

9.1 Within the context of the council's strategic priorities, a series of principles have been articulated to inform proposals. These are:

9.1.1 Centralised and streamlined support services internally, to achieve economies of scale and careful prioritisation of capacity;

9.1.2 Further digitalisation of council services to realise efficiencies in conjunction with the council's digital inclusion strategy;

9.1.3 Alternative service delivery models to deliver reductions in operating costs;

9.1.4 Maximising opportunities to generate income, e.g. by supporting more businesses to invest in Bolton.

10 Specific Proposals

10.1 There are a number of specific options with a potential equality impact, including:

10.1.1 A potential further reduction of the council's workforce by at least 124 posts;

10.1.2 A review of the provision of public health services;

10.1.3 A further review of universal services in order that resources may be re-directed to targeted support for the most vulnerable, as outlined in Appendix B of the budget report;

10.1.4 A review of provider services;

10.1.5 Increased partnership / community working may offer an alternative delivery model for the Halliwell UCAN centre.

11 Consultation

11.1 Formal consultation on the budget options set out in the report took place between Monday 3 December 2018 and Monday 14 January 2019 and included the following:

- Formal consultation with trade unions – information and proposals were presented to the joint unions on 22nd November 2018;
- A questionnaire made available online and sent to various stakeholders (a paper copy was available on request)
- Targeted presentations/discussions with representatives of the community and voluntary sector and business rates payers;

- Face-to-face briefings for staff, and updates via email explaining the overall budget position, and access to the report online.

11.2 Specific proposals, which will be brought forward during the course of the programme, will be subject to their own EIA, consultations and assessment procedures at the appropriate time, if required.

12 Equality Impact Assessment Questions

a Describe in summary the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal, including desired outcome

12.1 the report sets out the strategic context and outline budget for 2019/20 and 2020/21, including options to achieve the anticipated reduction of £23.5m over the two-year budget cycle.

b Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the proposal?

12.2 As set out in previous strategic EIAs, the very nature of the services the council provides, and the scale of the savings required, mean that a range of stakeholders are likely to be affected by changes to council activity in some way over the next couple of years. In particular:

12.2.1 Service users/their carers – both now and in the future, may find that some aspects of service provision change. Some services may change fundamentally and be delivered in a very different way; some services may reduce or stop; and some customers' eligibility to access services may change;

12.2.2 Members of the general public – could be affected by further reductions in universal services and changes in council tax;

12.2.3 Organisations working with, or supported by, the council – the reducing level of resources available will continue to have an effect on the extent to which the council can provide financial support for the work of partner organisations. Equally, whilst difficult to quantify, the reduction in services provided by the council may also have an effect on the demands for the services provided by these partners.

12.2.4 Staff – given the ongoing scale of the savings required, there will continue to be an impact on staff, whether through loss of employment or associated restructuring and change. The council's workforce has already reduced by over 1,700 jobs since 2009, and a minimum of 124 posts may be displaced in this programme. However, the council retains its objective of seeking to manage all reduction consensually as far as possible, to mitigate the impact on staff, through the use of voluntary early retirement, voluntary severance and vacancy management, avoiding compulsory redundancies wherever possible.

c In summary, what are the anticipated (positive or negative) impacts of the proposals?

12.3 The philosophy set out by the council to deliver its budget is very clear regarding its priorities in relation to protecting the most vulnerable and enabling economic growth. The approach set out in the earlier parts of this EIA seeks to deliver the best outcome for Bolton in very difficult circumstances and, where possible, mitigate the worst of the impacts, particularly for the borough's most vulnerable people.

12.4 The use of reserves as a one-off measure to cash flow the budget significantly lessens the financial burden on the council for the period 2019-21. That said, this option also focuses on the council's strategy for economic growth and development and the potential to increase base income.

12.5 As before, the council aims to minimise the impact of budget reductions on front line service user provision. Proposals have once again been sought from each of the council's directorates to offer a degree of protection to front line services and to safeguard the borough's most vulnerable people, whilst at the same time moving forward on our economic strategy.

12.6 The potentially negative impacts are: reduced universal services; an increase in council tax; and a potential further reduction of at least 124 council jobs. This will be mitigated through careful targeting to protect the most disadvantaged in the borough; ongoing investment in economic growth and development; and a workforce strategy to mitigate the impact of reductions in staff as far as possible.

Council Tax

12.7 The Secretary of State has announced that the Referendum limit for 2019/20 is 3%. In addition, the council can raise a further 1% in respect of Adult Social Care, this being the final element of the permitted 6% rise allowed over the budget years 2017/18 (3%), 2018/19 (2%), and 2019/20. Increasing or reducing the council tax by 1% has an impact of approximately £1m on council tax generated.

12.8 The council acknowledges that any increase in council tax has a financial effect on those who are eligible to pay in the borough, and may be particularly difficult for those who are already under financial pressure. However, the 2.25% increase (1.25% general levy and 1% Adult Social Care) will subsequently reduce the level of cuts which may otherwise need to be achieved. In addition, the council continues to provide a discretionary council tax discount scheme for eligible residents requiring extra help, as well as a Local Welfare Provision scheme for vulnerable people in short term crisis.

12.9 The 1% increase specifically for Adult Social Care would help protect the most vulnerable customers and residents in the borough and reduce the cuts in services they receive.

d Is there any potential for (positive or negative) differential impact or adverse impact with regard to the identified stakeholders and the diversity groups (race, religion, disability, gender, gender reassignment, age, sexuality, caring status, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, socio-economic)? Can this be justified/what mitigating actions will be taken?

13 Council Stakeholders

Service users (including parents and carers)

13.1 The council is committed to continuing to protect children's social care services as far as possible, however, reviews are proposed in services for children and young people. That said, limiting the impact on the most vulnerable children and young people is a priority, and care has been taken to ensure that the potential impacts of the proposals are mitigated as far as possible through targeting and engaging partners to deliver diminished council services.

13.2 The council is also committed to protecting adult and older people's social care services as far as possible, and in addition to this budget strategy, there is investment from the Greater Manchester devolution programme to assist in integration of health and social care services, which will mitigate against some of these reductions and improve outcomes for older people.

Members of the general public

13.3 The council has a clear strategy of moving from universal to targeted services, in order to offer a degree of protection for services for the borough's most vulnerable people, whilst at the same time driving forward our economic strategy. The strategy continues to be pursued through these proposals.

13.4 If council tax rises are approved, there would be a further, specific financial impact on those who pay council tax in Bolton, as they would be asked to pay an increased level of council tax. By raising council tax, however, the council is able to increase its income, and therefore reduce the level of cuts which may otherwise need to be achieved. This is particularly so for the 1% Adult Social Care precept.

13.5 In coming to a decision about possible council tax increases, the council will seek to strike a balance between the impact on the general public of a council tax increase, and the impact on the public in terms of service reductions.

Organisations working with or supported by the council

13.6 As in previous years, the council must look at making reductions from across the range of services which it provides, including commissioned and grant funded services. This means that partners who receive funding from the council may see a change or reduction in their funding, which may in turn have an effect on their service delivery.

13.7 Clearly, it will be essential to ensure that the council continues its good working relationships with partners from across the private, voluntary, and charitable sectors to understand, and where possible, manage the impact of possible funding changes. In addition, it will be necessary for individual reviews to consider any potential impact on partner service delivery, e.g. where complementary services are being reviewed. The council has been working with these partners over the last few years to encourage and assist these organisations to become self-financing and sustainable where possible.

Staff

13.8 Given the ongoing scale of the budget requirements, there will continue to be an impact on staff, whether through loss of employment or associated restructuring and change. Since 2009 the council's workforce has already reduced by 1,721 employees, entirely through voluntary means, for example, by freezing external recruitment, deleting vacancies, offering voluntary early retirement/severance, and a comprehensive redeployment scheme. The proposals set out in the report have been developed, alongside a continuing commitment to a set of values as an employer, which seek to protect the council's workforce from the worst aspects of the budget reductions and remain a best practice employer. The proposal as a basis for consultation is that the council will consider reductions through voluntary means, such as voluntary severance and voluntary early retirement (where these meet business needs), and these will be considered at the beginning of each individual savings proposal.

Diversity Groups

13.9 Throughout the process, the council will need to consider the impact of its proposals on its duties under national equalities legislation, which require it to have due regard to the outcomes below, whilst also ensuring that the council can set a legal, balanced budget.

1) Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
2) Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
3) Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

13.10 Analysis of those defined groups with protected characteristics is as follows:

- Race
- Religion
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Age
- Sexuality
- Caring status
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership

13.11 In addition to the protected characteristics set out by the Act, Bolton Council believes it is also important to consider socio-economic conditions, caring status and gender identity as part of its work around equality.

13.12 Headline analysis identifies potential impacts around age, disability, caring status and socio-economic deprivation. Specific impact around race, religion, gender, gender reassignment, sexuality, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership has not been identified at this early stage, but will be analysed as part of detailed EIAs for individual reviews.

13.13 Further detail included in previous strategic reports indicates that equality issues must be examined around customer access, as the council intends to move towards a greater use of technology as the primary access route. This is supported through the council's digital inclusion strategy for our communities.

Children and Young People and their Parents/Carers

13.14 Several significant reviews are proposed for services for children and young people. In the broadest sense, changes to such services have the potential to impact upon children and young people, including those with disabilities or special educational needs; their parents/carers; and those young people who are also parents or carers. Limiting the impact on the most vulnerable children and young people will continue to be a priority, and care will be taken to ensure that the potential impacts of proposals are well understood and mitigated as far as possible, e.g. through targeting.

13.15 The consultation undertaken at this high level has highlighted the impact that an increase in the cost of school meals could potentially have on young people; "*we will*

see hungry children" and also the potential for vulnerable young people and their families to be affected by the changes to Early Help. There is a worry that if the Early Help service was to focus solely on targeted support they would not be able to obtain behaviour change across communities and prevent future long-term problems.

13.16 One of the general messages to come from the consultation was the willingness protect vulnerable young people in our communities.

Older People and those who care for Older People

13.17 Ongoing transformation within adult social care means that the way in which services are provided will continue to change. The council continues to seek to deliver quality and affordable services, whilst also promoting independence, choice, and control, and meeting statutory duties. However, service users and their families and/or carers will see changes as a result of the budget proposals, and also as the programme of integration across health and social care services continues.

13.18 The consultation undertaken at this high level has highlighted some potential impacts on older people. In particular the proposal to review bowling greens. Many felt that the changes would impact on older people in terms of their social interaction, possible isolation and and level of exercise.

13.19 Another issue raised was the financial impact of increasing council tax or charges for services on pensioners or disabled people with fixed incomes.

13.20 Throughout the process it will be essential to ensure that any proposed changes to services are based on a full understanding of need and eligibility, to ensure that Bolton's older people and their families continue to receive appropriate, accessible, and safe care services.

Socio-economic Deprivation

13.21 The council and its partners have a long-standing commitment to achieving economic prosperity and narrowing the gap in Bolton, which sit at the heart of the council's aim to protect the most vulnerable in the borough. Many of these people live in Bolton's most deprived areas, and Bolton's strategy continues to be to target resources to support people in these areas – although resources are much more limited than in previous years, and this budget strategy does have the potential to have an impact on those people who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation. This will need to be considered as part of each review in the detailed EIA.

e Are there any gaps in your evidence, or conclusions which make it difficult to quantify the potential adverse impact? If so, please explain how you will explore the proposal in greater depth.

13.22 Yes, this strategic EIA provides a high level response to the council's standard EIA questions. It will, however, be necessary to bring forward detailed proposals for each of the options, including detailed analysis of equality impact, and this will take place on a phased basis over the next two years. It will also be necessary to consult with trades unions and appropriate stakeholders on each of the individual reviews as they come forward. The consultation processes will help to inform a full assessment of equality impact.

13.23 In conclusion, the council continues to make every effort to protect the most vulnerable as far as possible, support economic development, and to respond

appropriately to its duties under the Equality Act. However, this strategic EIA recognises the significant challenge presented by the financial position for Bolton, and the likelihood that many of the strategic budget options, whilst seeking to deliver the “least worst” outcome for Bolton, may well have an impact on a range of stakeholders as the council sets a legal budget for the coming two years.

APPENDIX J

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Summary

Consultation was undertaken to ascertain the views of interested parties on the financial challenges faced by the council over the next few years. A **survey form** was made available online, the consultation was sent direct to various stakeholders, and was forwarded to eView, the council's consultation panel. A press release was sent to the Bolton News, which ran a number of articles. A total of 281 responses were received.

Most respondents agreed with the **council's approach** to making the necessary savings: 88% agreed that the council should protect the most vulnerable as much as possible, 84% agreed that the council should maximise economic prosperity, 68% agreed that the council should seek to minimise the impact on staff and avoid compulsory redundancy where possible, and 88% of respondents agreed that the council should make savings from management and administration where possible, before frontline services.

Just over half (58%) of respondents agreed with the proposed 2.5% increase in **Council Tax** (including 1% for Adult Social Care) to achieve the savings and avoid even more cuts to services, with 30% disagreeing with this.

Respondents were then asked if they agreed or disagreed with a series of **proposals**: proposals receiving the greatest support included smarter use of management and leadership, and reviewing every penny we spend. Proposals receiving the least support included charging a bit extra for universal services to protect those in most need, reduced winter gritting, and increased charges for council services such as the use of land and facilities.

When asked about **managing change**, 64% accepted that budget reductions had to be made, 82% were aware of the need for the council to change the way it delivers services, but only 34% felt the council was doing its best under difficult circumstances.

Respondents were asked to comment on how the proposals would **impact on them or their families**, and for **alternative solutions**. The most commonly raised impact was related to the proposal to review all 28 bowling greens and their usage, and to use Community Asset Transfer Powers, where appropriate, to deliver greenspace functions through a new partnership approach with local communities. Other comments were related to the financial impact on them (e.g. from higher council tax rates), and potential job losses. The most commonly suggested alternatives were to cut costs of councillors / mayor, improved leadership / management and cutting staff costs / benefits.

Methodology

The consultation sought to ascertain the views of interested parties on the financial challenges faced by the council over the next few years.

A questionnaire was made available online and promoted via the council's website, via social media and via press releases in the Bolton News. A printed version of the questionnaire was available on request.

A presentation summarising the proposals was made available, alongside the full report which went to Cabinet so that respondents had information to permit intelligent consideration and response.

The consultation was sent direct to members of the Vision Partnership Action Group and the Vision Partnership Steering Group and forwarded to eView, the council's consultation panel.

The Borough Treasurer also had separate meetings with voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations (16 different organisations represented) and has a meeting arranged with non-domestic business rate payers.

Results

281 responses were received via the consultation questionnaire

- 73% responded as residents, 12% as Council staff, 3% as a partner, 9% represented a community or voluntary group and 3% were 'other' (mainly bowling clubs).

The following relate to those who had answered as residents / Council staff

- 96% gave their ethnic origin as White British, 2% as Other White, 1% Asian / Asian British and 1% Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Group

- 71% felt that their day-to-day activities were not limited due to long term illness or disability, 28% had some limitations

- 71% had no caring responsibilities, 28% had some caring responsibilities

- The age of respondents ranged between 26 and 89

Formal responses

Formal responses were also received from the following organisations:

- Bolton Community and Voluntary Services (CVS)
- Joint response from trade unions – UNISON and GMB
- Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

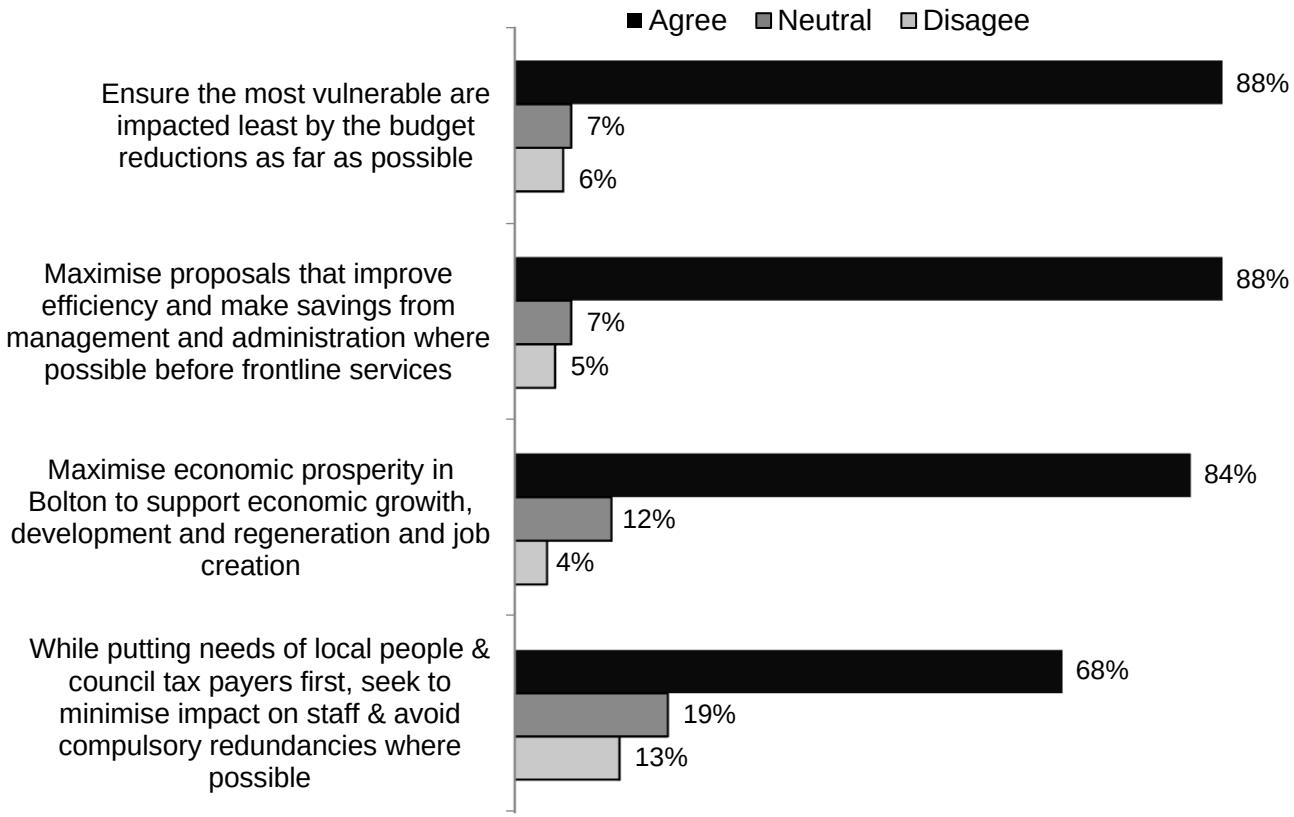
Responses from these organisations are provided at the end of this section.

Issues raised will be picked up within the regular meetings that take place between the council and organisations, in line with our partnership approach.

Responses

Q1: Our approach

Q: Whilst achieving the necessary cuts is very difficult, the council continues to have a clear strategy for the delivery of its budget, as detailed below. Please state how strongly you agree or disagree with each

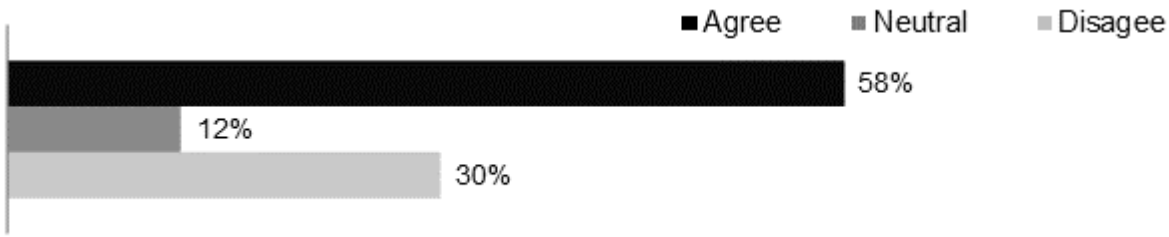


Bases:269 -273

The majority of respondents agreed with the strategy put forward by the council for the delivery of the budget.

Q2: Council tax

Q: The proposals put forward assume a 1.5% increase in council tax and an additional further 1% for Adult Social Care. Please state how strongly you agree or disagree that the council should raise council tax to achieve the savings and avoid even more cuts to services



Base:216

Just over half of respondents agreed with the proposal to raise council tax.

Q3. Proposals

Q: In order to protect the most vulnerable children and adults, and to avoid deeper cuts to directly delivered services, the council has had to make some very difficult decisions. Some of the proposals that have been put forward are detailed below. Please state how strongly you agree or disagree.

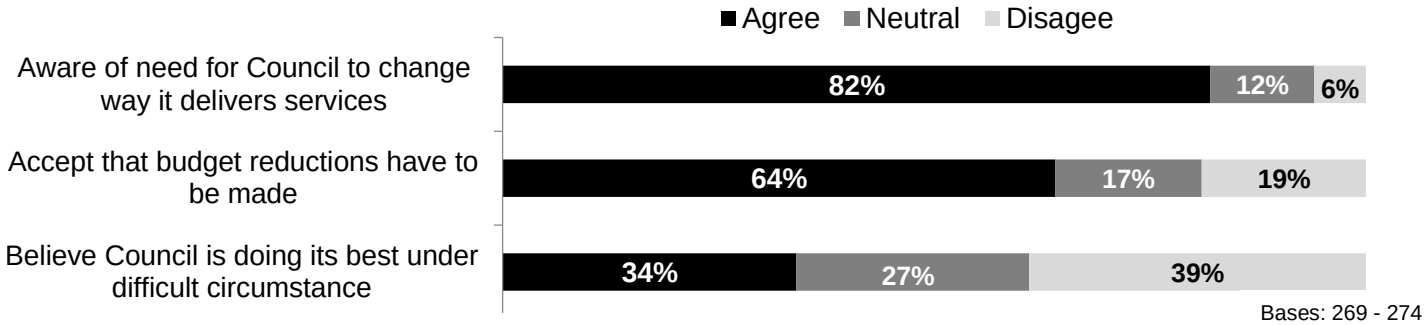


Bases:269 - 276

Strongest level of agreement related to the smarter use of management and leadership and reviewing every penny we spend. The strongest level of disagreement was for the reduction of the winter gritting service followed by charging a bit extra for school meals and community meals.

Q4: Managing change

Q: The council is going through a period of unprecedented change. As described above, in making decisions about what to change, the council's priority is to maintain support for vulnerable children and adults within the borough. With this in mind, please state how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements



Bases: 269 - 274

Most respondents are aware of the need for the council to change the way it delivers services, almost two-thirds accept that budget reductions have to be made but just over a third believe the council is doing its best under difficult circumstances.

Q5: Impact of the proposals

Q: Please describe how you / your family will be affected by the proposals

A total of 182 comments were received. These comments have been coded and categorised and are shown in the table below.

Categorised comments	Number of respondents
Bowling greens	94
Financial – including job losses	52
Services used will be affected / won't get value for money	19
Concern for others / future	17
Equality Impact / services for vulnerable people	13
No / little impact on self / family	10
Penalises workers	5

Table includes categorised comments with 5 or more respondents in category

Bowling Greens

Over half of all comments related to the proposal to review all 28 bowling greens. Most were concerned that due to their age they didn't have the capacity to physically maintain the land or have enough finance to pay for the running of it: "*We have neither the funds to buy and store essential equipment, nor the able bodied manpower to use it."* Some had tried and failed to obtain grants, and some had obtained contractors quotes which were too expensive.

A large number of comments related to the impact of bowling (or visits to the club-house) on their health and wellbeing. They felt that without the council's support, many bowling greens would cease which would have a big impact on their social interaction, emotional support and level of physical exercise "*Bowling provides a way of older, vulnerable adults getting exercise and stopping the isolation.*" *"The existence of these clubs save the NHS and supporting services money."*

Some said there was a contradiction in the proposals in that the council says it will 'ensure the most vulnerable are protected as far as possible' yet: "*almost all the users of the Park bowling greens are now termed 'vulnerable adults' by virtue of their age and the recent government requirement for a Safeguarding Officer to be appointed in each club."*

Finally, it was mentioned that some of the bowling greens were on charitable land "*Edward Deakin gifted Egerton Park to Bolton Council, to be used in perpetuity for enjoyment for the public. What the council proposes may mean that those conditions may be jeopardised".* This could potentially mean that any scheme would need to be agreed by the Charity Commission.

A small number of bowlers offered to pay slightly higher fees rather than lose the service; *"I would not object to a REASONABLE increase in the cost of the Council Permit year on year to contribute to your budget"* One representative of a bowling club explained that help to obtain sponsorship or funding for capital items / repairs would be needed; "*If help was available we would consider volunteering our efforts to taking this on."*

Financial / don't know what council tax goes on / job loss

Respondents talked about how they were struggling already and how an increase in council tax would affect them: *"I struggle making my money stretch to cover the rising costs of bills every month… whatever pay increases I get are quickly taken by council tax rises."* Some respondents were unsure what their council tax paid for: *"I don't see anything from my Council Tax money, not even a road sweeper. If you are going to raise the Council Tax again at least show where my money really goes"*

A rise in council tax was felt by some to be particularly unfair on more vulnerable members of society or those on low incomes; "*As a single old age pensioner I feel that the increase in Council Tax/Services plus the reduction in services for the elderly is totally unfair as my income is fixed."* and "*The council tax is the most discriminatory tax on people with low incomes like myself who pay a larger proportion of their income than others."* Other respondents were accepting; for example; *"My council tax will go up slightly but I would prefer that option and still have services for the vulnerable."*

Some people talked about the financial impact of specific proposals; *"If school meal cost increases, we would not be able to afford them so it would in effect mean a loss to the council as many families would go to packed lunches".* Council employees were concerned about their jobs; "*As I work directly for the council if I was to be made redundant my family would be affected substantially"*

Services used will be affected

Some respondents were concerned about universal services constantly being reduced; "*Cannot accept further changes to essential services like Bin collections, gritting, road improvements and other services which directly impact the residents and create another problems e.g. smaller bins lead to more fly tipping."* and *"worry that Early Help will end up only focussing on targeted support and we will never break some habitual needs and unable to support communities to change."* Others, however, thought it right to concentrate services on those in most need; *"I believe primarily the council should focus on protecting services to the young (subsided/free school meals etc.), elderly and the vulnerable."*

Respondents commented on cuts to specific services and the impact this would have;
"I am not sure what will happen to community meals - my father has a community meal every day and this is peace of mind as I know he gets a hot daily meal which he does enjoy." and

"By cutting gritting services you are putting people at risk of having accidents which will impact you in roads closures" and *"Reduction in ability to utilise facilities such as leisure services with likely detrimental effects on health and consequential cost displacement onto other services such as NHS and isolating impact of loss of social connections"*

Concern for others / future

Respondents described concerns for others who currently used services and the impact of them being reduced "*It seems that the school meals will go - outrageous - we see people queuing to Food Banks and now we will see hungry children. Libraries and museums - are you looking at fees to enter these facilities? …it is sometimes the only place a person can access internet, help etc.* and *"Very Concerned that services to children and young people will be cut again."* and *"Our parks and their maintenance should be maintained, these are vital to the well-being of the elderly whose general health will be greatly impacted by any proposed cuts"*

Respondents were also aware that they may need services in the future; "*One day I may be in similar circumstances at which point reduced services/provision for elderly care would become an issue." and "as we get older our needs may change; and we may need to rely more on Council support."*

Council employees were concerned about the uncertainty around their jobs; "*I've been told every year 'this is the year we review your job'. This has been the case since the cuts began. It has put pressure which I can't describe in words on myself, my family and also the young people I care for as I'm constantly worrying if I'm going to have a job or if I will have to take a major salary cut which will affect my family's life and future"*

Equality impact / services for vulnerable people

Respondents felt that some of the proposals (e.g. an increase in council tax, the price of school meals and the changes to bowling greens) would adversely impact the most vulnerable members of the community such as older people and children "*Council tax is already very high and for many people on a low income takes a large part of their pension"*

Some felt strongly that protecting the most vulnerable in society must be the priority; "*Front-line services must be protected for the elderly and children at risk in our society"* and "*I have two children with special needs that I certainly would not want support cut to. If you cut support further we may never get the support as a family we need. … All social care and early help must be protected at all costs"* and *"I am concerned about the vulnerable people in our town. I would like more done to help the homeless."*

Minimal / no impact on self / family

Respondents in this category felt that at the current time they wouldn't be impacted too much by the proposals but many were aware that their circumstances could change in the future prompting extra support; *"Very little impact at the moment, but as we get older our needs may change; and we may need to rely more on council support."* and "*At this stage, it is hard to see how any proposals outlined would affect us*"

Penalises workers / savers at expense of non-contributors

Some respondents felt that the proposals penalise those who work, as illustrated by the following quotes; "*Another increase in council tax would, yet again, penalise the hardworking residents of Bolton who have no choice but to pay. Me and my wife both work full time, pay a mortgage, pay for childcare and live within our means. We are the type of people this council doesn't work for, yet are the type who proportionally contribute the most"* and "*All the help seems to be going to people who don't work and who are on benefits or old people ... Money should be used to help the middle people, by sticking to bin collections, pot holes, schools, childcare*" and "*Can see no direct loss or benefit to my family however what I can see will be a higher expectation for me to pay more to support those who are not willing to do something about their own situation"*

Other comments

Other comments related to the use of volunteers; *"Working in partnership is good but we pay enough council tax not to be reliant on volunteers*," "*Looks like folk will have to ACCEPT more austerity and more voluntary working in order to keep the local community together*" and comments about proposed changes to specific services such as winter gritting, school meals and community meals; *"the amount of savings from winter gritting is surely not worth the chaos that this may cost"*

Q6: Alternative solutions

Q: Can you think of any other ways Bolton Council can make the savings whilst still delivering staturory services?

A total of 170 comments were received. These comments have been coded and categorised and are shown in the table below.

Categorised comments	**Number of respondents**
Cut costs of councillors / mayor	40
Comments about leadership / management	35
Cut staff costs / benefits / increase staff efficiencies	33
Alternative ways of working (shared services, partnership working)	30
Increase revenue / spend reserves / release capital / income generation	29
Avoid/review/cancel projects	22
Review buildings and contracts/contractors	18
Consider other efficiencies (reduce lighting/recycling collections etc.)	13
Attract more people/spending to borough (improve appearance)	13
Restrict/cut services/benefits	12
Not enough information provided to respond	8

Table includes categorised comments with 5 or more respondents in category

Cut costs of councillors / mayor

This category included comments about reducing the costs of elected members and also the mayor (including the GM mayor), or reducing the number of councillors and the council's highest earners.

Comments included; *"Cut councillors and their pay - no need for more than 2 per ward," "do not pay councillors fees - they should be councillors for the love of their community not for pay," "The council tax has already been increased unnecessarily by the additional charge for a Greater Manchester Mayor and Staff. We already have town mayors to organise the area and an expensive duplicate is not needed and most certainly should not be the cause of further increases,"* and *"A few less highly paid executives seems a good idea to me" "Review costs of Mayoral and Councillors social and celebratory events."*

Comments about leadership / management

Respondents felt that the management within the council needed to be reviewed; "*I am still aware of management staff taking huge advantages of their position, which needs stamping out," "Get rid of mid-level managers. Have job reviews of people who have been in post for a significant amount of time, and get rid people who may be less efficient with modern technology or adaptable through changing working practices," "Stop the fat cats at the top taking the cream with their ridiculous wages whilst we all suffer at the bottom"*

Cut staff costs / benefits / increase staff efficiencies

Comments in this category referred to cutting staff pay and benefits (including sick pay), reviewing pensions, increasing staff efficiencies and reducing the number of agency workers or consultants; "*Address the terms and conditions of council employees, such as the occupational sick pay. Pay scales"; "Make efficiencies from organising staff/services better Do not use so many expensive agency people," "I think that staff and administration costs should be addressed - look closely at wastage," "Administrative services to be more digitalised," "Pay review in ratio to work carried out/importance," "Stop bringing in expensive external consultants"*

Alternative ways of working

Respondents felt that efficiencies could be made by working with or learning from others. Comments related to working with other councils, encouraging shared services and partnership working, streamlining services, implementing behaviour change and becoming more customer focused; *"Adopt more of the measures used by, what's being called the 'Preston' model," "Digitalisation where possible within the services provided," "We need to look more closely at how we deliver services and potentially maybe look at community assets more and progress with partnership working and more aligned services in meeting needs within the community," "More shared services with other councils in order to gain from economy of size," "Run services yourselves rather than paying private companies," "Work with partners like schools and the third sector to see how we can work closely"*

Increase revenue / spend reserves / release capital / income generation

Respondents had a variety of ideas for bringing more income into the council - from increasing fees, introducing fines, making sure everyone pays council tax;

“You could fine people for parking on the pavement and not leaving enough room for wheelchairs” “Do not provide free parking on the multi-storey car parks.” Ensure all people and organisations pay their fair share of council tax.” “Massively increase planning process charges to major developers,” “*Increase range of goods for sale in the museum shop,”* “*Possibly the council could make money by hiring out schools in the summer months to various organisations for sports activities & other educational needs.”*

There were also suggestions to use council reserves more rather than making further cuts; *“Dig into the reserves a little further,” “Use some of the money that is put at one side for situations like this”*

Avoid / review / cancel projects

Respondents felt that the council should avoid spending money on what they consider to be ‘wasteful’ schemes in particular town centre developments; *“Stop putting these buildings up and trying to make Bolton like Manchester Trafford centre we used have a lovely town centre,” “Do not spend council tax payers money on vanity projects,” “Not purchasing Crompton Place would have been a start,” “Stop spending money on stupid projects and start spending it on the community,” “stop publishing a quarterly newspaper” “Christmas decorations can be expensive and are an avoidable expense.”*

Review buildings and contracts / contractors

Respondents suggested reviewing council buildings and selling where appropriate; “*Sell off any unused or derelict buildings,” “Offload any council buildings not fit for purpose.” Sell the several buildings standing empty or rent them out but not for the astronomical fees you are currently proposing,”* They also suggested using existing buildings more appropriately; “*Instead of putting things in a new building, where there is space in another place use that,”* and ensuring value for money from building contractors; “*Get more value for money on building works that are undertaken. More stringent supervision of the completed work,” Investigate better value from building contracts and maintenance contracts”*

Consider other efficiencies

Suggestions here included reduced lighting, changing recycling / bin collections, reviewing Bolton Scene, looking at suppliers, stationery, reducing the number of letters/questionnaires sent to residents and considering Christmas closures for staff / buildings;

“Stop sending Council Tax bills/Invoices/ Housing Benefit determinations by post and instead email them where you can,” “Do not buy headed paper - It is far more expensive that plain paper,” “Collect paper bins monthly as most people do not fill them collect burgundy bins monthly again as most people do not fill them,” “I am sure that if an admin person was employed by the council to resource cheaper ways to make purchases rather than always buy from the 'preferred supplier', huge savings could be made,” “Turn the LED street lights down slightly between 1:00am and 5:00am” “Focus on obtaining and negotiating harder for out sourced services.”

Attract more people/spending to borough (improve appearance, local businesses)

Respondents felt that greater investment and improvements made to the appearance of the borough would attract more business and more visitors; "*Attract more business to the area by making this an attractive place to be," "Definitely regenerate - Invest in the town and its people to get returns," "More investment in town centre shopping i.e. encourage people to shop in Bolton by reducing or scraping town centre parking charges," "Spread the money available across the whole of Bolton rather than always putting money into Bolton town centre"*

Restrict / cut services / benefits

Comments in this category included reducing or stopping various benefits or services;
"Perhaps the council can make savings by insisting that all council documents and communications are delivered in the English language only," "Reduce the amount spent on paying people benefits and rehousing," "Those who don't work but expect a service to be provided (to make life easier for themselves) should be made (or encouraged) to fend for themselves, rather than making the rate-payer subside their whims," "Not ALL families need primary school meals subsidy." "Libraries could be closed at 1 pm on a Saturday"

Not enough information provided to respond

Some respondents felt that they did not have enough detailed information to know the impact on them; *"It is difficult to answer this with such limited understanding of what the current proposals are" "This is difficult to answer without knowing the expenditure of the council in detail. A list of what the council spends broken down would be useful as part of this consultation," "Unfortunately I am neither a strategist nor an economist!"*

Other Comments

Other suggestions included campaigning for more funds from central government; "*Stop trying to make savings and demand support from the government," "Campaign with community and other local authorities to talk to central government." "All local authorities should join together and call for a general strike."*

Respondents also suggested stopping the funding of non-statutory services and encouraging the community to take ownership of some services "*Could BMC encourage and resource householders to take ownership of bits of their streets, could also be extended to churchyards and parks?" "More people are volunteering to keep Bolton clean and tidy, which takes some pressure of the council workers."*

Summary of issues from Bolton CVS and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE) organisations

Bolton CVS submitted a formal response to the budget consultation which can be found in full at the end of this section. It states that it is essential that the council recognises the impact of funding changes on VCSE groups and organisations and needs to ensure that social value is understood, considered, implemented and embedded in the council's financial planning and decision making. Whilst it agrees with many aspects of the council's approach to delivering the budget and the proposals put forward, it disagrees that budget reductions need to be made, explaining that decisions are impacting negatively on the groups and

organisations that Bolton CVS supports and the people accessing services provided by the VCSE organisations.

The Director of Corporate Resources also attended a workshop for the VCSE during the consultation period, at which 16 individual organisations were represented. They made the following points:

- ➔ The economic value of the 113,000 volunteering hours donated by people in Bolton each week equates to £1,243,000 per week and this must be valued and considered in all VCSE financing models and decision making.
- ➔ It is important to recognise and value the VCSE in Bolton as an economic contributor itself. Not only does it pay salaries to residents and contribute £94.4million per annum to the local economy, it also brings significant new investment to Bolton through grants, trusts and fundraising.
- ➔ There need to be more opportunities for discussion about how the council delivers services in partnership with the voluntary and community sector locally.
- ➔ It is important to recognise that although no compulsory redundancies have been made by Bolton Council, decisions on funding its supply chains, which includes the VCSE, have resulted in local organisations making compulsory redundancies.
- ➔ The conversation and openness is welcome, but there is an essential need to follow with action and listen to the voices of the VCSE following this consultation process and ensure that the VCSE is treated as an equitable partner during the process.
- ➔ Assumptions are made about what the VCSE can and can't do, without proper conversations or opportunities, and this needs to be addressed.
- ➔ There is a need for proper 'upstream' co-design with the VCSE, not after decisions have been made. The sector has a wealth of knowledge to share.
- ➔ Just because a service is a statutory responsibility of Bolton Council, it does not mean that Bolton Council has to deliver the service.
- ➔ It is important to understand the difference between effectiveness versus efficiencies and ensure that the focus on effectiveness is prioritised in decision making.
- ➔ Better outcomes can be achieved through strategic investment in the VCSE.
- ➔ There should be a move from 'salami slicing' the VCSE in Bolton and making bold decisions on investment that achieves the best results.
- ➔ There is an essential need for transparency through decision making.
- ➔ Would it be possible to incentivise suggestions from Bolton Council staff that could relate to making savings on the way that things are done internally?
- ➔ It is important to understand what the detail behind the headlines are and how this will impact communities.

Responses from non-domestic business rate payers.

Only one response has been received, as detailed below.

"Whilst not understanding all the detail in this report, it appears to be doing the best it can under difficult circumstances. I welcome the mention of a review of procurement activity and would like to be involved in that if there is an opportunity to do so. Nobody likes paying more for less, so anything that talks about reduction in service and increased payment will get a negative press but we are probably no different than many other councils. I don't really see any support for economic growth although it talks about this all the way through, so a change in procurement could be one of the ways to appease an increase in business rates."

Bolton Council

Budget consultation 2019-2021: have your say

Background

We are seeking your views on the financial challenge Bolton Council faces during the coming years. Significant reductions in funding from central government mean we have to make budget reductions over the next two years. This comes after £155m of savings over the last eight years.

The way the council gets money has changed - we've lost £107m of government grants, we have to meet inflation costs of £34m, and we need an extra £44m to meet increasing demands for our services (particularly for the most vulnerable in our society). This means we are increasingly reliant on income from council tax and business rates.

The report put forward to Cabinet recommends that the council use £8 million from its reserves to balance its 2019-21 budget, meaning directorates will have to find savings of **£23.5** million.
A further £8 million will also be used from reserves to allow savings to be phased in.

We are now consulting on these proposals. It is important that residents and other stakeholders express their views to help guide and shape decisions. Please go to:
www.bolton.gov.uk/consultations to read the full proposals and then complete the questions below.

Our approach

Whilst achieving the necessary cuts is very difficult, the council continues to have a clear strategy for the delivery of its budget, as detailed below.

Q1 Please state how strongly you agree or disagree with each: [tick one box per row]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree / disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Ensure the most vulnerable are impacted least by the budget reductions as far as possible	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maximise economic prosperity in Bolton to support economic growth, development and regeneration and job creation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
While putting the needs of local people and council taxpayers first, seek to minimise the impact on staff and avoid compulsory redundancies where possible	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maximise proposals that improve efficiency and make savings from management and administration where possible before frontline services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Council tax

The proposals put forward assume a 1.5% increase in council tax and an additional further 1% for Adult Social Care. A lower increase in council tax would mean even further cuts to services than those proposed.

Q2 Please state how strongly you agree or disagree that the council should raise council tax to balance the budget and avoid further cuts to services.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree / disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*As an indication this would add around £25 per year to a band **A** property and around £32 per year to a band **C** property

Proposals

In order to protect the most vulnerable children and adults, and to avoid deeper cuts to directly delivered services, the council has had to make some very difficult decisions. Some of the proposals that have been put forward are detailed below.

Q3 Please state how strongly you agree or disagree with each [tick one box per row]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree / disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Smarter use of management and leadership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Increased charges for council services such as the use of our land and facilities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reduce demand for council services by doing things differently e.g. early help	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reduce the winter gritting service to bring Bolton in line with other Greater Manchester Authorities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Investment in new developments to increase the level of income via council tax / business rates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working in a more modern way, for example by providing information in digital formats	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Review what buildings (assets) we can sell or transfer to community ownership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Greater partnership working - to deliver services in partnership with the community and our partners e.g. intermediate care	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Charge a bit extra for services such as school meals and community meals, in order to protect services for those in most need	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Review every penny we spend - e.g. look at care and support packages and review service contracts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Managing change

The council is going through a period of unprecedented change. As described above, in making decisions about what to change, the council's priority is to maintain support for vulnerable children and adults in the borough while ensuring that we balance the books.

Q4 With this in mind, please state how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements. [tick one box per row]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree / disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I accept that budget reductions have to be made	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am aware of the need for the council to change the way it delivers its services	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I believe the council is doing its best under difficult circumstances	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Impacts of the proposals

Q5 **Please describe how you / your family / your organisation will be affected by the proposals**

Alternative solutions

Q6 **Please describe how you / your family / your organisation will be affected by the proposals**

About you

So that we can understand how our proposals affect different residents, we would be grateful if you could answer the following questions.

Q7 Please tick the box that most closely describes your interest in this issue [tick one box]

- ☐ A resident in the borough of Bolton
- ☐ A Bolton Council member of staff
- ☐ An interested partner organisation (please state below)
- ☐ From a community or voluntary group (please state below)
- ☐ A business in the borough of Bolton (please state below)
- ☐ Other (please state below)

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, group or business you do not need to complete the rest of this section

Q8 Please tell us your postcode?

Q9 What is your age?

Q10 What is your ethnic origin?

- ☐ White British
- ☐ Other white
- ☐ Mixed / multiple ethnic groups
- ☐ Asian / Asian British
- ☐ Black / African / Caribbean / Black British
- ☐ Other ethnic group
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q11 Are your day to day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or expected to last, at least 12 months?

- ☐ Yes, limited a lot
- ☐ Yes, limited a little
- ☐ No

Q12 Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either a long term physical or mental ill health / disability or problems due to old age? (do not count anything you do as part of your paid employment)

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, 1-19 hours a week
- ☐ Yes, 20-49 hours a week
- ☐ Yes, 50 hours or more a week

Thank you for completing this survey form

Budget consultation 2019-2021: have your say consultation response.

14th January 2019.

Introduction

Bolton CVS is the local voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector infrastructure support organisation for the borough. We provide a range of services, support and tools to build capacity and increase the reach of VCSE groups and organisations across the borough.

Bolton's VCSE is made up of 1,561 groups and organisations with 46,900 volunteers who collectively donate 113,500 each week and as a membership organisation and registered charity, we champion the views of our members, their impact and the challenges that they face.

This consultation response has been submitted on behalf of Bolton CVS.

Bolton CVS response to the consultation

It is essential that Bolton Council recognise the impact of funding and finance changes on VCSE groups and organisations that form part of their supply chain, organisations that work in partnership or those groups, organisations and networks which operate to support people across the borough.

NCVO recently launched research highlighting that;
'Charities must prepare for continued high demand for their services in the face of a "gloomy economic outlook", according to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations' annual report The Road Ahead.

The report, published today for NCVO members, reviews the operating environment for charities every year and examines the challenges they are likely to face.

The 2019 report warns that a combination of Brexit, economic uncertainty, tight government budgets and a slow economy will continue to put increased pressure on beneficiaries and front-line services.'

It is essential that Social Value is fully understood, considered, implemented and embedded in Bolton Council's financial planning and decision making. It is important that as an anchor institution, the council sees far beyond the financial consequence of its decision making, but where specific and measurable social value is achieved that has a visible and demonstrable impact in the borough, far beyond Corporate Social Responsibility.

The following tables and comments align directly to the Bolton Council Budget Consultation;

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Ensure the most vulnerable are impacted least by the budget reductions as far as possible.	✓				

Bolton CVS recognises that some work has been undertaking on the importance of understanding exactly what is meant and understood as the 'most vulnerable' across all local partners through working collaboratively with Public Sector and community partners. Some work has been achieved on this through developing support through housing, social prescribing, the Early Help review and maintaining access to the Local Welfare Provision. It is important to ensure that through budget decision making, those that are prioritised and protected are not only those people currently living in crisis and who are currently identified as vulnerable, but those who will also be impacted through minor changes to current service delivery and existing preventative interventions which may be at risk of budget cuts.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Maximise economic prosperity in Bolton to support economic growth, development and regeneration and job creation.	✓				

Bolton CVS fully recognise the value of prioritising 'economic prosperity' in Bolton and this must be done inclusively, putting our resident population at the heart of this through ensuring tools such as the real cost of living is recognised through Bolton adopting approaches such as the 'real living wage'. Where employers are incentivised to locate to the borough to offer jobs for all our population, it is essential that there is a skills mix and that opportunities aren't restricted to low skilled opportunities. It is essential that Bolton Council lead, drive, prioritise and build approaches that develop the local workforce and where possible encourage recruitment from within communities and neighbourhoods across the borough. Approaches that build opportunities for people who may have been excluded from the workforce or need additional support to engage with work could be implemented to build and strengthen the workforce. All this can be achieved through further developing the council's approach to Social Value and ensuring that contracts are delivering what the borough needs.

In order to build economic prosperity in our borough, it is critical that transport, and particularly public transport, links are developed and strengthened and Bolton Council have a critical role in championing the views of its residents with transport companies about at a local and Greater Manchester level.

Whatever approach is designed; it has to be 100% based on economic prosperity for everyone in Bolton.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
While putting the needs of local people and council taxpayers first, seek to minimise the impact on staff and avoid compulsory redundancies where possible.			✓		

It is essential that the workforce is supported and enabled to deliver effective services that provide the right support for residents and it is essential that all decisions which are made, fully consider the end-user as the priority and beneficiary.

All decision making around posts should be made were possible in partnership with other public sector partners, as although tough decisions may need to be made, it is highly likely that there will be other opportunities for employment in other public sector organisations. Making collaborative decisions and more integrated public sector workforce planning may enable re-deployment in new organisations to prevent people becoming unemployed.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Maximise proposals that improve efficiency and make savings from management and administration where possible before frontline services.			✓		

It is important to assess all aspects of delivering services and operations for their viability and benefit to people and stakeholders in Bolton. It is also essential to recognise that whilst savings can be made from efficiencies, cutting management structures and administration too far can have a detrimental impact on morale, processes, performance monitoring and then in turn efficiency too and so this approach needs to carefully understand exactly what capacity is compromised and what impact that will have.

Council Tax

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Please state how strongly you agree or disagree that the council should raise council tax to balance the budget and avoid further cuts to services.		✓			

It is recognised that an increase in council tax will provide increased budget to provide essential services. There must be analysis of who will be impacted and support provided to any individual who is negatively impacted as a result of the increase. It is important to recognise that some employers have not been providing cost of living increases during recent years and therefore, this could be more challenging for people already vulnerable or at risk of small financial changes having a disproportionate impact. Support services should be promoted when people are notified of any increases and investment in those support services should be made to manage demand i.e. Age UK, Citizens Advice and other similar VCSE advice services.

Proposals

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Smarter use of management and leadership.	✓				

This is essential to the future sustainability of the Bolton pound and to ensure seamless integration that will improve the local offer.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Increased charges for council services such as the use of our land and facilities.			✓		

Whilst increased charges for council services such as the use of land and facilities initially appears to make sense, the impact of such action needs to be understood and assessed. There is a significant chance that the facilities being used are already funded through the public sector in one way or another and therefore, for instance if rents for a community building or recreation space are increased, the costs are increased to those providing that positive and valuable service. This action needs to be thought through in order to not inadvertently disadvantage any partner organisations, particularly community sector and socially focussed provision and services from both the VCSE sector and the independent sector i.e. if a charity is funded through a grants programme delivered through Bolton Council, then they are paying increased rates, the Local Authority could arguably be paying twice, where it would make more economic sense to just provide the venue for free in the first place to prevent the significant 'waste' in processes.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Reduce demand for council services by doing things differently e.g. early help.	✓				

Bolton CVS value and welcome the approach to 'Early Help'. As an organisation we believe that the VCSE sector in Bolton has significant experience of providing innovative preventative approaches and we feel it is essential that the role of the VCSE sector in the design of new delivery approaches as well as the delivery of such approaches is massively important.

It is essential that digital and technical interventions are also considered to reduce demand, but recognising that may require some 'upfront' or 'pump-prime' capital investment to achieve longer term savings.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Reduce the winter gritting service to bring Bolton in line with other Greater Manchester Authorities.			✓		

It is essential that a 'Community Impact Assessment' process is followed to understand what the impact will be on people and communities across the borough and in particular the most vulnerable in Bolton. There could be new costs created through the impact on individual residents and businesses which could create costs somewhere else in the system.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Investment in new developments to increase the level of income via council tax / business rates.	✓				

Whilst investment in development is critical, it is important to understand the impact of the choice of that investment.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Working in a more modern way, for example by providing information in digital formats.	✓				

Developing digital solutions for providing information will provide more immediate access to information for residents and this approach needs to be aligned to providing access to the internet in localities, developing digital skills for marginalised, excluded and vulnerable communities and ensuring that there is help and guidance for those who require it.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Review what buildings (assets) we can sell or transfer to community ownership.	✓				

Bolton CVS fully welcome the approach to community asset transfer. As an organisation we will offer to provide input and guidance to Bolton Council in developing the approach which considers the needs of those acquiring the assets in order to maximise the potential of the approach.

It is important to understand that the transfer of assets can create a significant burden and challenge for groups and organisations that lack the capacity and specialism and therefore the borough must invest in the VCSE capacity to be able to support the effect management of such programmes to maximise the potential of such an approach.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Greater partnership working - to deliver services in partnership with the community and our partners e.g. intermediate care.	✓				

Bolton CVS fully support this approach and were possible believe that both grants and contracting with the VCSE can unleash fantastic potential.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Charge a bit extra for services such as school meals and community meals, in order to protect services for those in most need.			✓		

In principle this does make sense for those that can afford it, however it is essential that the impact of this approach is fully understood, particularly the impact on those people who may be below threshold currently, but who may be severely impacted by small changes due to a precarious financial position. It is essential to not lose sight of the fact that even the most minimal changes to current provision can impact an individual or family that is struggling.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Review every penny we spend - e.g. look at care and support packages and review service contracts.	✓				

It is essential that whilst finance is a critical factor in effective decision making, decisions are not restricted to the financial impact of that decision. It is important that the social, economic and environmental impact of current spend are considered in their totality to understand the social value impact of spending decisions and aligned to a 'Community Impact Assessment' to establish the true impact of financial decision making.

Managing change

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I accept that budget reductions have to be made					✓

Bolton CVS recognises the challenging financial situation faced by Bolton Council and will support the council in its engagement with community groups and organisations in order to support effective decision making.

Whilst we recognise the challenges faced, as an organisation it is impossible to accept that budget reductions have to be made as decisions are impacting negatively

on the groups and organisations that use our services and those people accessing the services provided by VCSE organisation in the borough.

We have seen a significant rise in those groups tackling poverty and providing the most basic of needs to people who live in our borough accessing funding through Bolton CVS grants and investments programmes and those accessing our development support.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I am aware of the need for the council to change the way it delivers its services	✓				

Bolton CVS recognise the challenging financial situation faced by Bolton Council and will support the council in its engagement with community groups and organisations in order to support decision making. It is important that Bolton Council explores all options in order to minimise the impact on people and communities, but recognises the importance of 'not doing what's always been done'.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree/ disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I believe the council is doing its best under difficult circumstances		✓			

Bolton CVS is partner of Bolton Council and believes that the organisation and its people are committed to the best outcomes for everyone across the borough.

It is reassuring to see internal changes that mean clearer decision making in communities and the commitment to improving access and reach to communities.

Impact of the proposals

Please describe how you / your family / your organisation will be affected by the proposals.

It is unclear to know specifically how Bolton CVS and the VCSE sector will be affected by the proposals included in this document, however some elements include:

➔ The complexity of individual cases accessing support from voluntary and community sector groups and organisations is increasing and changes in financing public services will exacerbate this.

➔ Inflationary uplift in grants and contracts for the VCSE have not been implemented for a number of years and therefore there is inequity when this budget consultation is referring to inflationary uplifts. In order to reflect the reality,

inflationary uplifts should be considered across all supply contracting in the same way that is fostered for the local authority itself.

➔ There is a clear correlation to the reduction of support and services through the Local Authority and other public sector partners and an increase in demand and complexity in the VCSE.

➔ There is a need for a clear strategic approach to the VCSE (which is in progress) and how it is financed to ensure that there is provision for people and communities in this time of significant change.

Alternative solutions

Can you think of any other ways Bolton Council can make the savings whilst still delivering statutory services?

Bolton CVS recognises that Bolton Council has made some significant decisions in making savings and protecting statutory services. Some areas for consideration and development could include:

➔ To recognise the cost saving benefit of investing strategically in micro, small, medium and large VCSE organisations and associated activities.

➔ A definite commitment to Social Value of at least 20% in the borough to return a greater focus on the 'good' that can be achieved through investment of the Bolton pound.

➔ A full review of services which could be delivered outside of the Local Authority by VCSE providers that could attract grant investment from beyond the borough.

➔ More integration around 'back office' functions with other Bolton public sector organisations such as HR, Business Intelligence, Safeguarding, Communications and Marketing and Facilities, to have almost a 'Business Support Hub'.

➔ To undertake and co-design a new commissioning and procurement strategy for Bolton with system partners.

➔ New commissioning specifications should be co-designed with local people who have experienced similar to what the intended service specification aims to support or alleviate without exception, building on the borough intentions of co-design and co-production in order to improve service outcomes for the individual and result in less 'revolving door' activity and public sector service duplication.

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Whilst not understanding all the detail in this report, it appears to be doing the best it can under difficult circumstances. I welcome the mention of a review of procurement activity and would like to be involved in that if there is an opportunity to do so.

Nobody likes paying more for less, so anything that talks about reduction in service and increased payment will get a negative press but we are probably no different than many other councils. I don't really see any support for economic growth although it talks about this all the way through, so a change in procurement could be one of the ways to appease an increase in business rates.

UNISON
BOLTON BRANCH

GMB
GMB@WORK

Joint Response
2019-2021 Budget

January 2019

Since 2011 Council workers and Bolton Residents have suffered from the effects of austerity the making of which was a political choice and not economic necessity. £155m in cuts and over 1700 job losses. Our members running services on behalf of the public know first-hand the impact this is having not just on the service they provide but, on their health, as increased workload continues to push up the number of workers off on long term sick with stress related illness.
UNISON and GMB have held a series of member meetings throughout January to consult with our members on the budget. There was a general feeling that the staff briefings were not particularly informative. Given the difficulties of getting staff together in one place it is important that workers go out at least knowing a little bit more than they had read in the Bolton News. In Children's the column headed 'Total FTE Displaced', read "tbc". The information was too vague to be of any real value.
The trades unions are familiar with the budget process. We understand the strategic from individual reviews. We understand how consultation should work and what information is required and when for us to provide an informed response.
Unfortunately, the budget consultation document in itself is insufficient to be able to comment informatively. The outcome of the 'Peer Review' identifies the need for increased capacity at a corporate level but this does not feature in the budget proposals. The Cabinet approval of the CPS review last week identifies additional capital and revenue spending which also does not appear in the report. Detailed information on reserves was only received late last week. Therefore, this response is made in this context.

In terms of the unions **key headlines** they are as follows:

- By announcing a proposed council tax rise at this stage, it effectively sends out the message this is where it will be set at albeit the mayoral precept is to be added. This effectively leaves little wriggle room to make changes to the CT level.
- We welcome the use of reserves to mitigate the worse excesses of the cuts and to balance the books over the next two years.
- We welcome a two-year strategy as this serves for better panning.
- We welcome the commitment to avoiding compulsory redundancies where possible. However, we would ask that you go further and guarantee there are **no compulsory redundancies.** This may involve reviewing redundancy payments to make them attractive to volunteers. The cost being 'one off' from reserves.
- We welcome not putting staff on notice of redundancy until necessary
- We support the councils plan for economic development and believe a key contributor to this is becoming a **Real Living Wage Council** and ensuring goods and services procured and commissioned are given to companies paying at least the Real Lining Wage.
- That communication moving forward for individual reviews is vital and adherence to **collective bargaining** will aid that process.
- That Equality Impact Assessments are thorough and where groups of workers are disproportionately affected e.g. women, that the budget option is reviewed
- That there will be no increased workload as a result of any review. This would reduce the cost of sickness absence.
- **An end to outsourcing**
- That CPS is brought back in house in three years
- That Leisure Services be brought back in house as soon as the contract ends and not given an extension.
- That Adult Social Care within Bolton Cares is brought back in house at the end of its contract in two years
- That the poorly performing ICT service with Agilisys be brought back in house

- A costed plan to bring all other council services back in house where it can be demonstrated the council would deliver better services
- An end to the ‘bottom line’ accounting that puts private profit before public service
- An end to the ‘business ethos’ which has driven council services since 2010 and start to use the term ‘public service’
- End to the reliance on agency workers

In terms of the specific **departmental options** from the little information we know at this stage our response is as follows:

People

- Whilst reviewing ‘support services’ recognising that many of these so called ‘back office’ functions carried out by often low paid women are vital to sustaining front line services and should not be viewed as an easy option to cut
- Any cuts to school meals subsidy is likely to impact on jobs even though this column records zero impact on jobs
- Review of Community Meals should include the option of an in-house provider.

Place

- The Community Asset Transfer of 28 bowling greens should not be taken forward as it is a direct replacement of council jobs. This is a departure from the council’s previous commitment that volunteers should be used as an ‘add on’ as in libraries and museums and not a replacement for council jobs.
- That cuts to traded services do not affect the lowest paid. The Council to subsidise where necessary to avoid this option
- The cross-cutting proposal resulting in 24 FTE job losses is too vague to make any comment but we are obviously concerned
- Further cuts to the Library Service are unsustainable

Chief Executives

- We welcome the minimum impact on jobs in this department but would question the rationale when other departments are losing a disproportionate loss of jobs.
- We cautiously welcome digital solutions applied appropriately