

Delivering our priorities – Potential Budget Measures

The Delivering Better Outcomes consultation in 2012 set out workstreams that would contribute to delivering the council's priorities over the next five years. Within these we have identified a number of measures which would enable the council to balance its budget over the next three years. Details on the measures under each workstream are set out below.

1 Modernising services and managing our workforce

Measures totalling £15.54 million over the next three years have been identified which would make council services more efficient, accessible and cost effective. Services with a limited contribution to the council's eight priorities may be reduced, and some services may no longer be provided, or provided in different ways. This may result in changes to how staff work.

1a Modernising council support functions

➤ **Estimated Saving: £3.26 million**

The council operates a range of internal support functions, including Human Resources, Information Technology, Finance, Property, and Administrative Support.

These functions could be improved by centralising service provision to create economies of scale and remove duplication.

We would use technology to further increase efficiency and adopt more cost effective methods for cash collection and payments.

1b Reducing printing volumes and costs

➤ **Estimated Saving: £240,000**

We would make savings in printing costs across council services and schools by reducing the volume of printing and photocopying, limiting colour printing, and introducing new ways of communicating with customers.

1c Review of primary and secondary school budgets

➤ **Estimated Saving: £2.86 million**

This would be managed through a range of measures including greater use of technology to improve efficiency for teaching and administrative activities, changes to class sizes in some schools, and a review of administrative support functions in and across schools.

1d Review of nursery school provision

➤ **Estimated Saving: £200,000**

Council nursery places would be prioritised, reducing the number of places provided by partner providers, which would reduce costs and maximise the use of places available in council establishments.

1e Redesign of instrumental music service

➤ **Estimated Saving: £280,000**

Instrumental music classes would begin from primary 5 onwards and more group teaching would be used. There are no plans to introduce charging for instrumental music.

1f Review of central education support

➤ **Estimated Saving: £660,000**

We would further rationalise central education support activities with more partnership working and a focus on key priorities.

Measures include the redesign of the remit of school area business support managers, the support provided for out of school care, moving the central music therapy resource into core special school provision and implementing a new quality improvement model in schools.

1g Modernising the council's facilities management service

➤ **Estimated Saving: £780,000**

The council spends £4.5million a year providing a cleaning service in its buildings.

We would review the frequency of cleaning, maintaining the cleaning requirements in key areas such as toilets, kitchens and sports facilities, and prioritising the cleaning of other areas.

This would enable the council to provide a revised level of service which continues to meet the requirements of building users.

1h Changes to waste services

➤ **Estimated Saving: £1.04 million**

The council has introduced a number of changes in recent years. Further changes, including the introduction of refuse collections over seven days a week, revised routes, a review of staff deployment and of the number of community recycling sites and opening hours, would enable the council to provide waste services more efficiently.

1i Changes to land and environmental services

➤ **Estimated Saving: £300,000**

The council's Cleaner Communities team would change its approach to protecting the environment, focusing on prevention rather than enforcement.

The country parks service provision would also be reviewed and those services with low demand, or where income received does not fully cover the cost of delivery, would be reduced.

1j Modernising social care processes

➤ **Estimated Saving: £930,000**

The council would extend mobile and flexible working for social workers. The measure would increase the amount of time staff spend with clients and rationalise administrative support, improving the overall service delivered to customers.

1k Modernising community support functions

➤ **Estimated Saving: £640,000**

Community regeneration activity would be reviewed and redesigned to focus on the services which have a direct impact on communities. Closer working with partners such as the voluntary sector would be a key feature of the redesigned service, and the support provided to areas such as community arts and sports development would be reduced accordingly.

1l Restructure of environmental health and trading standards and a review of economic development activities

➤ **Estimated Saving: £180,000**

The Environmental Health and Trading Standards service would be redesigned to deliver more effective and efficient processes, through a revised management structure and clearer prioritisation of activity to support a more streamlined service. There would also be a review of the activities undertaken by the Economic Development service to make sure there continues to be a targeted approach to priority areas.

1m Review of public transport policy and service

➤ **Estimated Saving: £1.49 million**

The council currently supports around 20% of West Lothian's bus routes. A review of the public transport services supported by the council would focus on connecting communities and businesses in a way which is affordable and effective. The council would also explore alternative transport models, such as provision of transport based on individual's needs, to minimise the impact of service changes on users.

1 Modernising services and managing our workforce - continued

1n Review of the concessionary rail scheme

Estimated Saving: £270,000

The council currently supports a concessionary rail scheme. The costs have been rising considerably year-on-year and the number of journeys is projected to increase significantly in the future. There is no legal requirement to provide a concessionary rail scheme, with many councils not providing any rail concessions, and it is in addition to other schemes already in place. We would propose to maintain a scheme which complements existing national concessions; however users would pay more per journey.

1o Review of additional support needs pupil transport

Estimated Saving: £450,000

The council would review the way in which transport for additional support needs pupils is delivered to make sure the most appropriate transport option is provided. This would be undertaken on a contract by contract basis along the same lines as a successful pilot completed at Burnhouse School, where changes enabled the council to achieve savings in transportation costs with no negative impact on service users.

1p Reduction in internal vehicle costs

Estimated Saving: £1.54 million

The council spends over £9 million a year in maintaining a fleet of over 1,000 vehicles which are required to deliver the full range of council services. Savings would be delivered through a 33% reduction in mileage, reducing insurance claims and improving the use of the fleet to reduce the number of vehicles. Savings would also be achieved through improvements to route planning, changes in business practices and a greater focus on alternative methods of transport.

1q Review of noise monitoring and enforcement

Estimated Saving: £230,000

The council would redesign existing noise monitoring and enforcement services in order to deliver a merged and improved customer service, which will realise savings through better partnership working.

1r Redesign of hearing impairment service for schools

Estimated Saving: £150,000

The service would be redesigned on a more integrated basis in line with service requirements. Teachers who had been moved from class teaching to provide this service would return to teaching in the classroom.

1s Changes to fixed staff holidays

Estimated Saving: £40,000

The council currently observes seven fixed staff holidays each calendar year, and overtime is payable to staff who are required to work on these dates. We would propose to reduce the number of fixed staff holidays from seven to six, in exchange for an additional day's annual leave, to reduce the cost of overtime for fixed staff holiday working.

2 Working with partners to deliver outcomes

Measures totalling £3.66 million over the next three years have been identified which would enable the council to deliver more effective, flexible and affordable services.

2a Working with health to deliver health and social care services

Estimated Saving: £1.2 million

The council has a strong partnership with NHS Lothian, and would continue to look at further ways to share resources, remove duplication and integrate services to enhance the quality of care and improve experiences for patients.

2b Review of cultural and leisure services

Estimated Saving: £1.4 million

West Lothian has a trust model to deliver leisure services. This could be extended to other sports provision. This model could also include culture, local history and museum services. Such a model could provide access to funding and cost savings which would not otherwise be available to the council in the operation of these services.

2c Modernising our partnership with voluntary organisations

Estimated Saving: £695,000

The council currently works in partnership with voluntary organisations. Resources would be reviewed to focus on the most important areas that help to meet shared outcomes. This could mean the removal or reduction of non-priority areas or areas where other programmes are more effective.

2d Review of support to the business community

Estimated Saving: £185,000

The council would review the support to the business community including Visit West Lothian, Town Centre Management and Chamber of Commerce.

2e Providing services in partnership with West Lothian College

Estimated Saving: £180,000

Integration of support services in the council and the college could create savings through economies of scale, with the council providing the college with IT support, payroll, marketing and media functions. The council's management of staff learning and development would also be reviewed to consider how improved training can be delivered in partnership with the college.

3 Preventing negative outcomes

Measures totalling £2.29 million over the next three years have been identified that would change the way we deliver services which change behaviours that can have a detrimental impact on lives at an early stage, and/or deal with issues before they reach a crisis stage.

3a Reshaping care for families and young people

Estimated Saving: £850,000

A new model of working would allow more effective use of resources to create better outcomes for young people.

This would decrease the demand for residential school placements and reduce the use of care and education provision out-with the council.

More partnership working for homelessness activities and changes to care support in an education setting would reduce the numbers of staff needed to deliver the service.

Early years services would also be redesigned to focus on supporting families in their own homes and delivering parenting groups.

In addition, we would also reduce the funding to early intervention projects which no longer support the council's priorities.

3b Reshaping care for older people

Estimated Saving: £320,000

The reshaping care for older people programme aims to help older people to live independently in the community for as long as possible.

The greater use of home technology, care support and improving general health would help to reduce hospital admissions and care home placements.

The Older People's Challenge Fund will continue to fund the Food Train and Dementia Cafes, with a saving of £180,000 being used to fund core services for older people.

3c Changing levels for access to care services

Estimated Saving: £890,000

Growing numbers of people needing care services, combined with severe budget pressures, has resulted in many councils changing threshold levels for access to care services.

It is proposed that threshold levels would be set at critical/substantial level for all new clients.

Access to care services would be based on an assessment process focusing on people's needs and risks to their independence.

This may mean, for example, that some new clients whose needs are not assessed as critical or substantial would have to pay for some aids and adaptations.

3d Redesign of criminal justice service

Estimated Saving: £130,000

We would make improvements and changes to the criminal justice service which would reduce the need for funding to be given to external providers.

3e Changes to the way the council buys care services for people under 65

Estimated Saving: £100,000

The buying of specialist care at home and care home services for adults under 65 would be reviewed.

Contracts for services would be standardised so that all providers have the same hourly rate and range of services.

The council would also change how it buys care home places for people with physical disabilities and make alterations to the existing local residential unit so that services are more adaptable to changing needs.

4 Managing our assets

Measures totalling £2.51 million over the next three years have been identified which would ensure that the council continues to have efficient and effectively managed assets to support service delivery.

4a Review of the council's commercial property portfolio

Estimated Saving: £330,000

The council has a commercial property portfolio of over 700 shops, industrial units, warehouses, offices and other buildings and land. The properties are leased to tenants to generate income for the council and to promote economic development.

Rental income would be increased through rent reviews, lease renewals, review of management fees and other general fees and charges.

4b Property modernisation

Estimated Saving: £1.39 million

Over the years the council has reduced significantly the number and cost of buildings. The opening of the Civic Centre and partnership centres has ensured that properties are used in the most effective way, supporting a more mobile and flexible workforce. The modernisation and rationalisation of properties will continue.

A review and redesign of the services delivered in the community would match building requirements to local needs, which may mean an overall reduction in opening hours of buildings. For community facilities the focus would be on coordinating the use of facilities locally rather than the closure of buildings.

4c Combining property management and maintenance activities

Estimated Saving: £410,000

The council has a five year programme for investing in its property and other related assets in order to support service delivery. This approach reduces the need for reactive maintenance work. Maintenance budgets would be reduced and framework contracts introduced for maintenance in order to improve efficiency and reduce ongoing expenditure.

The centralisation of property activities delivered throughout the council would also enable savings to be achieved through the streamlining of operations and the removal of duplication.

4d Managing the council's information technology infrastructure

Estimated Saving: £380,000

Effective information technology systems are key to delivering modern and accessible services.

The council would continue the roll-out of its internet based telephone system which will generate savings in reduced line rental and call charges and at the same time will review the use of mobile telephones across services.

5 Reviewing income and concessions

Measures totalling £2.95 million over the next three years have been identified from the development of a clear and fair pricing strategy and concession scheme which would ensure that fees and charges generate income to support services, in line with the council's Anti Poverty Strategy.

5a Charging for services

Estimated Saving: £2.2 million

The council's standard practice is to increase charges by 3.5% each year for services, activities and non-housing rents. However the council has the lowest level of sales, fees and charges income per head of population of any council in Scotland. It is therefore proposed that the council sets all discretionary charges in line with Scottish averages, or in line with other local providers such as West Lothian Leisure. The council would also review income levels and budgets to reflect increased demand for services, actual levels of income currently being received and, in some cases, recover the full cost of services.

5b Introduction of a contributions policy for community care

Estimated Saving: £750,000

Following legislative changes the council would introduce a policy where, subject to financial assessment on affordability, people who can afford to pay would be required to make a contribution for non-residential care services.

6 Delivering effective procurement

Measures totalling £1.44 million over the next three years have been identified by reviewing what we buy and making sure that we buy the appropriate quality and quantity of supplies and services, at the right price.

6a Savings from the five year procurement plan

Estimated Saving: £1.44 million

The council's five year procurement strategy was approved in June 2013 and provides a framework for all of the council's purchasing. We would continue to work in partnership with national procurement organisations and other local authority partners for purchasing decisions.

7 Reducing energy use

Measures totalling £920,000 over the next three years have been identified by reducing the demand for energy in council buildings to save money and help the environment.

7a Reducing energy use

Estimated Saving: £920,000

The council has approved a number of renewable energy projects including new street lighting, biomass boilers and solar photovoltaic (PV) panels which will reduce energy consumption and generate additional income for the council. We would propose further energy efficiency measures with a focus on changes to building fabric and mechanical and electrical technology to reduce energy consumption. Savings would also be achieved through changing the behaviour of building users.

8 Managing our relationship with customers

Measures totalling £1.13 million over the next three years have been identified which will improve the quality and accessibility of customer services in the council, resulting in more cost effective customer contact.

8a Increased use of electronic and customer service centre access channels

Estimated Saving: £410,000

Investment in online and self-service systems which enhance access and choice would allow the council to deliver more efficient services that are designed to meet users' needs at a lower cost. Transferring more customer telephone and email enquiries to the council's Customer Service Centre would be achieved through a greater integration of council systems. These changes would enable the council to deliver more automated and centralised processes.

8b Rationalising frontline service delivery and management structures

Estimated Saving: £720,000

The partnership centre model successfully developed in Bathgate, Broxburn and Fauldhouse would be extended across West Lothian with the staff in the partnership centres offering a more comprehensive service targeting resources on the areas of greatest need. This would be accompanied by more streamlined services in local offices, with a review of opening hours and the range of services available to reflect the demand within communities.