

Purpose

At the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 7th March 2024, members considered options for reducing expenditure in 2024/2025, and future years, in order to replenish the Council's reserves quicker and reduce the future impact on taxpayers.

One-off Revenue Savings for 2024/2025

The following were identified as one-off revenue savings for 2024/2025 and approved by the Committee and it was recommended that the associated budget be vired to the Contingency fund. The funds exist in the budget base for delivery in 2025/2026, although there is a risk that costs will increase and therefore, additional funding will need to be found.

Description of one-off saving	Details and Delivery	Saving
Salary Savings: fixed term reduction in contracted hours	Approved until March 2025. Permanent Contract: employee could return to establishment hours.	£16,500
Biodiversity Study and Management Plan	Strategy doesn't provide a timeline for delivery; therefore, Policy & Resources postponed to 2025.	£5,200
Carbon Audit – First Review	Scheduled 2024. Strategy due to be reviewed June – September 2024. Merits in postponing to 2025 would provide a full year data on solar panels and on battery storage due to be installed later this year.	£4,000
Vehicle Costs	Contract renewal and costs have risen. Delivery of new vehicles not until September 2024 but had been budgeted for whole financial year.	£3,290
Notice Board Renewal	Year 3 of a 5-year programme; either Capital Plan updated to add another year or remaining 3-year programme delivered over 2 years from 2025/26.	£2,000
TOTAL		£30,990

Ongoing Revenue Savings for Future Years

Future and ongoing revenue savings are likely to have an initial cost. Given the current financial constraints, the savings generated will need to exceed the cost within the financial year. Therefore, a detailed assessment of the costs and the pay-back period will need to be developed, assessed and considered. Depending on the proposals, there could be an impact on service delivery; therefore, it is proposed to undertake a customer engagement process following the election purdah period for the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner elections (i.e. after 2nd May 2024).

The details of the customer engagement process will be dependent on the proposals.

The proposed timescales are as follows:

- 25th April 2024 – Policy & Resources Committee considers report setting out potential future and ongoing revenue savings and details of customer engagement process;
- three week customer engagement process; beginning week commencing 6th May 2024; and
- 13th June 2024 – Policy & Resources Committee considers responses and determines proposals.

Initial areas for consideration include:

- turning off some of the car park lighting at Thorpe Astley Community Centre and Shakespeare Park;
- installation of PIR sensors in corridors in the Council's buildings;
- splitting off lighting circuits in the Council's buildings, to enable lighting to be turned off in unused areas or for less lighting to be used where the circumstances allow; and
- review of business waste collection contracts.