

Members' Library Service Request Form

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Originator	Ellie Dunnet
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Date	02/04/24

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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

MEETING DATE:

BY: Executive Director for Council Resources

SUBJECT: Budget Impact 2024/25

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide members with a summary of the approach to preparing impact assessments to support onward considerations linked to proposals set out within the 2024/25 budget.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members note the contents of this report.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The budget for 2024/25 onwards to be considered by Council on 20 February 2024 will require hugely difficult decisions in order to close the forecast funding gap of circa £17.3 million.
- 3.2 A number of reductions are proposed to service budgets in order to close the funding gap in order to set a balanced budget in accordance with the council's statutory responsibilities.
- 3.3 This report sets out the key judgements and next steps relating to impact assessments made over budget decisions, recognising that there will be further work needed to redesign services around the reduced envelope, and that impact assessments will be conducted as part of these detailed proposals.

Council Tax

- 3.4 No increase to the band D council tax charge is proposed for 2024/25, and budget plans set out the assumption that Council will instead accept the

offer of the grant from Scottish Government which partially offsets the funding pressure created by the council tax freeze. On this basis, no integrated impact assessment will be required for council tax.

- 3.5 Council will consider introducing a 100% council tax premium on second homes as part of the measures to close the budget gap next year, following consultation on this by Scottish Government in 2023. As at 13 February there were 505 properties classed as Second Homes on the Council Tax database in East Lothian. This is equivalent of 0.96% of the properties held on the local authority's Council Tax database. However, we do not hold any demographic or equality and diversity information, and we therefore cannot identify precisely which individuals will be affected by the policy.

Other budget proposals

- 3.6 The below proposals which will support the delivery of a balanced budget for 2024/25 onwards are not considered to require an impact assessment, for the reasons set out below:

Finance staffing reductions	No change to front line service delivery
Shared Services Arrangement - Internal Audit	No change to front line service delivery
Registrars System Development	No change to front line service delivery
Bring Pest Control Service in house	No change to front line service delivery
Savings from new housing system	No change to front line service delivery
Project Manager cost saving City Deal	No change to front line service delivery
Print & Mailroom Review	No change to front line service delivery
Trade Waste Review	No change to front line service delivery
PPP Contract Savings	No change to front line service delivery
Savings from Counter Fraud	No change to front line service delivery
Changes to empty property relief (NDR)	No impact to individuals
Reduction in financial support for BTT	No change to service arising from Council decision
Reduction in financial support for Enjoy	No change to service arising from Council decision
Reduction in Area Partnership budget	No material change to service or funding
Review management & maintenance of sports facilities	No change to service arising from Council decision
Review of SLAs and janitor services	No change to service arising from Council decision
Reduction in community grant budgets	No material change to service or funding
Income generation	No material change to service or funding
Restructure of Place Directorate	No change to front line service delivery
Building warrant fee increase, subject to national uplift	No change to front line service delivery

- 3.7 The below proposals are likely to require impact assessments as detailed plans for their delivery are developed. Impact assessments will therefore be conducted as part of these plans and reported to future Council or Cabinet to inform decisions to effect the policy changes required in order to deliver the budget saving:

Improving Senior Phase Options
Income generation
Asset Review
Reduction in budget for IMI
Removal of Police Scotland funding
Redesign of libraries service
Reduction in taxicard / handicab budget
Further asset review savings
Waste services efficiency
Reduction in roads revenue budget
Use of U22 passes for home to school transport
Review of adaptations

- 3.8 If, following consideration of the impact assessment, a conclusion is reached that the impacts of these savings cannot be reasonably mitigated and the savings can no longer be delivered, then it will be necessary for alternative options to realise budget savings to be developed.
- 3.9 Impact assessments have already, or are already being undertaken in the following areas:

Improving Senior Phase Options
Three Weekly Residual Bin Collection
Charge for Garden Waste Collection
Reduction in museums budget
Self check in for face to face appointments

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As noted in the report, some of the decisions being considered as part of the budget will require a change in policy to be agreed through the relevant governance processes. Given the scale of the financial challenges which the council is now facing, it may not be possible for all of the priorities set out within the Council Plan to be met. It will therefore be necessary to reprioritise in order to ensure that scarce resources are targeted to meet the most pressing needs of our communities, and that the adverse impacts which arise from any budget reductions is minimised as far as possible.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 As noted within this report, impact assessments which consider the detailed plans for implementing budget reductions are taken forward through the budget setting process will be conducted where these require a change of policy or service delivery.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – no direct implications. However, if following consideration of the integrated impact assessment a conclusion is reached that savings set out within the budget plans cannot be delivered then alternative options will need to be identified.
- 6.2 Personnel – no direct implications.
- 6.3 Other – no direct implications.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None

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