

Savings Under Development

This appendix lists areas where departments are looking at the potential for additional savings which are not yet currently developed enough to be able to quantify and build into the detailed savings schedules.

Children and Family Services

All Savings Under Development lines are being treated as a programme, building on the successful ways of working from Defining Children & Family Services for the future programme, and will be called DCSF 2.

Staying Close

Staying Close is a model which provides an enhanced support package for young people leaving care from children's homes and is designed to be a comparable offer to the option to Stay Put, which supports young people in foster care to remain with their former foster carers until age 21. It provides an offer of move-on accommodation, alongside a package of practical and emotional support, provided by a member of staff from their former children's home or from someone who they know and trust. These bespoke packages of support help develop their confidence and skills for independent living, and for their emotional health and wellbeing. County Council savings will mainly appear in placement costs – residential and 16+ accommodation.

The DfE have funded 8 regional pilots since 2017/8. As well as more positive outcomes for young people, benefits quantified from these pilots averaged almost £2 of benefit for every £1 spent. A bid for £460k of funding has been submitted to the DfE to implement the Staying Close framework model in Leicestershire. The outcome of the bid is due imminently.

Family Breakdown

Parental mental health and substance misuse are key drivers behind family breakdown and children needing social care support and / or becoming a looked after child. This workstream is to help the service understand the root causes of children that escalate in care so that they can introduce new/additional practices that work in a preventative and holistic way to reduce the number of families that escalate and become Looked After Children.

Earlier Revocations

It has been identified that there are a number of children in care where they are placed with or spending a significant amount of time with their parents. The workstream is to ensure that revocations are made where appropriate, and at the earliest opportunity and in doing so, achieve permanence outside of the care system for our children and young people, giving them more security and reducing placement and support costs associated with drift, as well as care leaver costs and reducing the demand on 16+ accommodation.

Short Breaks

To develop the Councils approach to the provision of short breaks giving service users more autonomy and control over services. To explore opportunities around streamlined assessment and commissioning of services and to increase the support from volunteers to support children access activities. To explore alternatives to overnight short breaks to give greater choice to children.

Establishment Modelling

Looking at alternative delivery models, use of alternatively qualified staff to support social workers, as well as support staff to remove non value added activity to enable more time to be focussed on supporting families, increase caseloads and reduce the need to recruitment of agency staff to fill vacancies.

Fostering Sufficiency

Exploring the opportunity to reduce the cost of external foster placements by developing the internal offer or entering into a different commercial arrangement with independent agencies.

CIP Residential re-design next Phase iii

Expansion of residential investment for identified cohorts of children and young people.

Digitalisation Greater use of technology to create efficiencies in work to either deliver savings directly or allow additional work to be transferred that can be performed more cost effectively.

Prevention of escalation into Care – addition or increase to ART

Creating an in-house addition or alternative to the ART Team to prevent cases escalating in care need & cost. Giving the flexibility to provide preventative support to reduce the number of child in care starts, but also working with families to support children in care and their families to support the reduction in duration of their time in care.

Adults and CommunitiesIncreased income from fairer charging & removal of subsidy/aligning increases

The Department for Work and Pensions increases in benefits payments should provide additional chargeable income. It is anticipated that income from older people will rise faster than inflation because of the protection of over 65's benefits by the Government. This should help to maintain income levels in line with the savings target and will mitigate the impact of potential reductions in the income from under 65's.

Additional Health/BCF Income

Additional income anticipated from the annual uplift on the protected social care element of the Better Care Fund (BCF).

Technology Enabled Care (extension)

Savings by developing a range of IT and digital solutions that can be used to support service user outcomes across the Care Pathway following the launch of a reshaped Care Technology service in partnership with Hampshire County Council and its

commercial partner PA Argenti. An invest-to-save business case for the project suggested savings between £2-5m could be achieved, of which £2.25m have been built into the existing MTFS. The additional £2m proposed is anticipated through an extension of the types of people able to access Care Technology, and the range of devices offered. Savings would be a mixture of avoided cost (reduced growth) and cashable savings.

Establishment Review (extension)

A pause on recruitment to vacancies left over from the various HR action plans as a result of the Establishment Review programme, with the view to deleting a number of these vacant posts to release more savings and/or holding a higher vacancy rate.

Mental Health Accommodation Pathway (extension)

The Mental Health Accommodation Pathway project has developed and embedded a progression model to reduce residential costs and other support for people with a main diagnosis of Mental Health. This will enable people to step down from building-based services into their own homes with flexible support to prevent a further relapse and escalation back into building-based services. A floating support scheme has been commissioned which will commence from June 2022 that will support people to maintain tenancies and promote well-being. Additional staffing is in place to help support the move to step down accommodation and substantial savings have already been made ahead of the existing MTFS profile.

Commissioning efficiencies (Direct Payments)

Clawbacks of unspent direct payments during 2021/22 amounted to a similar amount to previous years (around £3.5m), of which £2.5m of savings has already been taken from budgets through previous MTFS lines. Proposed to build clawback of additional unspent direct payments into budgets, removing the remaining average amount of clawback (£1m) that has not already been built in.

3 Conversations Model

The 3 Conversations approach recognises that people and their families are the experts in their own lives and by listening to them it could be possible to develop a different approach to meeting their needs; utilising resources and skills, building upon their strengths, connecting them to the right people, communities, organisations to make their lives better. This approach has now been used in more than 40 local authorities in England and a number of Health and Social Care partnerships in Scotland. A 12-month pilot supported by Partners4Change to develop and test the 3 Conversations Model in a number of innovation sites across different areas of the Care Pathway. These innovation sites will develop new ways of working and the results will be collated and analysed to inform a business case for the full roll-out of the 3 Conversations Model across the whole of the Care Pathway.

Digitalisation of service delivery

There are a number of opportunities to digitise manual processes that are being explored:

- Areas of manual processing that could be digitised to increase efficiency. Examples include the use of robotic process automation to automate low value, repetitive administrative tasks and chat bot technology.

- The integration of the LLR Care Record with social care case management system will enable efficiencies for staff to self-serve information from other stakeholders without having to waste time telephoning around.
- Encouraging people to use on-line assessments will improve turnaround time for people to be assessed and reduce the amount of administration and costs associated with handling post.
- Introduction of electronic signatures of documents is estimated to reduce processing time from three weeks to four days for Direct Payment Agreements and three months to one week for Individual Placement Agreements.

Income

Potential areas for additional income include:

- Deputyship/appointeeship charging (existing saving under development)
- New income areas e.g. Creative Learning Services

Public Health

Early Help and Prevention

Explore potential to expand Early Help and Prevention to include a review of services across the authority to ensure interventions are efficient and effective.

Internal Infrastructure Costs (Weight Management)

A review of the infrastructure costs that are paid to organisations will be conducted to determine whether this funding is still needed.

Health Checks

Redesign of the Health Check programme to see what scope there is for delivering this service in a different way whilst still ensuring the statutory element of the service is provided.

ICB Prescribing Recharges

The Leicestershire ICB currently recharge Public Health for prescription items related to Public Health activity. However, in many authorities this isn't the case. There is an opportunity to ensure a standardised approach as they move towards an integrated care model.

Service Efficiencies

A review of the costs of each interaction with service users to see what opportunities there are to provide services more efficiently whilst still delivering desired outcomes.

Commercialisation of elements of the school offer

Selling some of the current PH services to schools and workplaces. This will initially be explored in the County but, given the ability of the public health service to deliver services in house, the opportunities to provide services outside Leicestershire could also be explored.

Environment & Transport

Fee & Charges Review

Assessment of income generated through fees and charges to ensure regularity of review, consistency in approach and full cost recovery.

SEN Transport Lean Review

Potential for savings has been identified from expanding the use of Fleet Transport. This would allow service users to be transferred from high-cost taxi contracts onto the Council's own fleet. A further opportunity has been identified to introduce a comprehensive marketing / communications approach to voluntary PTBs to increase take-up further. In addition, work to better understand costs will allow more accurate charging for fleet hire.

Digital Approach to Home to School Transport

End to end integration and process re-design with Children and Family Services (CFS) and digital delivery. CFS currently have a tender out for High Needs Special Education Needs Programme to look at reducing spend on the High Needs Block budget. This work includes joining up school and transport decision-making to enable better outcomes from CFS and reduce the number of Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) with a corresponding reduction in the need for transport.

Developer Income, including Planning Pre-Application charges (PPAs)

Work proposed to review the approach to engaging with developers across the department, identifying opportunities to maximise the income potential. Currently there are a number of approaches in different teams (such as s278, the work in Street Lighting savings, and a previously developed proposal for introduction of pre-app charges in highway development control). There are examples of other authorities that have a single approach to developer engagement that delivers and maximises income from the various activities included. Current view is there could be potential income from PPAs linked to a project the Growth Service is leading on. Current resourcing challenges mean potential income from pre-app charging is unlikely in the short term.

Chief Executive's

Corporate Review - Communities

Detailed review of service including consideration of other departmental needs and activities, staffing and efficiencies, grants provision and management, and partner contributions to overheads.

Corporate Review – Business Intelligence incl. Data Strategy

Instigation of a data strategy, aligning IT and Business Intelligence to drive a culture of data-led performance management across the Council. Review the infrastructure, skills roles and responsibilities required to deliver the Data Strategy for the Council to improve data management practices and identify where data collection could be improved and/or automated – driving efficiencies.

Corporate Reviews

Reviews of the following services in the Strategy and Business Intelligence Branch and closely related services based in other Departments under the branch: Policy and Strategy, Consultation and Engagement, Growth. Scoping papers have been prepared.

Increasing income generation

Increase income generation from partners and other bodies by leveraging increases in existing charges and exploring further support provision. Areas in scope include Local Pensions Board and Associated Bodies, Combined Fire Authority, ESPO, Business Intelligence, Ecology and heritage advice, Freeport management/admin and Additional Planning, Historic and Natural Environment fee income.

Department structure and functions

Undertake a full review of business support, and management structures and functions to drive potential efficiency and savings.

Process and service efficiencies

Undertake a detailed review of areas where there is high volume of standardised work to consider if there are efficiencies that can be achieved through streamlining processes or greater digitalisation.

Corporate ResourcesSalary Sacrifice Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions (AVC)

The department has been approached by a third party about introducing Salary Sacrifice Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions. This approach would provide an NI saving to employers to the value of 14.3%, which is available to the County Council if the scheme is implemented, marketed and managed inhouse.

Supplier Early Payment Discount

The proposed change is to move some suppliers to an earlier payment window/reduced Service Level Agreement (SLA) that will in turn attract a discount deducted from the settlement value. There are a number of other authorities that have moved to this approach and are seeing the benefits.

People Hub

A centralised People Hub could be created that would undertake recruitment administration and compliance checks for departments with a priority being given to recruitment thereby freeing up managers time and creating a centre of excellence.

This could enable:

- Financial savings through centralisation of people and processes
- Income generation from assessment centres
- Free up time spent by managers on recruitment related tasks (estimated around 10 hours outside of interview and onboarding) – offset/reducing growth
- Improve compliance, e.g. Employee checks and registrations, IR35

- Improve recruitment and retention – the ability to put together corporate recruitment campaigns particularly for hard to recruit to posts
- Potential reduction in agency spend

Department Structure

Corporate Resources consists of a large number of functions split under three assistant directors. All services in general focus on organisational compliance and/or provide support to the wider authority across a variety of functions and so it is important to ensure the right teams, structure, function and skills are in place. A number of areas including ICT and business support are under review to ensure they are best placed to support the department and the authority, with other functions being reviewed as part of this work, including:

1. management structure,
2. duplication of corporate functions across the authority, and
3. the wider support offer to departments to ensure smooth, efficient and cost effective operations.

Cost of provision

This review aims to revisit the spend on Insurance, Tax and Procurement activities - exploring opportunities to legally reduce our tax and insurance liability.

Also in scope would be exploring alternative buying approaches, and highlighting the further potential opportunity to scrutinise the Council's highest spending areas with a view to challenging potential over-specification, buying rationale, or commissioning effectiveness – where key value could potentially be obtained at a substantially lower cost, through retendering.

Use of Technology

Over the last three years the Council's eco-system of IT tools and infrastructure has matured, providing the foundations for an acceleration of digital delivery.

There are currently under-utilised corporate tools and methods which, if implemented, would reduce duplication, speed up processing and possibly automate manual tasks. Optimising the Council's IT and digital toolkit would enable the authority to build the foundations for a data enabled future.

A key opportunity as part of the consistent use of the corporate toolkit is process automation, which could be applied to many repetitive processes to enable efficiencies and cost reduction. Alongside this, there are also potential opportunities from revisiting staff's technology and licence costs for the tools and software they are using – ensuring this meets organisational need in the most cost-effective way.

Managed Assets

The Council's property assets and the way they are managed, planned, used and procured can have a fundamental impact on the Council's ability to deliver its services and their cost. The specific aims of this work are to:-

- Align asset management planning with the corporate and service delivery needs having regard to financial and resource planning.
- Identify the future property and asset management requirements necessary to deliver service priorities.
- Set out a programme of strategic reviews and initiatives together with an asset management delivery plan.

Energy Initiatives

A survey of all remaining County Council buildings has recently been undertaken to amend and optimise existing heating control settings; and identify further opportunities for improvements. These include further expansion of solar capacity and less carbon intensive methods of heating (e.g. air source heat pumps). There is an aspiration that the authority will be successful in bids for the Low Carbon Skills Fund to access specialist consultant support, and further central government or Midlands Energy Hub funding to provide the necessary capital and allow progression of opportunities prioritised; impact and cost details or plans for progression are understood to remain outstanding. A study of County Council land has been commissioned to identify if further opportunities exist to build renewable energy generation infrastructure.