
Report to Council

Liberal Democrats Budget Amendment Proposals 2020/21

Portfolio Holder: Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition, and Lead Member for Finance and Corporate Services, Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Chris Gloster

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Reason for Decision

The report presents to Council the Liberal Democrats (as the main opposition party) suggested amendments to the Administration's Budget proposals for 2020/21 and offers some forward looking proposals to achieve savings in future years.

Executive Summary

The report presents to Council a number of 2020/21 budget amendments in addition to those proposals already presented by the Administration.

This report identifies additional savings totalling £1.621m in 2020/21 and £0.304m in 2021/22 which can be considered individually or collectively. There are also initial investments that will be funded from the range of savings proposals put forward to offset the increased expenditure and suggested amendments to the Capital Programme. Details of the proposals can be found in section 3 and in summary at Appendix A. Business cases for the individual budget reductions can be found at Appendix B.

Following the presentation of the Liberal Democrat Budget Amendment proposals to Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money (PVFM) Select Committee on 4 February 2020, the Committee did make a number of recommendations to Cabinet of which some, but not all, were agreed.

Those recommended to Council are:

- a) In relation to the Revenue Budget that:

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- During 2020/21 a review should be undertaken of reward and recognition packages for employees, including essential car user allowances (with a view to making savings in future financial years);
 - There is a review of the support that can be offered to school holiday food clubs from within 2020/21 existing budgets; and
 - There is a review of the support that can be offered to the 2020 Saddleworth Band Contest from within existing budgets.

b) In relation to the Capital Programme that:

- When a review is undertaken to determine the schemes to be included within the Capital Programme for 2021/22 and future years, that additional health care centres for Chadderton and Saddleworth are considered.

Whilst the Liberal Democrats welcome that the Administration has accepted a number of its proposals, it is disappointing that not all the its recommendations or those put forward by the Select Committee to Cabinet have been accepted. Therefore, the Liberal Democrats propose that Council agrees the recommendations included within this report.

Recommendations

Council agrees that:

1. The Investment and Savings proposals for 2020/21 as summarised at Appendix A are approved.
2. The work required to deliver the 2021/22 proposals is started immediately so the opportunity to generate savings in future years is not compromised.
3. The amendments to the Administration's proposed Capital Programme are implemented as set out in this report.

Liberal Democrats Budget Amendment Proposals 2020/21

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council is required by legislation to produce a balanced budget each financial year. Aside from the legal requirements, financial plans are important because they set out the financial management of the Council's policies and guide officers on the areas where they should prioritise resources.
- 1.2 The Liberal Democrats produce an Alternative Budget to challenge key decisions set out by the Administration, identify other areas for revenue savings and propose alternative priority areas for the Council to concentrate its resources. There is also a review of the Administration's Capital Programme with the Liberal Democrats proposing alternative schemes to deliver their priorities.
- 1.3 In producing this Alternative Budget, the Liberal Democrats offer common-sense practical solutions to the borough's problems and challenge the Administration to cut waste and provide the value-for-money local services the public want. Throughout this document there is a focus on developing the borough and improving the health, wealth and wellbeing of residents.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 The context of the whole budget setting process continues to be the uncertainty of future Government funding, the scale of financial challenge the Council is facing and the additional service demand from the most vulnerable in the borough which has resulted in a considerable budget gap.
- 2.2 Considering these factors, the Administration has presented a series of savings proposals as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process. The Liberal Democrats recognise that difficult choices need to be made to ensure a balanced budget can be presented to Council, and therefore accept the proposals for 2020/21. However, there are several amendments from previous budget processes which the Liberal Democrats have reversed as part of this alternative budget. These are included as part of the Investment proposals detailed at section 3.
- 2.3 The proposal to increase Oldham Council's element of Council Tax by 0.99% for 2020/21 as well as the 2% increase for the Adult Social Care Precept is also accepted by the Liberal Democrats.
- 2.4 The Liberal Democrats believe that our actions in the coming weeks and months will have a direct impact on future generations, therefore collectively, want to ensure that the correct priorities at the forefront of decision making processes. As such the budget amendments included in this report can be categorised into broad themes based on Liberal Democrat priorities:

Tackling Health Deprivation

- 2.5 The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 published by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) shows that Oldham is ranked the 16th most deprived Local Authority district in England. This position is significantly declined from the position published in the English Indices of Deprivation 2015 where Oldham was 27th. This is a worrying trend considering the profound effects deprivation has on residents.

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- 2.6 Health deprivation particularly can result in premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health. The Liberal Democrats are committed to reversing this trend through the proposals set out in this report, including the building of 3 new health care centres across the borough.

Combatting Climate Change

- 2.7 The United Nations describes climate change as the defining issue of our time. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impacts of climate change are global in scope and unprecedented in scale.
- 2.8 In March 2019, the Greater Manchester five-year Environment Plan was launched, which commits the city region to achieving 'carbon neutrality' by 2038. Following on from this the Council announced its commitment to be the UK's first Green New Deal Council in July 2019, with a target of carbon neutrality for the borough by 2030, and for the Council itself by 2025.
- 2.9 The decisions that are made on a national and a local level today will impact on how the planet looks for future generations. The Liberal Democrats believe that policies designed to combat climate change need to be incorporated within the Council's budget now in order to have an impact.
- 2.10 Whilst the Liberal Democrats acknowledge and welcome the work that the Council intends to do over the future period, they propose that additional funding is provided within the Capital Programme to expedite the benefits that combatting climate change will bring. Further details of the proposals can be found at paragraph 3.7.

Regeneration

- 2.11 Regeneration of the Oldham borough is key to the prosperity of residents and should focus on an improvement in physical structures, social infrastructure and the economy.
- 2.12 There needs to be a focus on bringing old abandoned buildings back into use or demolishing them to provide new opportunities for development particularly housing. Attention also needs to be given to the 'spaces between buildings', the green spaces and other areas where residents live their lives.
- 2.13 The main Opposition Party is aware of the requirements set by Central Government coupled with the needs of local people to build additional houses within the borough. However, the Liberal Democrats do not believe that any irreplaceable green space should be sacrificed to meet this need when there are other brownfield or otherwise vacant sites which could be used instead.
- 2.14 The Liberal Democrats propose the establishment of a specific fund to support the remediation of contaminated brownfield or otherwise vacant sites.
- 2.15 The Liberal Democrats recognise that these priorities will not be achieved in the short term, therefore there is a real focus on including both revenue and capital investment proposals that tackle this issue within this alternative budget.

3. 2020/21 Proposals

- 3.1 The Liberal Democrats propose a number of specific budget amendments to be considered this year. These are split into:
- An alternative Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25
 - Investment proposals which would achieve significant benefits within the borough

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- Budget Reduction proposals where it is considered individual service areas can make new or additional savings in order to fund the Investment proposals put forward in this report.

3.2 If the investment proposals are unacceptable to the Administration, then they have the option to reduce the level of reserves required to support the budget improving the financial resilience of the Council.

Liberal Democrat Alternative Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25

3.3 The Liberal Democrats are proposing a series of adjustments to the Council's Capital Programme in order to achieve the goals of tackling health deprivation for residents, combatting climate change and regenerating the borough.

3.4 The proposed amendments include a revision to planned allocation of resources within the Creating a Better Place strategy whilst rephrasing and expanding the Administration's programme by adding additional investment. Further details of these proposals are included below with a summary shown in Table 1.

A - New health centres in Shaw, Saddleworth and Chadderton to tackle the increasing health deprivation within the borough

3.5 The Liberal Democrats have often highlighted the importance of tackling health deprivation and inequalities across the Council and hold it as one of their core values. An expanding population and a persistent lack of investment in health infrastructure has resulted in overly stretched, under resourced services with several present Health Centres unable to cope with demand.

3.6 Within the Administration's proposed Capital Programme for the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 is a potential future allocation of £6.000m to support a new healthcare centre in 2024/25. The Liberal Democrat Group is pleased that the Administration has finally recognised the need for further investment in our health centres. In their 2019/20 Budget Amendment, the Liberal Democrats proposed that an Earmarked Reserve, amounting to almost £1.200m, be created over four years to support the development of a new, much needed, Crompton Health Centre in Shaw, financed by savings identified elsewhere. The Liberal Democrats support the proposed allocation for the new healthcare centre, however, to deal with the increasing health deprivation in the borough, propose to bring this investment forward to 2021/22 with Shaw being identified as the priority. It is also proposed that two additional healthcare centres in Saddleworth and Chadderton, at an additional capital investment of £12.000m, are developed to ensure consistency of health provision across the whole of Oldham; one in 2022/23 and another in 2024/25.

B - Expedite the work around Green Energy and invest in solutions to address Climate change and to ensure carbon neutrality

3.7 The Liberal Democrat Group has long been active in advocating that prompt and effective action be taken by this Council to address Climate Change and reduce this organisation's Carbon Footprint. We have introduced numerous proposals in Council including identifying the measures needed to abandon the use of single-use plastics, to promote of the take-up of electric vehicles, and to utilise geothermal and other renewable energy sources.

3.8 Despite the fact that the Climate Change Act 2008 did not include a statutory duty for Local Authorities to develop plans or deliver cuts to emissions, the Council announced its commitment, as detailed in paragraph 2.8, to be the UK's first Green New Deal Council in July 2019, with a target of carbon neutrality for the borough by 2030 and for the Council itself by 2025. It is also creditable that, at the instigation of the Liberal Democrat Group, the Council joined many other UK Local Authorities in declaring a Climate Emergency in September

2019. The Liberal Democrat Group both welcomes and supports these developments; the Group will do everything that it can to support the Administration in their realisation. Accordingly, we also welcome the recent re-establishment of a cross-party group, to enable elected members from all parties to work together on this strategic issue

- 3.9 Whilst the Administration has a number of schemes planned to tackle Climate Change, such as increasing the number of electric vehicle charging points across the whole of the borough and significantly increasing the installation and use of solar panels across all Council buildings, the Liberal Democrats believe that more can be done and done earlier to deal with this issue. It is therefore proposed that additional capital investment be made available for this purpose of £6.500m over the period 2020/21 to 2024/25; £2.500m in 2020/21 with £1.000m in each year thereafter up to 2024/25.

C - Provide a specific fund to remediate brownfield sites to make areas available for development and protect valuable green space

- 3.10 The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework aims to focus on making the most of Greater Manchester's brownfield sites, prioritising redevelopment of town centres and other sustainable locations to help address the housing crisis in the region.
- 3.11 Oldham's Greenbelt land is irreplaceable, and the Liberal Democrats have consistently opposed plans to build on it. Although it is recognised that the borough will need more homes and areas for business development, brownfield or otherwise vacant sites should be developed before the Greenbelt is encroached on.
- 3.12 Within Oldham, there are a number of brownfield sites that would be suitable for redevelopment however, due to the condition of these sites they cannot currently be used for building. The Liberal Democrats are therefore proposing to establish a specific fund within the Capital Programme for the remediation of brownfield sites across the borough at a value of £6.500m over the period 2020/21 to 2020/24; £2.500m in 2020/21 with £1.000m allocated for each year thereafter to 2024/25.

D - Create a specific investment fund for the borough's footpaths and bring them up to standard

- 3.13 This has been a proposal of the main opposition party over a number of years, however there is still no specific fund to provide for footpaths. It is therefore proposed by the Liberal Democrats that a specific investment fund of £2.500m for the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 be made available within the Capital Programme. This would equate to £0.500m per financial year over this period.
- 3.14 The additional capital investment required to deliver the above would be £12.500m. Further details of this is detailed in the table below:

Table 1 - Liberal Democrats Alternative Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2024/25

Scheme	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	TOTAL £000
Administration's proposed Capital Programme which the Liberal Democrats propose to reverse or re-phase	(5,000)	(6,500)	(3,500)	0	(6,000)	(21,000)
Liberal Democrats Proposed Capital Programme						
A - New Health Centres - Shaw, Saddleworth and Chadderton	0	6,000	6,000	6,000	0	18,000
B - Climate Change	2,500	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	6,500
C - Remediate brownfield sites	2,500	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	6,500
D - Specific fund for improving footpaths across the borough	500	500	500	500	500	2,500
	5,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	2,500	33,500
Additional Capital Investment	500	2,000	5,000	8,500	(3,500)	12,500

- 3.15 The additional revenue cost to deliver this additional £12.500m capital investment would be as follows. Whilst the cost for 2021/22 has been addressed, future years implications will be dealt with in the context of the budget setting arrangements for those years.

	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000
Additional revenue cost of capital investment	28	142	425	906	708*

*The reduction in 2025/26 reflects the reduction in the capital investment required in that year.

Investment Proposals

- 3.16 The Liberal Democrats are proposing to spend £1.621m of the savings identified in 2020/21 to invest in a range of proposals aimed at improving the lives of residents within the borough. Details of the individual investment proposals are provided below.

Provide a revenue fund to assist the Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) work up detailed business cases for the proposed new health centres in Shaw, Saddleworth and Chadderton (£0.750m)

- 3.17 This investment proposal is similar to that made in the Liberal Democrats Alternative Budget for 2019/20. Revenue funding (held by the Oldham CCG) of £0.850m has been awarded to progress an outline business case for these health centres which, if viable, could be used to develop a full business case.
- 3.18 The Liberal Democrats are proposing to provide revenue funding of £0.750m to assist the Oldham CCG with the development of these business cases.

Reverse the Administration decision to reduce District Expenditure and continue investing in local priorities (£0.120m)

- 3.19 As part of the Administration's budget for 2019/20, Council approved the reduction in district expenditure whilst increasing individual Councillor budgets to £0.006m per annum. The Liberal Democrats opposed this budget reduction when it was proposed by the

Administration and feel that this reduction has impacted on the valuable work that Councillors do alongside ward residents. It is therefore proposed to reinstate this funding for 2020/21 onwards.

Reverse the Administration's reduction in Parish Council Grant funding (£0.015m)

- 3.20 The Liberal Democrats propose to reinstate a prior reduction of Parish Council Grant funding for both Saddleworth and Shaw & Crompton Parish Councils at a value of £0.015m. The Administration began the reduction in Parish Council funding as part of the 2017/18 budget setting process and has reduced the grant in line with the reductions in Revenue Support Grant imposed by Central Government.
- 3.21 The Liberal Democrats have always believed that Parish Councils are an essential part of the structure of local democracy and have a vital role in acting on behalf of the communities they represent and therefore propose the full reinstatement of this funding for 2020/21 to ensure activities such as the following can continue to:
- give views, on behalf of the community, on planning applications and other proposals that affect the parish.
 - undertake projects and schemes that benefit local residents.
 - work in partnership with other bodies to achieve benefits for the parish.
 - alert relevant authorities to problems that arise or work that needs to be undertaken.
 - maintain community buildings and land.

Create a dedicated fund to replace and maintain signage across the borough and other road safety measures (£0.100m)

- 3.22 In 2018 there were 427 reported casualties from road traffic incidents in Oldham (Department for Transport statistics), this includes 5 fatalities. In an effort to reduce road traffic incidents the Liberal Democrats have consistently promoted investment in highways infrastructure, a policy which has now been adopted by the Administration. To continue these improvements to road safety the Liberal Democrats propose to create a specific fund to replace and maintain signage across the borough. Currently, there is no specific provision within the Administration's budget to replace signage including Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) when required. There is also none to maintain and clean existing signage across the borough. Signage which is clear and well maintained will be more visible to drivers which is particularly important during the winter months when visibility is already poor due to low light levels and road traffic incidents typically increase. The Liberal Democrats would also propose that some of this budget would be made available to support the establishment and maintenance of Lorry Watch and Community Speedwatch schemes where these are warranted.

Increase the investment in tackling environmental crime to combat issues such as fly tipping and dog fouling across the borough (£0.571m)

- 3.23 The Liberal Democrats believe that visible incidences of environmental crime such as fly tipping, littering and dog fouling create an environment that encourages further acts, e.g. a culture where 'because they've done it, I can too'. Focusing on the prevention of these crimes and quickly remedying any acts that do occur helps to create a positive atmosphere and encourages residents to have pride in where they live, which will then in turn reduce future infractions. It is therefore proposed to increase the previous Administration investment in tackling environmental crime by £0.571m in 2020/21 and a further £0.276m in 2021/22.

School Holiday Food Clubs (£0.050m)

- 3.24 Low-income parents are at a particular risk of experiencing financial difficulties during school holidays, because of extra childcare costs and the absence of free school meals for their children. Save the Children and other children's welfare organisations have raised concerns

about the adverse impact that school holidays can have on the nutrition of children living in families on a low-income. The Parliamentary All-Party Group on Hunger 'Hungry Holiday' report of 2017 cited research estimating that the loss of free school meals adds between £30 and £40 per week to parents' outgoings during school holidays. The report also estimated that up to 3 million children are at risk of going hungry in the school holidays (1 million children who receive free school meals during term time and another 2 million children who are ineligible for free school meals but are growing up in households with in-work poverty).

- 3.25 The Liberal Democrats have long been concerned with food poverty in this Borough, particularly amongst children, and have frequently raised this issue in Council and with the Administration. The Group welcomes any initiative that will help address school holiday hunger and our proposal is to make a specific investment of £0.050m to allow school holiday food clubs to run throughout Oldham during the school holidays, providing this Borough's neediest children with healthy, nutritious meals and an opportunity for social interaction.

Allocate a specific dedicated resource to fund the annual Saddleworth Band Contest (£0.015m)

- 3.26 The Liberal Democrats place a high value on the Saddleworth Whit Friday Band Contest. This is an annual event which is not only popular amongst the residents of this Borough but enjoys an international reputation. Last year, 119 bands from far and wide competed and a significant number of day visitors and tourists came to watch and listen. This brings prestige to the Borough and a considerable amount of additional income to help sustain Oldham and Saddleworth businesses. Accordingly, the Liberal Democrats believe that this event should be funded centrally by Oldham Council under the Corporate Priorities budget as are town centre events, such as the Big Bang. The Liberal Democrats would establish within this budget heading a specific additional sum of £0.015m annually to use to meet the costs of this event.

4. Liberal Democrat Alternative Budget Reduction Proposals

- 4.1 The Liberal Democrats are proposing a range of challenging budget reduction proposals which will reduce spend on non-essential or non-statutory services in order to reprioritise the funds into proposals which will improve the lives of people in the borough. Brief summaries of the savings proposals are provided below with full proformas at Appendix B.

OPP-BR1-201 - Additional Vacancy Management factor to achieve greater efficiency including limiting the present use of agency staff and consultants (£0.500m)

- 4.2 For the 2019/20 budget, the Administration agreed to apply a vacancy factor at a rate of 1.5% (£0.800m saving) to all mainstream employee budgets based on the assumption that some posts would become vacant or would be held vacant during that financial year due to staff turnover.
- 4.3 To assist in reducing the number of agency staff and consultants used across the Council further, the Liberal Democrats propose that a further saving for 2020/21 should be applied at a rate of 1% to all Council mainstream employee budgets. This 1% vacancy management factor would generate a saving of £0.500m.

OPP-BR1-202 - Increase the Flexible use of capital receipts by revising the transformation programme to focus on the Opposition's priority areas (£0.500m)

- 4.4 As part of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 budget processes the Administration have taken advantage of the flexibility to fund transformational expenditure through capital receipts at a value of £3.000m in 2019/20 and at a proposed value of £3.750m in 2020/21. The Liberal Democrats propose the extension of the flexibility by £0.500m in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to fund revenue transformational activities which focus on the priority areas of the main

opposition. It is recognised that the availability of this funding opportunity currently ceases at the end of 2021/22, so if there is no extension of this Government initiative, future budgets will be prepared accordingly.

OPP-BR1-203 - Reduction in the amount of stationery purchased across the authority (£0.002m)

- 4.5 The purchase of stationery is completed by individual teams across the organisation on an ad hoc basis which does not always ensure best value for money through economies of scale.
- 4.6 It is suggested that stationery could be centralised in particular locations across the borough i.e. at the Civic Centre. This would ensure that better value for money was being achieved through increased understanding of which items are required, volumes etc. As such, the Liberal Democrats propose a budget reduction of £0.002m for 2020/21 with work to be completed during the financial year to determine if any future financial efficiencies can be realised in this area.

OPP-BR1-204 - Reduce the number of meetings where refreshments are provided (£0.004m)

- 4.7 Refreshments such as tea and coffee are provided on a regular basis at meetings across the Council. It is suggested that not all of these meetings require refreshments and as such, the Liberal Democrats propose to reduce the refreshment and hospitality mainstream budgets by 10% for 2020/21 with a further 10% reduction in 2021/22.

OPP-BR1-205 - Reduce in travel budgets to ensure the most efficient method of transport is used for essential Council business (£0.005m)

- 4.8 The Liberal Democrats propose to reduce travel expenditure by ensuring officers use the most efficient and cost effective method for necessary travel. In April 2018, the Council received a Freedom of Information (FOI) request asking for details of all flights paid for by the Council within the period 1 January 2015 and 31 March 2018. Within this period Oldham Council reported a number of flights to differing destinations domestically and beyond. A significant number of these flights were funded by external sources however some costs were incurred by the general fund and so there is scope to reduce the impact on Council mainstream funding.
- 4.9 The Liberal Democrats believe this move to more cost effective modes of transport would reasonably achieve a saving of circa £0.005m per annum.

OPP-BR1-206 - Review of car allowances as previously promised to reduce the amount paid as a lump sum to staff doing zero or minimal mileage (£0.037m)

- 4.10 A lump sum of £500 is paid annually to essential car users with 557 members of staff receiving this allowance in 2018/19. 46% of users subsequently recorded zero mileage.
- 4.11 The Liberal Democrats believe that a review of the posts which attract essential car user status should be undertaken with the intention of removing the lump sum payment from posts where users routinely record zero, or very few miles. Removal of the allowance from 100 employees would result in a £0.050m saving. Due to the consultation requirements only a part year saving of £0.037m would be generated in 2020/21 with full year effect being applied in 2021/22.
- 4.12 It is disappointing to see that, despite this Select Committee recommending at its meeting of 5 February 2019 and Council accepting this recommendation at the Budget meeting of 27

February 2019, that consideration of car allowances should be undertaken as part of a wider review of the Council's reward and recognition package, no progress has yet been made.

OPP-BR1-207 - Reduce the subsidisation of Trade Union support provided by the Council following a reduction in membership (£0.038m)

- 4.13 The Liberal Democrats are proposing to reduce the trade union subsidy provided by the Council following a consistent reduction in trade union membership as evidenced by decreasing numbers of staff opting to pay membership through payroll. This would result in a reduction of approximately 50% to the base budget resulting in a total saving £0.075m which, due to the consultation required, would be achieved over 2 financial years resulting in a £0.038m saving in 2020/21 and a further £0.037m in 2021/22.

OPP-BR1-208 - Reduction in the General Training Budget agreed in 2018/19 to be made permanent (£0.150m)

- 4.14 In 2018/19 the Administration implemented a one-off reduction to the Council's general training budget of £0.150m. The Liberal Democrats propose to make this budget reduction a permanent one and reduce the general training budget by £0.150m from 2020/21 on an ongoing basis.

OPP-BR1-209 - Reconsideration of Council priorities with regards to the Marketing and Communications Service (£0.275m)

- 4.15 Whilst the Administration has reviewed the Communications and Research service as part of its Design and Assurance work, the Liberal Democrats feel that there is further scope in this area to reduce spend on this non statutory service and re-prioritise this to other areas.
- 4.16 As such, the Liberal Democrats propose to redesign the Communications and Research team generating a total budget reduction of £0.275m in 2020/21. This will enable the reprioritisation of funding towards front line services. This reduction would be generated by halting production of the Borough Life magazine and disestablishing 6 vacant posts within the team. It is proposed to generate income of circa £0.005m by selling advertising on the Council's website similar to that which is done in a neighbouring authority.

OPP-BR1-210 - Utilise available digital platforms within Libraries to access newspapers and magazines rather than purchasing hardcopies (£0.010m)

- 4.17 Across the Library service, hard copies of newspapers and magazines are purchased and made available for visitors to read. The average cost per annum spent on this type of expenditure is circa £0.018m.
- 4.18 As newspapers and magazines are widely available using an online platform, the Liberal Democrats suggest that the budgetary provision for this can be reduced by £0.010m, with the remaining budget of £0.008m being used to fund any online subscriptions necessary or buy those publications that are not available digitally. It is also suggested that an assessment of the actual use of any hardcopy newspapers or magazines (not available online) is undertaken during 2020/21 with a view to reduce the budget further in future years.

OPP-BR1-211 - Increase income target with regard to Section 38 and Section 278 inspections within the Highways service (£0.100m)

- 4.19 Following consistent overachievement of the income target for the highways related inspections covered by Section 38 and Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980, the Liberal Democrats propose to formally increase the income target in this area by £0.100m for 2020/21.

5. Items for Future Consideration

- 5.1 In addition to the proposals set out in section 3 there are also areas which the Liberal Democrats believe should be investigated as part of future budget processes. These are set out below.

Reduction in the number of Councillors

- 5.2 The proposal is to reduce the number of elected members from 60 to 40. The current basic allowance is £0.009m per annum (plus National Insurance costs) and therefore this would represent a saving of £0.190m per annum. The Liberal Democrats have consistently proposed this reduction in Opposition Budget Amendment since 2012. The Liberal Democrat Group welcomes the Oldham Council electoral review currently taking place and recognises that this proposal will need to be reconsidered following the Boundary Commission's Review.

6. Review of previous Liberal Democrat Budgets

- 6.1 As part of the 2019/20 Opposition Budget process the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee recommended the following proposals to Cabinet at its meeting of 5 February 2019:
- a) OPP-BR1-106 Review of car allowance as previously promised to reduce the amount paid as a lump sum to staff doing zero or minimal mileage
 - b) OPP-BR1-108 Additional Bus Lane Enforcement to ensure consistency of provision within the Council controlled area
- 6.2 As detailed in paragraph 4.12, to date there has been no reduction in the payments of lump sum car allowances either individually or as part of a wider review of reward and recognition packages. Service data suggests the number of individuals in receipt of allowances has increased year on year. In this tough financial climate these are the areas which need to be considered in order to protect front line services.
- 6.3 As noted above, the implementation of the Additional Bus Lane Enforcement was to be reviewed during 2019/20 to ascertain if this could be applied to other routes in 2020/21. Despite another option being currently available to the Administration, no additional proposal has been made and therefore represents a loss of potential income for the Council. At a time when the maximisation of income generation is a key area for Local Authorities, it is disappointing to see that Administration have not acted upon the recommendation.
- 6.4 PVFM also recommended that:
- “An in-depth review of recycling rates within the borough be undertaken by the Select Committee with a view to identifying suggested improvements which would have the long-term impact of potentially reducing the levy to support future budgets. This was agreed as an agenda item for a future meeting of the Select Committee.”*
- 6.5 Whilst it is noted that a report was considered by the Select Committee on 9 January 2020, it is disappointing that there do not appear to be any significant plans to improve recycling rates across the Borough by the Administration.
- ### Summary
- 6.6 After considering all investment and savings proposals there is a balanced position as can be seen in Appendix A.

7. Director of Finance Comments

- 7.1 I confirm in my role as Responsible Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 that the budget amendments as presented are robust and deliverable.
- 7.2 As it is an alternative set of budget options the opportunity for testing the risks associated with the proposals are more limited and it is therefore necessary to afford a level of caution in presenting these alternatives. (Anne Ryans)

8. Options/Alternatives

- 8.1 With regard to the consideration of the Liberal Democrat's alternative Capital Programme for 2020/21 to 2024/25, revenue investment proposals and revenue savings proposals for 2020/21 and 2021/22, the options available to Council are to:
- Accept all of the recommendations of the report
 - Accept some of the recommendations of the report
 - Reject all of the recommendations of the report

9. Preferred Option

- 9.1 The preferred option is that Council accepts all of the recommendations.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 Service Managers have been involved in compiling the proposals and the proposals have been agreed within the content of the business cases attached at Appendix B.
- 10.2 The Budget Amendment proposals were presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money (PVFM) Select Committee on 4 February 2020. The Select Committee scrutinised all investment and budget reduction proposals. It recommended that some issues be taken back to the Committee for further review but recommended several issues to Cabinet for consideration. These were that:
- consideration be given by the Administration to the provision of refreshments at meetings going forward;
 - it be reminded of the decision of the Council on 27 February 2019 to undertake a review of essential car user allowances and be recommended to consider this issue within the wider review of reward packages;
 - consideration be given by the Administration to the reduction of the subsidisation of Trade Union support;
 - consideration be given to increasing the income target with regard to Section 38 and Section 278 inspections within the Highways service;
 - there is consideration given to the feasibility of the provision of additional healthcare centres in Saddleworth and Chadderton when reviewing the Capital Programme for future years;
 - there is a reversal of the decision to reduce Parish Council Grant funding and reinstate the £0.015m budget;
 - Cabinet looks at the issue of School Holiday Food Clubs and tries to find funding to provide additional support for this activity; and
 - there is a review of the Corporate Priorities Budget to consider whether £0.015m funding of the annual Saddleworth Band Contest could be identified.
- 10.3 The Liberal Democrats note that the Administration at the Cabinet meeting of 10 February 2020 reviewed each of the recommendations put forward by Select Committee and agreed to recommend the following to Council.

In relation to the Revenue Budget that:

- During 2020/21 a review should be undertaken of reward and recognition packages for employees, including essential car user allowances (with a view to making savings in future financial years);
- There is a review of the support that can be offered to school holiday food clubs from within 2020/21 existing budgets; and
- There is a review of the support that can be offered to the 2020 Saddleworth Band Contest from within existing budgets.

In relation to the Capital Programme that:

- When a review is undertaken to determine the schemes to be included within the Capital Programme for 2021/22 and future years, that additional health care centres for Chadderton and Saddleworth are considered.

10.4 The Liberal Democrats note that these issues have subsequently been addressed in the Administrations' revenue budget and capital programme reports.

11. Financial Implications

11.1 The financial implications are included within the report.

12. Legal Services Comments

12.1 There are no immediate legal issues arising from the report save that where the proposals involve a change to officer's employment terms and conditions appropriate HR processes will need to be followed in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures. (Colin Brittain)

13. Co-operative Agenda

13.1 Revenue and Capital Investment and Savings proposals have been considered in conjunction with the Council's Co-operative Agenda and there are no adverse impacts.

14. Human Resources Comments

14.1 The Opposition proposals are noted.

14.2 The Service has submitted full business cases / responses to these proposals which are contained in the appendices. It is the Service's view that reduction of the General Training Budget and Trade Union Facility will impact the delivery of key organisational priorities such as transformation activity and integration across the wider public service system. The removal of car allowance, if treated as a standalone activity, is likely to increase turnover of current staff and hinder our ability to recruit talent. It is proposed that this is considered as part of a broader review of pay and reward to ensure that the Council remains able to attract and retain scarce skills and talent. (Martyn Bramwell)

15. Risk Assessments

15.1 The risks of deliverability have been considered and are thought to be minimal at this stage.

16. IT Implications

16.1 There are no specific IT requirements associated with the proposals that have not already been considered.

17. Property Implications

- 17.1 The Council's approach to its Medium - Term Property Strategy will involve the workstreams associated with i.e. regeneration, new investments and combating climate change and carbon neutral initiatives. It is acknowledged that the business cases for the health centres are already underway. (Peter Wood).

18. Procurement Implications

- 18.1 Any proposals that impact on the procurement of goods, services etc. will be undertaken in full liaison with the Procurement Service and in compliance with all necessary Council and statutory requirements.

19. Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

- 19.1 There are no adverse environmental or Health and Safety implications associated with the proposals.

20. Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

- 20.1 There are no adverse equality, community cohesion or crime implications associated with the proposals.

21. Equality Impact Assessment Completed

- 21.1 These are not required.

22. Key Decision

- 22.1 No.

23. Key Decision Reference

- 23.1 Not a Key Decision.

24. Background Papers

- 24.1 The following is a list of background papers on which this report is based in accordance with the requirements of Section 100(1) of the Local Government Act 1972. It does not include documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information as defined by the Act:

File Ref:	Background papers are contained in Appendices A and B
Officer Name:	Mark Stenson
Contact No:	0161 770 4783

25. Appendices

- 25.1 Appendix A: Summary Alternative Budget Proposals.
Appendix B: Business Cases for Alternative Budget Reduction Proposals.

Summary of Alternative Budget Proposals

Proposal Reference	Proposal Name	Responsible Officer	Budget Proposal 2020/21 £000	FTE Impact 2020/21	Budget Proposal 2021/22 £000	Cumulative Budget Impact £000	EIA Required?	Appendix B Page no.
Alternative Budget Investment Proposals								
A	New health centres in Shaw, Saddleworth and Chadderton to tackle the increasing health deprivation within the borough						No	N/A
B	Expedite the work around Green Energy and invest in solutions to address Climate change and to ensure carbon neutrality						No	N/A
C	Provide a specific fund to remediate brownfield sites to make areas available for development and protect valuable green space						No	N/A
D	Create a specific investment fund for the borough's footpaths and bring them up to standard						No	N/A
Total Revenue cost of Alternative Capital Programme			0	0.00	28	28		
	Provide a revenue fund to assist the Oldham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) work up detailed business cases for the proposed new health centres in Shaw, Chadderton and Saddleworth		750	0.00	0	750	No	N/A
	Reverse the Administration decision to reduce District Expenditure and continue investing in local priorities		120	0.00	0	120	No	N/A
	Reverse the Administration's reduction in Parish Council Grant funding		15	0.00	0	15	No	N/A
	Create a dedicated fund to replace and maintain signage across the borough and other road safety measures		100	0.00	0	100	No	N/A
	Increase the investment in tackling environmental crime to combat issues such as fly tipping and dog fouling across the Borough		571	14.00	276	847	No	N/A
	School Holiday food clubs		50	0.00	0	50	No	N/A
	Allocate a specific dedicated resource to fund the annual Saddleworth Band Contest		15	0.00	0	15	No	N/A
Total Budget Investment Proposals			1,621	14.00	304	1,925		

Proposal Reference	Proposal Name	Responsible Officer	Budget Proposal 2020/21 £000	FTE Impact 2020/21	Budget Proposal 2021/22 £000	Cumulative Budget Impact £000	EIA Required?	Appendix B Page no.
Alternative Budget Reduction Proposals								
OPP-BR1-201	Additional Vacancy Management factor to achieve greater efficiency including limiting the present use of agency staff and consultants	Corporate	(500)	0.00	(250)	(750)	No	2
OPP-BR1-202	Increase the Flexible use of capital receipts by revising the transformation programme to focus on the Opposition's priority areas	Corporate	(500)	0.00	0	(500)	No	6
OPP-BR1-203	Reduction in the amount of stationery purchased across the authority	Corporate	(2)	0.00	0	(2)	No	10
OPP-BR1-204	Reduce the number of meetings where refreshments are provided	Corporate	(4)	0.00	(4)	(8)	No	14
OPP-BR1-205	Reduce in travel budgets to ensure the most efficient method of transport is used for essential Council business	Corporate	(5)	0.00	0	(5)	No	18
OPP-BR1-206	Review of car allowances as previously promised to reduce the amount paid as a lump sum to staff doing zero or minimal mileage	Martyn Bramwell	(37)	0.00	(13)	(50)	No	22
OPP-BR1-207	Reduce the subsidisation of Trade Union support provided by the Council following a reduction in membership	Martyn Bramwell	(38)	(2.00)	(37)	(75)	No	26
OPP-BR1-208	Reduction in the General Training Budget agreed in 2018/19 to be made permanent	Martyn Bramwell / Julia Veall	(150)	0.00	0	(150)	No	31
OPP-BR1-209	Reconsideration of Council priorities with regards to the Marketing and Communications Service	Stuart Tarbuck	(275)	(6.00)	0	(275)	No	35
OPP-BR1-210	Utilise available digital platforms within Libraries to access newspapers and magazines rather than purchasing hardcopies	Sheena McFarlane	(10)	0.00	0	(10)	Yes	39
OPP-BR1-211	Increase income target with regard to Section 38 and Section 278 inspections within the Highways service	Craig Dale	(100)	0.00	0	(100)	No	43
Total Budget Reduction Suggestions			(1,621)	(8)	(304)	(1,925)		
Surplus Budget/Total FTE Impact			0.0	6.0	0.0	0		

Appendix B

Business Cases for Alternative Budget Reduction Proposals

BR1 - Section A

Service Area:	Corporate
Budget Reduction Title:	Additional Vacancy Management factor to achieve greater efficiency including limiting the present use of agency staff and consultants

Budget Reduction Proposal - Detail and Objectives:

For the 2019/20 budget, the Administration agreed to apply a vacancy factor at a rate of 1.5% (£0.800m saving) to all mainstream employee budgets based on the assumption that some posts would become vacant or would be held vacant during that financial year due to staff turnover.

To assist in reducing the number of agency staff and consultants used across the Council further, the Liberal Democrats propose that a further saving for 2020/21 should be applied at a rate of 1% to all Council mainstream employee budgets. This 1% vacancy management factor would generate a saving of £0.500m.

2019/20 Service Budget and Establishment	£000
Employees	56,694
Other Operational Expenses	0
Income	0
Total	56,694

Current Forecast (under) / overspend	0
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Number of posts (Full time equivalent)	0
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	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Proposed Budget Reduction (£000)	(500)	0	0
Proposed Staffing Reductions (FTE)	0	0	0

Is your proposal a 'one-off' in 2020/21 or is it ongoing?	Ongoing
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Section B

What impact does the proposal have on the following?

Property
None.
Service Delivery
There is no anticipated impact on service delivery. Service staffing budgets will be managed within available resources.
Future expected outcomes
None.
Organisation
There is no anticipated impact on the organisation. Service staffing budgets will be managed within available resources.
Workforce
None.
Communities / Service Users
None.
Oldham Cares
There is no anticipated impact on Oldham Cares apart from Council staffing budgets within Adult Social Care carrying and managing the vacancy factor.
Partner Organisations
None.

Who are the key stakeholders?

Staff	Yes
Elected Members	No
Residents	No
Local business community	No
Schools	No
Trade Unions	No
External partners (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other Council departments (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	

Benefits to the organisation/staff/customers including performance improvements

Potential reduction in the number of interim and agency staff used across the authority which may reduce expenditure.

Section C**Key Risks and Mitigations**

Risk	Mitigation
Service budgets will overspend in 2020/21 due to non-achievement of the vacancy management target.	There is an expectation that a percentage of posts will be vacant in year through natural turnover of staff, and that services through to directorates will manage recruitment and cover arrangements accordingly.
Individual budget areas with low staff turnover will fail to meet the vacancy target.	Information on the achievement of vacancy management targets will be made available at service and directorate level to allow a wider analysis of progress against targets and allow offsets between over and under achieving service / directorate areas.
N/A	N/A

Key Development and Delivery Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Vacancy management targets are calculated, and allocations communicated to service and budget managers.	February 2020
Vacancy management targets are reviewed in line with any organisation change prior to the commencement of the 2020/21 financial year.	November 2019 – February 2020
Vacancy management targets are applied to individual budgets prior to the commencement of the 2020/21 financial year.	March 2020
N/A	N/A

Section D

Consultation required?	No
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	Start	Conclusion
Staff	N/A	N/A
Trade Union	N/A	N/A
Public	N/A	N/A
Service Users	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

Equality Impact Screening

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following?

Disabled people	No
Particular Ethnic Groups	No
Men or Women (including impacts due to pregnancy / maternity)	No
People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
People of particular sexual orientation	No
People who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	No
People on low incomes	No
People in particular age groups	No
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	No

EIA required? (choose YES if any of the above impacts are YES)	No
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Section E

Finance comments
This proposal is a continuation of the Administrations agreed 2019/20 budget reduction which introduced a 1.5% Vacancy Factor across mainstream budgets within the organisation. Application of any Vacancy Factor carries risks of non-delivery and service overspend as detailed in Section C of this pro-forma and the higher the applied Vacancy Factor, the higher the associated risk to financial and service performance.

Signed RO	03/01/2020
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Signed Finance	03/01/2020
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BR1 - Section A

Service Area:	Corporate
Budget Reduction Title:	Increase the Flexible use of capital receipts by revising the transformation programme to focus on the Opposition's priority areas

Budget Reduction Proposal - Detail and Objectives:

In March 2016, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government issued Statutory Guidance that permitted Local Authorities to use capital receipts to fund the revenue costs of transformation for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019. This flexibility was then extended to 31 March 2022 as part of the 2018/19 Local Government Finance Settlement (LGFS).

For the 2019/20 budget, the Administration took advantage of this flexibility by funding transformational expenditure at a value of £3.000m.

As part of the budget process for 2020/21, the Administration are proposing to increase the use of capital receipts for revenue expenditure to £3.750m.

The Opposition suggest that this use can be extended further by £0.500m in 2020/21 and 2021/22 by re-prioritising revenue expenditure to deliver opposition transformational activities.

This will require the amendment of the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Policy appended to the Capital Strategy.

2019/20 Service Budget and Establishment	£000
Employees	N/A
Other Operational Expenses	N/A
Income	N/A
Total	N/A

Current Forecast (under) / overspend	N/A
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Number of posts (Full time equivalent)	N/A
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	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Proposed Budget Reduction (£000)	(500)	0	500
Proposed Staffing Reductions (FTE)	0	0	0

Is your proposal a 'one-off' in 2020/21 or is it ongoing?	One-off
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Section B

What impact does the proposal have on the following?

Property
None.
Service Delivery
None, however the refocusing of activities to reflect Opposition transformational priorities will need to be managed effectively.
Future expected outcomes
None.
Organisation
None.
Workforce
None.
Communities / Service Users
None.
Oldham Cares
None.
Partner Organisations
None.

Who are the key stakeholders?

Staff	No
Elected Members	Yes
Residents	No
Local business community	No
Schools	No
Trade Unions	No
External partners (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other Council departments (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	

Benefits to the organisation/staff/customers including performance improvements

Revenue saving realised by financing general fund expenditure by capital receipts up to March 2022 and the potential generation of long term transformational change, associated working arrangements and financial benefits.

Section C**Key Risks and Mitigations**

Risk	Mitigation
There is not enough expenditure incurred within 2020/21 which can be classified as leading to transformational change.	The Council has an ambitious transformational agenda which is led by the Strategic Design Authority (SDA). The SDA regularly monitor each scheme to ensure its on track and delivering the required objectives.
Not enough capital receipts are received in 2020/21.	Any capital receipts received in year will be firstly assigned to fund the transformational expenditure. In the event, that there were insufficient capital receipts, alternative sources of funding would be identified.
External Audit determine that expenditure incurred within year and funded by capital receipts does not meet Government requirements.	Consistent monitoring of expenditure assigned and outcomes achieved will be completed throughout the financial year to ensure requirements are satisfied.

Key Development and Delivery Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Transformational activity and expected outcomes are identified.	February 2020
Capital receipts received are assigned against transformational expenditure.	April 2020 – March 2021
Evaluation of outcomes achieved from funding transformation expenditure by capital receipts.	March – April 2021
N/A	N/A

Section D

Consultation required?	No	
	Start	Conclusion
Staff	N/A	N/A
Trade Union	N/A	N/A
Public	N/A	N/A
Service Users	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

Equality Impact Screening

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following?

Disabled people	No
Particular Ethnic Groups	No
Men or Women (including impacts due to pregnancy / maternity)	No
People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
People of particular sexual orientation	No
People who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	No
People on low incomes	No
People in particular age groups	No
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	No

EIA required? (choose YES if any of the above impacts are YES)	No
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Section E

Finance comments

The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts to fund relevant transformational expenditure has been allowed by MHCLG since 1 April 2016 and can be used by Local Authorities up to 31 March 2022. Only capital receipts received within the relevant financial year can be used.

Oldham Council used this flexibility to finance expenditure within the 2019/20 budget and is proposing to do the same for 2020/21.

This proposal to fund an additional £0.500m for two years can be achieved, but only if there is the planned expenditure which meets the Government's requirements and that also enough capital receipts can be generated within the financial year.

If insufficient capital receipts are generated, the Council would need to identify an alternative source of funding for this expenditure. Included within the Council's reserves policy for 2018/19 to 2019/20, there is provision included for such an eventuality.

Any use of this flexibility will be subject to stringent audit checks and can only be used to fund qualifying expenditure where outcomes can be evidenced.

Signed RO	02/01/2020
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Signed Finance	02/01/2020
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BR1 - Section A

Service Area:	Corporate
Budget Reduction Title:	Reduction in the amount of stationery purchased across the authority

Budget Reduction Proposal - Detail and Objectives:

The purchase of stationery is completed using the A1 financial system. This ensures that suppliers used are those where contracts have been agreed by the strategic sourcing team. However, rather than stationery being ordered centrally, it can be ordered by individual teams on an ad hoc basis which does not always ensure best value for money through economies of scale.

It is suggested that stationery, in particular locations across the borough, could be centralised i.e. at the Civic Centre. This would ensure that better value for money was being achieved through increased understanding of which items are required, volumes etc.

To enable the true cost of services to be shown, for accounting and cost unit purposes, an internal recharge system could be implemented which would recharge cost centres for stationery that is used from the centralised store.

However, it is appreciated that this would take some time to implement and therefore, the Liberal Democrats propose that for 2020/21, each mainstream stationery budget is reduced by 5%. This would enable teams to begin to look at their stationery needs more effectively and allow the Council to devise, communicate and implement a new way of working. This new way of working could generate further budgetary reductions for 2021/22 onwards however, at present, these are not yet known.

2019/20 Service Budget and Establishment	£000
Employees	N/A
Other Operational Expenses	39
Income	N/A
Total	39

Current Forecast (under) / overspend	0
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Number of posts (Full time equivalent)	N/A
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	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Proposed Budget Reduction (£000)	(2)	TBC	0
Proposed Staffing Reductions (FTE)	0	0	0

Is your proposal a 'one-off' in 2020/21 or is it ongoing?	Ongoing
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Section B

What impact does the proposal have on the following?

Property
There would need to be a central location within locations across the borough where provisions of stationery could be kept. This would need to be easily accessible and secure.
Service Delivery
None.
Future expected outcomes
Economies of scale would be generated which would generate financial savings through better procurement of goods.
Organisation
This would be a change to the way that staff procure stationery items, however items would still be available as and when required.
Workforce
There is the potential that the workforce would evaluate whether items were needed if they were required to go through a centralised point.
Communities / Service Users
None.
Oldham Cares
None.
Partner Organisations
None.

Who are the key stakeholders?

Staff	Yes
Elected Members	No
Residents	No
Local business community	No
Schools	No
Trade Unions	No
External partners (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other Council departments (if yes please specify below)	Yes
All Council departments	
Other (if yes please specify below)	Yes
Current suppliers of stationery items	

Benefits to the organisation/staff/customers including performance improvements

Financial savings would be realised by economies of scale but also through a potential reduction in stationery required.

Section C**Key Risks and Mitigations**

Risk	Mitigation
Staff continue to purchase stationery on a team basis rather than through the centralised point and therefore the required economies of scale would not be realised.	Communication of new process across the Council. Utilise A1 system to flag requisitions raised for stationery items.
Time taken to administer new scheme outweighs the financial benefit.	The new way of working would be discussed throughout 2020/21 to ensure that when implemented, it would not increase burden on any one service.
N/A	N/A

Key Development and Delivery Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Proposal presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee.	4 February 2020
Implementation of 5% reduction of 2020/21 mainstream stationery budgets.	1 April 2020
New way of working for centralised stationery identified and approved.	April 2020 – March 2021
Implementation of new centralised stationery way of working.	April 2021

Section D

Consultation required?	No
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	Start	Conclusion
Staff	N/A	N/A
Trade Union	N/A	N/A
Public	N/A	N/A
Service Users	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

Equality Impact Screening

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following?

Disabled people	No
Particular Ethnic Groups	No
Men or Women (including impacts due to pregnancy / maternity)	No
People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
People of particular sexual orientation	No
People who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	No
People on low incomes	No
People in particular age groups	No
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	No

EIA required? (choose YES if any of the above impacts are YES)	No
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Section E

Finance comments
The approval of this budget reduction proposal would reduce mainstream stationery budgets by £0.002m in 2020/21. Budgets for stationery are held across the Council and therefore this would be a cross cutting saving.

Signed RO	02/01/2020
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Signed Finance	02/01/2020
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BR1 - Section A

Service Area:	Corporate
Budget Reduction Title:	Reduce the number of meetings where refreshments are provided

Budget Reduction Proposal - Detail and Objectives:

Several meetings take place every day across the Council and refreshments are provided on a regular basis. It is suggested that not all of these meetings require refreshments to be provided and as such, the Liberal Democrats propose to reduce the refreshment and hospitality mainstream budgets by 10% for 2020/21 with a further 10% reduction in 2021/22.

2019/20 Service Budget and Establishment

	£000
Employees	0
Other Operational Expenses	45
Income	0
Total	45

Current Forecast (under) / overspend

	0
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Number of posts (Full time equivalent)

	0
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	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Proposed Budget Reduction (£000)	(4)	(4)	0
Proposed Staffing Reductions (FTE)	0	0	0

Is your proposal a 'one-off' in 2020/21 or is it ongoing?

	Ongoing
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Section B

What impact does the proposal have on the following?

Property
None.
Service Delivery
None.
Future expected outcomes
Reduction in Council spending on refreshments and hospitality.
Organisation
More meetings will be held where refreshments will not be provided.
Workforce
None.
Communities / Service Users
None.
Oldham Cares
None.
Partner Organisations
None.

Who are the key stakeholders?

Staff	Yes
Elected Members	Yes
Residents	No
Local business community	Yes
Schools	No
Trade Unions	No
External partners (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other Council departments (if yes please specify below)	Yes
All Council departments	
Other (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	

Benefits to the organisation/staff/customers including performance improvements

Financial benefit realised due to a reduction in Council spending on refreshments and hospitality.

Section C**Key Risks and Mitigations**

Risk	Mitigation
External meeting attendees still expect refreshments to be provided.	Clear communication plan will be implemented to indicate the revised policy, and an alternative of water will be available for those who need it.
Employees continue to order refreshments for meetings.	Communication of new process across the Council. Utilise A1 system to flag requisitions raised for refreshment and hospitality.
N/A	N/A

Key Development and Delivery Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Proposal presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee.	4 February 2020
Implementation of 10% reduction of 2020/21 mainstream refreshment and hospitality budgets.	1 April 2020
N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A

Section D

Consultation required?	No
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	Start	Conclusion
Staff	N/A	N/A
Trade Union	N/A	N/A
Public	N/A	N/A
Service Users	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

Equality Impact Screening

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following?

Disabled people	No
Particular Ethnic Groups	No
Men or Women (including impacts due to pregnancy / maternity)	No
People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
People of particular sexual orientation	No
People who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	No
People on low incomes	No
People in particular age groups	No
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	No

EIA required? (choose YES if any of the above impacts are YES)	No
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Section E

Finance comments
This budget reduction proposal to reduce mainstream catering and hospitality budgets by 10% per annum would generate circa £0.004m in 2020/21 with an additional £0.004m in 2021/22. There is a risk that services would continue to provide refreshments at meetings however, this would be kept under review with services required to fund any associated costs incurred from within their cash envelope. Budgets for catering and hospitality are held across the Council and therefore this would be a cross cutting saving.

Signed RO	02/01/2020
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Signed Finance	02/01/2020
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BR1 - Section A

Service Area:	Corporate
Budget Reduction Title:	Reduce in travel budgets to ensure the most efficient method of transport is used for essential Council business

Budget Reduction Proposal - Detail and Objectives:

In April 2018, the Council received a Freedom of Information (FOI) request asking for details of all flights paid for by the Council within the period 1 January 2015 and 31 March 2018. Within this period Oldham Council reported a number of flights to differing destinations domestically and beyond. A significant number of these flights were funded by external sources however some costs were incurred by the Council's own funds and so there is scope to reduce the impact on Council mainstream funding.

By ensuring that the most efficient and cost effective method for travel is used, it is proposed to reduce travel expenditure budgets by £0.005m in 2020/21. Travel budgets are held across the organisation and therefore this reduction would be cross cutting.

2019/20 Service Budget and Establishment	£000
Employees	0
Other Operational Expenses	69
Income	0
Total	69

Current Forecast (under) / overspend	0
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Number of posts (Full time equivalent)	0
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	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Proposed Budget Reduction (£000)	(5)	0	0
Proposed Staffing Reductions (FTE)	0	0	0

Is your proposal a 'one-off' in 2020/21 or is it ongoing?	Ongoing
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Section B

What impact does the proposal have on the following?

Property
None.
Service Delivery
None.
Future expected outcomes
Most efficient use of transport is used for Council business.
Organisation
None.
Workforce
None.
Communities / Service Users
None.
Oldham Cares
None.
Partner Organisations
None.

Who are the key stakeholders?

Staff	Yes
Elected Members	No
Residents	No
Local business community	No
Schools	No
Trade Unions	No
External partners (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other Council departments (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	

Benefits to the organisation/staff/customers including performance improvements

Most efficient use of transport is used for Council business which will generate financial efficiencies for the Council whilst also reducing carbon emissions.

Section C**Key Risks and Mitigations**

Risk	Mitigation
Employees continue to book travel arrangements including flights which may not be the most cost effective.	Staff communication through Departmental Management Teams to ensure most cost effective and efficient transport solution is used. Exception reporting to be developed to identify any areas of non-compliance. Details of any such instances will be reported back to Senior Officers.
N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A

Key Development and Delivery Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Proposal presented to Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee.	4 February 2020
Implementation of proposal.	April 2020
N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A

Section D

Consultation required?	No
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	Start	Conclusion
Staff	N/A	N/A
Trade Union	N/A	N/A
Public	N/A	N/A
Service Users	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

Equality Impact Screening

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following?

Disabled people	No
Particular Ethnic Groups	No
Men or Women (including impacts due to pregnancy / maternity)	No
People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
People of particular sexual orientation	No
People who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	No
People on low incomes	No
People in particular age groups	No
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	No

EIA required? (choose YES if any of the above impacts are YES)	No
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Section E

Finance comments
The approval of this budget reduction proposal would reduce travel budgets by £0.005m. Budgets for travel are held across the Council and therefore this would be a cross cutting saving.

Signed RO	17/01/2020
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Signed Finance	17/01/2020
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BR1 - Section A

Service Area:	People Services
Budget Reduction Title:	Review of car allowances as previously promised to reduce the amount paid as a lump sum to staff doing zero or minimal mileage

Budget Reduction Proposal - Detail and Objectives:

A lump sum car allowance of £500 is paid annually to essential car users.

The Council paid a car allowance to 557 members of staff in the year (including leavers and thus a pro rata allowance for part of the year), and for the period April 2019 to Sept 2019 638 members of staff have received the allowance (again including pro rata for leavers).

Analysis of the data shows that in 2018/19 46% of those individuals in receipt of Essential Car Allowance recorded zero miles in their role with 57% claiming less than 100 miles.

For the period April 2019 to September 2019 58% of recipients (369 individuals) have recorded zero miles and 70% (446 individuals) have recorded less than 100 miles. It should be noted that anecdotal evidence suggests that officers do not always claim mileage refunds, particularly where the value is low.

The Liberal Democrats have proposed generating circa £0.050m saving by reducing the number of posts that attract an essential car user payment. A saving of £0.050m would equate to removal of allowance from circa 100 employees.

Due to consultation requirements, only a part year reduction of £0.037m would be generated in 2020/21 with an additional saving of £0.013m in 2021/22.

There is a local agreement with Trades Unions regarding the assessment of entitlement and application of the Car Allowance Scheme. The scheme comprises a series of factors, including mileage, and allocates points per factor. Consultation with Trades Unions and Individuals would need to take place before staff terms and conditions could be amended.

2019/20 Service Budget and Establishment	£000
Employees	0
Other Operational Expenses	350
Income	0
Total	350

Current Forecast (under) / overspend	0
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Number of posts (Full time equivalent)	0
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	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Proposed Budget Reduction (£000)	(37)	(13)	-
Proposed Staffing Reductions (FTE)	-	-	-

Is your proposal a 'one-off' in 2020/21 or is it ongoing?	Ongoing
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Section B

What impact does the proposal have on the following?

Property
As Essential user status bestows free parking on Council property, budget is provided to the Property Team. Removal of Essential user status would lead to a reduction in the Property Team budget.
Service Delivery
Employees may refuse to use their own vehicles to complete their duties which may result in service delay, especially in the areas of social care.
Future expected outcomes
Potential to increase travel costs associated with other methods e.g. taxi, public transport.
Organisation
None.
Workforce
Certain individuals will have Car Allowance removed. Car parking costs would also increase for those individuals who are reclassified from Essential Users.
Communities / Service Users
Potential for delays in receiving support in certain areas, e.g. social care.
Oldham Cares
None.
Partner Organisations
None.

Who are the key stakeholders?

Staff	Yes
Elected Members	No
Residents	No
Local business community	No
Schools	No
Trade Unions	Yes
External partners (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other Council departments (if yes please specify below)	Yes
People and Place - Property	
Other (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	

Benefits to the organisation/staff/customers including performance improvements

Achievement of budget reduction resulting in less pressure to make a saving elsewhere.

Section C

Key Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
The allowance may be taken from users who travel a significant number of miles but have not claimed them in the past.	Communicate to claimants the requirement to claim mileage on a regular basis.
Where allowance is removed there may be an increase in costs associated with other modes of transport, e.g. taxis, public transport.	None.
There is a requirement to undertake appropriate consultation and seek agreement from Trades Unions.	Excellent working relationships with Trades Unions should facilitate and appropriate agreement.

Key Development and Delivery Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Communicate to all staff the requirement to claim mileage in a timely manner.	February - March 2020
Communicate the intention to remove Car allowance from all zero mileage claimants.	March 2020
Consult with affected employees.	April – May 2020
Remove Car Allowance from all recipients who have claimed zero mileage in the preceding year.	June 2020

Section D

Consultation required?	Yes
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	Start	Conclusion
Staff	April 2020	May 2020
Trade Union	March 2020	May 2020
Public	N/A	N/A
Service Users	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

Equality Impact Screening

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following?

Disabled people	N/A
Particular Ethnic Groups	N/A
Men or Women (including impacts due to pregnancy / maternity)	N/A
People who are married or in a civil partnership	N/A
People of particular sexual orientation	N/A
People who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	N/A
People on low incomes	N/A
People in particular age groups	N/A
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	N/A

EIA required? (choose YES if any of the above impacts are YES)	N/A
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Section E

Finance comments
The reduction in the number of essential users for car allowances by 100 employees could generate a saving of £0.050m (phased over 2020/21 and 2021/22). The achievement of this budget reduction will be reliant on successful negotiation with Trades Unions and the management of any consequences such as additional alternative travel arrangements.

Signed RO	21/11/2019
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Signed Finance	10/01/2020
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BR1 - Section A

Service Area:	People Services
Budget Reduction Title:	Reduce the subsidisation of Trade Union Facility Time

Budget Reduction Proposal - Detail and Objectives:

The Council, in accordance with the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service, recognises 3 unions for Local Government Services employees as follow:

- Unison 2.89 FTE
- GMB 0.8 FTE
- Unite 0.4 FTE

Oldham Council supports the system of collective bargaining and the principle of solving employee relations problems by discussion and agreement before they escalate and to facilitate the conduct of joint business. The role of the unions is therefore to work with the employer to represent and protect the interests of their members by:

- Negotiating agreements with the Council on changes to conditions of service or other contractual provisions;
- Representing the workforce in consultation on changes which impact on their members or that represent major changes to the workplace such as large-scale restructure or working practices;
- Supporting members to discuss their concerns with the Council;
- Accompanying their members in disciplinary and grievance meetings; and
- Providing access to legal and financial advice and other support functions.

The Council seeks to provide for time off and facilities within the statutory framework provided by of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, and the ACAS Code of Practice 'Time off for Trade Union Duties and Activities'. The Liberal Democrats are proposing the Council reduces it subsidisation of trade union support following a reduction in membership. This would result in a reduction of approximately 50% to the base budget resulting in a total saving £0.075m which, due to the consultation required, would be achieved over 2 financial years.

In addition, the Liberal Democrats propose a review is undertaken to ensure the Council subsidy of trade union time and facilities is in line with that of neighbouring boroughs.

2019/20 Service Budget and Establishment	£000
Employees	127
Other Operational Expenses	51
Income	(23)
Total	155
Current Forecast (under) / overspend	0
Number of posts (Full time equivalent)	3.30

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Proposed Budget Reduction (£000)	(38)	(37)	-
Proposed Staffing Reductions (FTE)	(1.65)	-	-

Is your proposal a 'one-off' in 2020/21 or is it ongoing?	Ongoing
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Section B

What impact does the proposal have on the following?

Property
Potential impact on provision of office facilities within Manchester Chambers for UNISON and rent collection for this property.
Service Delivery
Potential effective use of management time and ability to conduct meetings and hearings due to non-availability of union representation.
Future expected outcomes
Loss of goodwill and excellent industrial relations history. Movement of trade union activity from local to regional level. Loss of trust and confidence among the workforce where unions are not fully involved.
Organisation
Delays in work and projects requiring (or where best practice dictates) working with, consulting or negotiating with the trades unions.
Workforce
Potential reduction in employee capacity arising from the requirement to engage the workforce directly in matters normally subject to trades union engagement. Frustration from employees unable to access statutory right to representation and delays to dealing with any matters.
Communities
Delay in the delivery of change or other cost saving activities
Service Users
Delay in the delivery of change or other cost saving activities
Partner Organisations
Where unions represent employees working within or in partnership with our partners– similar implications to those identified for Oldham Council. Oldham Council employees are not fully or properly represented in change that affects them and which is instigated within partner organisations.

Who are the key stakeholders?

Staff	Yes
Elected Members	Yes
Residents	No
Local business community	No
Schools	Yes
Trade Unions	Yes
External partners (if yes please specify below)	No

Other Council departments (if yes please specify below)	Yes
All	
Other (if yes please specify below)	Yes
Oldham Cares, Mio Care Group, Unity, Oldham Schools, Academies (who buy back)	

Benefits to the organisation/staff/customers including performance improvements
Reduction in cost.

Section C

Key Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
Delay in the ability of management to arrange and undertake meetings requiring statutory or policy trade union presence in a timely manner or having no continuity of attendees.	Seek greater involvement from Regional / National Officers. Increase recruitment of directorate stewards to undertake role within working time although previous attempts yielded little success. Lengthen consultation periods / development of new initiatives deadlines to allow for limited availability of local representatives.
TU lack of capacity to be able to support and properly represent their members especially given the Transformation Programme within the Council, Greater Manchester devolution, Health Integration Programme, change within Children's services and the significant levels of change anticipated within the Council over the next 12 - 24 months.	Seek greater involvement from Regional / National Officers. Increase recruitment of directorate stewards to undertake role within working time.
Inability of the organisation to comply with statutory, national or local policy requirements regarding negotiation, consultation and representation which will increase the risk of successful challenge, litigation and significant cost.	Seek greater involvement from Regional / National Officers for corporate initiatives. Increase recruitment of directorate stewards to undertake role within working time. Increase in employee direct engagement.
Confusion with the Councils own Fair Employment Charter which honours the right of every employee to be an active member of a recognised trade union without fear of discrimination or reprisal.	Be clear with employees where they are able to access alternative representation outside of the Council.
Movement away from local representation and engagement with reliance on Union own professional Regional Officers. Significant time delays due to lack of availability together with loss of knowledgeable local representation who understand the context, history and operational positions within Oldham.	Retain the recognition agreement and sufficient reasonable and benchmarked facility time.
Reduction in capacity efficiencies gained from collective bargaining. Decline in current constructive industrial relations working partnership and increase in disputes and escalation of industrial action	Retain the recognition agreement and sufficient and benchmarked facility time.

Key Development and Delivery Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Complete review of Employment decision making mechanisms in conjunction with Constitutional Services	February 2020
Consult trades union on proposals	February 2020
Review Membership amongst current workforce and update TU figures	April 2020
Benchmark facility time against results from 2018/19 statutory return (once published).	April 2020
(Submission of statutory trade union statistics return to government site under the Trade Union Facility Time Publication Requirements Regs 2017)	(By 31 July 2020)
Open consultation with the trades unions on any change proposals resulting from change to mechanisms and the normal bi - annual review.	April 2020
Internal sign off process.	June 2020
Submission to relevant committee for sign off.	July 2020

Section D

Consultation required?	Yes
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	Start	Conclusion
Staff	N/A	N/A
Trade Union	Feb 2020	June 2020
Public	N/A	N/A
Service Users	N/A	N/A
Other – schools /partners	April 2020	June 2020

Equality Impact Screening

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following?

Disabled people	No
Particular Ethnic Groups	No
Men or Women (including impacts due to pregnancy / maternity)	No
People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
People of particular sexual orientation	No

People who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	No
People on low incomes	No
People in particular age groups	No
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	No

EIA required? (choose YES if any of the above impacts are YES)	No
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Section E

Finance comments
The successful delivery of this budget reduction proposal will require successful negotiation with Trades Union representatives. There will be the requirement for careful management of consequences such as staff / managers spending time on staffing matters that Trades Union representatives would otherwise have undertaken, leading to increased costs. This will therefore require close financial monitoring.

Signed RO	22/10/2019
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Signed Finance	10/01/2020
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Additional information (if required)
<p>The facility time was initially due to be reviewed by the end of 2019. However due to the wider constitutional review of the overall workforce and trade union decision making this has been delayed until the outcome is known due to the potential impact on the “way we do business.”</p> <p>A review of trades union membership numbers has taken place, and this indicates that membership numbers have held firm since the 2017 review, although the number of employees making a deduction for payroll services has decreased significantly since April 2016.</p> <p>The statutory return submitted under the Trade Union Facility Time Publication Requirements Regs 2017 for 2017/18 indicated that Oldham was in line with other AGMA Councils. The data for 2018/19 has yet to be published. Submissions were required by the 31 July 2019, but this deadline was extended due to non-compliance/non submission by some organisations. Oldham submitted its return on the 24 June 2019 which compared favourably with the previous year.</p>

BR1 - Section A

Service Area:	People Services
Budget Reduction Title:	Reduction in the General Training Budget agreed in 2018/19 to be made permanent

Budget Reduction Proposal - Detail and Objectives:

The general training budget for 2020/21 is £0.555m.

For 2018/2019 a 'one off' reduction of £0.150m was proposed and implemented by the Administration and was subsequently reversed in 2019/20.

The Liberal Democrats once again propose to make this mainstream reduction permanent from 2020/21 by utilising the apprenticeship levy wherever possible. The net effect would be to reduce the general training budget to £0.405m annually.

From 2017/18, all employers with an annual pay bill of more than £3.000m are required to pay an apprenticeship levy. The levy is payable at 0.5% of the total pay bill. Oldham Council pays this levy to HMRC who hold the monies in a digital fund. These monies are available for 2 years from the date of payment with any unspent funds being retained by HMRC.

The apprenticeship levy pays for apprenticeship training and assessment for apprentices that work at least 50% of the time in England, and only up to the funding band maximum for that apprenticeship. There are several approved providers and courses which can be assessed through this levy.

The proposed reduction would require all future training requirements, which are not able to be funded via the apprenticeship levy, to be reviewed to ensure that best value is being secured. Priority would be provided to statutory and mandatory training. Any additional training and development would be assessed on the basis of value provided to the organisation, managing any identified risks to the Council in terms of building capability across all service areas.

2019/20 Service Budget and Establishment	£000
Employees	N/A
Other Operational Expenses	555
Income	N/A
Total	555

Current Forecast (under) / overspend	0
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Number of posts (Full time equivalent)	N/A
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	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Proposed Budget Reduction (£000)	(150)	0	0
Proposed Staffing Reductions (FTE)	0	0	0

Is your proposal a 'one-off' in 2020/21 or is it ongoing?	Ongoing
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Section B

What impact does the proposal have on the following?

Property
None.
Service Delivery
The Council and its partners are delivering and developing a major programme of work to ensure public services are sustainable in a continuing challenging environment caused by austerity, digital changes and other pressures. This means that the Council has been developing a Strategy for the workforce which will ensure it can proactively manage these challenges and help ensure it retains, attracts and develops staff as needs be. There is a need to ensure the right training and development tools and techniques are in place to support existing and new staff and whilst this is still being developed there is a clear need from across the Council that it needs to have a robust training programme to help it through the next 2-3 years. This programme will need to cover a range of service specific and corporate needs but will be critical to the Council's overall effectiveness and ability to retain and attract the staff it needs.
The age profile of the Council's workforce and the need to ensure it has a more robust approach to creating training opportunities for younger staff will also be critical.
Future expected outcomes
The proposal means, there could be less development of employees which would impact on organisational and individual capability and effectiveness. The reduction in budget could impact the delivery of key organisational priorities such as transformation activity and integration across the wider public service system.
Organisation
Priority would be provided to statutory and mandatory training. Any additional training and development would be assessed based upon corporate priorities.
Workforce
Reduced investment in the development of employees will have an impact on both individuals and the wider organisation. The reduction in development activity may increase levels of employee turnover and reduce the ability to attract new talent, especially in hard to fill roles and those where the Council needs to grow new skillsets.
Communities / Service Users
About 70% of the Council's staff are Oldham residents and so are service users and ambassadors as well as employees. If staff feel undervalued or unsupported, they may look for other jobs outside the Borough and/or become less productive.
Oldham Cares
The investment in workforce is being treated as a system wide issue and so the Council's approach is likely to have a knock-on impact and affect the investment and commitment that our partners in the Oldham Cares space feel they need to make.
Partner Organisations
Similar issues to those mentioned under the Oldham Cares paragraph.

Who are the key stakeholders?

Staff	Yes
Elected Members	Yes
Residents	Yes, in part
Local business community	Yes
Schools	No
Trade Unions	Yes

External partners (if yes please specify below)	Yes
Any training providers the Council currently use	
Other Council departments (if yes please specify below)	Yes
All	
Other (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Benefits to the organisation/staff/customers including performance improvements	
A £0.150m contribution to the achievement of the 2020/21 budget reduction target and the achievement of improved value by driving down supplier costs and/or demand. A greater focus on internal training delivery and self-directed learning will also be adopted.	

Section C

Key Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
General training provision will reduce, limiting the development of employees.	Focused management in procuring/ scoping and delivery of training and development activity, investment in resource to enable Internal training delivery / capacity, expansion and promotion of self-directed learning methods.
There will be insufficient development budget to enable the successful delivery of organisational transformation and modernisation within the timetable and ambition set out.	Exploring possible (temporary) investment from other external sources such as the transformation programme and possibly increased internal training delivery / self-directed learning methods.
There will be insufficient development budget to fund the development activity stemming from the new Workforce strategy, which will be based on widespread consultation and analysis of need.	Focused management in procuring/ scoping and delivery of training and development activity, investment in resource to enable Internal training delivery / capacity, expansion and promotion of self-directed learning methods.

Key Development and Delivery Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Proposal presented to Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee.	4 February 2020
Implementation.	1 April 2020
N/A	N/A

N/A	N/A
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Section D

Consultation required?	No
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	Start	Conclusion
Staff	N/A	N/A
Trade Union	N/A	N/A
Public	N/A	N/A
Service Users	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

Equality Impact Screening

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following?

Disabled people	No
Particular Ethnic Groups	No
Men or Women (including impacts due to pregnancy / maternity)	No
People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
People of particular sexual orientation	No
People who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	No
People on low incomes	No
People in particular age groups	No
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	No

EIA required? (choose YES if any of the above impacts are YES)	No
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Section E

Finance comments

This proposal would create an ongoing saving of £0.150m from the central training budget from 2020/21. However, the prioritisation of statutory and mandatory training through the Development Academy may encourage services to source additional training requirements from service budgets with the potential of creating pressures in these areas.

Signed RO	10/01/2020
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Signed Finance	02/01/2020
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BR1 - Section A

Service Area:	Communications and Research
Budget Reduction Title:	Reconsideration of Council priorities with regards to the Communications and Research service

Budget Reduction Proposal - Detail and Objectives:

The Communication team's role is to ensure that information and key messaging about Council services, decisions and campaigns are equally accessible to all of the borough's residents, our staff and our partners. Oldham Council has a centralised Communications and Research team with staff delivering digital, design internal communications, media relations, marketing and social media content creation with business partner support to each directorate.

As more information moves online and residents become increasingly technologically advanced the need to produce hard copy publications reduces. As such the Liberal Democrats propose to reduce the service budget for the Communications and Research team by £0.275m in 2020/21.

This reduction in 2020/21 would be met by generating £0.270m through ceasing the publication of the Borough Life Magazine, reducing the number of Communication Managers from 4 to 3 by deleting 1 vacant post, deleting 1 vacant Digital Services Officer post, deleting 2 vacant Communications Officer posts and 2 vacant Research, Engagement and Consultation Officer posts.

Alongside the above reductions, it is proposed to generate income of circa £0.005m by selling advertising on the Council's website similar to that which is done in a neighbouring authority.

2019/20 Service Budget and Establishment	£000
Employees	791
Other Operational Expenses	99
Income	(135)
Total	755
Current Forecast (under) / overspend	98
Number of posts (Full time equivalent)	19

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Proposed Budget Reduction (£000)	(275)	0	0
Proposed Staffing Reductions (FTE)	(6)	0	0

Is your proposal a 'one-off' in 2020/21 or is it ongoing?	Ongoing
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Section B

What impact does the proposal have on the following?

Property
None.
Service Delivery
The service is currently being restructured to be smaller and more effective. This process will make planned for savings of £1/2m from 2019 to 2021. Making further additional savings of approximately 1/3rd from the remaining budget in 2020/21, ahead of the current restructure being complete, and current savings taken, would be complex.
Future expected outcomes
Adding additional savings onto already a significant savings programme would potentially destabilise the services ability to deliver effective comms.
Organisation
Significant reduction in staff communications would lead to the organisation as a whole being less informed and less able to be effective ambassadors who understand our values and behaviours, plus our aims and objectives for the borough. This would also make leadership more difficult.
Workforce
The workforce are currently undergoing review, some only newly appointed. Reducing the service significantly so soon could risk a churn in newly appointed staff.
Communities / Service Users
Reduced communications activity – including social media – would leave residents less well informed about what the Council provides, including benefit and housing advice.
Oldham Cares
Significant reduction in communications advice to core council activities would occur - such as promoting economic regeneration or supporting the transformation of health and social care. This provides real risks for the council to deliver on its outcomes.
Partner Organisations
Reduced partner communications – would leave partners unclear of the role of the Council on key partnership projects such as Oldham Cares.

Who are the key stakeholders?

Staff	Yes
Elected Members	Yes
Residents	Yes
Local business community	Yes
Schools	Yes
Trade Unions	Yes
External partners (if yes please specify below)	Yes
All i.e. Oldham Cares	
Other Council departments (if yes please specify below)	Yes
All	
Other (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	

Benefits to the organisation/staff/customers including performance improvements
A budget reduction of £0.275m for 2020/21.

Section C

Key Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
The Communications and Research team will be unable to meet demand.	Priorities would have to be reviewed and activity reduced simply to support statutory services.
Proactive communications would be vastly reduced.	A tightly-defined and agreed set of core priorities would have to be agreed across the organisation with an acceptance that many existing communications activities would cease.
A reduction in communication opportunities could lead to some areas delivering their own messaging.	Utilise Business Partner relationships and other avenues for communication within the organisation or partners.

Key Development and Delivery Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Proposal presented to Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee.	4 February 2020
Staff and Trades Union consultations.	February – March 2020
Implementation of proposal.	April 2020
N/A	N/A

Section D

Consultation required?	Yes
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	Start	Conclusion
Staff	Feb 2020	March 2020
Trade Union	Feb 2020	March 2020
Public	N/A	N/A
Service Users	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

Equality Impact Screening

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following?

Disabled people	No
Particular Ethnic Groups	No
Men or Women (including impacts due to pregnancy / maternity)	No
People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
People of particular sexual orientation	No
People who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	No
People on low incomes	No
People in particular age groups	No
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	No

EIA required? (choose YES if any of the above impacts are YES)	No
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Section E

Finance comments
This option would result in a reduction of 6 posts within the Communications and Research service and the cessation of the Borough Life publication, which would generate a saving of £0.270m in a full financial year. There is also an additional proposal to generate additional income estimated at £0.005m per annum and therefore the total budget reduction would be £0.275m.

Signed RO	22/01/2020
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Signed Finance	22/01/2020
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BR1 - Section A

Service Area:	Heritage, Libraries and Arts
Budget Reduction Title:	Utilise available digital platforms within Libraries to access newspapers and magazines rather than purchasing hardcopies

Budget Reduction Proposal - Detail and Objectives:

Across the Library service, hard copies of newspapers and magazines are purchased and made available for visitors to read. The average cost per annum spent on this type of expenditure is circa £0.018m.

As newspapers and magazines are widely available using an online platform, the Liberal Democrats suggest that the budgetary provision for this can be reduced by £0.010m, with the remaining budget of £0.008m being used to fund any online subscriptions necessary or buy those publications that are not available digitally. It is also suggested that an assessment of the actual use of any hardcopy newspapers or magazines (not available online) is undertaken during 2020/21 with a view to reduce the budget further in future years.

2019/20 Service Budget and Establishment	£000
Employees	1,561
Other Operational Expenses	1,169
Income	(308)
Total	2,422

Current Forecast (under) / overspend	27
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Number of posts (Full time equivalent)	53.48
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	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Proposed Budget Reduction (£000)	(10)	0	0
Proposed Staffing Reductions (FTE)	0	0	0

Is your proposal a 'one-off' in 2020/21 or is it ongoing?	Ongoing
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Section B

What impact does the proposal have on the following?

Property
None.
Service Delivery
<p>The proposal would reduce the scope and quality of Library services and would likely result in a drop in visitor and issue figures. Hard copy subscriptions have been reduced over the last two years and savings used to meet general savings targets and increase the provision and scope of online resources. E-magazine downloads have increased from 5,184 in 2017/18 to 15,429 in 2018/19. Any savings made on reducing physical copies of magazines needs to be re-directed to digital resources in order to meet demand.</p> <p>Some library services that have removed physical copies of newspapers and magazines and are instead investing in loanable tablets which have the digital newspapers loaded on. This avoids the need for the customer to book a computer session or wait for an available computer in order to view the newspaper but would require capital investment for equipment.</p> <p>Demand for e-books is also increasing. The budget available to purchase books, which is also used to purchase e-books, has been reduced from £262k to £98k over the last four years, significantly reducing our capacity to meet demand. This adds additional pressure on the service to retain a decent selection of physical and digital stock to encourage customers to use the library service.</p>
Future expected outcomes
The way in which a number of newspapers and magazines are made available will change.
Organisation
None.
Workforce
None.
Communities / Service Users
<p>Visitors to libraries across the borough will be required to access some newspapers and magazines using the digital platforms available with the library.</p> <p>Libraries are important social spaces. The proposal could isolate older people who may stop using the service as they may not have the skills or enjoy the experience of reading a digital newspaper.</p>
Oldham Cares
None.
Partner Organisations
None.

Who are the key stakeholders?

Staff	Yes
Elected Members	No
Residents	Yes
Local business community	Yes
Schools	No
Trade Unions	No
External partners (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other Council departments (if yes please specify below)	No

N/A	
Other (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Benefits to the organisation/staff/customers including performance improvements	
Utilising the digital platforms already available within the libraries will enable a budget reduction to be realised.	

Section C

Key Risks and Mitigations

Risk	Mitigation
The number of publications available digitally is less than anticipated.	A full review of all newspapers and magazines currently purchased will be undertaken to assess if it is required / used with those publications that are not available digitally to be reviewed first.
Service users are not familiar with how to access the publications using a digital platform.	Library staff will be on hand to help service users access the publications. This change will also be communicated to library users in advance of the start date.
People at risk of social isolation lose their reason for visiting the library.	Investment is made in recruiting digital champions to identify and support isolated or vulnerable users with accessing newspapers online via computer or tablet.
Reduction in KPIs e.g. library issues and visits.	Awareness campaign, digital support and investment in pre-loaded tablets.

Key Development and Delivery Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Proposal presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee.	4 February 2020
Review of current purchases of hard copy newspapers and magazines is undertaken to ascertain those which will require an online subscription.	February – March 2020
Online subscriptions purchased for those publications where this is required.	April 2020
Review of all purchased newspapers and magazines for libraries to ascertain if they are used and therefore still required.	Throughout 2020/21

Section D

Consultation required?	Yes
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	Start	Conclusion
Staff	N/A	N/A
Trade Union	N/A	N/A
Public	N/A	N/A
Service Users	Feb 2020	March 2020
Other	N/A	N/A

Equality Impact Screening

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following?

Disabled people	Yes
Particular Ethnic Groups	No
Men or Women (including impacts due to pregnancy / maternity)	No
People who are married or in a civil partnership	No
People of particular sexual orientation	No
People who are proposing to undergo, undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	No
People on low incomes	No
People in particular age groups	Yes
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	No

EIA required? (choose YES if any of the above impacts are YES)	Yes
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Section E

Finance comments
<p>In 2018/19 the library service purchased £0.016m worth of Newspapers, Magazines and Periodicals and made this available to all visitors to use when accessing the library. In financial year 2019/20 the current budget is £0.021m, however the forecast is expected to be £0.018m which is a 13% increase on last year's actual spend.</p> <p>The £0.010m budget reduction would result in a budget of £0.011m left available to cover all subscriptions and purchasing publications that are not available digitally.</p>

Signed RO	10/01/2020
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Signed Finance	03/01/2020
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BR1 - Section A

Service Area:	Highways
Budget Reduction Title:	Increase income target with regard to Section 38 and Section 278 inspections within the Highways service

Budget Reduction Proposal - Detail and Objectives:

When planning consent has been granted for a new development, developers may ask the Local Authority to “adopt” new roads that have been constructed along with any associated infrastructure such as drains and lighting. Under **Section 38** of the Highways Act 1980, the Local Authority can charge a fee which covers items such as:

- Checking designs
- Preparing agreements
- Inspecting works
- Maintenance
- Bond for works

Under **Section 278** of the Highways Act 1980, Local Authorities are also able to charge for items such as:

- New access into the development site
- New signalised pedestrian crossing or improvements to existing junctions close to the site

As detailed within the Administration’s revenue budget monitoring reports, income generated for these areas have been over achieving over a number of financial years. The Opposition therefore propose to increase the income target for this type of fee by £0.100m from 2020/21 onwards. This increase will require rigorous budget control from the other services within the Directorate as this over achievement of income would no longer available to offset any in year pressures.

2019/20 Service Budget and Establishment	£000
Employees	0
Other Operational Expenses	310
Income	(207)
Total	103

Current Forecast (under) / overspend	(2)
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Number of posts (Full time equivalent)	Nil
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	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Proposed Budget Reduction (£000)	(100)	0	0
Proposed Staffing Reductions (FTE)	0	0	0

Is your proposal a 'one-off' in 2020/21 or is it ongoing?	Ongoing
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Section B

What impact does the proposal have on the following?

Property
None.
Service Delivery
None.
Future expected outcomes
Increased income target for the Council.
Organisation
None.
Workforce
None.
Communities / Service Users
None.
Oldham Cares
None.
Partner Organisations
None.

Who are the key stakeholders?

Staff	No
Elected Members	Yes
Residents	No
Local business community	Yes
Schools	No
Trade Unions	No
External partners (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other Council departments (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	
Other (if yes please specify below)	No
N/A	

Benefits to the organisation/staff/customers including performance improvements

Increase income target for the Council.

Section C**Key Risks and Mitigations**

Risk	Mitigation
The level of income generated is lower than that which has previously been achieved.	Continual budget monitoring throughout the year in line with the agreed reporting cycle.
The volume and scale of development required to generate the level of income required stretches staff to unsustainable levels.	Staff workloads will be assessed in line with developments in the local plan and Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.
N/A	N/A

Key Development and Delivery Milestones

Milestone	Timeline
Proposal presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Performance and Value for Money Select Committee.	4 February 2020
Increased income target issued for 2020/21.	April 2020
N/A	N/A
N/A	N/A

Section D

Consultation required?	No
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	Start	Conclusion
Staff	N/A	N/A
Trade Union	N/A	N/A
Public	N/A	N/A
Service Users	N/A	N/A
Other	N/A	N/A

Equality Impact Screening

Is there potential for the proposed budget reduction to have a disproportionate adverse impact on any of the following?

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People on low incomes	No
People in particular age groups	No
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs	No

EIA required? (choose YES if any of the above impacts are YES)	No
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Section E

Finance comments
<p>The level of income derived from S38/S278 inspection fees varies from year to year but has tended to be significantly above the existing £50k income target. An increase of £100k will, therefore, create a new income target of £150k p.a from 2020/21 onwards.</p> <p>Achieving this new target is wholly dependent on new schemes coming forward which is in turn reliant upon maintaining positive economic activity within the borough and the wider conurbation.</p> <p>The new target is prudent given the uncertain nature of this income stream and the need to balance the Council's need to generate additional income whilst supporting economic activity within the borough.</p>

Signed RO	08/01/2020
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Signed Finance	13/01/2020
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