

Draft Programme of Savings 2014-15

Information Pack

Published November 2013



Introduction

Welcome to our Draft Programme of Savings 2014-15 Information Pack which provides more information about our savings proposals. It provides answers to a series of questions and helps you to consider the different options in more detail.

We have split this document into different sections so you can look at all or some of the sections to allow you to find out more:

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Internal Efficiencies
- Proposals for Savings

You can also log on to www.bury.gov.uk/planforchange and download our 'Plan for Change: Draft Programme of Savings 2014/15' which provides information about the consultation process and how we have developed these proposals.

Please let us know your views by:

- ➔ Attending a public meeting (full details of meetings are online at www.bury.gov.uk/townshipforums).
- 💻 Viewing the proposals online and submitting feedback at www.bury.gov.uk/planforchange
- ✉ Emailing planforchange@bury.gov.uk
- ✉ Writing to us at Plan for Change, Bury Council, Knowsley Street, Bury BL9 0SW
- ☎ Calling us on 0161 253 5696

Please let us have your views by **17th January 2014**. Final proposals for savings will be published prior to the Council meeting on **19th February 2014**.

We hope that you find the information in this document useful.



Councillor Mike Connolly
Leader of the Council



Councillor John Smith
Deputy Leader of the Council
Cabinet Member
for Corporate Affairs

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you publishing further savings?

This is the most financially challenging time for Local Authorities across the country in our history. Bury, unfortunately, is no exception and we have already made massive savings year on year. We are trying our hardest to protect front line services, and identify more efficient ways of working but as the cuts increase, this is becoming increasingly difficult.

Last year when we wrote the Plan for Change and designed the Programme of Savings, we worked on our best forecasts at that time. Unfortunately, it has become apparent over the past few weeks that the overall financial support that we receive from government is likely to be cut by a far higher amount than we expected. We are now in a position where we will have to make more savings that we thought in 2014/15.

I would also stress that the position for 2014/15 will not be finalised until we know the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement; which we have been warned will not be until early 2014.

How much more money does the council have to find?

The Plan for Change Programme of Savings has already identified savings of £7.4 million for 2014/15.

Following a further 1% cut announced by the Chancellor, and factoring in unavoidable service pressures, we estimate that we will face a further £2.2 million cut, and need to update the Plan for Change to reflect this.

It should be noted that for the period 2011/12 to 2014/15, the Council will have faced cuts totalling £38.4 million, out of a controllable budget of approximately £100 million.

I thought there was a three year plan in place – is this no longer the case?

Yes, we originally set a three year plan covering 2012/13, 2013/14, and 2014/15, and we still firmly believe that taking a longer term view is the right thing to do. Unfortunately, the goalposts have moved a number of times during these 3 years; this led to us having to find additional savings for 2013/14, and we find ourselves in the same position again – with an additional £2.2 million cuts in 2014/15.

How is work progressing towards achieving savings for Internal Efficiencies?

We have spent some time examining all the detail of these savings and are confident that they can be delivered.

What is the difference between back office and front office services?

We use these terms to show the difference between those services which directly work with or relate to our residents (front office), for example children's centres or leisure centres, and those

which are needed to make sure the organisation works well (back office), for example financial management. Front office services are also sometimes referred to as front-line services.

How are you supporting staff through this process?

We have put in place a range of support for staff including:

- Now and Next – we have a dedicated resource area on the intranet where employees can find out more information about training opportunities, CV skills, interview techniques and apply for jobs.
- Redeployment – staff who are facing redundancy are prioritised and either matched with suitable vacancies or given the opportunity to apply for vacant posts across the council when they occur. This takes place before jobs are advertised internally.
- Voluntary Severance, Voluntary Early Retirement and Flexible Retirement – we have offered staff a range of options to allow us to make efficiencies and changes to the organisation.

How can I get involved in the consultation?

- Attend a public meeting – dates are on the website www.bury.gov.uk/townshipforums
- Read the proposals and comment online at www.bury.gov.uk/planforchange
- Read the information at your local library and send in your comments
- Call us 0161 253 5696
- Email planforchange@bury.gov.uk

What are the next steps in the budget consultation process?

We are consulting on all the proposals until **17th January 2014**. The comments and feedback will then be analysed before final proposals are taken to Budget Council on **19th February 2014**. The Budget Council is a public meeting which members of the public can attend. It takes place in the Council Chamber at Bury Town Hall.

Internal Efficiencies

Internal efficiencies: Office Accommodation

Proposal: Reduction in Town Centre buildings creating savings on utilities and rent.	Saving: £100,000
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Why are we proposing these savings?

The Council is seeking to make more efficient use of its assets, including rationalising its office buildings and introducing agile working practices. The closure of Athenaeum House and Castle Buildings in the summer of 2013 has resulted in savings higher than assumed in the original Plan For Change.

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

A substantial part of the saving will be achieved as a result of premises cost savings from the office moves that have taken place, but there will also be a review of staffing levels in the service to examine if further savings can be achieved.

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

Residents will continue to access services at Bury Town Hall and Knowsley Place rather than at Athenaeum House and Castle Buildings.

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

The office accommodation changes are primarily back office changes and there should be no further frontline impact.

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

Not applicable

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

This will depend on the outcome of the review of staffing levels, but every effort would be made to facilitate redeployment should reductions be necessary.

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Not applicable

Internal Efficiencies: Buildings and Accommodation

Proposal:	Saving: £70,000
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Reduction in Repairs and Maintenance for Buildings and Land.

Why are we proposing these savings?

Restricting expenditure whilst maintaining service provision

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

Reduction in spend on repairs & maintenance of buildings and land

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

It would restrict the ability of all service areas within DCN to keep buildings maintained

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

Savings will be made across services in all geographical areas

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

Improve procurement to minimise front-line impact

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

No

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Yes

Internal Efficiencies: Deletion of Vacant posts

Proposal:	Saving: £73,000
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Posts across the Council that are currently vacant will not be filled.

Why are we proposing these savings?

Deletion of vacant posts will enable us to limit spend without impacting on jobs

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

Non filling of a range of support service posts and one post in Environmental Services which are currently vacant

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

The deletion of the vacant Environment post will impact on environmental protection work the section is able to do

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

Non filling of vacant support service posts

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

No

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Yes

Internal Efficiencies: External Funding Optimisation

Proposal: Savings on contracts for traffic management and traffic signals.	Saving: £20,000
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Why are we proposing these savings?

The majority of work on traffic management and signals is now undertaken by Transport for Greater Manchester, resulting in an underspend on the highways budget to contribute to the savings target

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

The arrangements are currently in place

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

No

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

Not applicable

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

No

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Not applicable

Internal Efficiencies: External Funding Optimisation

Proposal:

Better use of specific grants to fund services across Adult Care, rather than being reliant on funding from Council Tax.

Saving: £317,000

Why are we proposing these savings?

To ensure that the grants available to the department are optimized and to review the work undertaken on behalf of other partner agencies to ensure that it is appropriately funded.

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

Review the use of existing grants and the outcomes being achieved. Look at the services which we currently provide and consider new ways of achieving income, through charges made to other organisations.

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

No changes to front line services anticipated.

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

At this point this is unclear.

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

It is proposed that we generate income using some of our back office function to provide services to partner organisations.

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

Not envisaged at this stage.

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Yes services will continue - any changes to services will include consultation with staff and customers.

Internal Efficiencies: External Funding Optimisation

Proposal: Better use of specific grants to support services across Children's Services, rather than being reliant on funding from Council Tax.	Saving: £513,000
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Why are we proposing these savings?

We plan to use money from external grants to support our existing core activities.

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

We are changing the way we allocate external resources to core activities.

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

Front-line services will benefit from the protection provided by these funds, rather than having to make savings on their provision.

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

None

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

No

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Not applicable

Internal efficiencies: Income Generation

Proposal: Additional income already being generated	Saving: £55,000
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Why are we proposing these savings?

Existing income levels exceed the budget and can be used to contribute to the savings target

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

The extra income will not be available to support other areas of the budget

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

None

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

Not applicable

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No – charges will only be subject to change as part of the annual review to reflect the inflation targets assumed in the Council's budget forecasts

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

No

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Not applicable

Internal efficiencies: Income generation

Proposal: Carelink to become a self financing service from April 1 st 2014, subject to consultation which will reduce Council subsidy of the service.	Saving: £40,000
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Why are we proposing these savings?

To protect other statutory services that the Council is obliged to provide.

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

The savings can be achieved through a combination of reducing costs and reviewing fees and charges.

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

If the proposals are accepted, consultation will take place on prices for the service.

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No – Borough wide

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

Some reductions in operating costs have been identified and will contribute to the savings. Cost reductions will be insufficient on their own to achieve the target reduction and maintain a safe service.

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

Yes, subject to consultation on the proposals as outlined above.

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

No

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Yes. Future pricing levels will be consulted upon before any decision is taken to implement the changes

Internal efficiencies: Procurement Savings

Proposal:	Saving: £100,000
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Less demand for liners for food caddies than initially forecast.

Why are we proposing these savings?

When food waste collections were introduced an estimated cost for the usage of caddy liners was included in the budget. Experience has been that fewer bags are used/requested than originally envisaged, allowing a saving to be realised whilst still continuing with the service.

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

Continue to monitor usage of food caddy liners to ensure reduced budget not exceeded

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

It is possible to reduce this budget without impacting on service provision

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

None

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

No

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Not applicable

Internal efficiencies: Procurement

Proposal:	Saving: £43,000
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Reduction in departmental budgets for Training, IT and Stationery.

Why are we proposing these savings?

We want to ensure that we continue to get maximum value for money from back-office functions. We have consolidated budgets so that we can get economies of scale which will allow us to achieve this saving.

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

We are reviewing and holding back on all of these budgets

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

No

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

There are no specific changes although budget management arrangements will be reviewed

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

No

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Not applicable

Internal efficiencies: Staff Restructuring

Proposal:	Saving: £462,000
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Restructures and reorganisations in various services across the Council.

Why are we proposing these savings?

We want to reduce the costs of management and support services in order that we can maximize spend on front-line services. However this will mean that there is a further reduction in management capacity across the Council.

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

There are a number of changes being adopted in various service areas such as approving flexible retirement applications, removing posts from management structures and reviewing operational activities to maximize efficiency, such as area based working.

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

Improved efficiency across the services is expected to maintain current standards. If there were any concerns that front line services would be affected, consultation with customers would take place.

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

There will be a range of back office changes across the Council to facilitate these restructures such as all resource functions in the Chief executives department will be brought together as one service. However, none of these will have impact on front line services. The focus is to reduce bureaucracy and aid smarter working.

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

Not applicable

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

Yes, there will be at least two voluntary redundancies following these restructures.

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Not applicable

Internal efficiencies: Staff Restructuring

Proposal:
Changes to Mental Health Services.

Saving: £130,000

Why are we proposing these savings?

The service needs to be reconfigured to provide a greater emphasis on recovery, whilst still supporting people who have complex needs.

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

Review of partnership agreement currently in place, restructure existing service and bring closer alignment to Assessment and Care Management services.

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

Better initial response to people who need Mental Health support at Connect and Direct, other services including Social Work and Community Psychiatric services will remain the same.

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

As part of this reconfiguration we will be proposing changes to administration staff and reviewing office accommodation.

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

Possibly, some staff have already expressed interest in VER/ VES

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Contact points will remain the same, if not improved by these changes

Internal efficiencies: Other

Proposal: Reduction in overtime and other budgets	Saving: £122,000
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Why are we proposing these savings?

To contribute to the Council's savings targets cost reductions will need to be made by reducing overtime this will allow the Council to protect other jobs without having an impact on statutory functions.

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

Restricting overtime so that extra costs are only incurred for essential duties, or where costs are rechargeable and funded outside the Council's General Fund budgets. Where there is surplus in budgets, this will contribute towards overall savings targets.

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

No front line services should be affected detrimentally.

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

Not applicable

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

No reducing overtime will help to protect other jobs

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Not applicable

Internal efficiencies: Other

Proposal: Catering and Cleaning cost savings	Saving: £40,000
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Why are we proposing these savings?

To contribute to the Council's savings targets cost reductions will need to be found

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

A review of costs in the cleaning & catering services will allow us to make savings

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

No

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

Revised procurement, amended administrative procedures and reduction in overheads

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

No

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Not applicable

Internal efficiencies: Other

Proposal: Reduction in Grounds Maintenance Standards.	Saving: £20,000
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Why are we proposing these savings?

Cost reductions are required to meet budget savings targets

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

Grounds Maintenance standards will be reduced across the borough.

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

There will be a reduction in grounds maintenance standards which will affect grass cutting frequencies, winter and summer maintenance to parks and planted areas.

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

There is likely to be a reduction across all areas

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

Not applicable

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

There is likely to be a reduction required in grounds staff as a result of this proposal but every effort would be made to facilitate redeployment should reductions be necessary

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Not applicable

Internal Efficiencies: Other

Proposal: Reduction in monies set aside for invest to save bids that promote healthier lives.	Saving: £40,000
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Why are we proposing these savings?

These monies are currently not committed to spend

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

We will not spend monies allocated to invest to save development opportunities.

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

None

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

No

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

None

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

No

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Yes, no consultation required.

New proposals

Reduction in Payments to External Organisations: Review of Grant allocations

Proposal:

Reduction in grants to voluntary organisations. Individual grant awards will be reviewed in line with priority spending areas and delivery against outcomes.

Saving: £75,000

Why are we proposing these savings?

Restrictions on the Council's funding means that the resources available to provide grants to other organisations will be restricted

What changes are we undertaking to allow us to reach this savings targets?

A review of existing grants will be undertaken and options for reductions will be considered and consulted on with the organisations affected

Will front line services be affected – what changes will residents see and when will this take place?

Reductions of grants will impact on voluntary organisations in the Borough. The saving represents a reduction of approx 10%. Individual reductions will be determined on a priority led approach taking account of outputs delivered and achievement of local priorities.

Will any geographical area be particularly affected by this proposal?

The areas affected will depend on the outcome of the review of grants

What back of office changes are proposed to achieve this target and minimise impact on front line services?

Not applicable

Does this mean additional charges for this service?

No

Does this budget proposal result in redundancies?

Not directly, though there may be some impact on staff in the organisations receiving less grant income

Can I still make contact face -to-face or over the phone about these problems/ will I be consulted to see how these changes affect my personal circumstances (e.g. changes to care arrangements)?

Not applicable