

Changing together

Like every other council in the country, we face unprecedented challenges due to increasing demand for services and reduced funding.

Our world is changing, and to meet these challenges we have no choice but to change too.

The Council needs to keep pace with growing demand, reduced funding and rising costs. It means that we'll have to prioritise what we do in the future and make some tough choices on spending.

We're currently assessing how we can save a further £16 million by 2020 – on top of savings already delivered or in the pipeline – while continuing to deliver essential services. This will help to close a growing funding gap, due in part to the increasing demand for, and rising costs of, adult and children's social care.

Changing role of the Council

Despite already making significant savings and capitalising on opportunities to earn income, we'll need to change the way that we work, identify what we can do differently, less of, or stop – and how we can raise additional income.

We're already working hard to maximise extra income, and will be putting our case to Government to recognise the unprecedented challenges that we face.

We can no longer be a universal provider of all services. We estimate that, in future, we will become a smaller organisation as we change the way we work. This will result in a reduction of around 300 full-time-equivalent (FTE) jobs in our 2,000-strong FTE workforce.

However, we will prioritise putting residents first – protecting and caring for our most vulnerable, nurturing residents' health, safety and wellbeing, and providing ways for everyone in the community to reach their full potential.

The pressures we face

Our corporate priorities remain unchanged, however there are many reasons why the Council is under pressure.

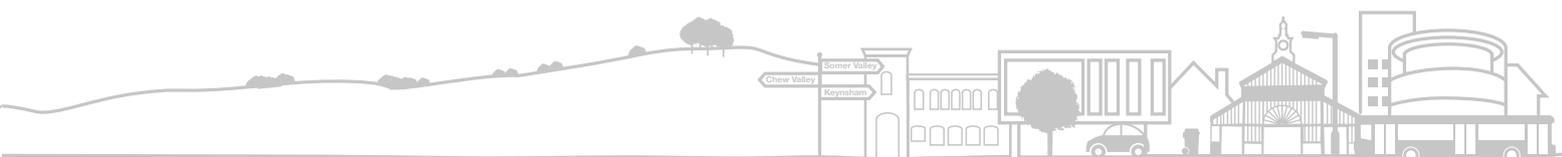
- An increasing number of people are living longer with complex conditions
- More children and young adults are living with complex care and educational needs. These care packages can cost up to £250,000 per person.
- There are 14 per cent more children in Bath & North East Somerset Council's care than last year.
- The national living wage is rising faster than inflation, which has a big impact on the Council.
- The costs of disposing of non-recyclable waste and maintaining our roads is rising
- Funding from central government is declining – putting more onus on us to be self-sufficient
- We are relying more heavily on business rates to raise income, so we'll need to work hard at growing our local economy.

What have we done so far to help?

Savings

Since 2016, we've saved £27 million primarily through reducing our estate, social care efficiencies, improving technology and re-designing services to be more efficient.

This has been done with minimal impact on front line services, and we continue to be regarded as a good authority by independent inspectors. For example, we have an outstanding fostering and adoption service and some of the best schools in the region. We've also kept Council Tax as one of lowest in the South West.



There are further savings of £15 million planned to 2020, which will include:

- Moving more services online
- Actions to manage and contain demand for adult and children's services
- Reviewing our management arrangements
- Completing our modern libraries programme, and
- Increasing income from our commercial estate.

Investments

We're also investing in key development projects, such as Bath Quays and the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone, where new offices and homes will bring in additional Council Tax and Business Rate income.

Investing in new waste services will increase recycling and reduce expensive landfill waste. Combining our libraries and One Stop Shops is upfront investment that will save £800,000 a year from 2020. New leisure facilities for Bath and Keynsham will help to improve residents' health and wellbeing to reduce pressure on care services in the longer term.

As part of the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), we've secured significant funding to invest in transport infrastructure improvements and new adult skills.

Raising income

We're looking at creative ways to raise income and be self-sufficient. This includes generating more income from our commercial estate and heritage service, and achieving greater New Homes Bonus by reducing the number of empty properties and increasing the number of new homes available. Our development company (ADL) generates significant income from refurbishing old Council properties and developing new housing on unused Council land.

What we plan to do now

Despite all of this work, the funding gap continues to grow. If we're to live within our means, we'll need to find an additional £16 million by 2020, while continuing to prioritise services for our most vulnerable children and adults. It's not going to be easy, because

shortly, 80 pence in every £1 we spend will go on delivering these priority services.

We're developing proposals around:

- Restructuring our workforce and delivering staff savings – reducing staff by around 300 FTE jobs in our 2,000-strong FTE workforce.
- Managing the demands and costs of social care – maximising efficiencies in this area while continuing to protect our most vulnerable residents
- Looking at what services other agencies can deliver, how they can be re-designed, and whether the market can provide some services directly
- Finding even more creative ways to raise income
- How the community can play an increasing part in delivering services
- Maximising government funding through the new West of England deals with Government
- Lobbying Government directly and through the Local Government Association to recognise the challenges we face and the solutions that might help.

We will share detailed proposals in January and all service areas are likely to be affected.

What the community can do to help

We intend to engage with you over the next 12 months to better understand how local communities can help to reduce demand and make our money go further on the things that really matter. We think you can particularly help in the following areas:

- Health and well-being
- Doing more online
- How the communities can do more.

We will:

- Run workshops (with expert help) to present our ideas and gather yours
- Set up a Facebook page to share ideas and start conversations with the community.

We welcome your ideas.

