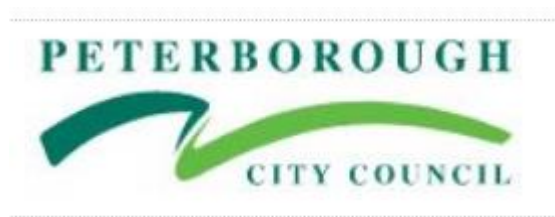


Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 Phase One Budget Consultation Document

**Embargoed until 5pm
15 October 2021**



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OVERVIEW

The unprecedented challenges of Covid-19 have dominated the council's response and that of its communities for the last 18 months.

The council's response was described as exemplary by a team of local government peers who came in to conduct a Peer Challenge in July of this year and whilst we are pleased with this, we now have to approach the clear challenges emerging from the pandemic with the same kind of response. Undoubtedly one of our most serious challenges is balancing our books going forward as the council is required by law to set a balanced budget each year.

Before the pandemic we recognised the significant challenges we were facing, and we invited expert external challenge to help us. We were open and transparent in the way we reported on our financial situation which has been commended by our external auditors and with the hard work of our staff, our members and those who we brought in to challenge us we identified £11m worth of measures and savings to close a £14m gap by February 2020 to help balance our budget for the financial year 2020/21.

Unfortunately, soon after this the pandemic hit and, like most councils across the country, we were not able to implement the measures and savings plans in full as we concentrated on the hard work we had to do to respond to the pandemic.

We are now planning for the financial year 2022/23 and with the impact of the pandemic and the inability to carry through all of our financial plans, we have a budget gap of around £26m. This is a substantial challenge, and it is the council's responsibility to meet this challenge head on.

Therefore, we are renewing our efforts and putting in place strong and focussed plans. We have a new Leader of the Council and Cabinet who are setting an energetic tone and direction to solving our financial issues and a new cross party working group has been set up so that the political groups can work together to tackle these challenges. We also recognise that, whilst sharing our Chief Executive with Cambridgeshire County Council has worked well, the landscape has changed significantly over the last 18 months so with the retirement of our Chief Executive we are investing in a Chief Executive solely for the council to give greater capacity and focus in this changed landscape.

The proposals in Phase 1 of this budget deliver measures and savings of about £10m and this is a good first step to closing the gap for next year. Officers and Members are now working at pace on Phase 2 of the budget which will be published for further consultation in the new year.

The proposals in Phase 1 are difficult, but they are vital to ensuring we set a balanced budget as required by law and demonstrate our absolute determination to do this. The budget consultation that we are launching is designed to explain our financial position and seek the views of our residents and partners on the measures and savings we are proposing so that those views can be considered finally by all of our Members at Full Council on 8 December 2021.

THE BUDGET PROCESS

The Councils budget position will be delivered over two phases, in line with the Councils Constitution.

The following table outlines the key meeting dates:

MTFS Phase One	Date
Consultation start date	15/10/2021
Cabinet	25/10/2021
Joint Scrutiny Committee Meeting - budget	17/11/2021
Cabinet	29/11/2021
Consultation close date	06/12/2021
Council	08/12/2021
MTFS Phase Two	Date
Consultation start date	21/01/2022
Cabinet	31/01/2022
Joint Scrutiny Committee Meeting- budget	09/02/2022
Cabinet	21/02/2022
Consultation close date	28/02/2022
Council	02/03/2022

COUNCIL DIRECTORATES

Governance

This department includes legal and democratic services, support for members and the mayor, management of elections and the electoral register, data protection and oversees information governance and coordinates information requests.

Place and Economy

This department is responsible for the Peterborough Highways Service, planning, regeneration, waste treatment, energy, climate change and the management of Aragon Direct Services, who provide services relating to waste, cleaning and open spaces.

It leads on the promotion of the city to attract business and investment by working with Opportunity Peterborough and the Peterborough Investment Partnership.

It also leads of delivering support to individuals and families requiring housing through the housing needs team, and works with Medesham Homes, the council's partnership with Cross Keys Homes to provide more affordable housing within the city to reduce the risk of homelessness.

People and Communities

This department is responsible for ensuring the needs of our residents are met, particularly those that are most vulnerable. It works with adults, children, families and communities, including schools, health services and the police. It leads on keeping children and adults safe, ensuring sufficient quality education placements, including early years settings, supporting children with special educational needs & Disabilities and commissioning function, often with our partners. It takes the lead on services that help people feel safe and supported in their communities, improving community relationships and working with communities to support and help each other. Services include regulatory and enforcement, domestic abuse.

And also leads on leisure, culture and city services including libraries, CCTV, car parks, events and the City Market.

In the current year it has also led on the work to support people who are more at risk from Covid-19 and those who need support to remain safe and well. This has been through the Countywide Coordination Hub and the local Peterborough Support Hub. It has also supported with outbreak management, to contain outbreaks when they occur and to encourage people to follow national guidance.

Public Health

This department works to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. Services include local health visiting and school nursing services, services to treat people with drug and alcohol misuse and addiction issues, sexual health and contraception services and services to support people to give up smoking, lose weight and achieve health goals.

In the current year it has led on the council's response to Covid-19, both in terms of managing outbreaks when they occur and working intensively with our communities to make sure as many people as possible are following national guidance to reduce the spread of the virus.

Resources

This department includes financial services encompassing financial planning and accounting, internal audit, fraud and insurance, and responsibility for the city's cemeteries, cremation and registrars.

It also oversees strategic Property services and the Peterborough Serco Strategic Partnership (PSSP), which covers business support, shared transactional services including revenues and benefits, business transformation, procurement, customer services and finance systems.

Customer services and digital

This department includes IT and digital services to manage and support most of the council's business systems, emergency planning, communications, including design and print and ICT services and the drive to improve technological options for the council and its services.

Business improvement and development

This department takes the lead on transforming council services so that they are able to meet the needs of residents with the funding that we have available. It is also responsible for delivering commercial opportunities for the Council.

Chief Executive

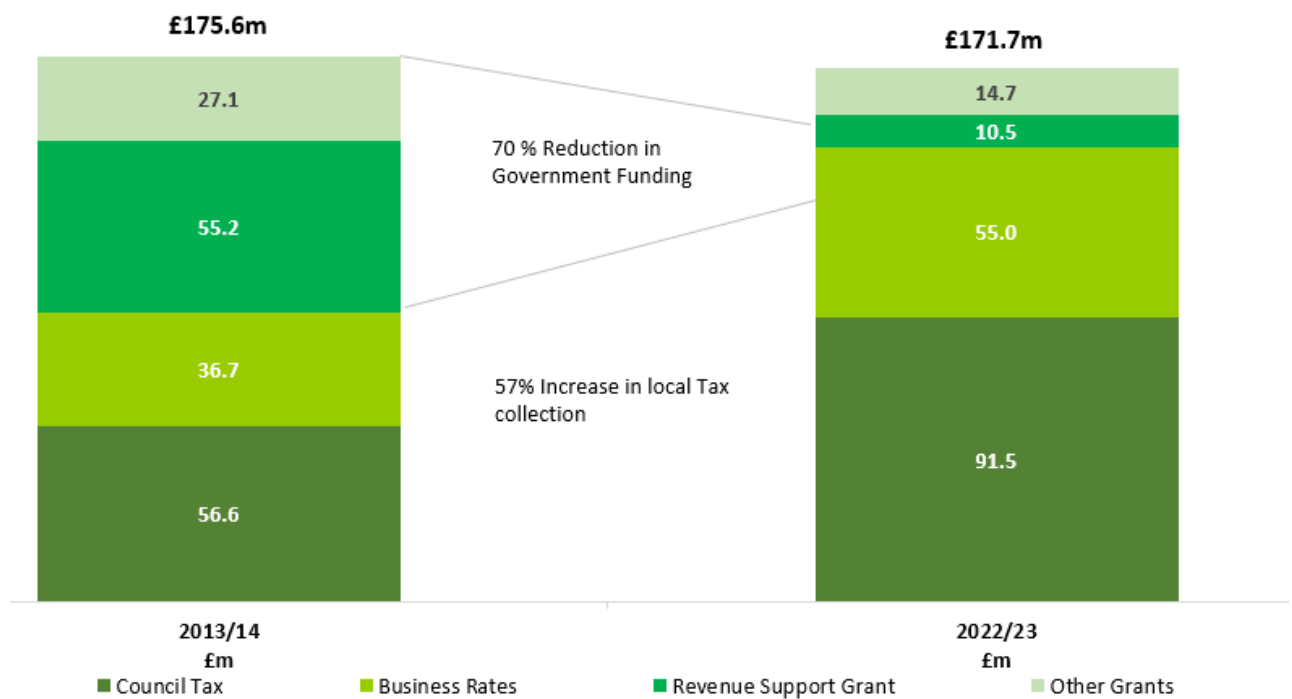
The Chief Executive is the head of the paid service. This directorate contains human resources and organisational development.

FUNDING AND COUNCIL SERVICE EXPENDITURE

Funding 2022/23

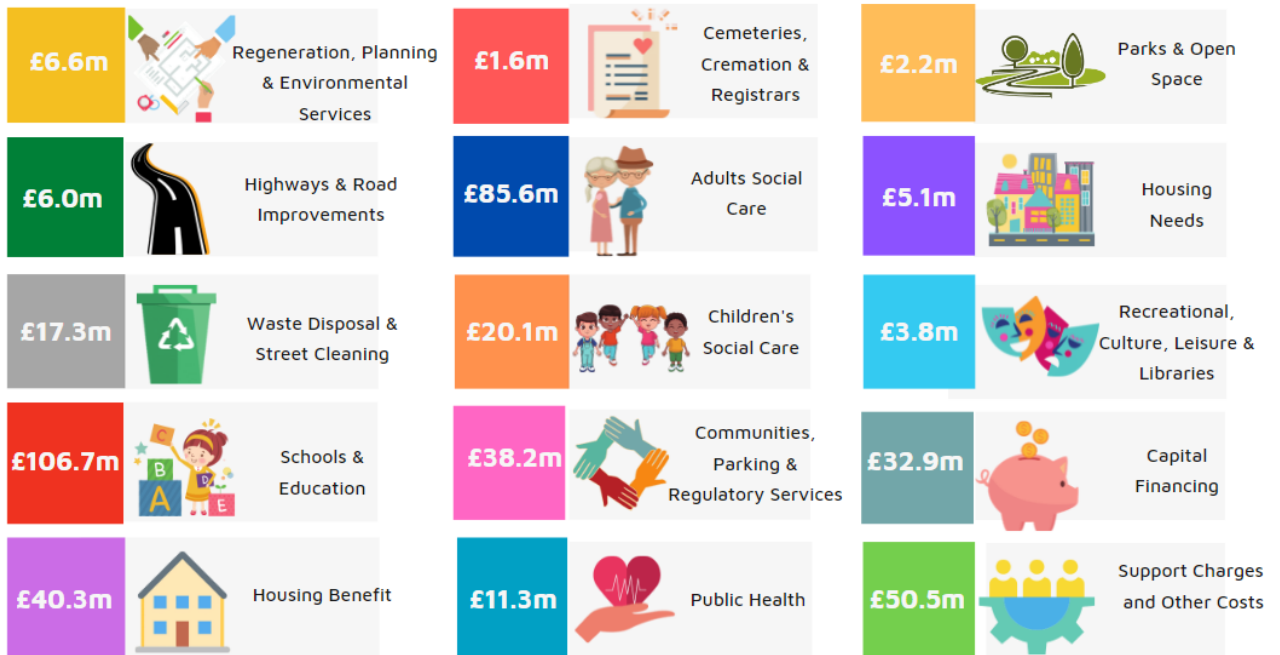
The Council's forecast core funding for 2022/23 is £171.7m, comprising of council tax, business rates, its Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and other un-ringfenced grants. The council has seen a 69% reduction in the level of grant funding received since 2013/14, and over this period has relied on Council Tax increases and Business Rates growth as its key income sources, as demonstrated in the following chart.

Change in Core Funding from 2013/14 to 2022/23



The Councils Expenditure Budget 2022/23

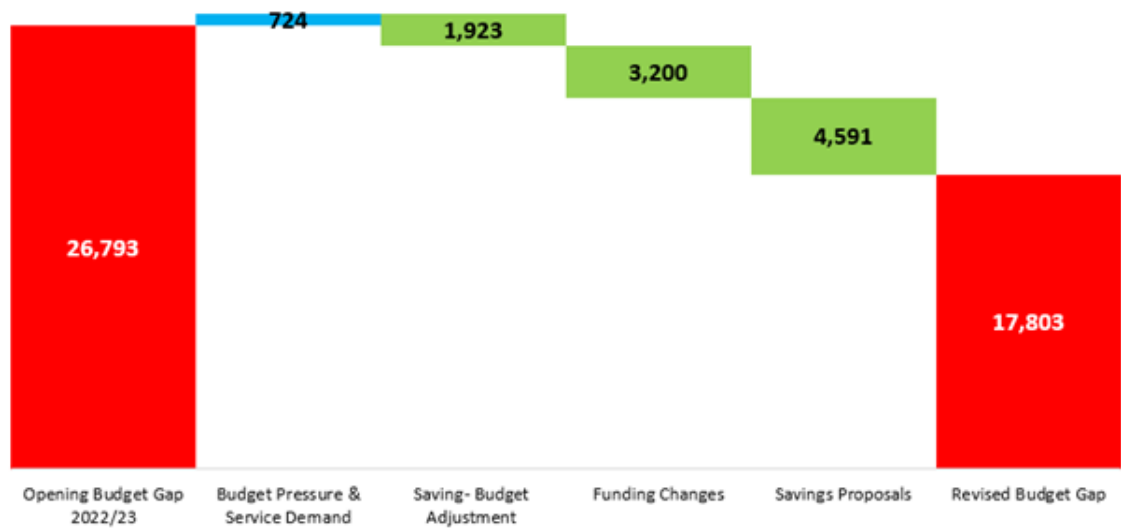
The following graphic outlines some of the Councils key service areas, and the gross expenditure budget for these areas for 2022/23. These budgets reflect the proposals outlined within this document, but at this stage this is an estimated position, based on the best and most up to date information available to the Council. The Councils will finalise the budget within Phase Two of the MTFS and balanced budget setting process.



OVERALL BUDGET POSITION

Phase one contains the first of two rounds of budget proposals, which outline £0.7m of additional pressures, £6.5m of savings, and £3.2m of funding changes, bringing the remaining budget gap down to £17.8m.

2022/23 MTFS budget gap- Phase One



	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000
Budget Gap from 2021/22 MTFS	26,793	28,910	27,735
Budget Pressure & Service Demand	724	915	979
Revised Budget Gap	27,517	29,825	28,714
Saving- Budget Adjustment	(1,923)	(1,923)	(1,923)
Funding Changes	(3,200)	(2,700)	(2,450)
Savings Proposals	(4,591)	(4,128)	(3,891)
Budget Gap	17,803	21,074	20,450

FUNDING CHANGES

Business Rates Pool (estimate)

The council has, with other Cambridgeshire local authorities, been part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Business Rates Pool since 2020/21 following a successful application to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The pool provided the council with £1.6m of additional benefit in 2020/21 and is forecast to provide in excess of £2m in 2021/22. This takes into account the business rates levy owed by each of the authorities, pooling them together, which produces a lower percentage levy calculation for member councils.

DLUHC has written to local authorities to invite applications for pooling arrangements in 2022/23. All of the local authorities currently within the pool have provisionally agreed to apply, with some external verification of the benefit to be undertaken by financial advisors PIXEL. It is expected to still be a generous and advantageous scheme for all involved and at this stage an estimate based on the current year figures has been proposed for inclusion within Phase One of the MTFS

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Funding Change	(2,200,000)	(2,200,000)	(2,200,000)

NNDR Income Base (estimate)

During the pandemic, the council's collection rates for National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) suffered significantly, and as a result the bad debt provision was increased to mitigate the risk of non-payment. A forecast increase in the bad debt provisions was also built in to the MTFS on a reducing scale to cover the risk and uncertainty surrounding economic recovery following the pandemic.

Due to the recovery action taken by the council, the outstanding balances have been reduced by over 60%, and together with continuing growth, within the city (such as the three new restaurants announced at Maskew Avenue) and promising signs of recovery the council is able to revise its forecasts to reflect this.

The NNDR forecast will be finalised and reported within Phase Two of the budget, in line with the Government's timeline for submitting the NNDR1 form to DLUHC.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Funding Change	(1,000,000)	(500,000)	(250,000)

SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Bad Debt Provision Review

The council's debt position has improved by £8.8 million (35%) over the past six months which reflects the hard work and increased emphasis on debt management across the organisation.

This includes £4.1 million from trade customers.

We anticipate collecting more debt over the next 12 months than previously forecast.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(500,000)	0	0

Hydrotherapy Pool

St George's Hydrotherapy Pool has benefitted many residents since the council bought the facility and secured its future ten years ago. We are now exploring the opportunity to sell the hydrotherapy pool to a private physiotherapy provider, to ensure it can continue offering services for the many residents who benefit from it. The sale would provide a one off saving as well as ongoing yearly savings.

If the sale goes ahead, the pool will continue to operate with the benefit of users in mind and members of the community will still be able to access the pool.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)

Reduce the Capital Programme

The council is proposing to reduce the investment in its capital programme activity for 2022/23 to more accurately reflect the level of work it has capacity to deliver.

Historically, the council only has capacity to deliver a programme no greater than £80m.

Last year the budget allocated to the programme was £147m.

A more accurate capital programme profile will ensure that the budget required to finance the capital (interest & debt repayment) will reflect the council's performance rather than an aspirational delivery position.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(2,245,000)	(2,017,000)	(1,780,000)

Economic Development

Economic development remains a key priority for the council, in order to generate greater levels of wealth within the private sector and increase income for the council from business rates. It also helps to reduce demand on public sector services by improving each

individual’s economic circumstances, financial stability and resilience, life chances, and overall health and wellbeing.

The city’s economic development agenda is currently being driven by Opportunity Peterborough (OP), to which the council contributes £140,000 each year. Due to the ongoing financial pressures being faced by the council, we are proposing to explore alternative delivery model options and their associated costs.

A number of potential options to strike the balance between council funding and economic development outcomes have been explored, with an initial proposal put forward which reduces the council’s financial contribution by £65,000 in 2022/23, and by a further £75,000 to £0 by 2023/24.

This phased approach would allow time for OP, with the support of the council, to develop other sources of income such as sponsorship and grant funding. By adopting this approach, this will provide time to conduct a forward review of the economic development functions that Peterborough needs and the most effective and efficient mechanisms and structures to deliver them.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(65,000)	(140,000)	(140,000)

Aragon Service Reduction

The council is proposing to reduce the specification of some of the non-statutory services delivered under the contract with Aragon Direct Services (ADS).

This would include:

- The removal of the dedicated cleansing hit squad; instead all flytipping and litter accumulations will be collected by ADS street cleaning crews as part of their rounds.
- Stopping the Annual Spring Clean which provides additional cleansing of targeted areas of the city.
- Reducing the frequency of pavement washing in the city centre to once a year from the current rolling programme of cleaning.
- No longer carrying out spring and summer planting in the council’s parks and open spaces. Applications for Green Flag status for city parks will no longer be made.

All services which are statutory requirements, such as waste and recycling collections, will continue to be delivered.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(221,000)	(221,000)	(221,000)

Aragon – Income Generation

The council is proposing to generate additional income for Aragon Direct Services (ADS) by introducing a charge to residents for replacing lost, stolen or damaged bins (except where

the bin has been damaged by ADS). The proposal also includes a charge to developers for the provision of bins for new housing developments, a cost which is currently borne by the council.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(130,000)	(130,000)	(130,000)

Review the NPS and Property Contract

Property delivery is fragmented across the council, with several roles and responsibilities currently carried out. It is recommended that these roles and responsibilities are clarified and simplified, by bringing the function under one directorate responsibility. This move will also help to deliver better value for money.

The total annual savings which will be achieved by these changes are as follows:

Revenue £297,108 to £347,748

Capital £77,168

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(300,000)	(300,000)	(300,000)

Serco – Business Support

This is made up of two main elements. At the moment, reflected in the 2021/22 monitoring, is a credit of £297,000 from not recruiting to advertised vacancies.

This will continue to be taken as a saving in future years.

The remainder of the savings will come from transforming how the service is delivered.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(651,000)	(651,000)	(651,000)

Serco – Automation of Revenues and Benefits

The revenues and benefits IT infrastructure is currently being upgraded to the Cloud to give greater resilience. In parallel to this, process improvements will be made to deliver savings prior to a review and analysis of what IT help is available to automate existing application processes that are currently manually based. This will reduce the need for human intervention.

The first applications expected to be implemented, depending on the analysis under way, will be modules for benefits/ Universal Credit claims handling and tax collection.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(100,000)	(100,000)	(100,000)

Serco – Customer Services

Due to a reduction from in-person demand (around 30-40 contacts a day), the customer services unit in Bridge Street will be re-located into the Town Hall, with the existing office space leased out.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(200,000)	(200,000)	(200,000)

Serco – Inflation and Current year recurring saving

The Serco contract increases annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rate each July. We expect this to be lower than previously forecast as the number of services it was originally based on has reduced. This includes savings that are already being delivered in this financial year.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(129,000)	(129,000)	(129,000)

Corporate Capacity Review

As part of the Lean Cost Structure Review, a proposal has been put forward to reshape the council's Corporate Services.

Many of these services had been redesigned and reduced in headcount during the previous year as part of the Financial Improvement Programme. Following changes in how some functions were delivered, the corporate centre has become fractured with some responsibilities spilt across directorates. Reductions in headcount has also left a top-heavy management structure which could be leaner and more efficient as well as removing cost.

A corporate capacity review of all corporate services and a reduction in leadership roles is now proposed.

Whilst the financial benefits of this review are relatively small, it will help the service deliver further improvements.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	0	(190,000)	(190,000)

Archiving

Following a review, the archiving contract is now managed corporately, and the local children's service budget can be removed, as this contribution is not required. This represents an annual saving of £18,000 per annum.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(18,000)	(18,000)	(18,000)

Better Care Fund Uplift – 2021/22

There is an expected annual uplift to the Better Care Fund 2021/22 for adult social care. It is proposed that this will be utilised to offset the additional Adult Social Care pressures already built into the MTFS.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(420,000)	(420,000)	(420,000)

Energy Recovery Facility – Improved Energy Pricing

The Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) produces electricity from the treatment of the city's waste, and the electricity sold provides income to pay towards the operation of the plant. Rising energy prices have meant that future income is expected to be higher than currently budgeted.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(500,000)	(500,000)	(500,000)

ICT Service Savings

This £175,000 budget reduction is due to a realignment of the budget for the ICT service following the repatriation of the contract with Serco back into the council in October 2020.

Since the service was brought back in-house, the council has been able to review what was being delivered and the budget required. Minor adjustments to the way the service is delivered, such as bringing the maintenance of the server in-house, have also reduced the level of budget required to deliver the service.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(175,000)	(175,000)	(175,000)

Reduction in Stray Dog Contract

There was an opportunity to review the stray dog contract specification to reduce spend by £10,000 per annum. The new contract took effect from the 1st April 2021 and the new specification has been fully implemented.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)

Review Mental Health Management Fees

A review of commissioning mental health budgets has identified an opportunity to reduce the management fee for the delivery of mental health services.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)

Aragon

Following previous investment in Aragon Direct Services due to the impact of Covid-19 on service provision, a budget reduction has been identified as services have now fully resumed.

An additional saving has been identified due to the investment in a new vehicle fleet, which will result in reduced maintenance costs.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Saving	(750,000)	(750,000)	(750,000)

BUDGET PRESSURE & SERVICE DEMAND

Chief Executive Position (Single Authority not shared)

Following the retirement of the Council's current Chief Executive, the arrangement to share the role with Cambridgeshire County Council comes to an end in December 2021, along with the funding from the Cambridgeshire for this sharing agreement. The Council's Employment Committee has agreed to seek the appointment of a separate Chief Executive to lead Peterborough City Council, which will be responsible for the full costs of employment.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Budget Pressure & Service Demand	115,000	115,000	115,000

Coroners – Rising Demand

Demand within the Coroners service has risen due to in the number of inquests.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Budget Pressure & Service Demand	100,000	100,000	100,000

Insurance Premiums

The Council's insurers have advised that the inflationary rate for insurance premiums is rising. The estimate for the increase in premiums also takes in to account any changes in the properties and services which the Council is responsible for insuring.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Budget Pressures & Service Demand	100,000	100,000	100,000

Sand Martin House Inflation

At the five-year anniversary of the start of the lease for Sand Martin House in July 2023, an increase in rent will become due, linked to the rate of inflation. An estimate has been made of the additional sum that will fall due.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Budget Pressure & Service Demand	0	191,000	255,000

Social Care Levy – 1.25% increase

The Social Care reform announcement made by the Government on 7 September outlined plans to increase National Insurance Contributions (NICs) for employees and employers by 1.25%, becoming a new "Health and Social Care Levy". An assessment of the council's direct salary costs has identified a budgetary pressure of £409,000.

This does not consider the impact of the costs of external organisations or contractors.

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Budget Pressure & Service Demand	409,000	409,000	409,000

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

The savings set out in this Phase One of the budget are expected to have minimal impact on headcount reduction for the Council at this stage. As with any staffing implications, it is the aim of the council to try and minimise any compulsory redundancies and the impact on our service delivery. In the first instance there are a number of elements which the council considers first which are looking for redeployment opportunities, deleting vacant posts, restricting recruitment (considering our service delivery), natural wastage / turnover and reducing or eliminating overtime (providing service delivery is not compromised). Where staff are affected, the Council will seek voluntary redundancies as appropriate to minimise compulsory redundancies and where this is unavoidable, appropriate outplacement support will be considered.

BUDGET CONSULTATION FORM

We want to hear the opinions of all residents, partner organisations, businesses and other interested parties as part of the budget setting process.

People will be able to give their opinions by completing an online survey on the city council website - www.peterborough.gov.uk/budget. Hard copies can be requested by emailing communications@peterborough.gov.uk

The consultation will close on 6 December 2021 at 5pm. Cabinet will consider comments on Monday 29 November 2021 and Full Council will debate the phase one proposals on Wednesday 8 December 2021.

The consultation will ask the following questions:

1. Do you have any comments to make about the phase one budget proposals?

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. Having read the phase one proposals document, how much do you now feel you understand about why the council must make total savings of almost £27.6million in 2022/23 and over £28.7million by 2024/25? Tick the answer you agree with.

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Nothing at all

3. If you have any specific ideas about how the council can save money or generate additional income to protect services, please state these here:

.....
.....
.....

So that we can check this survey is representative of Peterborough overall, please complete the following questions.

Are you?

- Male
- Female

Please tick which of the following best describes who you are:

- Resident
- Business person
- Member of council staff
- City councillor

- Work, but don't live in Peterborough
- Member of community or voluntary organisation
- Regular visitor
- Other (please state).....

Which of these age groups do you fall into?

- Under 16
- 16 to 24 years
- 25 to 34 years
- 35 to 44 years
- 45 to 54 years
- 55 to 64 years
- 65 to 74 years
- 75 years or over
- Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group?

- A White**
English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British
Gypsy or Irish Traveller
Any other white background
- B Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups**
White and Black Caribbean
White and Black African
White and Asian
Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background
- C Asian/ Asian British**
Indian
Pakistani
 Bangladeshi
Chinese
 Any other Asian background, write in
- D Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British**
African
Caribbean
Any other Black/ African/ Caribbean background
- E Other ethnic group**
Any other ethnic group

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes.....
No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey