

Protecting front line services and supporting residents and small businesses through hard times

A Conservative Budget for Bradford

These interim budget proposals set out the approach that a Conservative administration would take to running Bradford Council. At the heart of our proposals is the belief that front line services can and should be protected, that there remain significant inefficiencies within the Council's management and that ideological considerations should not guide decision-making at the expense of providing good services.

The Council has over £180 million in reserves – money set aside for specific purposes or else to insure against the proverbial rainy day. Conservatives believe that this rainy day has arrived – local people are struggling in hard economic times and small businesses – especially retail – see declining takings and rising costs. Conservatives believe that now is the time for the Council to help – to do what it can to ease the hardship and to support people through hard times.

The main elements of this support package are:

1. **Introducing free, short-term on-street parking throughout the District** – initially for two years - to replace currently paid spaces – this will provide a boost to local businesses and a little saving for shoppers and sends a strong message out that Bradford is open for business
2. **Freezing charges in Council car parks** and considering introducing a 30 minute free parking period – again this helps business and supports local communities
3. **No increases in rents for tenants of Council-owned shops and for market traders** – with other costs rising, small supports like this can make a big difference, maybe even helping keep a shop in business
4. **No increase in Council Tax** – supported by central government grant.
5. **A business rates support fund** intended to provide similar support to businesses in Shipley, Bingley, Keighley & Ilkley to that provided by the Coalition Government's Regional Development Fund for the City Centre

To achieve this support and to deliver on the transformation of Council services needed to ensure they are both protected and also of the highest quality, Conservatives propose to set up three funds drawing on reserves and savings in this year's budget:

1. **"Open for Business" fund** – a £10 million fund (£5 million for 2012/13 and £5million for **2013/14**) to provide the support package outline above
2. **"Better Services" fund** – a £9 million fund to support a series of substantial, transformational changes to how the Council delivers services exploring an "arm's length" trading company, a trust arrangement for leisure, cultural services and theatres, transferring local halls and facilities such as libraries to local community control and making more extensive use of the private and voluntary sector in service delivery

3. **“Community Dowry” fund** - a £5 million capital fund intended to support the transfer of facilities and services to community control and the development of social enterprise approaches in areas such as employment **and** skills and housing strategy.

We believe this use of reserves represents a sensible use of that available short-term funding – helping communities and businesses through difficult times, investing in better services and supporting communities or social enterprises that want to take on delivering Council services.

The revenue budget proposals recognise the need to find £21 million in savings during 2012/13. The change programme instigated by the then Conservative-led Council in 2008 will continue to deliver savings over the next two years. However, we should be prepared to smooth this process into a further year using reserves where the change process is delayed or slips.

The Conservative Group proposes to accelerate the change programme further with a further review of senior management at the Council including the role and function of the Chief Executive. Other local authorities have changed this role, merging it with other senior posts such as finance, while others have moved to sharing the position with other public bodies or even – in one or two cases – its abolition.

In addition, we propose some significant changes:

- **Ending the funding of full-time union officials from the Council’s budget** – Conservatives firmly believe that these positions should be funded from the subscriptions of union members not the taxes of local residents
- **Merging the Climate Change Unit with Facilities Management** – this continues the good work of supporting initiatives to reduce energy use and develops it by putting the activity close to the task of day-to-day management of the Council’s buildings
- **Establishing a “New Schools” team** to focus exclusively on the District’s school places challenge – the team would work with free school providers supporting them through the planning process and other hurdles to establishment as well as support other schools that wish to expand or switch to academy status
- **Reducing the size of the Council’s marketing department** – we recognise that communications are essential and that the Council must talk to local residents and other stakeholders but the current operation is too large. The Conservative Group also proposes exploring options for sharing marketing services with other public bodies such as the NHS, police and emergency services
- **Reviewing the closures and proposed closures from the 2011/12 Budget** including commitments to sustain **Whetley** Hill Resource Centre as a five-day provision for vulnerable disabled **adults** and to provide funds allowing ISG to sustain current operations and develop plans to transfer to social enterprise status
- **Increasing the Council’s events budget** to £500,000 and setting aside £250,000 from our “open for Business” fund specifically to programme a series of events making the most of the exciting, new City Park

These proposals demonstrate that Conservatives remain firmly committed to the transformation of Bradford Council into a more efficient organisation focused first and foremost on delivering great services to the residents of the City and District. On top of this, we want to support the regeneration of the City centre and to play a small part in making life in these difficult economic times just a little easier for local residents and businesses.

The spreadsheet lists the Conservative's draft budget proposals to give people an early indication.

1 INTERIM CONSERVATIVE GROUP REVENUE BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS	
2 2012to2013 Municipal Year	
3	
4 Miscellaneous	
5	
6 Removal of goldplated union subsidy	£500,000
7 Fees for collection of union subscriptions by council payroll	£25,000
8 Further Senior management review	£500,000
9 BDP review of officer support structure	£250,000
10 Removal of free staff parking and shuttle minibuses	£100,000
11 Increased use of shared central services with neighbouring councils	£1,000,000
12 Fund to provide free short stay on street parking & freeze car park charges	-1,000,000
13	
14 Total miscellaneous savings	£1,375,000
15	
16 Adult Services	
17	
18 In house domiciliary care	770,000
19 Community Care Equipment	147,000
20 Income / charging	1,000,000
21 In house residential and day care services,	900,000
22 Access/assessment	756,000
23 Business support	330,000
24 Social care reform programme	100,000
25 Housing	1,830,000
26 Strategic commissioning	553,000
27 Care Trust contract	1,000,000
28 Community Fund Unit	483,000
29 Reduced spend on passenger transport due to personalisation	500,000
30 Continuation of Whetley Hill	-250,000
31 Total Adult Services Savings	8,119,000
32	
33 Children Services	
34	
35 Directors office	53,410
36 Early years efficiency savings	1,500,000
37 14-19 Commissioning, NEET, Post 16 funding	63,000
38 Transformation service efficiencies	400,000
39 School places	600,000
40 Home to school transport	200,000
41 VI/HI Service (Visual impairment / Hearing impairment)	200,000
42 Contract delayering and efficiencies	2,750,000
43 Assistant Director's Office	30,000
44 Outside district placements	440,000
45 Youth offending efficiency savings from non statutory	70,000
46 Transfer of provision of Youth Service to Voluntary / Community Sector	730,000
47 New schools fund	-250,000
48 Total Children's Services savings	6,756,447
49	
50 Chief Executive's Office	
51	
52 Strategic Co-ordination and admin	60,000
53 Main political opposition group support	30,000
54 Public Affairs & Communications	£522,300

55	Human Resources	400,000
56	Total Chief Executive's savings	1,012,300
57		
58	Department of Finance	
61		
62	5% Efficiency savings	1,098,900
63	Discretionary benefits payments	600,000
64		
66	Total Finance Department savings	1,698,900
67		
68	Legal & Democratic Services	
69		
70	Shared Legal Services with neighbouring authorities	1,000,000
71		
72		
73	Democratic Services	
74		
75	Merging of Electoral, Secretariat, Member and Support	
76	services, reduction of management posts and admin.	150,000
77		
78	Total Legal & Democratic efficiency savings.	1,150,000
79		
80	Environment & Sport Department	
81		
82	Director's office	41,000
83	Admin & Depot efficiencies	105,000
84	Engagement & Co-ordination	500,000
85	Creation of a Leisure Trust	500,000
86	Tendering of refuse collection and Waste Centres	500,000
87		
88	Total Environment & Sport	1,646,000
89		
90	Regeneration & Culture	
91		
92	Planning, full cost charging	200,000
93	Transportation	
94	(Planning & Transport Strategy efficiencies, excluding winter maintenance)	1,000,000
95	Merge Climate change unit with FM	350,000
96	Housing - improved use of capital financing	255,000
97	Economic development review	100,000
98	Events & Festivals (increase spend to £500k)	-73,000
99	Transfer of Community Halls to voluntary / community sector	159,000
100	Externalise (non statutory) employment and skills provision	2,300,000
101	Creation of Theatres Trust	500,000
102		
103		
104	Regeneration & Culture savings total	4,791,000
105		
106	Total savings	26,548,647