

The Council Executive's Money-Saving Ideas for 2025/26

Summary

This report is about the Council Executive's ideas to save money for the year 2025/26.

We want to save a total of £33.84 million with 47 different ideas. Here is a quick look at the ideas:

- Two ideas about school transport that will save £0.5 million. We will ask people what they think about these.
- Five ideas that will save £16.2 million related to BCFT. These are just for information.
- Eighteen ideas that will save £5.988 million and will also ask for people's opinions.
- Twenty-two ideas that were talked about before in March 2024, saving £11.152 million. These are also just for information.

Starting on November 5, 2024, people can share their thoughts about these money-saving ideas by filling out a survey. They can do this online or by mail. This is a chance for everyone to say what they think.

For the two school transport ideas, there will also be separate consultations starting on November 6 and 18, 2024. After these consultations, the Council Executive will meet in February 2025 to talk about what people said and make decisions.

All ideas that might affect fairness have a special check called an Equality Impact Assessment.

We are also working on more ideas to save another £6.16 million, which will be shared in December 2024.

Equality & Diversity:

This report explains why it is important to think about fairness when making budget savings. Just like in the past, there are special checks called **Equality Impact Assessments** for the ideas that might affect fairness.

The money in the budget helps the Council do important things, like making sure everyone has a fair chance at good health, enough money, opportunities, and a clean environment.

Background:

Money Problems: We have big money problems. Last year, We spent **£80 million** more than we had, which means we need help from the Government to borrow money. This has created a big gap of **£120 million** in our budget. For next year, we think we will be short **£140 million**.

Future Plans: It might take at least **five more years** for the Council to fix these money issues. We might need to borrow a total of **£573 million**. To help with this, we need to save about **£40 million** each year.

Why This Happened: There are four main reasons for these problems:

- The cost of taking care of children has gone up a lot, from **£100 million** in 2019 to **£250 million** now.
- The Council does not get enough money. For example, people in Bradford pay **£145 less** in taxes than in other places.
- The Council has used a lot of its savings without a good plan for the future. We used **£48 million** of our savings last year, but now we only have **£39.6 million** left.
- There are also some challenges within the Council itself.

What the Council is Doing: To fix these problems, we are:

- Planning to save about **£40 million** for 2025/26 and the years after.
- Looking for ways to save money all year long.
- Reducing our spending on big projects to save on borrowing costs.
- Trying to sell some things to make **£100 million** to help pay off debts.
- Keeping a close eye on spending.
- Working to make sure we have the right people and tools to manage money better.

Important Goals: It is really important for us to stick to our savings plan so we can keep the trust of the Government and avoid having someone else come in to run things.

Current Savings: So far, we have found **£33.84 million** in savings towards our goal of **£40 million** for 2025/26. We will look for more savings to cover the remaining **£6.16 million** and share these ideas in December 2024.

Future Savings: We are also trying to find more savings now and in 2025/26 to help with any extra spending or to save for the next year.

Overall Impact: The planned savings for this year and next year are very important for helping us become more stable with the Council's money.

Savings Proposals Needing Special Attention (£0.500 million)

Children and Families – Cllr Sue Duffy (£0.500 million)

Changes to Transport for Older Students (£0.300 million)

Every council needs to have arrangements to help eligible older students (over 16) get to school. We want to ask families what they think about the help they get for travel.

The goal is to make sure the help is right for the students and their families. We want to help families find their own ways to travel instead of the Council doing it for them. This will also help the Council save money.

For the year 2024/25, we think we will spend **£1,316,500** on transport for eligible older students. Right now, **216 students** are getting help with travel, and this number might go up.

Currently, if a student gets help from the Council for transport, we pay **£370** each year. If the new plan is approved, this will stay the same for students who really need the Council's help, like those who need a taxi or minibus.

If approved, under the new plan, students with special needs will get a yearly allowance based on how far they live from school. This money can help them arrange their own travel:

- **3 to 10 miles:** £1,000 per year
- **10.01 to 20 miles:** £2,000 per year
- **Over 20.01 miles:** £3,000 per year
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This allowance will allow families choose how to get to school instead of using Council buses. Some families already like this option. The plan aims to help students be more independent while using the Council's money wisely.

For some students with very special needs, the Council will still arrange transport like taxis or minibuses because that might be the best option for them.

If the changes are approved, they will start in **April 2025** for new requests or if a student's situation changes. Current users will stay on the old plan until **September 2025**, when everyone will switch to the new plan.

Special Bus Services (£0.200 million)

The Council pays to run **35 special school buses to six schools**. This has been happening for many years because lots of students needed these buses. But since 2016, fewer students have been using these services.

These buses let parents choose schools that are not close to home, but now the Council is paying for some students who do not get help with travel costs. This means the Council is spending a lot of money on buses that are not needed as much

anymore.

As of **September 2024**, there are **56 students** who get help with travel to the schools mentioned, using **18 special buses**. Many of these buses have very few students on them. There are also **1,209 students** who pay for their own tickets to ride these buses.

The plan is to stop the special bus services to **St Bede's, St Joseph's, and Bingley Grammar School** starting in **September 2025**. Instead, students who need help will get travel passes for trains or buses, or other transport like minibuses or taxis if needed.

Savings Ideas for Bradford Children and Families Trust (£16.200 million)

1. **Children's Trust Savings:** The Children's Trust has come up with ideas to save **£16.200 million**. They are also working on more ideas to save an extra **£0.600 million**.
2. **What the Council Needs to Know:** The Council needs to understand these ideas and how they will affect the budget for 2025/26.

Savings Ideas:

Reducing Agency Staff (£3.200 million):

- The Council wants to lower the number of temporary workers who help with social work. They plan to go from **353 workers** in March 2024 to **231** in March 2025, and then to **114** by March 2026.
- Right now, there are **301** temporary workers, but they expect this number to drop to **176** by March 2025 and **65** by March 2026. They are already working on this change.

Helping Kids Stay with Families (£7.600 million):

- The Council wants to help more families so that fewer kids need to go into care. We plan to help about **9 kids** each month stay with their families instead of going into care.
- Right now, there are **1,398 kids** in care, but we hope to reduce this number to **1,335** by March 2025.

Supporting Young Adults Leaving Care (£1.300 million):

- The Council will help young adults who are leaving care find good places to live and get the support they need. We will also help them get money for housing.
- We want to start planning for their future when they turn **16** so they can be more independent.

Family Help Programs (£1.300 million):

- The Council will use programs like Family Group Conferencing to help families stay together and reduce the need for social workers to step in.
- This will help kids return home from care when it is safe to do so.

Helping Kids with Health Needs (£2.800 million):

- The Council wants to provide better support for kids with complex health and disability needs. This will help keep them out of care.
- We will also create short breaks for families to help them manage better.

Savings Ideas to Discuss (£5.988 million)

Leader of the Council & Corporate Area – Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe (£1.100 million)

IT Savings (£0.300 million)

- The Council will save money by combining and reducing IT contracts.

More Efficiency in Communication (£0.150 million)

- We will save money by organising communication resources better across the Council.

Cheaper IT Licences (£0.150 million)

- The Council will look at how many Microsoft 365 licences they need and switch some users to cheaper options.

Spending Less on Outside Help (£0.500 million)

- The Council spends about **£435 million** each year on outside companies for services like roads, parks, and waste collection. We will review these contracts to find ways to save money.

Economy, Employment, and Skills – Cllr Imran Khan (£0.750 million)

One-Time Skills Grant (£0.750 million)

- The Council expects to get extra money from a grant for the Employment and Skills Service, which will help save money this year.

Regeneration, Planning, and Transport – Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw (£0.840 million)

Saving on Staff Costs (£0.100 million)

- We will save money by changing how we pay for staff.

Reducing Dangerous Driving (£0.580 million)

- The Council will set up more places to check for dangerous driving to help keep roads safe. We will start with two pilot locations.

Merging Planning Panels (£0.022 million)

- We will save money by combining some planning groups.

Saving Energy on Street Lights (£0.138 million)

- The Council will dim some street lights to save energy, but we will be careful about areas that need to stay bright for safety.

Healthy People and Places – Cllr Sarah Ferriby (£3.198 million)

Charging for Short-Term Care Beds (£0.150 million)

- The Council will start charging for short stays in care beds, which is common in other places. This will help bring in extra money.

Changing Extra Care Funding (£0.237 million)

- We will change how we pay for extra care services to make it easier and save money.

Improving Street Cleaning and Parks (£1.500 million)

- The Council will change how we clean streets and maintain parks to make things better and save money. They will also encourage community clean-up events.

Increasing Garden Waste Fees (£0.400 million)

- The Council will raise the fee for garden waste collection from **£53** to **£62.01** to cover costs.

Reducing Community Service Grants (£0.336 million)

- The Council will cut funding for some community projects by **21%** to help us become self-sufficient.

Reviewing Learning Disability Care (£0.250 million)

- We will make sure we recover costs for people who need special health care funded by the NHS.

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Building Community Partnerships (£0.150 million)

- The Council will create partnerships to help people in the community, which will save money by reducing the need for formal care.

Library Hours Review (£0.175 million)

- The Council will save money by reducing the hours that libraries are open

Children and Families – Cllr Sue Duffy (£0.100 million)

Making Money from Education Psychologists (£0.100 million)

- The Council wants to make more money for the Education Psychologists Service. Instead of raising fees for families, we plan to find new ways to bring in extra business. This extra money will help pay for the services they provide.

Savings Ideas Already Approved by the Council (£11.152 million)

Leader of the Council & Corporate Area – Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe (£2.621 million)

Improving Customer Services (£1.600 million)

- The Council wants to make it easier for people to get help by using technology like voice automation. This will save money and help residents have a better experience when they contact the Council.

Changing Employee Benefits (£0.750 million)

- The Council will simplify the rules about employee benefits to make them fairer and easier to understand.

Reducing Pension Payments (£0.101 million)

- The Council will save money because fewer former employees are receiving extra pension payments.

Saving on Office Costs (£0.045 million)

- The Council will save money by changing how they staff their offices and reducing printing costs.

Stopping the Counselling Service (£0.125 million)

- The Council is thinking about ending a counselling contract early to save money, while still offering other support services.

Neighbourhoods and Community Safety – Cllr Kamran Hussain (£0.522 million)

Stopping Support for Some Community Services (£0.138 million)

- The Council will stop funding some community support contracts to save money.

Reducing Community Team Staff (£0.225 million)

- The Council will save money by reducing the number of staff in the Stronger Communities team.

Cutting Staff in Neighbourhood Teams (£0.109 million)

- The Council will save money by having fewer people in the Neighbourhood Teams.

Reducing Youth Services Staff (£0.050 million)

- The Council will save money by having fewer staff in the Youth Services teams.

Regeneration, Planning, and Transport – Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw (£2.805 million)

Saving on Catering and Cleaning (£0.600 million)

- The Council will save money by changing how they staff catering and cleaning services.

Closing Unused Buildings (£1.002 million)

- The Council will save money by closing or selling buildings that are no longer needed.

Increasing Parking Fees (£1.203 million)

- The Council will raise parking fees in different areas to make more money.

Healthy People and Places – Cllr Sarah Ferriby (£5.004 million)

Closing the Visitor Information Centre (£0.009 million)

- The Council will save money by closing the Visitor Information Centre but will still provide information from the library.

Reviewing Care for Adults with Disabilities (£2.500 million)

- The Council will check if the current care plans for adults with disabilities are still needed and make changes if necessary.

Reviewing Mental Health Services (£0.250 million)

- The Council will review care plans for people with mental health needs to make sure they are getting the best support.

Helping Older People Stay Independent (£0.250 million)

- The Council will help older people get the support they need to stay independent and reduce the need for long-term care.

Reducing High-Cost Care for Older People (£0.500 million)

- The Council will help older people use community services and technology to stay at home instead of going into care.

Reviewing Care Packages for Older People (£0.500 million)

- The Council will look at how many carers older people need and make changes to save money.

Checking Low-Cost Care Packages (£0.250 million)

- The Council will reassess the needs of people who get low-cost care to see if they still need it.

Older People Reviews (£0.245 million)

- The Council wants to create a better way to help older people who need special care. We will add more resources to make sure that fewer people need this

special care called s117 Aftercare. We will also check on the older people who are already receiving this care to make sure they are getting the right support. This will help everyone get the help they need more quickly and effectively.

Children and Families – Cllr Sue Duffy (£0.200 million)

Teacher Pensions (£0.200 million)

- The Council will save money because fewer former teachers are receiving extra pension payments that were agreed upon a long time ago. This change will not affect current teachers at all.

Managing Risks and Rules

Budget Risks: The Council's budget has some risks that we need to think about.

Uncertain Money: The Council is not sure how much money we will have. We are keeping an eye on this and will talk about it in our reports in March and December.

Saving Money: The Council has a big goal to save money, which is tough. We are planning carefully and trying to find ways to save even more than **£40 million**. This will help us be ready for any extra costs that might come up and save money for the future.

Changes During the Year: Sometimes, things do not go as planned with the budget. The Council is ready for this and will make changes quickly if needed. We will share budget information sooner and, in more detail, to help everyone understand.

Teamwork: All of this is managed by a special team called the **Bradford Budget Emergency Response Team (BBERT)**. We will keep checking on the budget and report back to the Council regularly.

Understanding the Rules for Money Management

Keeping Track of Money: The Council has to follow some important rules about how they manage their money. They need to make sure they are spending and saving correctly.

Checking Money Regularly: The Council must look at how much money they have and how much they are spending throughout the year. If they see that they are running out of money, they need to take action to fix it.

Fairness for Everyone: The Council also has to make sure they treat everyone

fairly. They need to think about how their decisions affect different groups of people, like those with disabilities or different backgrounds. This means they should try to help everyone have the same opportunities.

Helping Everyone: The Council needs to make sure that people who might have a harder time, like those with disabilities, get the support they need. They should also encourage everyone to join in community activities.

Listening to the Community: The Council must talk to people who pay taxes and those who use their services to understand what they need and how to improve.

Making Things Better: The Council has to keep finding ways to do things better and save money while helping the community.

Other Important Information

Community Safety: The Council is going to make changes to street lighting in areas that need extra care to keep everyone safe.

Human Rights: If there are any issues related to people's rights because of this report, the Council will look at them carefully in special reviews.

Working with Unions: The Council is facing money problems, which means they might have to change how they provide services. This could mean that some workers might lose their jobs, but the Council wants to avoid this if they can. They have plans to help workers during these changes.

Right now, there is no need to start a special process for job cuts, but if it becomes necessary, the Council will talk to the workers' unions. They have to do this if 20 or more workers might lose their jobs in a short time. If 100 or more workers are at risk, they need to start talking to the unions at least 45 days before any job cuts happen. They will discuss ways to help workers keep their jobs and lessen the impact of any cuts.

Talking About the Budget saving ideas and Getting Feedback

Getting Opinions: The Council wants to hear what people think about their budget plans for the year 2025-2026. They want everyone in the community to share their ideas and opinions.

When to Share: Starting from **November 5, 2024**, people can fill out a survey to give their thoughts. They can do this online or by sending a letter to the Council for free. The Council will also use social media like Twitter and Facebook to let everyone know about this opportunity.

Fairness for Everyone: The Council encourages everyone to talk about how the

budget might affect different groups of people. We have looked at how our plans might impact people with special needs or those who might need extra help.

Special Consultations: For two specific proposals about school transport, the Council will reach out to people starting on **November 11**. We will ask for feedback until **January 8**. For the dedicated bus service, We will start asking for opinions on **November 11** and continue until **December 18**.

Sharing Results: After gathering all the feedback, the Council will share what they learned with their Executive team on **February 18, 2025**. We will use this information to finalise our budget plans before the big meeting on **March 6, 2025**.

Ongoing Conversations: Besides this main budget talk, the Council will keep having other discussions about specific changes to services that need separate feedback.

Impact on Kids: The Council will also look at how these budget plans might affect children and young people, and we will check this in our reviews.

Recommendations

Understanding Money Problems: The Council needs to recognise that they have some big money challenges and will need to save a lot over the next five years.

Starting Conversations: We should start talking to people about saving **£0.500 million** as mentioned earlier.

Reporting Back: The Council should plan to share what they learned from these conversations in February 2025.

Looking at Savings for Children and Families: We should pay attention to the savings ideas for the Children and Families Trust, which total **£16.200 million**.

Approving More Savings: We should agree to save **£5.988 million** as mentioned before, but only after talking to the community about it.

Remembering Previous Savings: We should keep in mind the savings ideas from earlier that total **£11.152 million**, which were already discussed and recommended for approval.

Future Savings Plans: We should know that more savings ideas will be shared at the next Executive Committee meeting on **December 3, 2024**, and that we are also working on saving even more money.

Sharing with Others: These ideas will be shared with the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on **November 14, 2024**, and more ideas will be discussed with them in **January 2025**.

Part of a Bigger Plan: All these savings are part of the larger budget plan, and the full budget for 2025/26 will be presented for approval in March 2025.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

<https://bradford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s46407/Document%20AL%20-%20Revenue%20Estimates.pdf>

<https://bradford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s47881/Doc%20E.pdf>

Budget Papers

New Working Papers: The Council has created new papers to help explain how they plan to save money. These papers show the details for each saving idea.

Helping Members Understand: These papers are part of the regular information that the Council shares with its members so they can review and decide on the budget.

Future Plans: As the Council keeps improving, they might share these papers with everyone in the community for the budget planning in 2026/27. But they will make sure to keep private information safe and not share anything that should not be public.

As part of a pilot project, this document has been produced from the Report of the Interim Director of Finance to the meeting of the Executive to be held on 5 November 2024 with support from artificial intelligence.