

The Future Council – Delivery Plan phase 1

Report of Director of Public Services and Head of Finance

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Cabinet received and agreed a report at its meeting on 7 September setting out the process that the Council is going through in order to learn from the experience of dealing with the pandemic, working with partners and the community to re-design the operating model for the Future Council. This will use the principles of Keep it Local to inform what we do next and define how services might be delivered in the future working with our communities, moving away from a dependency upon the Council and harnessing the potential within the place. It is also intended to set out the action required to build a sustainable financial position for the Council as part of the recovery process from Covid-19.
- 1.2 This report requests approval from Cabinet for the first phase of the delivery plan under this approach. Many of the services provided by the Council, particularly for vulnerable people, are statutory specialist or targeted services. The Future Council framework will be used to ensure that these are delivered as efficiently and effectively as possible and using the same principles of Keep it Local. Phase 1 of the programme however concentrates on Public Services which are in the main services which the Council has some discretion over in terms of service delivery and are mainly universal in their nature i.e. received by most, if not all, of the borough's residents. The Council faces some difficult choices and decisions about these universal services in order to avoid putting any of its statutory responsibilities at risk and to ensure a sustainable position moving forwards.

2. Need for a decision

- 2.1 The report to Cabinet on 7 September explained the Future Council approach but also the extremely challenging financial position of the Council in the current year and over the medium term as the recovery process will not be instant and the impact of Covid-19 will be felt for some considerable time. This has become increasingly evident over recent weeks. The recovery process must be built upon a sound financial base and decisions are required in the current year in order to provide these foundations. This will also allow the Council to make decisions on its sustainability and resilience over the next three years with greater confidence when it discusses and agrees the Council's budget in February next year. Some changes cannot however wait until then as the

Council has to respond to the more immediate challenges to service delivery as a result of the pandemic and financially. The current position allows the opportunity to consider how these services might be delivered in a different way in the future.

- 2.2 The recommendations within this report on Public Services will attempt to implement the learnings from our experience during the pandemic to date, ensure that services are fit for purpose in the post pandemic environment and provide a more sustainable financial position for the Future Council. Wherever possible the recommendations will apply the principles of Keep it Local to work with our communities and voluntary sector and Town and Parish Councils to re-shape service provision.
- 2.3 Recommendations on other services will be reported to Cabinet for decision under subsequent phases of the review.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet agrees the proposals within this report on the re-shaping of Public Services and delegates authority to the Director of Public Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Services and Communities to implement the proposals.
- 3.2 That the necessary consultation is undertaken with service users and staff under the existing Council policies and negotiations with contractors on commissioned services to ensure that the services are fit for purpose.

4. Background and/or details

- 4.1 Cabinet received and agreed a report at its meeting on 7 September setting out the process that the Council is going through in order to learn from the experience of dealing with the pandemic, working with partners and the community to re-design the operating model for the Future Council. This will use the principles of Keep it Local to inform what we do next and define how services might be delivered in the future working with our communities, moving away from a dependency upon the Council and harnessing the potential within the place. The report also recommended that Cabinet receive a further report in October setting out progress with the reviews and timelines for delivery.
- 4.2 This report provides an update of progress on the reviews and makes recommendations about more immediate changes to some discretionary services over which the Council has more control and flexibility in terms of service transformation. This does not mean that statutory or targeted services cannot be provided in different ways and we will continue to explore how they may be undertaken as effectively and efficiently as possible. There are also some discretionary services not referred to in this report where the Council provides a higher standard of services than is required or is provided in other local authorities, for example, winter maintenance. The Council's performance in these areas is higher than most but clearly also comes at a relatively high cost.
- 4.3 The Council and local government more generally are facing greater challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic than it has ever experienced before in its history and these challenges are likely to be with us for some time. These challenges have financial implications both in the current year and in subsequent years as explained in the financial recovery plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy which forecast that the Council may need to identify savings of around £15m next year mainly as a result of the ongoing financial impact of Covid-19.
- 4.4 The financial recovery plan in the current year emphasised the approach being taken with:
- Implementation of the agreed savings
 - Containment of additional costs relating to Covid-19 within the Government support wherever possible
 - Reviewing discretionary spend and re-shaping services towards a business critical model.

Overall the Council has a shortfall this year of around £4.3m which we will partly address on a short term basis through additional contributions to hospital discharges by the CCG and through the Government income compensation scheme. Given that this funding will not necessarily be available in future years budget challenge sessions are also being held with directors to ensure that existing savings targets and budget pressures are being addressed.

- 4.5 Public Services are forecasting in the current year a projected overspend of £8.5m of which £7.6m relates to Covid-19. There is still therefore an underlying budget pressure of £0.9m. Budget pressures in other areas of Public Services such as achievement of the library and halls income targets have also been

exacerbated as a result of the pandemic and are unlikely to be resolved in the near future. This means that short term savings of £900k need to be identified within Public Services to provide a sustainable budget position in advance of the budget process for 2021/22.

- 4.6 Public Services has 738.5 members of staff and a net revenue budget of £24.5m. The directorate brings together a basket of universal services that enhance the quality of life in our local communities and neighbourhoods and have an everyday impact on health and wellbeing.

- 4.7 The Directorate has three service aims that can be summarised as:

Neighbourhoods - Getting the Basics right. The way we manage our environment through our Green Space and Street Scene services has an immediate impact on the people who live, work in and visit our towns and villages. Supported by our Community Protection and Regulatory teams these services are vital to the wellbeing of local areas and local people.

Customer Services – Improving Quality of Life. We make it easier for our customers to access our services and reduce inequalities. Through our customer, cultural and leisure services we play a vital role in the physical and mental wellbeing of our communities and make an important contribution to the wider visitor economy of Calderdale.

IT and Digital – Enabling our Customers and Staff. As signatories to the Local Digital Declaration we are committed to delivering high quality enabling digital services. Our reliance upon technology is greater than ever as both staff and customers have had to adapt to new ways of working and accessing services.

- 4.8 In this report the Public Services which have been reviewed in light of our experience during the pandemic are waste and recycling, transport, parking, libraries, museums, public halls and customer first facilities.

- 4.9 To frame the transformation work it was agreed that we would use the following operating principles over the next 12 months:

1. We will need to operate differently to be financially stable and resilient
2. We want to design public services with the communities and partners
3. We need to prioritise and take decisions at pace
4. We need to support the workforce and deliver services to the best of our abilities
5. We need to do democracy differently embracing digital innovation and improving work-life balance.

- 4.10 We know that these services are important to our communities and contribute towards the Cabinet's objectives. We recognise that there needs to be a strong focus on those most in need and that will mean reducing, ceasing and/or funding different ways of delivery for some of our services.

- 4.11 **Neighbourhoods - Getting the Basics right.**

The following services within the Neighbourhoods Service have been reviewed.

4.12 Waste and Recycling.

As a Unitary authority, Calderdale has a statutory duty under section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990 to provide Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) for the public to dispose of waste. However, there is ambiguity over the number of facilities required, with the EPA simply stating that they need to be “reasonably accessible to persons resident in the area”.

When comparing the current provision in Calderdale to the above guidance it is fair to say there is a good network of HWRC's, with the ratio for inhabitants and households suggesting that two sites, rather than five, could be sufficient. This is evidenced by a simple comparison which shows that Calderdale has the highest number of household waste recycling centres per head of population in West Yorkshire. Notwithstanding this the decision has been taken to reopen all five sites.

The rationale behind this is evidenced by the fact that 44.5% of all domestic recycling went directly through the HWRCs in 19/20. Feedback following the recent Covid-19 closures demonstrated that the level and accessibility of service provided is highly valued by our communities.

If we are to retain five HWRCs it is necessary to explore alternative options as there is still a need to reduce overall costs. The range of options available include:

- i. Reduce the number of household waste recycling centres – as explained above the Council has a relatively high level of service in terms of household waste recycling centres compared with other local authorities but the option of reducing the number of sites has previously been rejected by Cabinet. The closure of two sites would have resulted in savings of around £200,000 per annum to the Council.
- ii. Reduce the opening hours at the household waste recycling centres – reducing the hours of household waste recycling centres would provide more modest revenue savings but would potentially have little impact on overall recycling performance. There are a range of options available including reducing the opening hours at all sites by an hour a day during the summer months (i.e. opening for winter times all year round) which would save around £25,000 per annum or reducing the opening hours at all sites by an hour a day all year round which would save around £43,000. These figures are approximate as they would need to be negotiated with the contractor. Alternatively, there are options which would involve closing the HWRC at Brighouse, Elland and Sowerby Bridge on the quietest days of the week (Tuesday and Wednesday) which would achieve savings to the Council of around £85,000 per annum. Although this option is available to the Council under the contract, there would be staffing implications for the contractor which they would look to the Council for support with.
- iii. Move to a three weekly refuse collection (recycling remaining weekly) – this would require the replacement of some refuse collection vehicles with recycling vehicles at additional cost but could provide significant increases

in recycling performance. Experience of this system in other local authorities suggests that a 15% reduction in waste disposal costs could be achieved which would save around £550,000 per annum. After allowing for increased investment in recycling vehicles and increased food waste the net saving could still be around £400,000 per annum to the Council. Although there may be a public perception of a reduced service and the capacity of bins particularly for large families would need to be considered, the introduction of three weekly refuse collection in other local authorities has increased recycling.

- iv. End of lane collections - potentially up to £180k could be saved by asking all residents in more rural areas to present waste and recycling at lane ends. This would allow for the removal of the Land Rover-type collection vehicles which currently service around 2,100 households in Calderdale. There would be no change in the frequency of collection for households, but they would have to move their waste a greater distance. The potential impact on households with assisted collection would need to be taken into account which could reduce the amount of saving to £120,000 per annum (based on a reduction of two vehicles) or £60,000 per annum based on a reduction of one vehicle.
- v. Fortnightly recycling – Currently only a third of households put recycling materials out for collection on a weekly basis suggesting that most households would be unaffected by a change to fortnightly recycling collections. Potentially £330k net savings could be achieved, even after taking into account that there could be a 15% reduction in recycled waste, through a move to fortnightly recycling (alternate weekly collection of recycling and residual waste) as less vehicles would be required.

4.13 Transport

A large part of the current overspend relates to planned savings on transport from the re-negotiation of contracts for school transport with WYCA and other changes to our school transport policies which were initially delayed due to the pandemic. It is now apparent that due to the ongoing requirements of social distancing and transport requirements for young people attending school that these changes may not be possible and alternative proposals have been considered. Children who are not eligible for free home to school transport are able to pay a fare (£10.75 per week) to use a dedicated school bus if there is spare capacity on the bus. This makes sense as it is inefficient to have half-empty buses driving around the Borough.

We currently subsidise 29 buses at a total cost of £708k and on some of them there are very few pupils for whom we pay/have responsibility because they are eligible for free home to school transport; but we still pay the £24,428 towards the costs of running the bus and WYCA get the fares from the paying pupils. Any increase in concessionary fares would reduce the subsidy required from

the Council from the current £708k due to the fact that WYCA would be getting extra fare income from service users (WYCA's total income would be the same at £1.067m and so would allow them to continue to operate the buses as they do at the moment).

- If we increased the concessionary fare for non-eligible pupils on dedicated home to school transport from £10.75 per week to £13, it would give the Council a £293k saving
- If fares were increased to £14 then the saving to the Council would be £343k.
- If fares were increased to £15 per week (£3 a day) then the saving to the Council would be £394k and
- if fares were increased to £16 then the saving to the Council would be £444k.

We need to consult if we wish to make these changes, and we would ask WYCA to run this on our behalf alongside any other West Yorkshire authorities who want to consider the same changes.

4.14 Parking

Unsurprisingly we have seen a significant reduction in total pay and display income for the period April to August with income at 25% of what it was in the same period last year, a shortfall of £837k for the first 5 months of the financial year.

The service didn't achieve its income targets last financial year (i.e. pre-Covid) and this year is forecast to be £2m overspent, mainly due to the fall in pay and display income (there is also a £65k reduction in permit income April to August 2020).

Whilst we are seeing some signs of recovery this will be added budget pressure for the directorate this year. Although there are no further proposals in this report in relation to Parking the budget pressure will continue into the next financial year and present further challenges to the financial sustainability of the Council.

4.15 Customer Services – Improving Quality of Life

The following services within the Customer Services have been reviewed.

4.16 Libraries

The library service is another service which Calderdale provides to a significantly higher level than comparator authorities and we have the most libraries per head of population in West Yorkshire and the wider region. Most other local authorities have already taken the decision to reduce library provision in the face of continued austerity and rising social care costs and through enhanced digital alternatives. Nationally around 20% of libraries have closed since 2010. The recommendations in this report give the opportunity to

focus the available resources on the highest priorities and to develop the services in a more concentrated number of facilities.

All libraries were closed due to Lockdown restrictions. During this period, we have promoted alternative access to our services and our online digital and Home Delivery Service has seen a significant increase. There is a clear appreciation that some of our library buildings are very small or in such a poor state of repair that it will be impossible to provide safe services with social distancing there. Officers have attempted previously to find alternative community venues and identify options for moving services out of buildings that are no longer fit for purpose, without success. The consolidation of more digitally enhanced library services into a reduced number of buildings based around the central library and hub libraries and potentially a more mobile service which are fit for purpose is therefore necessary at least in the short term. The service also has historic income targets around its audio and video library which are no longer achievable partly as a result of changes in technology and customer preference.

In the meantime Halifax Central, Todmorden and Brighouse libraries have re-opened, with the remaining Hub libraries in Sowerby Bridge, Hebden Bridge and King Cross re-opening from 16th September (with the exception of Elland which remains closed as a full refurbishment of the building takes place). We will utilise all the existing library staff to ensure that safe working arrangements are maintained in these buildings. It is proposed that we reduce the number of community libraries across the Borough and focus provision on our most deprived areas, with IT provision and Customer Service Advisers being a key element of future delivery in those areas.

Consideration has been given to current usage and investment required to make these community library buildings safe and fit to deliver a 21st century library service. They play an important role in promoting wellbeing and cohesion by producing a range of cultural activities and providing many with access to vital online services. In acknowledgement of this Calderdale Council has made significant investment in its library service, over and above the statutory requirements. In these challenging times the Council remains committed to evolving and developing library services to meet new patterns of use and to offer different experiences which meet the varied needs of our communities which is at the core of our Vision 2024.

Our proposal is to retain the existing Halifax Central library and the six hub libraries in Brighouse, Elland, Hebden Bridge, King Cross, Sowerby Bridge and Todmorden but reduce the number of community libraries from 13 to 7, with Shelf remaining operational until the future of the Village Hall is determined.

Akroyd Library - The recommendation is to retain the library and continue to develop the flexible space and self-service to enable an increase in opening hours to match those of the museum.

Beechwood Road Library - The recommendation is to retain the library, as it supports an area with higher levels of deprivation, although further investment will be required in the building.

Greetland Library – a small prefabricated timber on brick-base building now in need of extensive repairs. There has been no community interest in delivering or adding value to the library services, despite Ward Forum discussion and discussions with Cross Hills Methodist Church and St Thomas Church have been unsuccessful. The recommendation is to close the library and signpost people to Stainland (2 miles away) or Elland (1.5 miles away) Libraries.

Hipperholme Library – Situated on the first floor with steps up to the main entrance it is not easily accessible. The lift is old and confined and in need of replacement. The recommendation is to close the library and signpost people to Northowram Library (1.6 miles away) or to Brighouse Library and Halifax Central Library.

Mixenden Library - The recommendation and best way forward for library provision in Mixenden is to integrate the library into Mixenden Hub and retain a service in the area.

Mytholmroyd Library – Although situated on the ground floor, space within the library is restricted and the building is in need of refurbishment both internally and externally. Alternative provisions within Mytholmroyd have been explored and have been unsuccessful. The recommendation is to close the library and signpost people to Hebden Bridge Library (1 mile away).

Northowram Library – the recommendation is that as a well used community library this should be retained.

Rastrick Library - The recommendation is to retain and continue to develop the library co-working with Friends of Rastrick Library.

Ripponden Library – The recommendation is to continue to explore improved links and usage of the building with Ripponden Parish Council in order to retain the library.

Shelf Library - The recommendation is to consider this alongside overall plans for the Village Hall in which it is located.

Skircoat Library – Built in 1926 the building is in need of both internal and external repairs. The recommendation is to close the library and signpost people to Halifax Central Library (1.5 miles away) and King Cross Library (1 mile away).

Southowram Library – Built in 1959 the building needs significant renovation and modernisation. The recommendation is to close the library and signpost people to Halifax Central Library (2 miles away) and Brighouse Library (2.8 miles away).

Stainland Library – the recommendation is to explore options for the Community and / or Parish Council to enable them to operate and maintain the facility for the local community in the future.

4.17 Public Halls

All public halls are currently closed due to lockdown restrictions and the need to ensure that they could be operated safely. This is likely to continue for some time. There is no statutory requirement to provide buildings for the local community to hire. The venues previously provided a small profit for the Authority overall. However in recent years unachievable income targets of £100k have created significant budget pressures for the service. Whilst the service more or less covers operational costs from the hire of the venues, there is no surplus for future maintenance and development.

Todmorden Town Hall is considered to be a key cultural and civic asset within the town which will play an increasing part in the planned development as part of the Towns Fund. For these reasons it is proposed that it be retained within the Council's cultural assets.

The position on Clay House, Brighthouse Civic Hall and Shelf village hall is less clear and it is recommended that these facilities be offered to our communities and local voluntary organisations to be responsible for their use and upkeep. Unless community interest can be found these buildings will remain closed and ultimately we will consider their sale.

4.18 Museums and Galleries

Shibden Hall re-opened in August for visitors with appropriate arrangements in place to ensure the safety of visitors and the staff that work there. Changes made to facilitate this include a requirement to pre-book tickets to visit by installing the Eventbrite booking system. With this and other precautions in place it may be possible to accommodate around two thirds of the visitors which were expected for the remainder of the year. This will mean a shortfall in income of around £120k this year compared with what was expected. We will attempt to recover part of this through the Government's income compensation scheme.

Bankfield Museum closed to the public on 20 March 2020. Bankfield is attended primarily by adults and is the only facility of its type in Calderdale with Shibden Hall primarily being a historic house. Approximately 60% of visitors are Calderdale residents and the remaining 40% are visitors from outside the area so Bankfield is also a tourist attraction for the Borough. The service will continue to make accessible our collections and information relating to the history and heritage of Calderdale and its people. This will remain the primary function of the service and the building.

Bankfield had a record year in 2019/20 with 41,958 visitors in person considerably up from 26,202 the previous year. It has been very successful recently following a combined exhibition programme with Shibden Hall. The two sites are attracting record numbers of tourists to the area as part of the "Gentleman Jack Effect".

It is proposed that Bankfield Museum will re-open in October. We will continue to promote our online offer both for the shop and for the sale of prints from our collection or use of collection images. There are no admission charges for Bankfield Museum but we will increase signage to suggest a donation of “£5 per person or whatever you can afford” at the entrance and exit. We have now installed a contactless option to make donations as well as the existing cash donations boxes. The online shop also includes an option to add a donation to your basket before checkout.

Current restrictions make it difficult to promote hire of meeting spaces etc. or the inclusion of charges for children’s activities but we can re-introduce these once it is possible to do so.

Similar arrangements are currently being put in place for the Smith Art Gallery.

The opportunity for tours has been explored for Heptonstall Museum, but the size of the building would make it not economically viable to operate with social distancing guidance. Larger events, crowds, and proximity of people in confined spaces or rooms are not likely to be allowed for some time. For these reasons it is recommended that Heptonstall Museum does not re-open at least in the short term. Community interest in taking over the museum will be gauged over this period. Unless community interest is forthcoming which can take on operation of the Heptonstall museum on a self-financing basis then the museum will remain closed.

4.19 Customer First

Pre Covid, our face to face Customer First service was provided in Halifax, Brighouse Civic Hall and Todmorden Library, with appointments also being offered in Hebden Bridge, Elland and Sowerby Bridge. Demand in all Customer First points had significantly reduced even before coronavirus with the greatest reductions being seen in the district offices. Brighouse saw a reduction in demand by 26% from 2017/18 to 2019 with Todmorden seeing a 23% reduction from 2017/18 to 2019. Numbers across all Customer First points have reduced by 46% since the introduction of Universal Credit in 2017 and numbers in Brighouse have reduced significantly since the closure of the Together Housing Office and the Job Centre and Universal Support is being provided through the Citizen Advice Bureau.

Hubs such as libraries and neighbourhood offices within local communities are supporting customers often in a more holistic way than can be delivered by Customer First Advisers. The experience gained during lockdown reinforces the view that this service can be promoted through alternative means although the impact of increasing numbers of unemployed people resulting from Covid-19 will also need to be taken into account.

Customer First at Horton Street was closed on 24 March 2020. Since then all front-line customer access teams have been working remotely and have demonstrated resilience, adaptability and responsiveness.

Support that was previously offered face to face has still been available via the phone or digital channels. Advisers who are part of the Early Advice and Support Team (EAST) have continued to support customers who have been referred to them as potentially vulnerable. They continue to use 'Trauma Informed Practice' methodology to confidently assist customers with a variety of complex needs and circumstances.

Three advisers specifically deal with Homelessness Prevention working with the Housing Options Team. During Covid all homeless people have been allocated temporary accommodation regardless of their circumstances which resulted in an increased caseload. The advisers have also focussed on finding accommodation for those under the threat of eviction before the suspension of regulations prohibiting evictions.

Our digital assistant VIRA was able to provide answers to a range of enquiries including Council Tax and Waste enabling customers to access our services 24/7. In total VIRA and the human aided chat have handled almost 13,000 exchanges with customers since the start of the pandemic.

It is recommended that Horton Street remains permanently closed to customers and staff and that the team continue to work remotely to manage the telephony and digital channels, and in localities to offer face to face support for those customers who require it.

Initially this face to face support will be delivered on an appointment basis through the Central and Hub Libraries for complex enquiries or to help customers on the free-use PCs where they don't have digital access or have limited skills. There will also be support delivered through Halifax Opportunities Trust for customers who need assistance to make EU Settlement Applications and we are working on plans for Homelessness Advice to be provided from No42 in Halifax Town Centre.

When it is safe to do so, this support will be scaled up to include drop-in sessions. We also have an agreement in principle with the DWP to have a presence in their Halifax office once they reopen more widely to the public which is something they are keen to pursue. We will open up discussions with other partners such as the CAB and agencies in outlying locations depending on where there is demand and whether or not it is a safe environment for our staff and customers.

Finally, we will be using what we have experienced through the Covid pandemic to develop the Customer Service Strategy for 2021 – 2024. All these developments were initially driven by the need to respond to the pandemic but our experience now suggests that an improved service can be provided without the requirement to operate from Customer First offices supplemented with the option of face to face contact where necessary through the Hub libraries.

5. Options considered

- 5.1 The Council could, when restrictions allow, return to operating and commissioning services as it did prior to the pandemic. This would not however be affordable based on the latest financial projections, but also would not use the valuable experience learned during lockdown to inform the design of future services. Without changes in the types of public universal services proposed in this report then compensatory savings would be required from other discretionary services which the Council has prioritised in recent years or a more risk based approach to targeted services to vulnerable people would need to be adopted.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The latest estimate is that the additional cost to the Council in the current year is likely to be around £31.6m with around £16.7m of additional Government funding to cover this i.e. a shortfall of £14.9m. Around £10.6m of this relates to potential losses on council tax and business rates income which the Government has said that it will allow local authorities to recover over the next three years. There is therefore currently an in year shortfall of around £4.3m. It is anticipated that this will reduce through the receipt of additional CCG contributions towards the additional social care costs associated with the discharge of people from hospital and also the Government income compensation scheme.
- 6.2 The reliance on short term funding is however not sustainable and more permanent solutions need to be put in place for existing budget pressures and unachievable savings in advance of the budget process for 2021/22. Our initial estimate of the potential impact on next year's budget position is that the Council may be faced with having to find on-going savings of around £8m in a best case scenario and up to £20m in the worst case. This will increase if existing budget pressures are not addressed and by any unfunded shortfall in relation to the coronavirus, for example, the deficit on Council Tax and Business Rates income in the current year.
- 6.3 In the case of Public Services, there were existing budget pressures prior to the pandemic on income targets in libraries, halls and in particular on transport where the demand and cost of transporting special educational needs children has escalated. The latest forecast in the current year is that even after stripping out Covid related costs of £7.6m there is an underlying budget deficit of at least £900k. Although proposals to reduce these budgetary pressures were agreed in January it has not been possible to implement some of these plans due to the pandemic and the planned changes on transport contracts and policies cannot now be implemented until September 2021 at the earliest due to the current social distancing arrangements and the need to consult on any changes.
- 6.4 The proposals in this report under phase 1 of the delivery plan could make the following contributions to reducing the shortfall in a full year:

	Full year saving (£000)
Reduce household waste recycling centres to statutory level	200
Reduce opening hours of household waste recycling centres	85
Move to 3 weekly Kerbside Refuse Collections	400
End of Lane Collections	120
Move to 2 weekly Recycling Collections	330
Increase in Concessionary Bus Fees	343
Libraries	150
Public Halls	163
Museums & galleries	15
Customer First	174

- 6.5 Some of these savings will be realised in other service areas of the Council – the savings on library services are mainly in relation to building running costs and some savings have already been assumed within other reports such as the Office Accommodation Strategy. The proposals in this report would however deliver realisable savings to the Council and help put the Council's financial position on a more sustainable footing in advance of the budget process for 2021/22 which is expected to be even more challenging.
- 6.6 The potential changes in waste services would need to be negotiated with the contractor in some cases but the savings are based on estimates from previous discussions. Similarly the savings from an increase in the concessionary bus fares would need to be agreed with WYCA.
- 6.7 The potential saving in the library service is based on the retention of the community libraries suggested in paragraph 4.16. While social distancing requirements and other Covid safe working arrangements are still required, existing staff will be diverted to those libraries which are re-opening. In the first instance therefore, the savings are likely to be less than anticipated above (currently estimated to be around £100k per annum). Where it is suggested that the Council retain community libraries we would continue to work with the community to establish interest in a model by which the community would operate that library and make it more financially sustainable. The sale of library buildings if not required by the community could potentially raise capital receipts of around £400k for the Council which could be re-invested in service development. For example, it is estimated that the amount of investment required to maintain the community libraries over the next five years is around £1m. The proposals within this report to retain the core of community libraries

would reduce the additional funding which the Council would have to identify to around £500k.

- 6.8 The forecast saving on public halls assumes the closure of Clay House, Brighthouse Civic Hall and Shelf village hall but also a reduction in the associated management costs.
- 6.9 In total the options in this report could provide a saving to the Council in a full year of nearly £2m per annum. Part of this (£174k) has already been assumed in the revised Office Accommodation Strategy agreed by Council and will be utilised to service the investment required under this strategy. It would also not be possible to implement all of the waste options in their totality. Little of this could be achieved in the current year due to the consultation processes which would need to be undertaken but any savings realised in 2020/21 would help reduce the current year budget deficit and reduce the likely need to use reserves to balance this year's budget position. If the potential changes were not introduced until after the Council agreed its budget in February 2021 then it would not be possible to achieve the full year effect in 2021/22.
- 6.10 Where the proposals include disposal of a building, in the case of no community interest in running it, then this would realise a capital receipt to the Council. The current capital programme has limited scope for re-investment in the development of services and therefore additional capital receipts would allow for some re-investment in Council capital priorities.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 All the proposals within this report and under the approach being taken to re-starting and reviewing Council operations will need to comply with appropriate guidance and legislation in terms of the responsibilities of local authorities. The Head of Democratic and Partnership Services will be consulted on all relevant proposals.

8. Human Resources and Organisation Development Implications

- 8.1 Public Services has been carrying vacancies within its establishment for some time and during the pandemic vacancies have been retained in order to give some flexibility when a restructure became necessary. In some cases, however, such as libraries it will be necessary to retain all permanent staff in the short term due to the increased staffing requirements to ensure that social distancing is exercised at facilities. In this case, the need for casual staff hours will reduce. In the longer term as the requirements for social distancing ease then staffing levels will need to be reduced accordingly but may be achieved through vacancy management.
- 8.2 Once the principles of the service requirements have been agreed, detailed staffing requirements will be determined and consultation undertaken with the trade unions and staff in accordance with the Council's HR policies for restructures. Where there is a proposed reduction in staffing numbers, in the first instance we would seek expressions of interest in applications for Voluntary Redundancy/Voluntary Early Retirement. We would also seek to redeploy

individuals to alternative roles before making any compulsory redundancies. The Council's HR policies in relation to Redundancies, Restructuring and Redeployment will be followed and subject to consultation.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 The proposals within this report will require consultation with the community, service users, and affected staff through the Council's HR policies and procedures.

10. Environment, Health and Economic Implications

- 10.1 The Director of Public Health is included on the Future Council Group and will be involved, along with other key services and professional advisors, in the decision making on when to re-start and review services.

11. Equality and Diversity

- 11.1 Equality impact assessments will be undertaken on any significant service changes resulting from the recommendations within this report.

12. Summary and Recommendations

- 12.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has given us an opportunity to re-engage with the community and our partner organisations to think about and re-design the role of the Future Council. At the same time the Council is facing significant financial challenges both in the short term but likely also to be over the next three years as the country and the borough start to recover from its impact.
- 12.1 This report is the first phase of a delivery plan to re-shape the Future Council which will concentrate on protecting the most vulnerable people in the borough and providing business critical services. As a result this phase concentrates on universal services, which most if not all people receive, and considers how these might be delivered through alternative means in the context of continued restrictions around social distancing and constantly changing requirements.
- 12.2 The report concentrates on Public Services and specifically waste and recycling, parking, libraries, museums, public halls and customer first facilities. Options are included in this report which would protect the Household waste sites which the Council has but reduce the frequency of collections.
- 12.3 On parking, this report recognises at this stage that it will take some time for the Council's parking income to reach previous levels and the opportunity will be taken to consider parking requirements and the move towards cashless payments in line with the Council's climate change aspirations. The longer-term implications will need to be considered as part of the budget process.

- 12.4 In the first instance Halifax Central and Hub libraries have reopened, and service availability will be extended to browsing and use of the IT equipment which is a valuable resource to many of our residents. Many of the community libraries are in a poor state of repair and would require significant investment but would even then not be able to maintain safe social distancing. The report therefore recommends that the Council reduces the number of community libraries across the Borough and focus provision on our most deprived areas and areas furthest away from other libraries, with IT provision and Customer Service Advisers being a key element of future delivery in those areas. Where possible the Council will work with communities to establish the local appetite to operate local libraries.
- 12.5 On museums, it is proposed that we continue to develop the digital access to our exhibits at Bankfield Museum, Shibden Hall and the Smith Art Gallery but improved arrangements including pre-booking of visits have also been put in place to ensure that visitors can have an enjoyable, educational but also safe visit. The only facility where this is not possible is the Heptonstall museum where it is recommended that the Council establish whether there would be any community interest in utilising this building.
- 12.6 On public halls, the report recommends that Todmorden Town Hall is retained as a central and civic hub within the town particularly in the context of the plans through the Towns Fund. The Council will consult with communities or organisations to establish interest in taking on the halls at Clay House, Brighouse civic hall and Shelf village hall as it is not financially viable for the Council to continue to maintain these.
- 12.7 There are currently no plans to re-open the Customer First facilities in Halifax, Brighouse or Todmorden and so Customer Service Advisers will work from our Hub libraries, supporting people with online applications and reporting. Our online facilities are excellent and well used by customers, however we are aware that for some people, with more complex issues, face to face support will be vital. We will provide this from our Hub libraries and also in partnership with the voluntary and community sector and DWP.
- 12.8 The report concludes that these proposals will help put the directorate in a more financially sustainable position but that the appropriate consultation, including affected staff, will be undertaken before implementing any permanent changes.
- 12.9 A report on the second phase of the Future Council programme will be presented to the Cabinet meeting in November with proposals around services from other parts of the Council using the principles and framework agreed previously.
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The documents used in the preparation of this report are:

1. Cabinet report on 7 September 2020: The Future Council – re-start and review of Council operations
- 2.
- 3.

The documents are available for inspection at:

Finance Services, Westgate House, Halifax, HX1 1PS