Public Document Pack

Rutland County Council

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Telephone 01572 722577 Email governance@rutland.gov.uk

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A meeting of the **Rutland Countryside Access Forum** will be held virtually via Zoom on **Wednesday, 16th June, 2021** commencing at 2.00 pm when it is hoped you will be able to attend.

https://zoom.us/j/99146174800

Yours faithfully

Mark Andrews
Chief Executive

A G E N D A

1) APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

2) APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

3) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

4) TERMS OF REFERENCE

To note the Terms of Reference for the Rutland Countryside Access Forum. (Pages 3 - 6)

5) BUDGET SAVING PROPOSALS - PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

To receive a report by Stuart Crook, Highways Asset & Policy Manager. (Pages 7 - 34)

6) IMPROVEMENTS TO ACCESS ALONG THE OLD OAKHAM CANAL

Presentation from Paul Dadford, Project Manager, who is seeking grant funding to help deliver improvements to access along the old Canal.

7) ANY OTHER BUSINESS

To receive any other items of business which have been previously notified to the person presiding.

8) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 6 October 2021.

To note: There is a statutory requirement to have two meetings a year

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<u>DISTRIBUTION</u>
MEMBERS OF THE RUTLAND COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM

Cllr W Cross
Mr J Law
Mr J Williams
Ms R Harris
Mr R Linford
Mr H Baines
Mr W Kirstein
Mr R Brett
Mr J Buchannan
Mr C Plummer
Mr J Clarkson
Cllr A Brown
Cllr M Jones

Rutland Countryside Access Forum

Terms of Reference

Role and Responsibilities

1. Section 94 of the Countryside And Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 places a statutory duty on highway authorities to establish advisory bodies to be known as Local Access Forums. The primary purpose of the Rutland Countryside Access Forum is to provide advice to the authorities and to Natural England on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open-air recreation, in ways which address social, economic and environmental interests. The Forum will encourage and assist access provision, giving advice on issues of particular local relevance.

2. The Rutland Countryside Access Forum will give advice on three main topics:

   a) Development of recreation and access strategies which cater for a wide range of people;
   b) Improving the rights of way network; and
   c) Implementation, management and review of the statutory right of access to the countryside.

3. Those bodies obliged to have regard to advice received from the Forum should give serious consideration to excluding Forum members from paid work initiated by those bodies, where such work could be directly and specifically attributed to the advice received from the Forum.

4. The Rutland Countryside Access Forum will work to:

   a) Develop a constructive and inclusive approach to the improvement of recreational access to the countryside;
   b) Respect local circumstances and different interests while operating within national guidance;
   c) Provide advice on issues of principle and good practice which is consistent with national guidance;
   d) Engage in constructive debate and seek consensus wherever possible; and
   e) Where consensus is not possible, make clear the nature of differing views, and suggest how they might be resolved.

   In carrying out these functions, the Forum shall have regard to:

   - The needs of land management
   - The desirability of conserving the natural beauty of the area for which it is established, including the flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features of the area;
   - Guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State; and
   - Proper liaison with neighbouring authorities

Membership

5. The membership will:

   a) Be balanced to avoid dominance by any single interest group or coalition of like interested; and
   b) Include a cross-section of local interests in the countryside.

6. The membership will include:

   a) An independent Chair;
   b) An optimum number of twelve with a maximum of fourteen members, and;
   c) One representative from Rutland County Council.

7. Members in total must bring a wide range of experience, including:

   a) Recreational use, for example, walking, riding and cycling;
   b) Land management, for example, tenants, landowners and occupiers, and others with an interest in the land; and
   c) Nature conservation, heritage, tourism, health, business, disability and transport.

8. The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected on an annual basis.

9. Each Forum should contain roughly equal number of members ascribed to each of the categories in 7a and 7b. Members who genuinely have experience and credibility in relation to more than one category in 7 will be particularly useful.

10. Members will be appointed by the authority according to selection criteria which assess if candidates have sufficient experience of access to the countryside in the local area to be able to make an informed and constructive contribution to improving access provision.

11. Advertisement for new members would be done through local networks, Parish Council Forum, and the local press.

12. Before appointment, members will be asked to confirm:

    a) Their support of the positive purpose of Local Forums;
    b) Commitment to working within the terms of reference and achieving the aims of the Local Forum through constructive working with other members; and
    c) That they are able to devote the necessary time to attend meetings, training and to network with a wide range of interests outside meetings.

13. Any member of the Forum who has a personal interest, whether direct or indirect, in a matter to be discussed by the Forum, to disclose the nature of that interest at the meeting.

14. A member of the Forum may resign at any time by giving written notice to the authority that appointed him or her.

Attendance

15. Members are expected to be able to devote the necessary time to attend meetings. Where a member misses all meetings in a year, the Forum shall review his/her position.

    Subject to a review and it being agreed by the Forum that a member be replaced, the replacement member should ideally be from the same interest group and the appointment shall be subject to the usual selection procedure (organised by the appointing authority)

16. The quorum for the Forum meeting is 5. Where the Chair feels that the meeting is unbalanced because of low attendance the Chair has the discretion to postpone the meeting.

Administration

17. Meetings will be held at least twice a year, and more frequently when necessary. One of these meetings will be the Annual General Meeting at which the Chair and Vice Chair shall be selected.

18. The appointing authority will provide access to meeting rooms, provide a secretary and reimburse reasonable child care and travelling costs.

19. Meeting agendas will be agreed between the Chair, the Officers of the appointing authority and the secretary to the Forum.

20. Members of the Forum will be entitled to submit agenda items to the Secretary 14 days prior to the meeting.

21. Meetings will be advertised in advance and held in public.

22. Agendas, papers and minutes of meetings will be available to the public.

23. The Chair will invite observers to the meeting when appropriate.

24. Observers will be able to contribute to the proceedings at the discretion of the Chair.

25. The public will be able to ask questions on the business of the meetings at the discretion of the Chair, subject to a time limit of 3 minutes per person.

26. The appointing authority will have the right to review the membership of the Local Forum on an annual basis, if necessary.

Reporting Lines

27. The Secretary shall prepare regular progress reports of the Forum's business to the appointing authority.

Report No: 82/2021
PUBLIC REPORT

RUTLAND COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS FORUM

16 June 2021

BUDGET SAVING PROPOSALS: PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

Report of the Strategic Director for Places

Strategic Aim:	Customer focussed services	
Key Decision: No	Forward Plan Reference: n/a	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Cllr Lucy Stephenson: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Communities, Environment and Climate Change Cllr Karen Payne: Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance and Performance, Change and Transformation	
Contact Officer(s):	Stuart Crook, Highways Asset & Policy Manager	scrook@rutland.gov.uk
	Penny Sharp, Strategic Director for Places	01572 758160 psharp@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	All	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS
That the Countryside Access Forum: Considers the likely impacts of the budget savings proposals on the improvement of public access, open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area, and provides advice to the appointing authority (as per section 94(4) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 Rutland County Council has set a 21/22 budget using £2.4m of reserves. In year savings of around £1m have been called for. The Council has sought to identify options to reduce net cost (both in the short term and long term). It has generated an initial set of ideas through a line by line review of budgets taking into consideration work done and ideas generated by Members, feedback from the public in relation to the budget, staff suggestions and initiatives taken by other Councils.

1.2 A report proposing options (Appendix A) was presented to Cabinet on the 18th May, after previously having been considered by Scrutiny on the 29th April. Option PLA-065 (Appendix B) proposes the following in relation to the rights of way service:

- The maintenance budget is reduced and we focus only on high priority works
- Our current policy of replacing lawfully erected stiles with gates is altered so that gates
    i. will still be provided but landowners must arrange for installation.
    ii. We will stop printing promotional materials such as walking leaflets, offering electronic (web/pdf) versions only.

1.3 The current budget for the rights of way service is around £95k per annum (revenue). It has been the service budget is reduced to around £35k (revenue), and that any capital works would need to bid for funding from the Integrated Transport Capital Funding block.

1.4 To be awarded funding it has been proposed that schemes now undergo an initial assessment (using the form at Appendix D) in an attempt to assign them to one of the following categories:

- Essential – a scheme that must be delivered as soon as possible to address actual harm to people i.e. serious injuries.
- Necessary – works that are required to address sites that historically have injury or maintenance harm but are not currently occurring, but may occur again if not acted upon.
- Beneficial – works that would provide benefit to the current situation but are not addressing a recorded history of harm. These will be schemes for example, where the concerns or perception relating to a location feeling unsafe can be addressed.
- Amenity – works that would provide amenity opportunities only.

1.5 Schemes identified as essential or necessary will move forward to the design stage and then be submitted for funding approval. Schemes identified as beneficial or amenity won't be progressed unless alternative funding sources are available, or there is any underspend available from the Integrated Transport Capital Funding block at the end of the financial year. At that point, all beneficial and amenity schemes will be reviewed and a decision made regarding use of any underspend.

1.6 An indicative programme of capital schemes that may only be able to progress if/when they receive funding from the HTWG is attached at Appendix C. What effect the proposed changes this will have on the rest of the service will depend, to some extent, on how often capital works on the rights of way network are approved for funding by the Highways and Transport Working Group (HTWG).

2 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 A significant reduction in proactive maintenance on the rights of way network may increase the likelihood that a notice under section 56 of the Highways Act 1980 is served on the Council.

2.2 Section 56 notices can be served by members of the public in cases where they believe their local highway authority is failing in its duty to maintain a highway to the required standard.

3 DATA PROTECTION IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no data protection issues as there is no data involved.

4 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.1 Equality issue to be reported verbally

5 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is the function of a local access forum, as respects the area for which it is established, to advise the appointing authority as to the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area, and as to such other matters as may be prescribed.

5.2 In carrying out its functions, a local access forum shall have regard to:

a) the needs of land management,
b) the desirability of conserving the natural beauty of the area for which it is established, including the flora, fauna and geological and physiographical features of the area, and
c) guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State (as respects England) or the National Assembly for Wales (as respects Wales)

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

7 APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix A: RCC Cabinet Report No.64/2021 (18 May 2021)

7.2 Appendix B: Saving Reference PLA-035

7.3 Appendix C: Indicative Capital Works Programme

7.4 Appendix D: HTWG Assessment Forms

A Large Print or Braille Version of this Report is available upon request – Contact 01572 722577.

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Report No: 64/2021
PUBLIC REPORT

CABINET

18 May 2021

BUDGET SAVINGS 21/22

Report of the Strategic Director for Resources

Strategic Aim:	All	
Key Decision: Yes	Forward Plan Reference: N/A	
Exempt Information	No	
Cabinet Member(s) Responsible:	Cllr Karen Payne, Portfolio Holder for Finance	
Contact Officer(s):	Saverio Della Rocca, Strategic Director for Resources (s.151 Officer)	01572 758159 sdrocca@rutland.gov.uk
	Andrew Merry, Finance Manager	01572 758152 amerry@rutland.gov.uk
Ward Councillors	Not Applicable	

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS
That Cabinet RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL that it: a) Approves the principles (in para 2.2.2) to guide future work and decision making in respect of budget savings; b) Approves budget savings of £598k to be applied in 21/22 and changes to funding of £613k; c) Delegates authority to the Director and Chief Finance Officer (in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance) to spend the £172k in Invest to Save plus £328k from 20/21 anticipated under spends to fund support, if required, that will allow savings projects to be accelerated; d) Notes the provisional position on the 20/21 outturn (para 2.6) and that the provisional underspend does not change the projected gap of £2.7m for 22/23.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The Council set a 21/22 budget using £2.4m of reserves following a government funding settlement that gave it no additional funding.

1.2 Councillors are aware that the ongoing use of reserves to balance the budget is poor practice. In setting the budget, the Council noted two important objectives:

- It should aim to make savings in year and be underspent against its 21/22 budget by at least £1m.
- It should also commence work on other projects that will enable it to reduce reliance on reserves to a minimum of £1m by 22/23.

1.3 This report presents some short term savings options for Members to consider and the direction of travel on some long term options for Members to endorse. This report was considered by Scrutiny Committees in April.

2 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 Council financial objectives

2.1.1 The Council is committed to ensuring it can live "within its means". This issue is complicated by the fact that:

- Future Government funding is unknown – there are various reforms promised which are yet to be completed;
- The Council works in a changing risk environment – the Budget Report (34/2021) set out a range of possible risks (many of which are uncontrollable); and
- The risk of economic downturn, nationally or locally, is a distinct possibility.

2.1.2 The above risks mean that the Council could face further significant reductions in funding, falling business rate income, and increased cost of Council Tax reductions for tax payers on low incomes. It could also lead to a growing demand for Council support and services and an increase in bad debts.

2.1.3 Notwithstanding this context, the financial position is such that the Council must aim to make savings in 21/22 and underspend its budget by at least £1m. This would reduce reliance on non-ring fenced reserves to £1.4m. Alongside these actions, the Council must begin other projects aimed at releasing savings in 2022/23 of at least £1.5m which would mean reliance on non-ringfenced reserves would be no more than £1m.

2.2 Approach and principles

2.2.1 The Council has sought to identify options to reduce net cost (both in the short term and long term). It has generated an initial set of ideas through a line by line review of budgets taking into consideration work done and ideas generated by Members, feedback from the public in relation to the budget, staff suggestions and initiatives taken by other Councils.

2.2.2 In reviewing budgets and putting forward options, various principles were considered:

- We will enable and empower our communities to do more for themselves;

- We will work with others who are better placed to deliver objectives;
- We will seed fund initiatives that will deliver long term savings;
- We will borrow to capital invest (and reduce revenue costs);
- We will focus on those in greatest need;
- We will not deliver services that have low value;
- We will identify services that we will operate commercially (minimum break-even);
- We will focus ringfenced/grant funding on prevention/work that reduces ongoing revenue costs;
- We will charge for services where we can; and
- We will provide information, guidance and advice to help people self-serve.

2.2.3 The outcome of the above work identified various opportunities:

Type of savings	**Description**	**Further information**
Administrative savings	Reduction in operational overheads through encouraging changes in working practises	Appendix A
Revised Council offer	A revision to the Council's Offer to the public or staff	Appendix B
Change in Funding Assumptions	No change to the Council's offer but proposed changes to how the Offer is funded	Appendix C
Strategic projects	Planned reviews of the Council's current offer across major services	Appendix D
Other ideas	Ideas being developed that require further work	Appendix E

2.3 Latest position and the ask of Cabinet and Council

2.3.1 Based on work done to date, the dashboard below shows the latest position.

Rutland County Council	**Total 21/22**	**Total 22/23**	**Total 23/24**
Administrative Savings	(186,500)	(137,500)	(137,500)
Revision to Councils Offer	(412,700)	(308,400)	(295,100)
Change in Funding Assumptions	(613,000)	(371,000)	(151,000)
Strategic Projects	0	0	(1,492,200)
Other Proposals being Developed	(145,600)	(386,100)	(416,800)
Total Rutland Council	**(1,357,800)**	**(1,203,000)**	**(2,492,600)**

2.3.2 Cabinet will be asked to recommend to Council a revised budget that incorporates:

- Administrative savings of £186k;
- Revisions to the Council Offer totalling £412k;
- Changes in funding of £613k.

2.3.3 At the same time, Council are being asked to note the strategic projects planned (Appendix D) and other proposals being developed (Appendix E).

2.4 Risks

2.4.1 Further to the current position, there are some risks that may threaten the Council's ability to achieve the targets set in 2.1.3.

2.4.2 *Capacity and resources* – officers are still dealing with the pandemic response and workload impacts on staff are not reducing at this time. Equally, the Council is still working through how it will transition from Covid and how that will impact on the shape of services. At the same time, there are a number of other significant impacts on workload and therefore capacity:

- Current strategic projects and procurement activity - Leisure, Waste Management, Highways etc;
- The Rutland Conversation;
- The Local Plan and any other associated work;
- Staffing issues in teams – either vacancies (some held for savings purposes) or sickness;

2.4.3 The impact of these issues is that without additional investment, the Council is very unlikely to be able to progress some of the big strategic projects highlighted. The Strategic Management Team is considering what additional investment might be needed and indeed whether there is sufficient capacity to commission and oversee whatever support may be brought in or released internally. The Council understands that incurring expenditure on an Invest to Save basis must deliver appropriate payback so appropriate due diligence is required. To facilitate access to resource, officers are requesting that delegated authority is given from Cabinet to the Chief Finance Officer (in consultation with the Chief Executive, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance) to spend the £172k in Invest to Save plus £328k from 20/21 anticipated under spends on bringing in external support or releasing internal capacity to accelerate savings projects.

2.4.4 *Timing* - Linked to the above issues, delays in progressing and agreeing proposals simply means that savings will not impact the budget and therefore the use of reserves will continue for longer than ideal.

2.4.5 *Pressures* - The Council is seeing emerging pressures which may need to be funded. Any new pressures simply add to the £2.4m projected loss and will offset the savings approved as part of this paper. Potential pressures include:

- Local Plan - the decision to reject the HIF grant will cause a pressure being calculated as either a) the Council will have to redo its Local Plan and in the

meantime deal with the additional planning applications that are already emerging, or b) continue with the existing Local Plan (including St Georges Barracks) and process any planning application at significant cost unless a planning performance agreement can be reached.

- Residential Care - The Council is engaging with care providers about fee uplifts (this is a standard annual process). Other Councils are seeing requests for an inflationary uplift (based on changes to the National Living Wage, 2.2% increase) and a separate request (one-off) to take into account Covid costs.

- Adult Social Care - There is a growing expectation adult social care will have to provide a 7 day a week service with increased working times of 12 hours per day which will also include the weekends to facilitate hospital discharges. This will require a greater professional staff footprint than the current establishment e.g social workers and therapist. Currently there are no additional funding streams identified which would pay for such an expansion although this could change and the long-awaited Social Care White Paper due in November could also impact this landscape.

- Leisure contract - Cabinet has agreed to subsidise its leisure contractor, SLL, during the lockdown but as this has continued longer than originally envisaged, there are further pressures which Cabinet will be asked to consider.

- Pandemic response - the Council has funding in the budget to continue with its pandemic response. It also has funding from 20/21 to be carried forward which will be set aside for the response (as indicated in 2.5). The medium term impact on services is not yet known but is being monitored and could have a financial impact.

2.5 Year-end accounts and other adjustments

2.5.1 Alongside the decisions to be made by Members in the June Council report, there will be other changes to the budget associated with the Covid grants and the year-end position. The table below sets these out.

		Original budget 21/22	
A	Less	Budget Savings	June Council report
B	Add	Ring fenced grant income received in 20/21 but not used	June Cabinet
C	Less	Expected expenditure in 21/22 against ring fenced grants (in B)	June Cabinet
D	N/A	Allocation of £720k non ring fenced grants (included in 21/22 budget) to commitments carried forward from 20/21 e.g. temporary staff working on Covid continuing into 21/22	June Cabinet

E	Less	Top up from non-ring fenced grant to cover commitments (referred to D) if required	June Cabinet
F	Add	Possible pressures (see potential issues in section 2.4)	Ad hoc
G	Add	Grants received in 21/22 to deliver Covid duties (will be cost neutral as grant income will be offset by planned expenditure)	June Cabinet and ad hoc
		Revised Budget 21/22	

2.5.2 The quarterly budget reports will include an audit trail of how the budget has moved since the original budget.

2.6 Outturn 20/21 and Covid grant position

Overview

2.6.1 At the time that Scrutiny Committees considered the budget savings, the outturn position was not known although at Quarter 3 the Council reported an underspend of just under £1m. The Council's plan, all year, has been to be prudent with grants received, only bring in external support where necessary and conserve some pandemic funding recognising that the medium term impacts on services are not yet understood.

2.6.2 2020/21 has been a year like no other. The Council has faced enormous costs during the pandemic (from providing additional support to Care providers and other key suppliers, significant income losses as services have been largely closed and providing support to individuals through food supplies, self-isolation compensation and family support). Alongside Covid pressures, there have been service pressures due to the adverse winter weather, increases in legal costs through SEN cases and additional grounds maintenance work. The Council has managed to cover the additional costs of c£4.7m through additional grants received, the remainder of which will be kept to keep services going into next year as the pandemic continues.

2.6.3 Organisationally, the redeployment of staff and diversion of activity has reduced business as usual capacity slowing down delivery of some projects and halted some permanent recruitment in light of the need for saving but also as teams pause to consider what might be right for the future. This change of focus alongside the closure of Catmose and other Council services alongside a move towards a virtual offer in other areas have produced welcome savings. One of the biggest positive budget impacts comes from the reduction in demand for key services totalling over £1m. The Council considers this a one off, rather than an ongoing saving it can "bank" now with unmet need in the community very likely to emerge post pandemic.

2.6.4 The upshot of the above issues, means that through additional Government support, favourable trends and prudent management, the Council has come out of the year in a positive financial position and is projecting a provisional under spend of c£2.445m (over £500k of this funding will be needed to fund ongoing staffing pressures to cover key vacancies not in the 21/22 budget next year). Members

should note that this position is provisional and work is still ongoing to finalise various issues.

2.6.5 Whilst this is a positive picture, some will ask what impact it might have on the budget savings proposal in this report and our future financial gap. The answer to this question is that the outturn has no impact for the following reasons:

- The vast majority of the under spend this year does not arise from business as usual service activity – if it did then the Council might be able to reduce future budget accordingly but this is not the case;
- The under spend does not alter the view that service budgets continue to come under pressure and are vulnerable to additional demand e.g. social care, homelessness, legal, Special Educational Needs;
- The size of the projected financial gap (£2.7m in 22/23) does not change because of the underspend – only permanent funding changes or change in service offer leading to budget reductions will do this;
- There is still a significant amount of future uncertainty regarding future funding and the impact of the pandemic. The confidence level in respect of the robustness of some 21/22 budgets (e.g. income budgets, demand led budgets and key contract budgets) is much lower than would normally be the case because of the uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

2.6.6 Finally, whilst increasing reserves could allow the Council to continue to meet the financial gap through use of reserves for longer, this is still poor practice and cannot continue indefinitely.

2.7 Summary and Next Steps

2.7.1 The Council has made good progress in identifying savings options but as the dashboard shows even if all savings can be delivered, the Council is still unlikely to close the financial gap fully. Strategic projects are “hoped” to deliver over £1.5m in savings but this is by no means certain and, to some extent, outside of the control of the Council. At this stage, there is more work to do to get to a position where reliance on reserves will be less than £1m in 22/23.

2.7.2 We will bring further updates on:

- the year-end position for 20/21 as indicated in 2.6;
- whether budget savings agreed have been actually delivered;
- any further budget savings proposed including progress on strategic projects and other proposals being developed;
- the financial position for 21/22 and the ongoing Covid impact.

3 CONSULTATION

3.1 The Council has at this stage only put forward proposals which do not require formal

consultation. This allows for savings to be made quickly. The Council recognises that some of the strategic projects and other long term proposals may require formal consultation. Where this is the case then the Council will follow due process. For example, the Council is currently consulting on a waste strategy and leisure needs analysis alongside the Rutland Conversation.

3.2 Scrutiny Committees have considered the proposals in this report and the following key points were noted:

- Councillors understood the need to make savings and were generally supportive of the vast majority of proposals;

- Councillors were appreciative of the hard work of officers in putting the proposals at a time when the Council was still dealing with an additional workload arising from the Pandemic;

- Councillors noted the need to start work on all proposals and encouraged Officers to do so but a small number raised concerns about the possibility of funds being delegated to Officers to bring in support if needed without Council knowing how this funding might be spent and what return it might bring. Councillors noted that the alternative was to approve requests on an ad hoc basis but this might slow down the process;

- Councillors felt that it would be useful to have more comparative information for each proposal so they could understand the Council's offer relative to others and have this information available for discussion with residents;

- Councillors made various comments in relation to individual proposals (the list below highlights the major points):

a) Councillors noted that the possible withdrawal of Arts funding had been met by concern from a small number of parishes. The Portfolio Holder explained that Live and Local events would continue until September and that she would talk to the Arts Council and work with parishes to see if there were alternative options which could include parishes meeting costs directly.

b) Councillors discussed the principle of 'double taxation' and noted that all residents picked up the costs for services enjoyed specifically by residents in Oakham. Councillors noted that a Localism projected has been identified and that there would be a discussion with Parishes about how certain services were delivered and paid for.

c) Councillors asked about future changes to Customer Services and were informed that work was being done as part of the launch of MyAccount to revisit how customer queries are received and managed. Councillors were supportive of the move to an appointment system for customers and were informed that there is a system in place for those customers who still wanted to pay cash.

d) Councillors queried whether a reduction to the Aiming High activities programme meant that Council was not meeting its statutory duty but it was explained that this was not the case.

e) One Councillor asked whether parishes could be asked if they wished to contribute to Rights of Way spending on replacements gates (kissing gates) and whether leaflets could be made available on the website in a format which would lend itself to them being printed at home, by those who wished to do so, in black and white;

f) One Councillor queried the approach to facilitating development of the High Street and why Uppingham Town Council had not been consulted about this;

g) Councillors noted that Jules House has not re-opened and encouraged Officers to complete work on this proposal to release further savings;

h) Councillors discussed the changes to verge cutting and noted that savings could not be made in 21/22 (this proposal has been withdrawn). Some Councillors were opposed to changes that went against the Climate Change action plan and other Councillors wanted the retender of the grounds maintenance contract to be accelerated.

i) Councillors asked about the potential for further savings in Adult Social Care and it was explained that an End to End review had just been started and there were opportunities to look at various aspects including the Council's preventative approach.

j) Councillors asked whether the changes to Aiming High meant that the Council would fall short of its duties under the Short Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011, which requires Local Authorities to provide a range of short break services. There is no prescribed offer that the Local Authority must provide under the Short Break Regulations and the Council believe the revised offer will meet ongoing needs. Officer explained that the service also funds short breaks respite for families, and should the Council consider making any changes to this element of the offer, it would seek to engage and consult fully before any decision taken.

3.3 No significant changes to the report have been made since the Scrutiny Committee meetings.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 There are alternative options. In relation to proposed savings and funding changes, Cabinet can approve changes en bloc, approve changes and exclude certain proposals or reject all proposals. The latter is not advised in light of the Council's financial position.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The impact of the savings presented would reduce the reliance on non-ring-fenced reserves from £2.4m to £1.1m in 21/22.

5.2 The MTFP will be updated when the decisions in table 2.5 have been taken and the outturn position for 20/21 is finalised.

6 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The Budget is approved by Council. Cabinet can approve virements in any functional budget of up to £250k in any one year to a cumulative value of £500k across all functions. Changes above £500k must be approved by Council on a recommendation from Cabinet.

6.2 Whilst there are changes proposed that, on an individual basis, could be approved by Cabinet, the total value of proposed changes is above £500k and constitute a fundamental revision to the Council's budget. In line with Finance Procedure Rules para 4.15, Council will be asked to approve changes.

7 THE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

7.1 In the exercise of its functions, the Council must have due regard to the Council's duty to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity for protected groups and to foster good relations between protected groups and others.

7.2 The Council has completed Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) screening for all savings proposals and summary comments are made in each proposal in Appendix B. There are no proposals or decisions on specific courses of action that could have an impact on different groups of people and therefore full EIAs are not required.

8 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no community safety implications.

9 DATA PROTECTION

9.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) has not been completed because there are no risks/issues to the rights and freedoms of natural persons.

10 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications.

11 ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Staffing - none of the immediate proposals have an impact on staffing or terms and conditions. It is likely that strategic projects could have an impact on staff and the Council will follow due process as required.

11.2 Risk and controls - delivering budget savings may involve the Council having a different appetite towards the management of risk. Whilst in some areas e.g. payment of the staff payroll or payments to suppliers there are unlikely to be changes, in other areas e.g. management of petty cash or spot checks on use of procurement cards, there may be a greater residual risk as controls are exercised less frequently.

12 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 The Council is required to set a balanced budget and agree the level of Council tax for 21/22. The 21/22 budget uses reserves to balance the budget which is not sustainable in the medium term.

12.2 The savings proposals in this paper are a start towards the Council working towards reducing its deficit and living within its means.

13 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 There are no additional background papers to the report.

14 APPENDICES

Appendix A	Administrative savings
Appendix B	Proposed revisions to Council Offer
Appendix C	Funding
Appendix D	Strategic projects
Appendix E	Other savings proposals

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Rutland County Council

Public Rights of Way
Saving Reference PLA-035
Current Offer
The Council, as a highways authority has a duty to maintain public rights of way. The Council's policy is to provide and install, new kissing gates in place of lawfully erected stiles. This makes the network more accessible to the less able bodied who often struggle with stiles. The Council also undertake some improvement of the network primarily by the works to address surface problems and drainage issues. This service is funded entirely through revenue.
Revised Offer
The Council proposes to: a) Reduce the maintenance budget to focus on high priority works; b) Only to provide a replacement gates, installation to be done by landowners; c) Produce electronic publications only (removing printed leaflets) The service will continue to be funded primarily through revenue but there is an opportunity to capitalise some costs thereby releasing revenue savings.
Impact
The work to improve the network will reduce and we will refocus on maintaining current condition and meeting statutory obligations. Whilst capital funds will be available to deliver improvement work, such projects may take a longer time to deliver. Landowners may not accept a kissing gate as a replacement for their stiles due to the additional costs for installation. The network therefore may become less accessible overall for less abled bodies.
Equalities impact issues
The Equalities Act requires that we make reasonable adjustments to improve access for the less able bodies and the Council will continue to do this. The production of information electronically may impact those digitally excluded but libraries will be able to provide this information.

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Budget Item	Location	Estimate [cost]	Priority	Comments
Surfacing & drainage	E123 The drift	£10,000.00		regrade and surface dress the drift
	E155 - Cottesmore	£20,000.00		Improve surface
	E192 Braunston	£1,500.00		Add sleeper to bridge, a couple of steps and some surface
	E353 Wood Lane, Wardley	£7,500.00		Further work to ditches, surface & cross drains still required
	E190 Brooke	£7,500.00		Continue surfacing of track from bank reinforcement
	E136 Great Casterton / Pickworth	£3,000.00		Contact landowner prior to scheme design
	C87 Wood Lane Braunston	£1,000.00		Regrade and surface dress existing surfaces
	E306 Uppingham	£20,000.00		130m long *2m wide (sloped, may need some steps)
	E189 Braunston	£5,000.00		Surfacing between fences around badger raft
	E217 Gunnel Lane, Empingham	£5,000.00		Always wet at the end of the lane going into field - surfacing required?
	E243 -Ridlington	£10,000.00		wet in winter - hill is slippy
	E279 - South Luffenham	£20,000.00		Surfacing as very narrow and well used
	E303 - Sheilds Yard	£5,000.00		Re-tarmac
	E184 Braunston	£5,000.00		Watter puddles at end of surfaced path on C87 by junction with E184
	E309 (Uppingham)	£10,000.00		Upgrade surface (suitable for disabled, push chairs / buggys)
	E311 Seaton	£10,000.00		Adjust steps to make them more accessible
	E190 - Across top of Woodland trust field	£1,000.00		Small patch on a slope gets wet and muddy - slip down slope!
	E145 - Loodle Lane	£20,000.00		Sort out drainage and resurface
		£161,500.00		

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Highway and transport concern – initial assessment form for strategically identified public rights of way schemes: (Created: 27/05/2021)

Scheme reference number:	*e.g. ITCP-2020-66*
Location:	*e.g. Braunston Road, Oakham*
Concern:	*e.g. Lack of surfacing on bridleway*
Case officer	Stuart Crook

Evidence of concern Please provide detail here (exclude confidential data) including: - Any relevant accident/ incident records - Any complaints from route users - Photo of problem from site visit (if applicable)

Officer review Outline what you believe the impact will be if the concern isn't addressed. Consider impacts on the following: - Members of the public - Landowner - The asset - The environment - Budget

Officer recommendation Based on the evidence available please outline what category the concern falls within.
☐**Essential** – a scheme that must be delivered as soon as possible to address actual harm to persons i.e. serious injuries. Progress to design/ feasibility as a priority. ☐**Necessary** – works that are required to address sites that historically have injury or maintenance harm but are not currently occurring, but may occur again if not acted upon. Progress to design/ feasibility study. ☐**Beneficial** – works that would provide benefit to the current situation but are not addressing a recorded history of harm. These will be schemes where the concerns

or perception relating to a location feeling unsafe can be addressed. Scheme won't be progressed unless there is an underspend available or alternative funding sources are found.

☐**Amenity** – works that would provide amenity opportunities only. Scheme won't be progressed unless there is an underspend available or alternative funding sources are found.

Additional comments
Officer to provide any further points of note.

FOLLOW ON ACTION: Case officer/ engineer – upon completion of the above sections, please email this initial assessment to the Senior Highway Manager for review.

Senior manager review and comments *(to be completed by senior highway manager)*

I have reviewed the above assessment and do/ do not concur with the officer recommendation.

Additional comments or action required: *(e.g. deliver remedial works asap prior to feasibility/ design.)*

Date:

Signed:

Role:

FOLLOW ON ACTION: Senior highway manager - please forward a signed copy of this initial assessment to:

- the lead engineer/ officer
- tstrategy@rutland.gov.uk

Highway and transport concern – feasibility and design (updated: 15/03/2021)

Scheme reference number:	
Location:	
Concern:	
Concern category:	
Parish/s	
Ward Member/s	
Case officer	

1. Officer recommendation Outline below the recommended option/s along with a summary of the alternative options considered and justification for recommendation. Please provide the design of the recommended option as an attachment.
Recommended option/s – with estimated costings: **Design/s attached? ☐Yes / ☐No** **Alternative options considered:** **A)** **B)** **C)** **Justification for recommended option:** **Total estimated cost of recommendations:**

2. **Appendices** Please append the following documents to this form.
☐**Initial assessment** ☐**Design/s for recommended option/s**
FOLLOW ON ACTION: Case officer/ engineer – upon completion of the above sections, please email this Feasibility and design form to either the Senior Highway Manager or Senior Transport Manager for review.

3. **Senior manager review and comments** (to be completed by senior highway manager or senior transport manager – depending on nature of concern)
I have reviewed the above assessment and designs and do/ do not concur with the officer recommendation and associated design/s. **Additional comments or action required:** **Date:** **Signed:** **Role:**
FOLLOW ON ACTION: Senior highway or transport manager - please forward a signed copy of this Feasibility and design form back to the lead engineer/ officer. The lead engineer/ officer must then proceed to consultation.

4. **Consultation and communication** The lead officer/ engineer must consult with the following groups and summarise the key feedback points. **However, please note:** where a scheme is being developed in response to a KSI or council identified safety concern, communication will be on a notification basis only rather than full consultation. **GDPR:** Please ensure that no personal or identifiable data/ information is detailed below.
☐ **Parish** – date of communication: Summary of responses: How has feedback been taken into account? ☐ **Ward members** – date of communication: Summary of responses:

How has feedback been taken into account?

☐ **Police** – date of communication:

Summary of responses:

How has feedback been taken into account?

☐ **Fire service** – date of communication:

Summary of responses:

How has feedback been taken into account?

☐ **The applicant (if not the parish or ward member)** – date of communication:

Summary of responses:

How has feedback been taken into account?

☐ **Other stakeholder/ interested party** – date of communication and consultee name (e.g. The Velo Club):

Summary of responses:

How has feedback been taken into account?

5. Final recommendation Please state the revised recommendation, or state 'not changed' if the recommendation has not been altered.

6. Finance feedback Lead engineer/ officer to send to finance for feedback. Once received – feedback to be added below.
Finance feedback: e.g. confirmation that scheme is capital. Date feedback received:

7. **Transport strategy feedback** Lead engineer/ officer to send to Transport Strategy Manager (TSM) to ensure compliance with RCC policy/ strategy and that procedures have been followed. Once received – feedback to be added below.
Transport Strategy feedback: Date feedback received:

8. **Approval route** Please identify the scheme value and the associated approval route.
☐ **Scheme up to £10,000** – ITCP budget holder approval required. ☐ **Schemes between £10,001 and £200,000** – approval by the Strategic Director for Places and Portfolio Holder via delegated decision form. ☐ **Schemes over £200,000** – approval required by Cabinet.
FOLLOW ON ACTION: Case officer/ engineer – upon completion of the above sections, please email this Feasibility and design form to either the Senior Highway Manager or Senior Transport Manager for review.

9. **Senior manager sign off** (to be completed by senior highway manager or senior transport manager – depending on nature of concern)
I have reviewed the above consultation, finance and transport strategy feedback and do/ do not concur with the final officer recommendation and associated design/s. **Additional comments or action required:** **Does the scheme need to be brought to the HTWG for consideration before a decision is made?** Yes/ No (e.g is there a strong opposing view from the parish?) **Date:** **Signed:** **Role:**
FOLLOW ON ACTION: Senior highway or transport manager - please forward a signed copy of this initial assessment back to the lead engineer/ officer.

10. Follow on actions Lead officer/ engineer to set/ complete the following actions.
☐ **HTWG meeting** – liaise with Transport Strategy Manager to identify as an agenda item and then add date (put N/A if not required) Meeting date: Meeting outcome: ☐ **Delegated decision form completed** – add date signed off (put N/A if not required) Date delegated decision form signed and pdf'd: ☐ **Cabinet date scheduled** – liaise with Transport Strategy Manager to identify Cabinet date and then add date below (put N/A if not required) Meeting date: Meeting outcome: ☐ **Ordered on Agresso** – add date order raised (put N/A if not required) Date works order raised: ☐ **Works scheduled** – add 3 or 6 month delivery due date (put N/A if not required). Estimated 3/ 6 month work completion date:

11. Notification of outcome Case officer/ lead engineer to notify all relevant parties of outcome. Please check all relevant boxes and provide date of communication.
☐ **Parish** – date of communication: ☐ **Ward members** – date of communication: ☐ **The applicant (if not the parish or ward member)** – date of communication: ☐ **Other stakeholder/ interested party** – date of communication:
FOLLOW ON ACTION: Case officer/ engineer – upon completion of the above section, please forward this completed initial assessment to: tstrategy@rutland.gov.uk

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