# Special Supplement December 2010 Birmingham City Council

Forward is the official publication of Birmingham City Council which profiles the council's policies, initiatives and events



WELCOME to this special edition of Birmingham City Council's Forward newspaper, which will provide you with information about the budget challenge we are facing.

Here we explain how we are proposing to meet this challenge and how you can help us develop the final package of pro-

The government's Spending Review 2010 sets an unparalleled challenge for local councils.

On average, council grants will reduce by 28% in real terms over four years with much of this reduction in the next year.

In Birmingham, we anticipate that we will need to make savings of more than £300 million over that period. As well as the financial challenge, the national Spending Review sets out a clear change in the role of government and the state.

Individuals and communities are encouraged to help themselves and each other, rather than relying on the state.

In Birmingham, we are committed to helping individuals and communities to become increasingly self sufficient and to take more responsibility for their com-

We will support and encourage com-

munities that want to get things done. With this in mind we have developed proposals for the redesign of the services that Birmingham City Council offers and they represent a new way for the council to support the people of Birmingham.

We believe, with your help, we can continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable directly while everyone can get access to the support they need but in different ways from how they do today.

A summary of our proposals is shown over the next couple of pages and full details are also available on the Birmingham City Council website at www. birmingham.gov.uk/budgetviews

If you don't have internet access at home please visit your local community library or the Central Library where you can access the internet for free. Please remember that these proposals are not the finished product as we need your views, comments and ideas before final budget decisions are made in March 2011.

We look forward to hearing your views and working with you to continue to deliver the key outcomes for Birmingham through the difficult financial times ahead

# THE information below shows

The council's income

and spending

where Birmingham City Council's money comes from and how it is spent. The majority of Birmingham

City Council's income comes from central government, with less than 10p of every £1 coming from local council taxpayers.

The council is therefore heavily affected by any reductions in gov-

Why we have to make these savings

National government has made clear the need to reduce public spending significantly in order to tackle the deficit.

It has decided to prioritise spending in some areas (such as the NHS) rather than others, and

to accelerate savings required of local government so that much of these are expected in the first

year of the four-year period. It is also removing certain spe-cific grants such as the working neighbourhoods fund which has a gnificant effect on cities like

Birmingham.
We anticipate having to save more than £300 million in the next four years - equivalent to around £300,000 each working

Here's how we calculated savings per working day

| Target          | £308,000.000 |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Years           |              |
| Working days/ye | ar256        |
| Working days to | :al1,024     |
| Target/working  | day£300,781  |

**Council Tax** 

Council Tax generates around £333 million of revenue for the

council each year.
In the last four years we have sought to minimise increases in council tax levels, so that we now have the lowest council tax rates of the eight biggest city councils

How the money is spent

Outside London, we have the third lowest level of council tax in England. Birmingham City Council spends around £3,550 million each

Most of this is spent on services for children and young people, or on social care support. The graphs (left) shows the income and main areas of spending this year.

# Interested in volunteering?

IF you'd like to volunteeer, we'd like to hear from you.

Just contact us - by email, text or post (see below). If you'd like to get involved, we'd be delighted to hear from vou.

As volunteers. many of you are already making a huge contribution to help the council deliver leisure and cultural facilities and events across the city, with the value of volunteering to the Environment and Culture directorate alone estimated at £4.6 million. In the Housing and Constituencies directorate, technology is also helping council house tenants choose their future home through a 'self service'

website. The council is planning to roll out similar approaches across all service areas.

And we're not just proposing to do this to save money - but because we believe a vibrant community is one in which everyone plays their part. This is the council's version of the 'Big Society'.

We believe this will require new ways of working to support local volunteers and the people who organise their work in the community, and provides a valuable option for business in fulfilling corporate responsibility obligations.

Email budget\_views@birmingham.gov.uk

Text 'Budget' - followed by a space and then your comment - to: 07786 200 403

Write to: Budget Views, Room 221, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham, B1 1BB

■ Plus look out for volunteering opportunities at www. birmingham.gov.uk

# **How the money** is spent

| Service Area                      | 2010/11<br>Em |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Schools                           | 840           |
| Children, Young People & Families | 686           |
| Benefits                          | 528           |
| Adults & Communities              | 380           |
| Housing Revenue Account           | 218           |
| Transport & Regeneration          | 181           |
| Local Services & Community Safety | 165           |
| Constituencies                    | 119           |
| Other Services*                   | 431           |
| Total                             | 3,548         |



# Delivering services and savings

**Environmen** and Culture

ENVIRONMENT and Culture makes Birmingham a more attractive place to live in, work in and visit. It supports a diverse range of cultural activities, arts, music, dance, museums and gal-leries, theatres and concert

Equally important are Birmingham's parks and nature, sports and leisure facilities, libraries and the largest UK programme of community, cultural and sporting events – enjoyed by millions of people every year and supported by thousands of volunteers. Through the Highways and Fleet & Waste services it keeps the streets clean and the traffic

It is proposed that we will redesign the delivery of these services and work with partners and vol-unteers in order to continue to help people to be healthy, enjoy a good quality of life and continue to make a significant contribu-tion towards the local economy through attracting visitors and investors to our city.

# **Transforming our efficiency**

By redesigning the way we deliver, manage and support Museums, Parks, Community & Play and Fleet & Waste Management services, we propose to reduce costs and deliver what is most important to our customers. We also intend to transform the way we generate income and



work with suppliers in order to deliver better value for money. We propose to reduce our management and administration costs and work more collaboratively with contractors and volunteers

### Preventing problems to avoid big costs later

It is proposed to redesign Fleet and Waste Management services, to drive down waste, increase recycling, reduce landfill tax costs and help to keep the city clean and green. Birmingham's parks and nature play an important part in keeping residents fit and health and by working smarter with our contractors and community we will be able to sustain this vital natural resource for future generations

### Reducing dependency and enabling self-sufficiency

We already provide a range of exciting volunteering opportunities in areas such as major sporting events, parks, highways, libraries, museums and play. We want to do even more to help people use volunteering as a route back into work or to develop a personal interest or hobby. We personal interest or hobby. want to recognise more formally the contribution our wonderful volunteers make and give the opportunity to many more. By encouraging even more people to volunteer in a diverse range of interesting areas, we intend to

provide opportunities for people to positively contribute towards their communities, helping them to learn new skills and to reduce

# **Personalising public services**

Whilst the majority of our services are available to everyone, we will continue to provide personalised services to help vulnerable people live independently with supportive waste management, leisure programmes, parks and

**Environment and Culture aims** to make savings of £15.4 million in 2011-12 and £41.6 million by

WHEN thinking about how to make these savings we have focused on what is most important to the people of Birmingham.

In the light of the economic recession, we've also thought about the role of local government.

The Council Plan 2010 sets out our three top priorities:

■ Supporting employment and employability – helping people get jobs

- Safeguarding people whose circumstances make them vulnerable
- Keeping the city clean and safe.

Our approach to delivering the required savings is also based on principles originally set out by the Council Leader, Cllr Mike Whitby, in 2010:

- Transforming our efficiency
- Preventing problems to avoid big costs
- Reducing dependency and enabling self sufficiency
- Collaboration between service areas and other public agencies
- Personalisation of services, for example by giving users direct control over money spent on them
- Maximising income streams
- Levering in funds from the private sec-

We've considered all of these aims and objectives when putting together our pro-

# Draft proposals for each service area

Birmingham City Council has developed outline proposals on how the savings could be made. Across these pages you will see our suggestions. These are split into serv-

The figures are only an estimate as the council will not know exactly how much money it will receive from the government until January 2011.

The proposals have been developed by council officers and have benefited from initial discussions with the council's elected leaders. They also include proposals



WE'RE determined to keep the needs of the city's children and young people at the centre of what we do - and help guarantee their futures in every way we can.

This means CYPF will continue to address the Every Child Matters outcomes\* - the government's approach to wellbeing in children and young people - while focusing on helping to deliver the Spending Review and maintaining the city council's key priorities.

It means our immediate priorities are:

- 1. Protecting children from significant harm and improving children's social care.
- 2. Improving the way they take part in learning, and achieve and boost their skills. 3. Reducing health inequalities.
- In terms of new ways of working, it means: ■ Remodelling children's social care services, producing a more streamlined management structure and reduced number of referrals and voungsters in care
- Remodelling youth services, education welfare services and family support services

- Remodelling all other directorate resources to deliver new ways of working
- School cleaning, catering services, music, outdoor services, health education and schools advisory services will be remodelled and moved to a social enterprise outside the coun-
- $\blacksquare$  Proposing reductions in directorate administrative functions by 30 per cent over three

It's proposed to reduce or cease non-statutory functions, remove all directorate vacancies, and review home-to-school transport to provide the services required by law.

CYPF aims to make savings of £20 million in 2011-12 and £62 million by 2014-15.

The Every Child Matters outcomes are: Be healthy; Be safe; Enjoy and achieve; Make a positive contribution; Achieve economic wellbeing



Adults and Communities – helping you to be independent and in control

# **Adults and Communities**

ACCOUNTING for more than £1 in every £4 of net spending by the council, adult social care will play a big role in the council's response to the Spending Review.

Although the government has announced some new funding for care, it won't be enough for the council to cover the anticipated reduction in funding we'll receive over the next three years.

But we're determined to continue to deliver quality services, in an efficient way. We plan to work in new ways to build on the government's new 'Vision for Adult Social Care'.

It's proposed that the new service offer will be based on the idea that the vast majority of people can use their own resources and skills to care for themselves and the community.

This should mean:

- Access to information, advice and signposting for everyone.
- Services that prevent people from needing care in the first place.
   An individual budget for people with
- An individual budget for people with low incomes or low levels of savings, whose personal care needs are critical.
- A more joined-up service with col-

leagues working in health, to help keep people out of care and help them stay independent in their own homes.

We intend to use the new money from the government to help people in the community increase the support they can give other people – and to develop new services with colleagues working in health.

All this is based on our commitment to achieve two crucial things for city people:

# Quality of life

We exist to ensure the quality of life of all citizens: today, tomorrow and always.

## Health

We exist to keep the health of city people – through a single approach to health and care, and to meet the strategic ambitions of a world-class city.

Adults and Communities aims to make savings of £40.5 million in year one and savings of £106.9 million by 2014-15.



# Development

THE Development directorate will prioritise work that can help grow Birmingham's economy and its global competitiveness.

By creating a high-quality environment, and attracting investment, we aim to protect the economic future of the city's people, including the most vulnerable.

A review of the planning and regeneration service will mean flexible, multi-disciplinary teams will respond quickly and effectively to the needs of developers and investors – and help take forward major projects like the Big City Plan.

Successful partnership working, with developers, investors and other public bodies, will

bring world-class jobs and facilities to the city.

And a commercial, customerfocused outlook will encourage new ways of working: for example, individual, newlycreated, council-linked companies could generate income, working with other public bodies.

This will especially suit trading organisations within the directorate such as Building Consultancy, Urban Design, Civic Catering and Building Cleaning.

The directorate will continue to play a key leadership role in Birmingham, through a remodelled, leaner version of our strategic partner Be Birmingham. We'll support the community budget and big society agendas, and help drive forward vital strategy work, and major transportation and infrastructure projects.

Plus our business development and innovation service plans to boost its income from external funding, and reassess the way it delivers services.

At the same time, we'll need to reduce or cease some of our smaller-scaled employment work – even though we appreciate this is important to particular service users.

Year one should see savings of £6.3 million, with £11.5 million savings by 2014-15.

# Housing and Constituencies

WE know that homes and neighbourhoods are at the heart of people's lives. This directorate offers a

This directorate offers a crucial range of services that underpin council priorities – from gas repairs in council housing, to community development, school crossing patrols and statutory services for homeless families.

Even before the current financial pressures, these services were already focused on efficiency and breaking new ground – for example, by:

Boosting personal choice,

- Boosting personal choice, with initiatives like choice-based lettings to let council homes
- Outsourcing more than 70 per cent of their work to private sector partners
- Working with partners to keep the city safe.

Now, in recognition of the financial challenge we face, work is already well underway in a number of new areas, for example:

- Modernising libraries using better technology and developing "centres of excellence"
- Modernising neighbour-

hood offices, using customer

The new Customer Service Centre in Newtown offers state-of-the-art facilities

■ Reviewing our partnerships – like the Safer Birmingham Partnership – to protect frontline services and tackle antisocial behaviour.

# Protecting frontline work - with staff working better together in local area teams

Our goal now is to make sure we offer you the services you need, in the most costeffective way. This might mean sharing "back office services" that support customer service delivery.

It might mean one local management team, with responsibility for everything we do – removing boundaries between services, so you're not passed around between different parts of the council.

We want to put our staff in

the customers' shoes to improve things.

It might mean commissioning quality services rather than delivering them directly, for example using voluntary and community groups or housing associations more.

And we want to carry on providing new homes for rent and sale to meet the demand for quality accommodation.

Keeping this focus – and pulling together Housing and Constituencies into a 'Homes and Neighbourhoods' directorate – we are planning to achieve £15.3 million worth of savings by 2011-12, and £26.9 million worth by 2014-15. This is while continuing to keep you, as our customers, at the centre of everything we do and listening to your feedback on our services.

Our approach to delivering savings, continued from previous pages...

# **Corporate Services**

WE'RE determined to keep you and your needs at the forefront of our minds as we make any changes. And we're determined to take the lead behind the scenes, to help protect front-line services.

The Corporate Services directorate has responsibility for front-line services like council tax, business rates, benefits, and regulatory services (like environmental health and trading standards). Plus other internal areas like procurement (that's buying in council goods and services), finance, policy, human resources (HR) and information technology.

This part of the council is planning to deliver a higher-thanaverage level of savings, because we want to focus resources on essential front-line services.

### Goals include a better-focused central team, to:

- Help councillors and staff driving the direction of the council
  ■ Support decision-making for
- the council and its partners
- Manage external relationships
- Provide a steer on policy and

business intelligence.

### A new relationship with council directorates, which:

- Provides a minimum safe level of support
- Ensures joined-up professional advice (on HR, law, finance, policy and property, for example)
- Means managers and employees can use self-service systems, on HR for example, wherever possible.

### Improved decision-making and efficiency, to:

- Cut out unnecessary meetings ■ Improve the way we follow

corporate policies and procedures

- Reduce plans and strategy documents
- Stop non-essential work
- Improve our commercial focus and skills
- Use new technology to its full potential.

All this will inevitably mean reducing the number of staff in the directorate and reshaping it.

Year one should see savings of £12.9 million - with £28.4 million worth of savings by year



# How to h

WE welcome views and comments from service users, other Birmingham residents and businesses, council employees, Trade Unions and other stakeholders.

This might include:

- Your comments on particular proposals
- Your suggestions on improving particular
- proposals

   Further suggestions for how savings can be made
- How you feel the proposals would affect you and particular groups of people.

Please also tell us your home postcode and whether you are a council employee, to enable us to analyse the results more clearly.

For further information, please see our website at http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/budgetviews

# Comments are invited by email, text or post

 $Simply\ email\ to:\ budget\_views@birming-ham.gov.uk$ 

# By text message:

Simply start a new message with the word 'Budget' followed by a space (if you miss this word your message will be lost)

Add your comment then send to: 07786 200 403. (Please note: You will not get a receipt

Messages sent via this service will cost your usual network rate per message and are anonymous unless you put your name in the

## By post:

Mail to Budget Views, Room 221, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham, B1 1BB



# **Key dates**

WE will seek to consider all responses received before March; however it would be very helpful if comments could be sent by **January** 

17, 2011, so that these can be fed into early discussions on the proposals. Final budget decisions will

be made by the council in

March 2011. In addition to this overarching consultation, individual directorates are consulting affected parties about proposals for specific service areas.

You can find details of our consultations on our website www.birmingham.gov.co.uk

We will summarise the results of the consultation and final council decisions and publish this on the webpage in May 2011.

We will continue to review the situation and will update and amend the proposals as may be appropriate.

# Drivers, keep safe on roads this winter

THE council is advising city motorists and businesses to take a few simple steps that will help them be prepared for the snow, ice and cold that has been sweeping the country.

In partnership with highways contractor Amey, the council's annual winter maintenance and gritting programme has already swung into action - with up to 1200km of the city's roads gritted in just one evening.

You can find out more at www. birmingham.gov.uk - where vou'll also find a full range of travel tips. Just click on the Winter Weather Tips button you'll find on the home

page.
Other useful websites to look at include www.birmingham prepared.gov.uk where you can sign up for free text alerts.

You will also find advice on safe driving in winter from organisations like the AA – at www.theaa.

# Tips and advice for drivers

- Is your trip essential? Can it wait for another day?
- Check local news for updates on weather and traffic
- Can you walk, cycle, use public transport or share vehicles?
- Keep petrol levels up in case you get stuck
- Do extra checks on things like tyres, antifreeze and windscreen
- Avoid travelling at peak times if you can
- Restrict your speed
- Stick to larger roads but be aware you still need to drive carefully, even where gritting has been
- Think about keeping bottled water, long-life snacks, a first aid kit, torch and batteries, useful phone numbers, blankets, waterproof clothing and boots with you

Keep up-to-date with the latest Birmingham City Council news by receiving our free electronic newsletter. Subscribe at www.birmingham.gov.uk/bulletin