

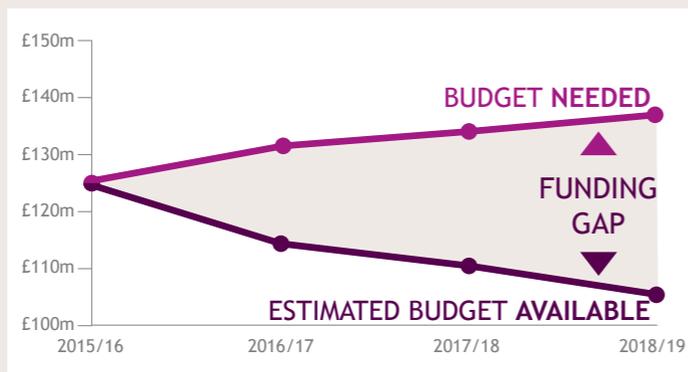
July 2015 Budget Proposals

Over the next three years the Council will be coming forward with a series of savings proposals to help fill the budget gap. Those savings proposals will come forward in a variety of ways.

We will continue to try and identify more efficient ways of working, as we have been doing over the last few years. Some saving proposals will be about changing the way we deliver services. For example, if we can make better use of our buildings by delivering the same services, but from different locations, we will look at options for doing that. We will look at which services we are subsidising, and which services we cannot afford to any more. In some cases, policies have already been agreed that will create additional savings over the coming years. Looking at ways to create additional income will also form part of the proposals.

The latest package of savings, efficiencies and income proposals was agreed for consultation at a meeting of Reading Borough Council's Policy Committee on July 20th 2015. These total £7.24 million. We want residents who use our services to be aware of the proposals being made and to have their say. Please turn to the back page of this leaflet to find out more and how you can have your say.

We have estimated the budget available and the budget needed if we carried on with the current service offer over the next 3 years



If all of the savings agreed are taken forward following consultation, it would still leave the Council having to find £31.76 million by 2019. We will be coming forward with more proposals over the coming months and years. If you want to be kept up to date with all future proposals, turn to the back page to find out how.

The full effects of the Chancellor's Emergency budget have yet to be evaluated and figures could be subject to revision

Have Your Say

To read the details of the individual budget proposals, including how they could affect the services you use, go to www.reading.gov.uk/budget. Hard copies of the full proposals are also available to read at council buildings including libraries, leisure centres and the Civic Offices.

Under each of the proposals is a section where you can leave your comments. Please take some time to read through the individual proposals and feedback your thoughts in the context of the current budget limitations the Council is facing.

If you prefer to write in with your comments on any of the individual proposals you can do so. Please ensure the budget proposal (or proposals) you are referring to is clearly identified and email: budget@reading.gov.uk

Alternatively you can write in to the following address:

Budget Consultation
Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices
Bridge Street
Reading RG1 2LU

This consultation runs until **5pm on Friday 16th October**.

These are your Council services. We want you to have your say. All feedback will be considered in advance of final decisions through the Autumn and Winter.

If you would like to be added to our email mailing list to be kept up to date with future budget proposals and consultations, and council news, you can register your details when you submit your comments to this consultation.

Please look out for future budget consultation information as the council comes forward with further proposals.



Budget Consultation

July 2015

Your Council Services. Your Say

Reading Borough Council estimates it needs to save a further **£39 million** over the next three years to 2019. This is because since 2013/14 the Government has **cut Reading's grant funding by 40%**. These cuts are taking place at a time when demand for local Council services in Reading is increasing.

Over the next three years the Council will be making a series of budget proposals to make the savings needed. We want you to be informed and have your say.

Government money to Council is cut



Demand for our services is increasing

Have your say at www.reading.gov.uk/budget

Our priority remains protecting the most vulnerable

We face some difficult decisions. The size of the funding cuts makes this the biggest budget challenge this Council has ever faced. It means we have some difficult decisions to make over the next three years. Those decisions will affect Council services used by you, your family and your community. Our priority remains protecting the most vulnerable and using resources to help narrow the gaps which exist between communities in Reading.



Jo Lovelock,
Council Leader

It is towns and cities like Reading that are being hit hardest by Government cuts, despite having the biggest demand for Council services. You only have to look next door to Wokingham where Government funding cuts over the last two years were £37 per head. In Reading the figure was £101. We have made savings by finding more efficient ways of working and losing large numbers of staff. It is inevitable that services will be affected, but our priority remains protecting the most vulnerable.



Ian Wardle,
Managing Director

Over the past five years we have made major savings, including losing more than 600 posts. We are continuing to deliver services but with fewer resources. At a time when demand for Council services is rising sharply, that is becoming more and more difficult. We are now facing more cuts in Government funding with demand for services continuing to rise. We have some difficult decisions to make and our priorities will help us shape services.

Our Six Priorities are:

- Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable
- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active
- Providing the best life through education, early help and healthy living
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy
- Providing homes for those in most need
- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities

Reading's Budget Challenge

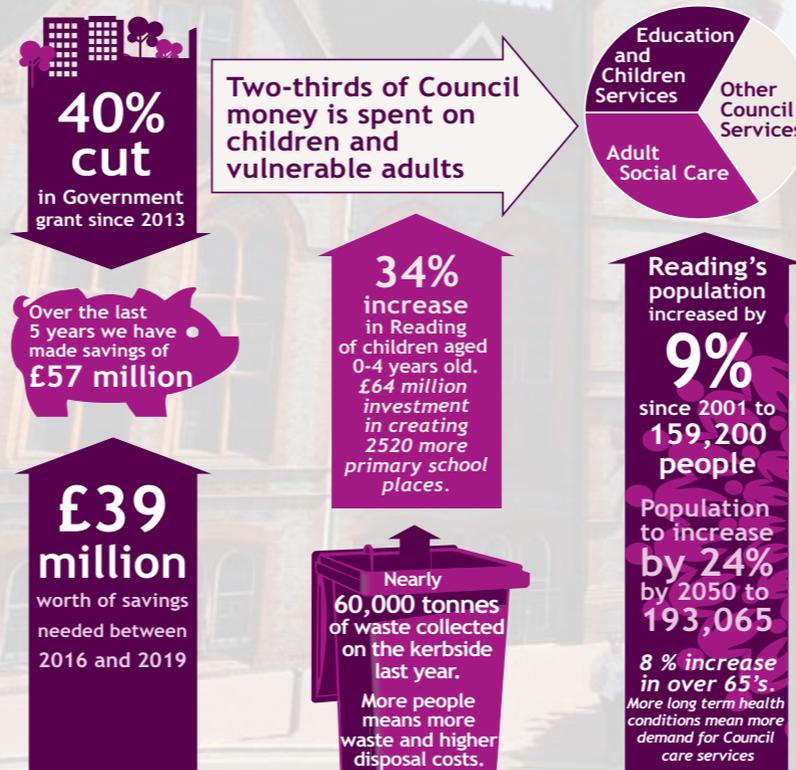
What we've done so far

We have already made savings of nearly £57 million since 2011. We have done this by making some very painful choices. More than 600 posts have been lost and in some cases the Council is struggling to cope with demand. We are continuing to deliver services, but with hugely reduced resources.

The Council has further reduced costs by making better use of technology, allowing us to work more efficiently and more cheaply. We have relocated the Council offices to a smaller, cheaper and energy efficient building, to save Council tax payers money. We have had to stop subsidising things we can no longer afford, like the old Civic Centre Post Office for example.

Last year alone, Reading Borough Council made savings of £12 million. That is the equivalent of £230,000 every week.

This is Reading's Budget Challenge



What we still need to do

£57 million in savings is not enough

Because of the continuing Government cuts, we now need to save another £39 million between 2016 and 2019.

At the same time, demand for Council services in Reading is massively increasing. A rising population means we are providing more care for older people, dealing with more demand for affordable housing, collecting more waste and creating 2,520 new primary school places.

Put alongside the scale of Government budget cuts, it now means we have some even more difficult decisions to make on how we deliver services and on the services we will continue to provide. It will mean delivering some services differently and from different places, reducing services or - in some cases - stopping them altogether.

What are the choices?

We are required by law to provide many services. That means we will continue to provide them. Two thirds of the money the Council spends are in the areas of Adult Social Care and Education and Children's Services. That includes things like protecting vulnerable young people, caring for older people and providing enough school places. With Reading's population increasing, the cost of providing these services is rising as well.

The Council sets the level of Council Tax every year. We cannot raise Council Tax by more than 2% without a referendum. We also do not get all the benefit of the Business Rates that are generated in the town with three quarters being paid to the Government.

The Council has worked hard to minimise the impact of Government cuts on frontline services as far as possible. The scale of the savings needed is now unprecedented however. We will continue looking, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to identify further efficiencies that will address the budget gap. The choices we now need to make will have an impact on the residents and organisations who use Council services in Reading.