**Savings proposals for 2023/24 to 2025/26**

## Bridging our budget gap

Councillors are considering savings proposals to help bridge [the projected budget gap](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/691/performance_and_spending/755/our_budget_challenge_202324) of £13.87 million in 2023/24 rising to an estimated £25.94 million by 2027/28.

They want to hear your views on these proposals before the council must, by law, present a balanced budget on Tuesday 21 February. [Bridging our budget gap | Savings proposals for 2023/24 to 2025/26 | Midlothian Council](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200288/consultations/759/savings_proposals_for_202324_to_202526)

To comment on the savings proposals by Wednesday 8 February:

* Email HaveYourSay@midlothian.gov.uk
* [Or tell us online](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MMV262J)
* Printed copies of the proposals will also be available at [libraries](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory/6/libraries) and [leisure centres](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/directory/3/leisure_centres_and_swimming_pools).

**Education Budget**

The 2022/23 Education budget is £108.9m, which includes an efficiency target of £2.95m.

As shown in the table below, not all of the Education budget is directly influenced by the Education Service (rates and PPP contracts, etc.). The total sum not directly influenced is currently circa £17m.

60% (£66.5m) of the Education budget is teacher salaries and associated costs.

The education budget also funds staffing for learning assistants, additional support for learning and early years.

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| **Budget Proposals** | Additional Information | Feedback |
| **Community and Third Sector funding**Review council grants - total saving of £520,000 in large grant funding from 2025/26 and £89,000 in small grants from 2023/24 | The council offers large grant funding for a three-year period which currently supports 28 community and third sector projects. This proposal is to stop allocating large grants from 2025 onwards.Small grants are also awarded annually to small locally based groups/organisations. The maximum grant awarded to any group is £3,000. This proposal is to stop allocating small grants from 2023/24 onwards.Examples of support provided by those currently funded include youth work, family support, food banks and support into employment. |  |
| **Reduce the Instrumental Music Service – saving of £444,000 in total from 2023/24** | As a result of an agreement with the Scottish Government, there are no charging fees for children learning a musical instrument. This proposal is to operate an instrumental music service within the funding provided by the Scottish Government. Within the funding available, priority would be given to supporting those studying for music qualifications in secondary schools and secondary school pupils. |  |
| **Reduction in non-statutory early years provision – saving of £215,000 in total from 2023/24** | Good Time to be Two hours are available for 2-year-olds in Midlothian in certain situations, in line with the Scottish Government criteria. Councils have discretion to award further places based on circumstances beyond this. This proposal is to remove the use of these discretionary allocations.  |  |
| **End P4 swimming programme – saving of £27,000 in total from 2023/24** | Swimming is currently provided free to all primary 4 pupils, in blocks of 12 weeks with lesson periods of forty minutes.The Learn to Swim programme would be offered to all pupils who cannot swim and would otherwise have benefitted from school swimming lessons. |  |
| **Reduction in commissioned services – saving of £500,000 in total from £2023/24** | The proposal is to review all education service contracts as they come up for renewal. Examples of current commissioned services include family learning and therapeutic services |  |
| **Rationalise Home to School and ASN Transport – annual saving of £30,000 from 2023/24** | Current legislation requires us to provide transport for all pupils over the age of eight years where the safe walking route is more than three miles, for those up to eight years the current legislation is for routes over two miles.This proposal is to increase the distance for eligibility to free transport for all Secondary age pupils from two to three miles.  The introduction of the National Entitlement Card also provides an opportunity to replace some of the council’s school transport with public transport, which would provide additional savings.Neighbouring councils are already signposting pupils to public transport timetables and promoting the NEC cards. |  |
| **Devolved School Management Budgets involving other staff groups and budgets – saving of £34,000 in total from 2023/24** | It is proposed that each Associated School Group (ASG) area - based on a secondary school and its associated primary schools - would have their own Business Manager who would provide support to the primary schools in that area. |  |
| **Service reduction in school library service – saving of £165,000 in 2023/24 rising to a total of £248,000 by 2025/26** | This proposal would remove school librarians from secondary school libraries. |  |
| **Rationalisation of school estate – saving of £290,000 in total from 2024/25** | This proposal would see the council approve officers to undertake a statutory consultation on the closure of St Matthew’s RC Primary School in line with the Schools Consultation Scotland Act 2010. There are currently 51 children over three classes attending the school. St Matthew’s RC PS is the smallest school in Midlothian. The second smallest school has a pupil roll of circa 100. Midlothian Council does not own the school building which is category C condition and suitability. The proposed savings relate to staffing and utility costs. |  |
| **Reduction in the Devolved School Management Scheme allocation to schools by 1% – saving of £400,000 in 2023/24 rising to £607,000 in total by 2025/26** | The Devolved School Management scheme (DSM) is the funding provided to early learning and childcare, primary, secondary and special schools. Staffing accounts for 98% of a schools DSM budget.This measure would involve an initial 1% cut from each school budget or a cash target. It includes:* staffing (teaching and non-teaching)
* educational supplies
* staff development
* Emergency property repairs
* cleaning materials
* excursions
* copyright, tv licences and other supplies
 |  |
| **Increase shared head teacher posts – saving of £17,000 in 2023/24 rising to £27,000 in total by 2025/26** | This proposal would see our smaller schools enter into joint Headships, within their Associated School Group (ASG) area.  We currently have successful joint headships (Sacred Heart and St Matthew’s), and this model could be replicated across the authority. |  |
| **Reduction in Devolved School Management Budgets involving teachers – saving of £1.969 million in 2023/24 rising to £6.207 million in total by 2025/26** | Within Education, there is very little flexibility to find efficiencies of the required scale other than staffing numbers. This proposal would involve reducing teacher numbers across the authority over the next five years. |  |
| **Transformation of school week – £1.5 million in 2024/25 rising to £2 million in total by 2025/26** | This proposal is to redesign the primary school week and review the secondary school curriculum. |  |