

Rushcliffe Borough Council

Transformation Strategy and Efficiency Plan 2025/26 – 2029/30

Introduction

The council has had a transformation Plan since 2010 and widened this to incorporate other efficiencies. The purpose of the Transformation and Efficiency Plan (TEP) is a measured approach to meeting the emerging financial challenges. The plan was written to identify cost efficiencies, increase income opportunities and develop transformational alternatives for the future delivery of services. This Transformation and Efficiency Plan also constitutes what was the previous Government's requirements for a Productivity Plan. This plan covers four key themes:

- Transformation of services to make better use of resources
- Take advantage of advances in technology
- Reduce wasteful spend within systems or, for example, on consultants
- Barriers preventing activity that the Government can help to reduce or remove

The Transformation Programme since its inception and going forward aims to support the delivery of over £7.6m in efficiencies. The following are guiding principles used, to identify ways to make efficiencies through the TEP:

- Where possible individuals that use facilities should pay for them
- Maximise income where we can and ensure costs are recovered
- Focus on reducing discretionary expenditure
- Continue to identify budget expenditure efficiencies
- Maximise the use of Council assets
- Digital by design programme and other innovations

The aim is to achieve this without significantly impacting on service quality or resident satisfaction. Our latest resident polling data shows us that 82% of residents are satisfied with Rushcliffe as a place to live and 61% of residents are satisfied with the way the Council runs its services. (2024).

The TEP is updated each year and sets out the Council's approach to making further savings between now and 2029/30, projects are summarised in Appendix B. It also explains our approach to identifying and working with partners, recognising and maximising opportunities, and leading the way in delivering high quality services that match the needs of residents. It is clear that as the organisation becomes leaner, it will become increasingly challenging to find further savings. Achieving the increased targets requires a bolder and more strategically focussed way of thinking. However with the Local Government Reorganisation expected within the five-year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period, the focus of transformation, and the resources required, are likely to switch to transitioning to a new authority. The plan will evolve when we know more.

Addressing the funding gap

The most significant achievement of the TEP in recent years is the delivery in 2023 of both the Rushcliffe Oaks Crematorium and the Bingham Arena and Enterprise Centre. Despite the challenges on Council resources as a result of Covid and international conflict, these projects were delivered on time and with savings against budget and will continue to make a significant contribution to the growing financial pressures during this MTFS period and help to deliver socio-economic benefits.

The Council continues to constrain spending and increase income where possible but also continues to review how it delivers its services for potential efficiency savings and to investigate opportunities for further transformation projects. Already lean budgets coupled with Inflation, National Insurance increases and policy changes such as Simpler Recycling and Extended Producer Responsibility places pressure on costs, making this a more challenging endeavour.

The Council has identified additional service efficiencies and income generating opportunities for 2025/26 onwards, see Appendix B. Decisions which help to reduce the budget requirement include; a review of the Council's leisure contract, the relocation of the Customer Contact Centre in 2024 with savings on rent and running costs, the home alarms digitalisation project, increases in garden waste charges and long stay car parking changes. A collaboration with Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club to increase the use of leisure facilities at West Park is set to deliver additional income from 2026/27.

The impact of high inflation rates and reduced funding, means that the council has a need to draw on reserves, however due to savings identified this has been mitigated to a value of £k0.172 over the five-year period to 2029/30 (subject to risks outlined in the MTFS).

Savings targets

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Gross Budget Deficit excluding Transformation Plan	3,107	8,133	8,248	8,326	8,281
Cumulative Savings in Transformation Plan	(5,833)	(6,658)	(6,972)	(7,189)	(7,509)
Gross Budget Deficit/(Surplus)	(2,726)	1,475	1,276	1,137	772
Additional Transformation Plan savings	(824)	(314)	(218)	(320)	(86)
Net budget Deficit/(Surplus)	(3,550)	1,161	1,058	817	686
Cumulative additional Transformation savings	(824)	(1,138)	(1,356)	(1,676)	(1,762)

Partnering arrangements are pursued where this results in efficiencies. Existing examples are; Building Control partnership with South Kesteven and Newark & Sherwood, Payroll with Gedling Borough Council, Procurement provision by Nottingham County Council and Eastcroft Depot premises shared with Nottingham City Council, the insourcing of Streetwise in 2022 and part-outsourcing of the IT help desk in 2024 to the Cutter Group.

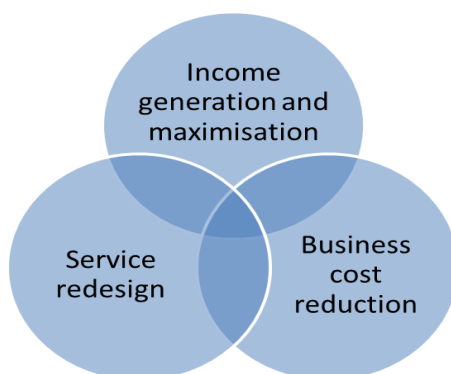
In March 2024 Nottinghamshire set up the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA) with a directly elected Mayor covering Derbyshire, Derby, Nottinghamshire and Nottingham. This was formed to improve the region through local funding and decision making, as a result there may be additional opportunities for collaboration and funding to deliver

efficiencies not yet included in the budget. In the coming years the advent of LGR will result in a whole new collaboration.

This Strategy can be revised at any time by Full Council and as part of our Capital and Investment Strategy reporting we must show the impact on our prudential indicators.

Rushcliffe's core operating principles

Rushcliffe has three core principles which underpin its approach to transformation – income generation and maximisation, business cost reduction and service redesign. Transformation has been achieved to date by focusing on a 'one' Council approach and great teamwork between Councillors and officers to limit the impact upon residents. However, we recognise to be successful in bridging the remaining funding gap it may be necessary to consider and implement large scale transformational change which can generate a large fiscal impact.



The TEP is an evolving document and although it essentially covers the next five years it should not be bound by time or scope. To this end and within the emerging complex environment, three partnership models have been identified to provide a framework to generate further efficiencies. These are covered in more detail in [Appendix A](#).

An Integrated Approach to Transformation

This Strategy formalises the Council's integrated approach to transformation. It highlights the work that has been, and continues to be, done to deliver over £7.6m by 2029/30 in efficiencies and formalises the Council's principles of partnership working (detailed at [Appendix A](#)). At a strategic level it highlights the important relationship between:

- The Council's Corporate Strategy – which provides the overall direction of the Council, its core values and its four key priorities,
- The Medium-Term Financial Strategy – a defined plan of how the authority will work towards a balanced budget and maintain viability,
- The Transformation and Efficiency Plan/Productivity Plan – a document providing direction in respect of the strategically focussed streams of work to meet the financial targets whilst fulfilling the Council's corporate priorities.



Rushcliffe's Integrated Approach to Transformation

The diagram above also shows how this trio of documents can be influenced by external factors such as central government, public expectation, and other stakeholders.

The Transformation and Efficiency Plan (TEP)

This document details the different areas of work Officers and Councillors will focus upon to meet the stretching financial targets and requirements of the Productivity Plan whilst continuing to fulfil our corporate priorities. The diagram below highlights the different work streams and shows how they fit together over the next five years. Underpinning the work we do undertake is a commercial culture. Impending LGR is a 'thinking big' item and will take-up significant council resource going forward.



Management Responsibility with Member Challenge

Each year, officers undertake an internal programme of investigations looking specifically at improving efficiency through different ways of working. We also challenge our budgets every year to drive out further savings whilst minimising the impact of front-line services. We have a strong leadership focused on corporate priorities using regular performance clinics to manage performance and budgets. We also ensure that every large-scale project (where there is deemed to be a significant impact on residents, staff, or budgets) has its own project board and governance structure. Activities are challenged through Leader and Portfolio Holder briefings and constituted and established processes such as Member Groups. Reports on policy changes are passed through the Cabinet, and our Corporate Overview Group and other scrutiny groups regularly scrutinise review findings. Additional Member Groups are created by Cabinet and Scrutiny Groups when required.

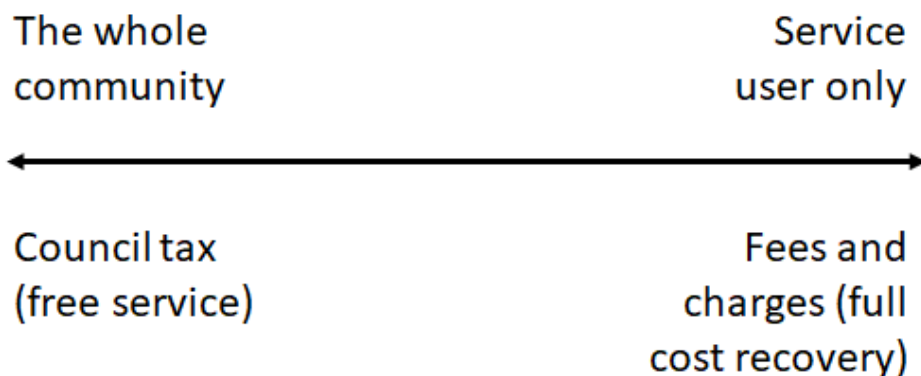
Service Efficiencies/Transformation of Services

The culture at Rushcliffe has been to ensure different services are reviewed regularly to make sure they are as focused upon the customer and as streamlined as possible, any identified inefficiency removed from the system and where appropriate services are moved online. The way the service is delivered is also investigated and consideration is given to potential partnership opportunities or alternative methods of delivery to protect the services that residents value without a pre-determined view. Headline efficiency targets have been identified for each area of the Council and these are illustrated at Appendix .

Process Reviews/Technology

The Council introduced its digital by design strategy in 2019 with the objective of understanding the Council's digital needs and delivering a programme of planned improvements. This strategy promoted four areas; Digital Culture, Efficiencies, Customer Satisfaction, and Security and Privacy, and successfully delivered a total of 18 projects. A cumulative savings of approx. £74k has been achieved in efficiencies per annum due to initiatives such as the 'My Account' portal for our residents, the Councillors portal for our elected Members, improved website, new booking system, new workflow and automation, and Hybrid Mail. There will continue to be an improvement plan; however, future developments will be based on the new ICT Strategy 2025–2028.

The Council has a Fees and Charges Policy which aims to ensure that fees are set in a transparent and consistent manner. In the current economic climate, fees and charges offer an opportunity for the Council to maximise its financial position, and to achieve policy objectives, for example by encouraging or discouraging the use of a service or to alter patterns of behaviour. The corporate charging policy covers: Which services should be subject to full cost recovery, and which should be met from the General Fund; Which services should be eligible for concessions within a broader equality and fairness framework; How charges relate to and support wider corporate priorities; and the impact of any competition and whether the Council is or should be competing with local businesses in the economy. Ultimately the balance between taxpayer and service user should be aligned. The diagram below demonstrates this principle.



Management Challenge/Reducing Waste

The Service Efficiencies are strengthened by on-going management of the services through regular performance clinics and a management challenge as part of the annual budget setting process – each Director is charged with scrutinising their budget to identify any additional savings or remove unused budget. Again, top level targets have been identified where appropriate, and these are illustrated in the table at Appendix B.

Members and Officers Working Together

The upper area of the diagram above focuses on activities where Members and officers work together to identify further savings and different ways of working. These aspects of the Strategy have been arrived at through our budget proposals which have continued to be radical and challenging as we look at ways of bridging the financial gap by 2029/30. Budget update sessions (both this year and in the past), incorporating Members from all political groups, have looked at what has been achieved so far, policy changes that can be made immediately to save money in the coming year, different ways of delivering services in the future, and more long-term options that could significantly change the face of the Council and the services it delivers.

Immediate savings

Each year, Members are presented with several policy changes which hit one or more of our core principles of income generation and maximisation, business cost reduction or service redesign. These operational changes form part of the budget setting process each year and generally result in savings or additional income for the following year(s).

Transformational Projects 2025-2030

As has already been mentioned above, this Strategy is a continuation of the Council's original Transformation Programme and consequently, several key projects which influence service delivery and finances over the next few years are already in progress. Good progress has been made with new Transformational Projects as mentioned above.

Going forwards, two major transformation and efficiency projects are:

- Leisure strategy review
- Additional income from garden waste and car parking charges

These schemes are embedded in the Corporate Strategy and fully embrace the Council's four priorities:

- Quality of Life
- Efficient Services
- Sustainable Growth
- The Environment.

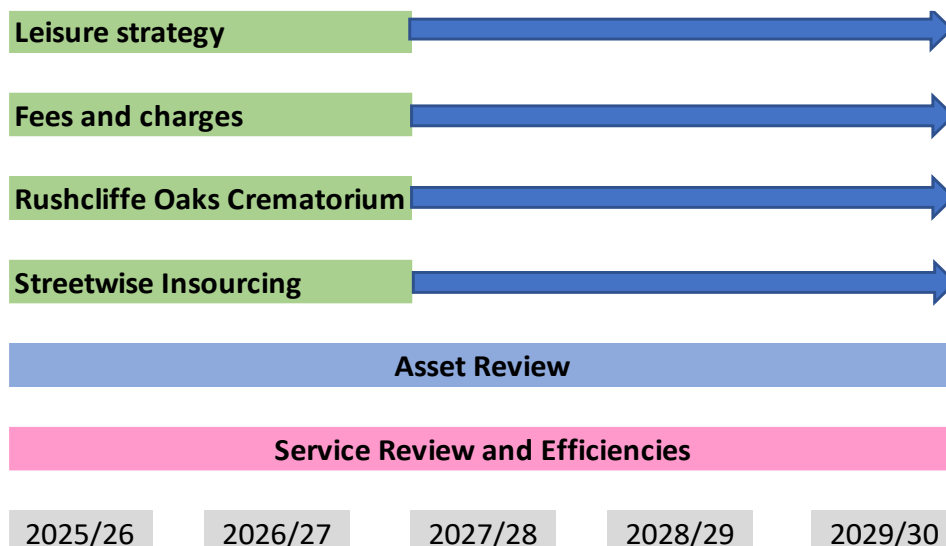
The Leisure strategy review will continue to ensure the Council provides high quality leisure facilities across the borough, that are affordable and accessible for residents whilst maximising the return to the Council to support its budget position and continue to provide such services. Additional income from fees and charges for garden waste and car parking to ensure that efficient services continue to be delivered whilst meeting rising costs.

Leisure Strategy Activation

The new Bingham Arena and Enterprise Centre opened in February 2023 giving even more added value for the taxpayer and the offices providing opportunities for small and growing businesses. Leisure Services continue to be improved, Keyworth and Cotgrave leisure centres during 2024 and 2025, to improve carbon efficiency through green technology measures, further supporting the Council's targets to be carbon neutral by 2030. The council has secured £1.2m external funding from SALIX to support these improvements. A short term extension to the Leisure Centre Management Contract to 2030 has been agreed and will deliver savings as per appendix B and will allow aligned of all of the Councils Leisure offering which may present opportunities to secure further efficiencies.

Summary of the Transformation Plan Work Programme

The diagram below summarises the Transformation and Efficiency Plan Work Programme for the next five years and provides a framework within which the required efficiencies will be delivered.



Governance

Whilst this strategy establishes a framework and timeframe for the individual projects within the programme, arrangements are flexible to allow for unforeseen circumstances and redirection of resources to maximise opportunities as they arise. It is anticipated that these same principles of agile working will apply to the 2025-2030 rolling Transformation Programme.

Each project within the programme has appropriate governance arrangements depending on the size, complexity, and risk. Overall, monitoring of the Strategy ultimately is reported Finance and Performance reports to both Cabinet and Corporate Overview Group and as necessary a relevant Scrutiny Group will take place quarterly by the Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team. Where it is required by individual projects, consultation, and engagement with members of the public will take place.

The following risks have been identified and will be monitored accordingly.

Risk	Probability	Impact	Mitigation
Reviews do not achieve anticipated savings	Probable	>£250k	Individual reviews where there is underachievement may be offset by others with higher savings. Regular reporting in budget papers.
Programme slippage	Possible	>£250k	Monitoring of programme and taking early corrective action
Insufficient capacity to undertake the programme	Possible	>£250k	Procure extra resources – i.e., consultancy
Insufficient interest from alternative providers	Possible	Negative	Find appropriate savings from direct service provision by quality reduction (probably)
Delay in anticipated savings or a reduction or removal of current savings due to external factors	Possible	>£250k	Accurate profiling of efficiencies. Close monitoring of the environment (e.g., rising prices) that may affect the feasibility of projects and regular reviews on the commercial market (e.g., rental demand) to assess likelihood of income falling.

Conclusion

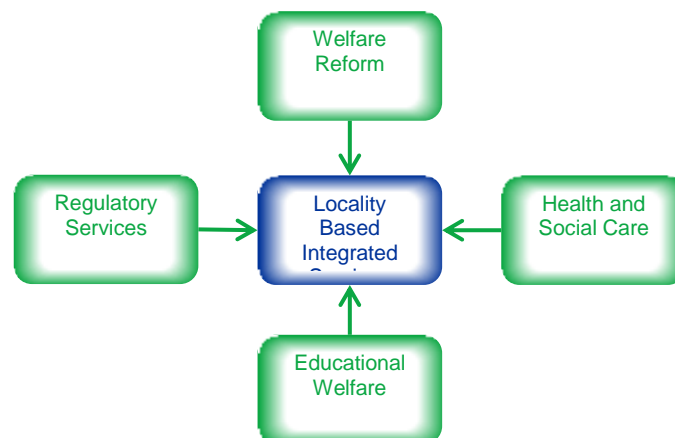
The above sets out Rushcliffe's plans over the next five years and the Council's commitment towards delivering these plans. This plan supports the Council's MTFS and is the vehicle upon which the Council will achieve a balanced budget. The Council is required to produce and publish a Productivity Plan and approval of this Strategy by Council satisfies this requirement.

Appendix A - Rushcliffe's Accepted Models of Partnership Working

Localised Integrated Working Partnerships

These types of integrated delivery partnerships involve working with other agencies and organisations whose services are delivered to Rushcliffe Borough residents. These partnerships are aimed at improving the connectivity of public services, public regulation, reducing the need to cross-refer people and issues.

The Government has recognised and begun to embrace the value of partnerships of scope and is increasingly looking to realise both financial and customer benefits from these. Central Government policies around community safety, health outcomes, welfare reform and community budget pilots, all demonstrate recognition of the importance of different agencies working together in a single locality to benefit their residents.



The Council's Customer Services Team operates in locations across the Borough on a remote access basis in buildings operated by partners such as libraries and health centres. The main Customer Service Centre is in West Bridgford library, the largest of the towns in Rushcliffe.

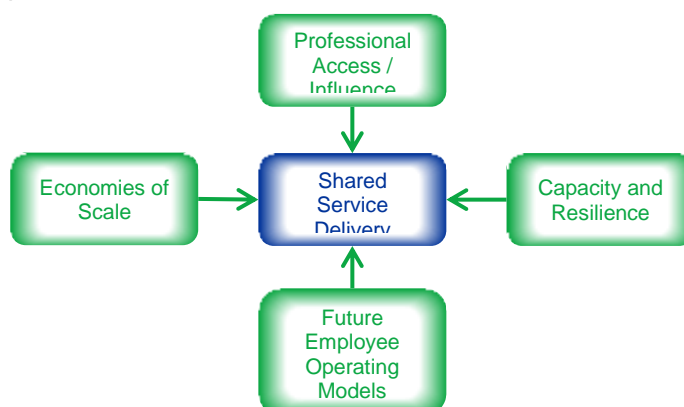
The service is delivered in Bingham where an integrated delivery service model has been deployed and is being delivered from its Health Centre. In addition, there are contact points in Cotgrave and East Leake located in libraries, supporting extended opening times of these facilities and providing increased remote access for the Customer Services Team.

There are also a range of projects underway involving our locality partners, which embed these principles and take services out into the community, including Positive Futures, Lark in the Park and Business Partnership events and networking.

Partnerships of Scale

This term describes two or more organisations joining together largely to benefit from economies of scale. These partnerships can, like localised integrated working partnerships, drive efficiencies but they may not, in themselves, directly improve the way in which the service is delivered to Rushcliffe Borough residents. Opportunities exist in this area to share back-office services, such as payroll, reducing costs and removing duplication whilst maintaining and improving capacity and resilience.

If scale partnerships are to be successful, previous experience has shown that there is a greater chance for success if they cover a broad range of services but are focussed and aligned on a small number of culturally similar and willing partners. It is possible to develop these partnerships organically – that is, as opportunities arise.



As mentioned above, to date partnerships of scale have developed organically – the Council has been successful in developing several such partnerships in the past, of which the following, mostly back-office services, have come to fruition: payroll services (Gedling), building control (South Kesteven, Newark & Sherwood), procurement (Nottinghamshire County Council), and emergency planning (Nottinghamshire County Council).

Following continued encouragement from Central Government, there has been an increased willingness and determination from the Leaders within Nottinghamshire to forge closer partnerships of scale – agreement with Nottingham City Council to relocate Depot Services to operate out of Eastcroft, now housing a shared depot for refuse fleet maintenance. Further opportunities will be assessed as opportunities arise. The Council is actively involved with the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA) which may present opportunities for collaboration.

Partnerships for Governance

There has been a growth of place-based and themed partnership arrangements. These have largely been designed to implement and administer arrangements within defined areas focussed upon common objectives including: The Joint Planning and Advisory Board (Nottingham City, Nottinghamshire County Council, Broxtowe BC, Gedling BC, Erewash DC, and Rushcliffe BC).

The Council is also working with partners on the power station site as part of the now approved East Midlands Freeport. along with East Midlands Airport and East Midlands Intermodal Park in South Derbyshire. To support the development of the site the Council worked with Uniper and others to adopt a Local Development Order for Ratcliffe on Soar, this is intended to accelerate the planning process to meet the challenging timescales of the EMF incentives.

The emergence and growth of other forums has restricted the representation and influencing role of individual districts. The Health and Wellbeing Boards is a prime example of where representation is restricted to one district or borough council. However, Officers ensure that regular updates are received and sent between district and borough councils to keep colleagues informed and good relationships are maintained with these organisations so we remain aware of opportunities as they arise. However, to further combat this, other supporting arrangements are in place. For example, the Council has created the Strategic Growth Board, Development and Community Boards and task and finish groups focused on particular areas or themes to either facilitate local economic growth or deal with the challenges growth creates. There is also the City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee to drive future investment in growth and jobs in the City and County. At a regional level there is a Development Corporation Board which focuses on, for example agreeing joint objectives, allocating resources and monitoring outcomes which will impact regionally.



As these develop, there will be an increasing reliance upon forging relationships which can influence outcomes for Rushcliffe residents; for example, agreeing key infrastructure requirements which benefit not only Rushcliffe but neighbouring boroughs, districts, and the City. These models of partnership working provide a framework within which officers can be swift to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. They build upon our existing core principles model highlighted above and provide a clear map for the future. Going forward LGR will lead to a reset of relationships when a newly constituted local authority corporate entity is created.

Appendix B – Transformation and Efficiency Plan – Productivity Plan

Efficiency	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
THEMATIC						0
LEISURE STRATEGY	(385)	(33)	17	(5)	(5)	(411)
CREMATORIUM	(61)	(70)	(64)	(40)	0	(235)
WEST PARK NCCC (SPECIAL EXPENSE)	0	(36)	1	1		(34)
CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE	(50)	(1)	(1)	(1)		(53)
ADDITONAL INCOME						0
CHARGING FOR NEW BINS	50					50
CAR PARKING	(15)			(100)		(115)
GREEN BIN SCHEME	(98)	(106)	(100)	(100)		(404)
GREEN BIN SCHEME (2ND AND SUBSEQUENT PRICE INCREASE)	(34)	(69)	(71)	(75)	(81)	(330)
BINGHAM ENTERPRISE		(8)				(8)
COTGRAVE PHASE 2	(1)	(6)				(7)
MARKETING SERVICES	10	(10)				0
EDWALTON GOLF COURSE	21					21
HOME ALARMS DIGITALISATION	(97)	26				(71)
CAR PARKING BINGHAM	(11)					(11)
CAR PARKING	(84)					(84)
SAVINGS						0
PUBLIC CONVENIENCES	(15)	(1)				(16)
CIVIC DINNER	(11)					(11)
POSITIVE FUTURES	(25)					(25)
RUSHCLIFFE REPORTS (2 PAPER COPIES)	(18)					(18)
TOTAL	(825)	(314)	(218)	(320)	(86)	(1,762)
CUMULATIVE SAVINGS TO DATE	(5,833)	(6,658)	(6,972)	(7,189)	(7,509)	
CUMULATIVE SAVINGS CARRIED FORWARD	(6,658)	(6,972)	(7,189)	(7,509)	(7,595)	