### **BUDGET VIEWS**

# **Consultation Period Comments**

## **17.12.12 – 23.12.12**

Ref	Contact	Date	Comment
BVE131069	External	17.12.12	
BVE131070	External	17.12.12	I am responding to the letter I received on the 14.12.2012 regarding the free bus tickets for my child's transportation commuting too and from school.  I would like to explain the situation regarding this matter. There are a number of reasons I want to point forward to you, explaining how much these tickets would mean to me and my family:  • It would help our financial situation, as we are currently struggling.  • Because he didn't get the place in the school that we had hoped for, instead of us walking him to school we will have to take him on the bus, that will be very difficult for us as me and my wife are both working.  • He needs to go to this catholic school as it is a religion we practise, if he is unable to get to school this

			<ul> <li>would be against our religion, the reason we put our son in this school, because it suits our requirements with our beliefs.</li> <li>We believe if we are unable to have these free tickets we would consider taking our son out of this school.</li> <li>I hope you consider the points I have made above, I hope we can continue our son's education at your school. We always want the best for our son, I hope you understand.</li> </ul>
BVE131071	External	17.12.12	Please, do not under any circumstances cut the Parent Partnership service!!!!  They have helped me sort out two statements for my autistic children and they have been absolutely invaluable to us as parents, coming to meetings at school, helping us stand up for our children and ensure they receive what they are entitled to in school.  I would as a parent and a user of the PP service, protest loudly against any cuts in the PP service.  Not only is it a statutory service (named in the SENCOP as required), but it is vital. Please do not reduce the support parents get - its a minefield out there and we struggle on as it is.
BVE131072	External	17.12.12	Axe some wasted money resurfacing pavements - people can walk on what's there. Do not axe the PP service!  I am really disappointed to read that Stepping Stones may well be closed down as a consequence of the budget cuts. Many of our students have benefitted from the services and parents have appreciated the support they have offered. There is limited resources available as it is and I for one, who workes in a school, in the front line of dealing with many and complex issues, will miss this valuable resource.
BVE131073	External	17.12.12	I read the email about proposed cuts to the Stepping Stones, ARCH, CAMHS family support with great disappointment. At our school, we try to address all the needs of our children and families and we have many needy children that require support. These projects have been a great source of support for many of our families, particularly Stepping Stones/ARCH. It would be a great loss if schools were to lose this service as there are so many of the charitable services that we have previously lost due to funding cuts. If this support were to be taken away too, schools would have no where else to go to for support. Please reconsider this decision.
BVE131074	External	15.12.12	I've read the fact-sheet on this - the reduction in "subsidy" to University Hospital Birmingham, but am not clear quite what is meant or intended. Does the reduction reflect lower Section 5 payments owed by the City to the Trust? Does the term "mitigation" by the use of the Kenrick Centre imply using it for more patients - if so the admission criteria may need to be adjusted, or staffing and skills adapted to take more disabled patients. Furthermore, the Choice directive can restrict the Trust's ability to transfer to the Centre.

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			I write as a former consultant at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.
BVE131075	Internal	17.12.12	Looking at the Budget Consultation and the spreadsheet for Children, Young People and Families, I feel that I must comment about CYPF 11. The proposal to deliver the statutory complaints procedure in the area teams rather than by a small central team would, I believe, be a false economy.
			I am concerned about this because my role is as seek to foster a good relationship with her and her team. I see a lot of complaints about Children's social care (there were around 60 last year) and have a lot of contact with Customer Relations.
			Complaints arise because area teams, for whatever reason, have not dealt with something properly to begin with. Now I know that everyone is busy and that this is an incredibly tricky area of service, so I am not here to judge about why things go wrong. My job is to limit the damage as much as I can when it has reached the Ombudsman, or before that, by means of a settlement under S. 92 of the LGA 2000. Complaints often arise because teams are so stretched now that they do not return a call or follow the procedure properly. I am trying to settle two cases at the moment which have both arisen because of failure to follow the procedure properly. They will both be costly to you - probably around £10,000 each.
			So my worry is that if the area has not managed a case well and it leads to a complaint, how will they then find the time to undertake all the additional duties they would have if Customer Relations does not exist? How is this service undertaken objectively by the same team which dealt with it originally?
			I think that there will be an increase in LGO complaints if this is done. It would take a while to filter through but I can easily see the number doubling within 12 months and the costs of settlement will rise because we will have very little defence if the the complaint process is poorly handled on top of a case having been mishandled to begin with. Once the Ombudsman spots a systemic failure in service (and she will, because she is always looking for it), we will see a rise in reports too. That adds to your costs and to the damage to the Council's reputation.
			I note that it is not a course being pursued by Adults and Communities.
			I an sure that my colleagues in Legal Services will comment for themselves, but I know that the Head of Civil Litigation and Personal Injury fears a rise of 600 cases a year in his area of service if this change takes place. The costs of that would be phenomenal. It would dwarf the increased costs of Ombudsman complaints, but they are, of course, my primary concern because I am trying to safeguard the Council's reputation.
			I do urge a re-think of this proposal as I do not think it is a wise course for Children, Young People and Families.

BVE131076	External	17.12.12	I have looked at the Budget Views 'Have your Say' document on the Budget 2013+, but found there is a lack of detail and context.
			(1) There is little information on the absolute level of expenditure on each activity or functional area.
			To give an example: page 46, option 3 'Reduce mechanical sweeping', says there would be a £0.32 m saving in 2013/14, with the "amount of mechanical sweeping is likely to be significantly reduced". But the absolute level (total amount spent) on sweeping is not given, only the change in the amount spent.
			And there is no way of knowing what "significantly", in "amount of mechanical sweeping is likely to be significantly reduced", means.
			Another example is the Library of Birmingham, where a saving has been proposed in the opening ceremony. But there is no information on the Library of Birmingham PR budget, or what the reduced opening ceremony would involve, or cost.
			Could you clarify the options by showing what the amounts spent in each department each year would be, what the outcomes are in quantitative terms, and what the total spend is for each section in each department.
			(2) It is also hard to understand the effects of workforce reductions, because there is no historic or current information on numbers of departmental staff by job type, pay band, or full/part time status.
			(3) There are no details as regards use of overtime, bonuses, or the use of contract and/or agency staff.
			(4) There is no comparability information in the document on how Birmingham city council pay and terms and conditions compare with those of other local authorities.
BVE131077	Internal	17.12.12	why don't they cut peoples hours to make savings
BVE131078	External	17.12.12	having read the budget sheets for CYPF my main concern is the drastic overall percentage cut to CAMHS. This problem is increasing and there are few vountary sector services to pick up. Drastically cutting this vital service will be 'false economy' as the council will pay in other ways as young people with mental health problems will need more services such as police, NHS, social services etc. This preventative work is vital.
BVE131079	External	17.12.12	I am writing to ask, on behalf of vulnerable students, that funding for Stepping Stones is maintained. This service has provided a unique service for many of our most vulnerable students and is crucial to improving their life chances. It would be extremely short-sighted to attempt to save money in the short term by cutting funding for this service as the interventions provided are preventative and save money in the long-term.

			Stepping Stones has had significant impact on our students who have a wide range of needs, including students who have experienced abuse, neglect or trauma. It supports students to remain in mainstream settings and it may be that, without their support, students will require a more specialised and far more expensive educational setting.  We are very grateful to Stepping Stones for their work in the past and are very concerned at the prospect of a reduced or absent service and the implications this would have for our most vulnerable students.  I urge Birmingham City Council to prioritise this service and maintain the funding with a view to increasing funding in the future.
BVE131080	External	19.12.12	We are deeply concerned that there is a risk to the loss of the Stepping Stones Service or a reduction in their funding.  This is a service that has become invaluable to our children and families over recent years. They have supported families with many issues eg breavement, separation of parents, dealing with domestic issues, behavioural issues in and out of school etc. All families supported have given positive feedback about the support received and the Stepping Stones service has impacted on the well being of the child and family.  This service compliments Birmingham's Children's Services (Social Services) at a time when they are equally stretched and provides an interim and often preventative support package before things excalate to a higher level.
BVE131081	External Email	19.12.12	We have to accept your quotes of facts, figures and percentages, but not cuts which are putting people out of work and into the dole queue. It seems money (tax payers) is being spent trying to re-create the services you are cutting. You need workers and front line services to prevent a short fall in council tax income.  A responsible council and its leader should have the courage to stand and challenge the Government, barter for more Government grants, not whinge and sit drawing up a "jaws of doom" graph! Sort out the dead wood amongst councillors: cut their expenses and 'perks', and cost of the admin. used in trying to justify the need to change public services. Wheelie bins is a prime example: gaining £30m (provided you use wheeled bins) to impose 3 bins on householders without consultation or knowledge of the City's layout of properties and streets that can't accommodate them: Re-negotiate the £30m to spend improving the adequate system we already have. It is the right of all council tax payers to expect the best possible services for their money, so work with what you have, enhance instead of destroy. You need to respect public opinion.  What has happened to plans and money secured for regeneration of Stirchley? you cut that the moment you came into Office:  What of the jobs it would create?  Moseley Baths set to be refurbished?, fallen under the axe!: so much for inspiration from the Olympics and Paralympics to get people involved, where do they participate? Remploy employees out of work, facing the rest

			of their lives on benefit! (no jobs for able bodied people)! What will that cost the already overloaded benefit system?  Most despicable of all, removing emergency pull cords from council properties to "save £1.08p a week"??  I fear there will be no justification, no consultation, for the council is unlikely to find itself affected by the cuts.  Good job they had our money for a £27K 'knees up'!!  I wonder what damage this Council will do in the next 3 years if the public don't stand up to them now?
BVE131082	External	18.12.12	I'm grateful for the opportunity to respond through the Budget Consultation process, and I hope many other Birmingham citizens have also done so.
			My response is largely around the general principles (what you call 'the wider service delivery issues' in the document) rather than the particularities of individual budget lines.
			I'm sure cliches have already been over-used in this conversation, but I'm afraid the cliche that springs to mind is about 'rearranging deckchairs on the Titanic'. It is becoming increasingly clear that the figures, projected into the future, mean not only that so-called 'salami slicing' of services is an ineffective response, but even that an approach that 'preserves' some services while cutting others will not be going far enough. Albert Bore's description of 'the end of local government as we know it' is correct, and what is needed is a radically different approach to local government. Rather than 'restructuring the building', I would suggest, what is needed, unavoidably, is to begin the work of imagining what might be built, what seeds planted and nurtured, in the rubble that is left behind.
			1) Who will be able to think the unthinkable?
			I would humbly suggest that those best-equipped to do this imagining might include some council members and officers with an ability to think far enough 'outside the box', but that the pressures of working within the current system may well mean that many will find that just too difficult. Those of us who work in what is often called the 'Third' (and sometimes, more recently, the 'Tired') Sector have, I would suggest, a wealth of experience not simply in surviving on a shoestring, but on the kind of creative reinvention that is needed for Birmingham.
			My first suggestion, then, would be an urgent need, not for another consultation exercise, or polite listening, but for getting the <i>right</i> people in rooms, together, with a blank sheet of paper, across all the areas and departments in which the Council currently provides, or aspires to provide, some kind of service — to re-imagine what kind of support will be needed for Birmingham to survive, and ideally thrive. As a concrete example, I would want to highlight the work of the Chamberlain Forum as being ideally placed to enable such thinking to happen and develop.
			2) A radical approach that starts with neighbourhoods

The traditional model of 'service provision' is almost dead. That will, inevitably, mean huge losses, both in terms of council employees but also in terms of what local neighbourhoods will no longer benefit from. I would suggest, however, that in the crisis there is also an opportunity, and it is an opportunity to rediscover ourselves as a city, begin with our local neighbourhoods. There are many things that are 'provided' as 'services' that neighbourhoods are actually, with adequate resourcing, much better at doing themselves. There is clear evidence, for example, that the most significant factors that make people feel safe and secure is not police presence, but the levels of trust between neighbours, and the frequency with which people in a neighbourhood gather together outdoors. There is also clear evidence that the wellbeing of the most vulnerable people – children & young people, older people, and adults in between – is maximised not within institutions, but within communities of mutual care.

What I'm suggesting here is not 'big society' – a policy that looks for all the world like a smokescreen for massive cuts in public services, with nothing positive to replace them apart from some patronising moral exhortations emanating from comfortable Oxfordshire villages. It is also not simply about 'devolving to District Committees', as if that somehow solves anything – merely displacing the same old problems to a lower level on the chain (something that central government have been doing very 'successfully' themselves, as Birmingham can testify).

What I am suggesting needs resourcing. But it needs a kind of resourcing that is utterly different from 'service provision'. It also, helpfully, can be done very effectively with rather less money. It is not about 'neighbourhood management', although that was a very good initiative in this direction. There will, after all, be rather less services for communities to manage or commission. This is about *community development*. Paid people, in each local neighbourhood (and 'local' means 'local' here – if it's not within walking distance, it's not 'local') of the city, who are trained and skilled in connecting people, building relationships, growing trust, nurturing friendships, drawing out people's skills and confidence and knowledge and passions. It is, as the Social Cohesion Inquiry has at least begun to realise about identifying, unlocking, and connecting the 'assets' within people and communities so often labelled in 'deficit' terms – but using them to grow things from the grassroots, not to support a creaking, disintegrating, top-down structure.

Again, it is often the 3rd Sector that knows better than most how to do this. But even 'we' are often so tied in to the 'service provision' mentality that we fail to do what needs doing most.

Yes, Birmingham needs infrastructure, and it would be easy and obvious for the City Council to focus on that. But Birmingham needs strong, resilient and caring communities more. If we're asking the hardest questions about what BCC spends its money on, I would argue this has to come first, before anything else – because everything else will flow from this. BCC is in the best possible position to commission the recruitment, training, and support of such a network of community developers – and it will pay dividends. The evidence from a programme such as 'Near Neighbours' in significant sections of the city would back this up.

			There is, of course, an 'equality' question in all of this. Clearly some neighbourhoods will need more 'intense' work, others will require a 'lighter touch'. There are measures around that will help with that judgement, but they
			may not be the traditional 'deprivation' indices. Levels of social capital, social infrastructure, and formal/informal co-production (again, see Chamberlain Forum's work in this area) will be the key indicators.
			3) Relationship with central government
			As an outsider to the workings of 'government', I can only imagine what goes on behind the scenes in the relationship between local and central government. I would suggest, however, that we are again moving into radically new terrain in that relationship. While central government slashes and burns local government's powers and budget (especially in authorities like Birmingham, particularly dependent on central funding), 'responsibility' (for picking up the pieces) is devolved to local level like never before.
			It must surely be time for cities like Birmingham to find creative ways to vocally and powerfully resist the central government agenda and its impact on our communities, especially where it hits the poorest and most vulnerable. It may be an uncomfortable alliance, but I would suggest Birmingham City Council might find a whole new strength in forging links with groups as diverse as Citizens UK and UK Uncut, to make the people power of Birmingham known in the corridors of Westminster.
			In conclusion, I appreciate these may well be answers to questions that you haven't quite been asking, and that as answers go they may be either beyond what feels currently imaginable, or too vague to be of use. Whatever happens, please have the courage to not allow the vested interests and impoverished imaginations of those who wish to preserve their own small patch of 'status quo' to, if not win the day, at least paralyse any possibility of meaningful action. The ship is sinking, and we need to be hard at work making the best possible lifeboats.
BVE131083	External	18.12.12	We are writing to contribute to home and the school transport service. we are very much in favour of the home and school service because it has given us a lot of help with our daughter to go to school and the children those who dont travel to school independently and as parents we would like the home and school transport continue.
BVE131084	Text Messag e	18.12.12	as a parent wiv 4 autistic children of which 2 go 2 excellent schools 4 autism and behaviour problems I am disgusted 2 hear yet again that u r cutting springfield house school , knowle , funding 4 after school , holiday schemes refurb etc. This is disgusting as an excellent school which as enabled my son 2 read write interact a school which other main stream schools didn't give my son cian , they exclude him leave him in corridor classed as disrupted and blamed 4 everything and laffed at by other children they r left 2 1 side. Springfield helps children b so called normal not a statistic and these r their foundation years. If not 4 this school my son would b classed as thick a trouble maker and only way of defence wud b 2 fight or steal in years 2 cum as no qualifications springfield as accomplished so much 4 all children and the cuts r stopping other children now and in future fr progressing

BVE131085	External	18.12.12	I am very concerned that funding may be cut for Bockleton or bell Heath activity centres and transportation to and from school for children subject to special needs.
			My son suffers from ADHD, aspergers, low mood, dyslexia and dyspraxia. He is extremely unconfident and very aware of the different between him his peers. My son is a very sweet loving child that is really struggling to fit into society. Bockleton and bell Heath are an excellent respite for him. He gains confidence each time he is able to complete Activities that he didn't think possible. Staff are extremely supportive and skilled at working with children with special needs. We would not be able to afford any other activities of this nature.
			Without the centres it's highly likely that I wouldn't be able to encourage my son to engage in any activities or to use it As a reference to help him overcome challenges. It would lead to him becoming isolated and increasingly anti social.
			My son receives transport funding as his placement is subject to statement provisions. Without this funding I would not be able to fund his transport. This would result in him Leaving school and being placed in a school nearby, most of which have already Been considered to be inappropriate. This is highly likely to lead to him becoming behaviourally challenging leading to his exclusion. This is likely to be extremely costly for the authority not to mention that it would be failing my child.
			Cutting funds for vulnerable children is a cowardly way of saving money in the short term, but the long term impact will undoubtedly result in competitively higher costs through specialist placements for isolated, behaviorally challenging children. The links between poor funding for children with autism/aspergers and the likelihood of our children turning to the criminal system or psychiatric care is highly risky.
BVE131086	External	18.12.12	Disappointing to see what I feel is disproportional cuts to children and young peoples services. As a young city this cannot be justified. Appreciate that local authorities are baring the brunt of the coalitions ideological attack on local government however as a labour party member I am shocked that a Labour council is willing to prioritize services that may secure a quick win and short term votes over our children and young peoples services. The excuses for cutting the youthservice is boring. A cut to the rights and participation (45%) service will mean the city loses it's formal links to young peoples voices. Disappointed that you are willing to do this. Years to build services will be lost on months if you go ahead with these proposals.
BVE131087	External	18.12.12	i have counselling from barnardo's and honestly barnardo's in birmingham should not be closed because as its gave me alot of support recently and if you close down barnardos it will not be fair on those children or young people and families that have been affected in many ways such as sexual abuse.if you close it down people like me will no longer be able to have the support we need, and have the strength to move on and look forward to a better life.please dont close dont barnardo's in birmingham, we need barnardo's

BVE131088	External	18.12.12	My name is and I am an elected executive member of Birmingham Young People's Parliament – Voice is Power.
			I'm emailing you to reconsider the cuts being proposed to reduce the budget of the Rights and Participation Service by 45%.
			As you are aware, the Rights and Participation Service has a number of functions including the management of the Voice is Power group which encompasses the Children in Care Council (CiCC), Birmingham Young People's parliament (VIP), Young Disabled Champions (YDC) and Junior VIP.
			The council is proposing that the Rights and Participation Service increase the availability of advocacy service to vulnerable people.
			However, this is illogical as with the 45% cut to the service's budget, it would be impossible for the service to function effectively. The cut would inevitably lead to job losses and the dissolution of the Youth parliament.
			It is rather ironic that one of the main aims of the Children, Young people and Families directorate is participation yet the proposed cuts would mean that participation would come to an end.
			I along with other members of Voice is Power attended the Executive Management Meeting of Birmingham City Council on Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> November and felt that we were listened to and felt that we could make a genuine difference. However, following the release of the budget proposals, we all feel disheartened as we feel that you really did not take into account the views we had and blatantly disregarded them.
			Birmingham City Council may suggest that the Parliament be outsourced, however this would mean we have no direct link with BCC and therefore mean we are not listened to and opportunities such as sitting on scrutiny boards, sitting on interview panels and attending future EMT meetings being unavailable to us.
			If there are alterations to be made to the budget of the RAP service, it should be to increase the budget rather than cutting the budget! I realise that the former is unlikely but I would definitely urge you to reconsider the budget cuts that have been proposed. The effects of the budget cuts to RAP would have huge consequences and a council that is committed to participation should not be making such cuts!
			I genuinely hope that you will alleviate the disappointment I and other young people have experiences thus far and reverse the budget cut proposals to the RAP service.
BVE131089	External	18.12.12	Re Pls stop plans to stop Bockelton Family Trips
			I went to Bockelton through the Birmingham City Council inclusive scheme last February .

			It was the first time I ever took my children some where on holiday. I have two children diagnosed with autism, and am a single mother .
			Going anywhere with my kids is trouble and a real no.
			Bockelton gave us an opportunity to have a lovely break.
			I actually saw my son play with another boy, something he never does -other than with immediate family.
			It was also a great opportunity for my children to mix and play with children who are of different background and religion.
			Please keep this positive scheme which creates so much family and community harmonyits priceless and a well deserved break for many who never get a break!
			Please consider this polite request.
BVE131090	External	19.12.12	I wonder if you can clarify what the changes being proposed in the Home to School Transport consultation will have upon the students with little or no sight who attend this resource Base at Plantsbrook School.
			Will all of these students be expected to come to this provision on public transport? Will the parents be expected to bring these students to school? Can you clarify the position please as many of my parents are extremely anxious. Will these changes take effect over night? Will all these students who currently have Home to School transport have it withdrawn immediately?
			All of the students who attend this Resource Base have Statement's of Special Needs because they have little or no sight and often an additional disability such as learning, medical, physical, etc. They are all either blind or have severe (I mean severe) visual losses. They have been placed in this Resource base because it is considered the nearest provision that can meet their often complex and degenerative eye conditions. They have all been placed here by SENAR.
			At present we have a Qualified Mobility Officer coming into work with our students once a fortnight. There are only 2.2 full time equivalent Qualified Mobility Officers in the whole of the city who work specifically with students who require mobility training. At present they have over 100 students who they are working with directly at the moment and over 250 students who will need some kind of mobility input during the next year.
			If there is to be a mass move to remove all the students who attend this Resource Base from Home to School transport then I will require a full-time Qualified Mobility Officer for at least the next two years.

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			I am myself totally blind having no vision and I know from experience how difficult it is to be expected to travel on public transport especially if it is not possible to attend the local mainstream school because they do not have the resources, expertise, equipment, staffing, etc to meet needs. As someone who is either blind or severely visually impaired. Many of the students who attend this Resource Base would need to take 2 or 3 buses in order to get to school. They would have to set out at 6am in order to get to school by 8.30am. Then reverse the journey at night. Have you any idea how tiring this can be? Have you any idea how exhausted you become trying to keep your concentration in order to stay safe? One slip in your concentration in response to a noise, crowd, bump, jolt, etc and you can lose your orientation, way etc. Once gone you can be lost, disorientated etc and I can tell you from experience this is an extremely terrifying and frightening experience. In addition the lighting, weather, etc can have a huge effect upon your level of mobility. If you suffer from photophobia (extreme sensitivity to light) the simple matter of the level of glare can make the difference of seeing something, to absolutely nothing. It is like looking into the headlights of a car and can dazzle you for hours. This is like being 'snow blind'. It is painful and can often make you physically sick.
			I appreciate that budgets need to be cut, students should attend the nearest provision that meets ALL of their special needs and the level of Home to School transport reduced, however for students with visual loss especially those who are blind or have very low levels of vision it is not as simple as showing them the bus route once. It can take many months or even years before independent travel can be undertaken. Often the students who attend the Resource Bases or Special School for the visually impaired are at the most severe end of the spectrum. They must be shown how to travel safely and able to use the mobility aids properly. Having no sight means that you are totally dependent upon public transport and cannot hop into a car like the majority of the sighted population. We need proper mobility training from experienced and properly qualified staff. There are already not enough Qualified Mobility Officers to deliver the amount of mobility that is needed now, if Home to School transport were removed on mass then Birmingham will need to invest considerable amounts in its Mobility Service which will cost more than leaving students on transport.
			How will this policy affect students who are over 16? The bursary that schools receive will not cover the costs of transport and the same reasons exist as to why these students attend the resource base at Post 16. It is the nearest provision that will meet their needs.
			I would be most grateful if these queries could be answered in order to reassure and clarify the situation.
BVE131091	External	19.12.12	Children, Young People and Families Directorate, Budget Reduction Proposals line 11, Strategic Support Services.
			"These are internal teams supporting Governance and Policy, Commissioning, Information Management Team, and Customer Relations. This will mean reductions in budgets supporting staffing and non-staffing elements of

central support. There will be an impact on performance monitoring and support for strategic management of children's services."

It may be thought that the Customer Services Team provides an intangible 'feel-good' face of the CYPF Directorate. This is not the case. Its task is to handle complaints from the public which have not been resolved by the service itself, and it does this through provision of a formal independent investigation process at Stage Two, escalating to an independent panel if the complainant remains dissatisfied. The complainant's next recourse is to the Local Government Ombudsman.

#### a) Costs

The information I have received indicates that the intention is to **delete the Customer Services Team and provision**, which at an annual cost of approx £0.25m represents 37% of the annuals savings calculated for that budget line, and 1.1% of the CYPF first year's projected savings from the new proposals for consultation. That percentage decreases over time. In 2008/9 there were nine local settlements on Birmingham's Children and Family Services complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman. In three of these cases financial remedies between £18,000 and £24,000 were agreed. My view is that the Local Authority can ill afford to risk an increase in such further settlements as the result of a proposed budget reduction of approximately £250,000.

#### b) Statutory responsibility

The right of children, young people and their families to complain is a statutory one (principally within the Children Act 1989). The role of Complaints Manager is required by the regulations.

#### c) Risk factors

It is already noticeable that as pressure of work and tighter resources impact on local teams, they are less able to handle complaints at Stage One, and more complainants move to Stage Two by virtue of the failure to deal with the Stage One appropriately. The faith of complainants in the work of the operational team is low, and they are seeking independent investigation of their concerns. Without an impartial investigation at this stage there is a high risk of

- Increased referrals direct to the Local Government Ombudsman whose office would refer back to the Local Authority for attempt at resolution
- Possible criticism by the Ombudsman for a failure to provide this service
- More frequent recourse to legal services by those who can afford this option, and risk of more frequent / high claims for compensation
- More frequent recourse to local councillors and MPs by those who cannot afford the legal route

Any or all of these possibilities would result in an increased workload for operational managers, whose failure to handle it would simply escalate the initial problem, and make them less able to carry out their core task. In other words, a downward spiralling process, resulting in an even higher incidence of complaints. 2

#### d) Learning from experience

A new formal, one stage complaint handling arrangement for adult social care was introduced from 1 April 2009. This was part of a national culture shift in the provision of adult services (direct payments and personalisation), and was carefully prepared. Local deletion of the CYPF Customer Services team would have the same effect

			without any change in the national infrastructure, or, apparently, the same degree of preparation. The Customer Services team manages the considerable level of dissatisfaction communicated by a section of CYPF's customers. It does this within a small team, supplemented by Independent Investigating Officers contracted in as required. This represents a cost-effective system, which capitalises on the considerable and varied experience which these (now self-employed) contractors have amassed within local government social care and allied professions. It is probable that minimal use is made within the organisation of the learning points which emerge from each investigation report, but the value of these should be maximised, not deleted. The LGO commented on a CYPF case in her 2012 report to the Birmingham Chief Executive: "The Independent Investigating Officer did a thorough investigation and produced an excellent report. The Council may wish to assess the extent to which it and my findings have fed into learning and improvement in practice."  e) Summary  This response concentrates on the risks to the organisation from deleting the Customer Services Team and the complaints service as currently provided. I hope that the benefits it has provided are not in question, and recognise that difficult budgetary decisions need to be made. I suggest to the decision makers that this deletion will almost certainly result in greater expenditure of cash and inefficient misuse of costly operational staff. f) I write as one of the Independent Investigating Officers, who while appreciative of the additional income I receive by virtue of being contracted from time to time by CYPF Directorate, is not dependent on that income. My experience is that the task done is valued by a mistrustful section of the electorate, offers value for money, benefits those reliant on the CYPF service, delivers learning points to the organisation and has a mediatory function.
BVE131092	External	19.12.12	Having read of the recent budget cuts, I am under no illusion that these proposals will have radical and negative effects on local services, and subsequently, and more alarmingly on the socio economic well being of Birmingham and its residents.  FUN CLUB is one of these services that is being considered for axing. It is a Saturday and holiday club that provides specialist inclusive and exclusive opportunities for children 5-12 from mainstream and SEN schools. FUN CLUB has benefited from Short Breaks funding becoming well established and popular over the past five years. FUN CLUB accepts very challenging children, some of which have been signposted to us via the Family Information Service (another effective service that supports families and is under threat of closure) and places are always in demand.  FUN CLUB provides exceptional care and expertise and offers opportunities for all children aged between 5-12 to socilalise, develop social competencies and communication and most importantly have lots of fun in a safe and friendly environment. Additionally, in our small way we are educating parents and children to understand disability is not a barrier to achievement or to having pleasurable leisure time.  Our parents and children regularly provide us with evaluations. (samples attached) They identify that our service contributes to a better quality of life, for the child, siblings and parents.  The combination of cuts to our FUN CLUB, other provision and the many other existing benefits being reduced,

			will be counter productive and lead to further disaffection of families, possible safeguarding issues, domestic violence and sadly the decline of the health, emotional well being and life chances of children and young people. For the above reasons, please do not withdraw/reduce our funding, we make a positive contribution, we DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.  Thanking you for taking the time to read this and giving it your consideration.
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BVE131093	External	19.12.12	Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the forthcoming budget.  All realistic people understand the need to save money during the present crisis but they also understand the need to protect vital services where failure to do so would be seen to be distasteful in areas such as children's and adult services but on page 13 of the document the Council defends the need to hold reserves. In 2011 Council Leaders throughout the West Midlands decided there was a need to cut the portion of the transport levy used to support the Ring and Ride service but they also forced Ring and Ride to cash in £1m of reserves despite the stock market being at its lowest for over a decade. Management at Ring and Ride used the same arguments as used in the City document but to no avail and therefore Ring and Ride was left with no option but to sell over £1m of investment at around £100k loss even on today's prices. My point is that if at the time the argument did not count for one vital service why should it now be accepted as a valid argument for the City to avoid using its reserves to protect the mobility impaired citizens and children of the City.
			Looking at the pie charts it is of note that £247m of income comes from housing rents etc. but the City spends £474m in order, it would appear, to gather this income, a loss of £207m which is getting close to what the Council needs for the next 3 years. No doubt the answer will be that some of this money goes towards providing housing for the needy which is very applaudable and much needed but we all hear of people avoiding paying rent or sub-letting council properties and I would suspect the council has a good idea who the majority of these people are but instead of taking action you prefer to reduce the amount of people used to collect these arrears or evict people who should be evicted. This gives the impression, either rightly or wrongly, that the council accepts the position and instead of recouping losses instead cuts overheads
			I work with and enjoy the company of emigrants especially those from the Asian continent and many of these people are a very valuable asset to our Country and City. However someone must soon act against people from Europe, Asia and indeed UK born people who are abusing state benefits without contributing to the community. Whilst I appreciate this may well be a problem that needs to be addressed at national level more could and should be done locally to ensure that only those who are entitled to benefits should get them in order to give them a decent standard of living but those not qualified made to earn them.
BVE131094	External	19.12.12	I am alarmed that the proposal for CYPF has a cut of £4.43m for Voluntary Sector Funding.

			<ol> <li>It is the largest proposed cut in the proposed CYPF budget: what does that demonstrate the Council thinks of charities?</li> <li>It is well known that the voluntary sector reach people that the statutory agencies cannot, hence they should be supported to achieve the priority of helping those in most need.</li> <li>Most charities deliver a prevention service that is again a priority for this budget.</li> <li>What has happened about working in partnership with others to deliver the priorities?</li> </ol> I look forward to the Cabinet asking for this reduction to be cancelled.
BVE131095	External	19.12.12	I attended the public meeting at the Council House on 18 December and was appalled at the tone of the debate - insults shouted from the floor, threats of rioting, people referring to one another as 'cowards' and 'Trots', etc. This does nothing to help the discussion.
			However I do feel that Sir Albert and his team could do more to distance Birmingham from Coalition policies. If I understood an early point correctly, then the £600 million required breaks down as £149 per person annually, which could potentially be levied through Council Tax. Why is this option not being explored in more detail? Personally I could probably afford to pay a little more Council Tax each month if it was absolutely necessary and I would vote for a means tested increase, averaging at £15 a month for median earners, if the choice was clearly translated into saving and improving our services. To keep things in perspective there were hordes of people outside the Council Chambers yesterday spending £15 on mulled wine and roast ham. The Council should call a referendum and make the case strongly and passionately that if taxation is the only form of income generation available, the citizens of Birmingham have no choice but to stand together and make reasonable sacrifices if we want to protect our interests in the present crisis.
BVE131096	External	20.12.12	I have received a letter regarding budget reviews related to home - school transport. I have not been to any consultations but am aware that this review will be a result of considering ways of reducing expenditure in this area.
			My two sons attend James Brindley school on Perry Common road and after many issues with getting them back into the educational system I know that the transport provided is a maojr help in them acheiving over 90% attendance. Currently they go by taxi, which is provided by the school.
			I have two options that would in my opinion reduce the expenditure of getting children such as mine into school.
			One choice would be to issue them with a term time bus pass. This would surely be cheaper than providing taxis to and from school each day and would provide the additional benefits of giving them the responsibility to get into school on their own initiative, which would of course be monitored and supported by us as parents. Alternatively, it might be worth considering a pool of drivers from parent's of children that attend the school. Of course this might not be possible as some parents will not be drivers, car owners or have the time to commit if

			they have jobs to go to but it is worth considering.
BVE131097	External	20.12.12	You can't help but cut I know, but try not to pay too many 'experts' providing reviews and reports: try to insist that those in receipt of most money really are giving value for money (very often those on the front line are paid less but actually give more - i.e. preserve the jobs of the people who actually do make a difference to people's lives). I think you should preserve the jobs of those who deal with children and with the vulnerable elderly - the first because they're the people who will vote in the future, the second because they're the most likely people who vote now!  I think that you should take the advice of those who are suggesting that Council Tax should rise a little (which we were told at the public meeting will actually raise more money than taking the Government's bribe) I agree with the lady's suggestion that we should all (well, most of us) chip in with a sort of levy of about £!00 to make up the shortfall in order to protect as many services as possible.  I think you should aim to keep Citizens' Advice Bureaux open (I know from my own experience of volunteering in this sector a few years ago how valuable people found the advice - and how much it saved the Council!!).
BVE131098	External	20.12.12	I understand that under City's Budget consultation that there is a real possibility that the above (Bocleton Study Centre) centre will not be able to host short breaks after April 2013 due to a reduction in funding. As a parent of an autistic child (registered disabled) we have benefitted from 2 family short break visits to Bockleton (over the past 2 years). On both occasions it has provided a fun, safe and rewarding environment for all members of our family (2 ad, 4 ch). Having the opportunity to talk and share experiences with other families whilst being in this environment has been invaluable. Please don't cut off the funding to this specialist centre – it offers such a lot.
BVE131099	External	20.12.12	I attended the recent consultation in the town hall, and I have a few questions which I hope you could share your views on. In 2013/2014 (I am assuming this is from April 2013 - April 2014), the council will need to save or make cuts of £110 Million.  In your document the average reduction in goverement funding for the country as a whole has amounted to £74/p, whilst Birmingham's reduction has been £149/p. Thus Birmingham is not getting ~ £79.2 Million. What is the reasons behind this?  Page 11 of your document you said you shall be committed to "putting fairness" so without valid reasons we really need "YOU" our elected council to fight for fairness!  The tables which highlight spending pressures, council tax and government grants (should really have your tables numbered for a report) show a huge increase each year in spending pressures, taking inflation, cost of living etc, the jump should not be that large!!  What's the reasons behind this?  The whole consultation is gloom and doom, there is no visionary thoughts or solutions!!

			What is the strategy for growth? creating jobs? development?  If you were a business and you wanted to invest your money in "the second city" what are the things you would looke for?  You would want a clean environment - studies have shown that a clean environment puts order and calms people. You would want somewhere with low crime.  You at the council get paid to make our city a better place to live, work and be happy, all I ask is think a growth, development and outside the box.
BVE131100	External	20.12.12	I understand the climate we are under and cuts have up be made But cutting a £1.5 million from the Youth Service budget that has already been decimated is frankly ludicrous.  Youth workers play a key role in engaging with young people at time of need when other services struggle to even reach some of these young people. It offers support, guidance information at critical times of crisis in young people's lives. It's often the last contact of a trusted adult before total disengagement and isolation. Young people then become even more vulnerable and susceptible to the lures of crime, ASB, teenage pregnancy, extremisms and so on so forth.  Youth workers often empower young people to become strong individuals who can respond to challenges they face an support young people to be able to build resilience to counter any negatively they may face through peer pressure. It's supports learning and growth in characterit challenges oppression and is key broker of often tense community cohesion issues that are played out amongst young people.  Youth workers have been involved in mediation and conflict resolution exercise at a time when the city was under threat of race riots. The already limited Youth workers prevented young people from going out on to the streets and getting caught up in the curiosity p the riots.  Youth worker play a important role in working with police and safer partnership birmingham to help reduce TRC total recorded crime and ASB. They work with local Neighbourhood forums and the districts to ensure young people's voices are heard.  Apart from offering young people positive activities aim the centers or places of work. They support the BCC safeguarding agenda and ensure young people are safe and free from harm and risk and work tirelessly with IFST teams and trouble families. Ensuring that youth workers make a key contribution to the young people in the family.

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			If you ask young people what they think they should cut and whether cutting the lifeline to young people's contact with a trusted adult in the youth service is what the answer is I think they will be very very disappointed and feeling of being let down AGAIN.
			I urge you to consider carefully any cuts to Birmingham Youth Service and the Major implications this will have. it makes sense Invest in youth Invest in the youth service.
BVE131101	External	20.12.12	I response to the opportunity to comment on budget proposals, I firstly want to pass my sympathies as clearly this is a most painful process for all involved, including finally the citizens of Brum. As an outsider it is difficult to comment on details but would suggest (maybe this is what service reviews entail) that it may be better to stop certain non-legal services rather than everyone suffers the death of a thousand cuts.
			Personally I would support a higher council tax, a percentage or two above inflation, but I am in a position to afford this which others cant and I appreciate that council tax increases do not deliver big budget gain. I would ask that any increase was used to create new opportunities especially for economic growth rather than subsidise existing services.
			Finally I welcome the commitment to building a smart city. This is a positive beacon in what feels like a negative (understandably) set of proposals. The smart city commission document is currently lacking in clear actions/targets but I trust these are coming. If the city is to grow and improve, it will need more local money created by jobs, tourism and international links. It therefore needs to commit to growing markets for our skills and ways of bringing in external investment. Digital media businesses fit into this area and I would hope that we can jointly (ie business and the council) develop new approaches to encourage these areas. Continuing to fund Digital Birmingham is a part of this commitment as would be strong links to business clusters. Best wishes for your difficult task
BVE131102	External	20.12.12	I really think that the people who are getting counselling or been counselled should help raise money aswell as it was a good service and a lot of people like Barnardo's! If their is anything I can do to help raise money for barnardo's please let me know as I have been counselled there before and they really helped me so others should get help as well thanks Amazon Counselling service!
BVE131103	Internal	20.12.12	Could savings be made by a greater use of external financial companies for the processing and payment of invoices, calculating contributions towards care costs, chasing 'bad debts' etc. There seems to be a plethora of accountancy and financial management firms who I assume could undertake this type of work.
BVE131104	External	20.12.12	In response to the current budget consultation, I would like to thank you on behalf of DanceXchange for retaining the level of funding to our organisation in the current funding period and for not considering further cuts to culture in this round.

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			Birmingham has an outstanding world-class cultural infrastructure and I believe it is vital that this area of the city's budget is safeguarded, even in these very difficult times. Birmingham City Council has an impressive track record of funding a diverse range of arts organisations and venues, including DanceXchange and our major biennial festival International Dance Festival Birmingham, which have created a distinctive cultural offer for the city – creating employment, contributing to the local economy, attracting visitors, inspiring audiences, nurturing local talent, engaging people of all backgrounds in stimulating activity, bringing communities together, and broadening horizons for both young and old. We recognise there is immense pressure on public funding. We have always delivered to a high standard within very tight budgets, and we are working hard to find new sources of funding and maximise our income streams, but there are no quick solutions – and stable City Council support remains critical in levering additional investment. To be recognised as a truly global city that can compete on the world stage, Birmingham needs to find a way to protect its vibrant and diverse cultural sector, particularly at a time when the sector's ability to stimulate creative thinking and raise aspirations is most needed.
BVE131105	External	20.12.12	I am writing with comments for consideration in relation to the Birmingham Council's proposed budget savings.
			Sutton Coldfield, whilst is not considered an area of deprivation, is an area where families, including the deprived rely on Council services. Not everyone in Sutton lives on Millionnaire's Row. Most of us are working hard to provide for our families yet are still struggling to cope having had pay freezes for several years and with a serious threat of redundancy. Council services such as those previously offered by Children's Centres, prior to the last round of cuts, assist families who not only are classed as deprived but also those who are just making ends meet whilst working very hard – and paying over a third of our income in taxes. With the rest used to pay for essentials like food, gas, water, childcare – not extravagancies or luxuries.
			I worry about the impact the cuts are having on this generation of children as there is no doubt that the cuts are hitting families very hard.
			I disagree with making more cuts to Children's Centres. It will get to the point where there is no point offering a children's centre. There has been a lot of investment in Children's Centres in the area and this is going to waste with the cuts experienced so far. Why not make more use of the excellent resources that have been provided. With the cuts that have already been applied the Children's Centres are not offering the services that they were designed for. My local children's centre in Walmley is excellent yet because of cuts the services are extremely limited with a lot of the activities having to be paid for at quite a high cost which to me is unaffordable.
			Health, Leisure and Library services are also important to the community in Sutton Coldfield. Sutton Coldfield library has been closed for many years with no comment from the Council on plans to re-open it. Smaller libraries in the area are not equipped to provide the same level of service as the main library and are also facing cuts. Yet massive expense has been gone to in opening the new library in Birmingham. Whilst this will be fantastic for Birmingham it is of little use to most of us not living near the city and the vast amount of money

			spent on the outside look of the library is a complete waste of money as it looks hideous and is not in keeping at all with the area around it.  Overall the picture is bleak for the people of Sutton Coldfield as it seems that it is becoming the forgotten Town in the Council's plans. Except perhaps when it wants to introduce charges for example parking in our local park or wants to sell off our greenbelt to profit from a controversial scheme to build 10,000 new homes.
BVE131106	External	21.12.12	I'd like to take this opportunity to let you know how supportive the EVENTS DEPOT Team have been over the past 5 years.  University of Birmingham Sport & Birmingham City Council are continuing to strengthen the citys reputation by co-hosting mayor sporting events, Jamaican Pre-Olympic training camps, World Squash Masters, just to mention 2 high profile events for 2012.
			As a facilitator I know I can always pick up the phone and will always deliver, whether it be 200m fence scrim, barrier fencing, or putting me in touch with one of their suppliers they have NEVER failed me. Having that support behind me makes my life easier because I KNOW WE CAN GET IT DONE.  This email might change any decisions already been made but without the team behind me I will definitely struggle to deliver as previously done.
BVE131107	External	21.12.12	So we have come again to spending cuts,we would not be in this situation if the city council had not gone on a crazy spending spree of footing and wanting projects where they put money towards,we have Moor st queensway its even worse than before,,and why is this ,because the city council wanted to run a tram from snow hill to new st ,was it needed in a time of cut backs NO.and who will use it ?its no use to many Birmingham people.  A new park has been built by the science museum ,it should never have been built ,just a waste of money, one fancy folly ,some stone i believe came from china and the trees from Germany ?WHY cannot we use British things ?the project could have easily been cancelled but no ,i wonder what will happen to it when curzon st is made into the new station ?
			theres 3 things where money could have been saved.  a small saving in electric could be made if less lighting was not on in daylight ,outside lights on flats burning all day long and on other council building ,cannot anyone alter time clocks ,its very simple to do ,but as i was told at one place it was dark by the door ,that was at 11am in the morning.

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			If the council cannot afford to run libraries ,swimming baths , golf courses, leisure centres,etc sell them off if they are not needed,
			Theres still to many useless employees working for the council,if you ring up departments ,some are yawning over the phone or have not got a clue about what to do about your enquiry ,the council still needs a good sort out .
			main services should be looked after, schools, rubbish,street cleaning, etc., is ay if its not needed get rid of it, its simple. is see to many council workers who work around the city, sitting in vans and trucks etc., if we say anything to officials they have no answer as to why, we the general public notice these things, they think if they tuck there transport way somewhere they cannot be seen .some are even asleep.
			Why should the residents of Birmingham have to foot the bills that the council have created ,its very bad management of money ,spend to much ,but theres not enough to pay for it ,i read that you want to put up council tax,,we are all having to tighten our belts ,but the council thinks we can just pay more money into a council that's leaks money left ,right and centre.
			We will see cutbacks ,but we will see money still been wasted on things we do no need .
BVE131108	External	21.12.12	RE: potential decommissioning of Barnardos Amazon Project.
			Amazon is providing the only specialist counselling service offered to children and young people that have experienced sexual abuse and rape across the city.  This counselling service is also extended to siblings within the family and parents and carers. Regularly we see whole families that are devastated by the impact of sexual abuse and prevalence has only increased as the service has become well known across the city to all professionals in health, police, social care, schools and community faith groups.
			Amazon project receives specialist high risk referrals from the Child and Mental Health Service and this releases essential long term appointments for their complex work with other traumatised children. The two services work together to provide the most relevant service to young people. Amazon is able to offer long term counselling where needed and this can extend to over a year. There is no other counselling service that provides a service that offers this type of psychological holding and containment. Often a young person has experienced boundaries being crossed in their life and sexual abuse has distorted their understanding of relationships. There is a permanent waiting list for this service due to the amount of referrals and need.
			Regularly all types of children and young people from wide backgrounds that have been subjected to horrific abuse that has permeated every part of their identity. Amazon offers a service that helps to turn the

			unthinkable and the unspeakable topic of sexual abuse into something that can be safely explored and worked through so that with understanding it can be put in a place that no longer goes on to dominate the young person's life.  Currently due to the welcomed publicity of the Saville Case and the reports of historical abuse that we have seen unfolding over the last months I am disgusted that this precious service is under threat.  I need to stress that this service should be allowed to continue and that the Labour Party should not become another part of our society that has enabled their abuse to remain silenced. Without Amazon there is no one to easily accessible help to encourage them to survive what they have been subjected to and will remain with them for a lifetime.  Jimmy Saville continued his reign because no one had the courage to challenge him and to expose what he was doing.  I feel if the council decommissions the Amazon counselling service they too will be adding weight to support the silencing of many children and young people as they have nowhere to go when the police or social care have finished with them and closed their case. Just at the point when they are falling to pieces and wondering how to move on nd recover. Psychological services for children and young people is limited so please consider carefully the choices that you have within your remit because the children of Birmingham that have experienced sexual abuse will have no choice if the service is decommissioned.
BVE131109	External	21.12.12	I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed budget cut of £1.5 million to Birmingham Youth Service. The youth service provides an excellent service for the young people of Birmingham. The youth service works with some of the most vulnerable young people in the city and does so with finate resources. If the youth service in local communities is cut many young people will have nothing constructive to do and no one to turn to when they are in need of help and support. As a local resident in stirchley I regularly see young people hanging around on the streets bored I urge you to support our young people in this city and withdraw the plan to reduce the Birmingham youth service budget. As a labour voter I would be apalled if this process goss ahead.
BVE131110	External	21.12.12	as the council is planing the next year buget we requst you to protect vital services for deaf children next year.
BVE131111	External	21.12.12	I am appalled by the thought that you might reduce or even cease funding Homestart. This organisation does untold good for families who need help and can't get it anywhere else. Apart from the fact that Homestart is a well-organised and extremely cost-effective organisation, removal of this support will result in untold misery, creating problems that will have to be addressed in any event, and more expensively.
			You cannot seriously be suggesting that families with difficulties should be allowed to soldier on regardless,

			because ultimately the city will have to pick up the pieces.
			The problems simply won't disappear, and will simply become more intractable and expensive.
BVE131112	External	21.12.12	I have read the proposed changes to transport and i am very worried about my family situation. I have four young children. My son aged 4 years old will be starting reception in a primary school in 2013, the girl soon to be three years old in January will be starting nursery nearby in Sept 2013, which is different to that of the 4 year old. My six year old (eldest son) who attends special school also go to a different school. I also have a young baby at home. Having the transport taken away from the eldest child who attends special school will put tremendous pressure and stress on my family. I just can't imagine how i would cope with having transport taken away. I don't have a car to go to three different schools in the morning at the same time. I hope the council will listen to the parents before going ahead with their plans.
BVE131113	External	21.12.12	My son is 7 (will turn 8) and attends Victoria School – He has global development needs and his school has all the appropriate facilities to support him. As a parent who has transport provided for my special need child to be picked-up from home to school and then returned I think this is the most important service the council provides to these childrenI travel a lot with work and my wife has to drop of two other children to school whilst caring for a younger child too (not yet at school) and my elderly disabled parents. If reduction or cuts were made to this transport service I'm not sure how we could cope as a family and be able to send my son to school (which is few miles from where we currently live) – we are also a single income family and cant afford to contribute either to any proposals. Once again as a tax payer and a very concerned parent I would urge Birmingham council to be understanding about this service provided and the importance of this to special and disabled children as I'm sure other cuts can be made in other areas.
BVE131114	External	21.12.12	I was absolutely amazed to hear that you had included The Amazon Project (Barnardos) on your Decommissioning List.  The Amazon Project offers one-to-one counselling to children and young people who have been sexually abused. Most of the children have been betrayed and used by a family member, father, step-father or brother, grandfather, uncle or cousin, which leaves them lacking in trust and with a sense of defilement. Many of the young women, mostly between 14 and 17, have been raped by a so-called friend. Despite the ignominy of the police and medical process they persist in their quest for justice. Often to no avail, as the police and CPS do not take the case forward. Consequently, on top of the sense of defilement, they have had their trust in friendship and the legal process destroyed and now, it appears, the list of those prepared to betray them will include you and the Labour Group.  Shortly after you resumed power in May, I noted you embracing the concept of "A Living Wage" for all Council employees. I was pleased that your workers should have the economic means of having a fuller life. Unfortunately, though, I did not realise that the children and young people who previously attended Amazon would be paying the price with damaged and impaired lives.

BVE131115	External	al 22.12.12	I work pupils come to us with a myriad of barriers to learning and we pride ourselves on removing or equipping the pupils to overcome these barriers. We have pupils that have experienced sexual assault, witness domestic violence, are young carers, live in the most horrendous conditions. Sometimes we have to refer these pupils to services that have relevant expertise. Over the last week I have been horrified that two of the services that we regularly use are under threat of closure because Birmingham City Council is slashing their funding. These services are CAMHS and Amazon counselling. I'm sure there are more that I haven't heard yet.
			I urge you to reconsider these cuts. CAMHS has already suffered huge losses from funding cuts. As a result of this children have had to face long waits to get support and others that would previously been supported are being turned away. I am not trained but I am now expected to support pupils with issues such as Self Harm, Obsessional behaviour and anxiety. I have had to work with pupils suffering from depression, suicidal thoughts and such low self esteem that coming to school is a miracle in itself. I have had to practically beg services to get them help. If CAMHS is no longer available who will support these children? What effect will this have on our schools? Our local community? Our families?
			Amazon counselling service also has suffered cuts. One of my pupils who was sexually assaulted when in primary school had to wait 6 months for counselling with Amazon. Now she is there she is a different pupil. She is smiling again. When a child has suffered such a trauma it can be a long time before they are ready to talk and deal with it. What do I do when a pupils says they need help and Amazon isn't there?
			I know cuts have to be made, but I used to work for Birmingham City Council. I have seen where money is wasted. I know you can make cuts that will not have a devastating effect on our future generation. Maybe counsellors need to look at some of the 'perks' to their role. Why do we spend money on award ceremonies?
			I urge you please please please do not cut vital services to young people. If Birmingham is to have a thriving future we need a new generation of healthy, happy young people.
BVE131116	Text Messag e	22.12.12	I'm a single mother of three children two of which are twins aged 6 and both have autism ASD, they both use the transport school buses and as a whole we all would be affected by these silly cuts/ costs you purpose as its the only bit of support and light at the end of our dark and dingy tunnel we have had since sept 2010/11 since my twins have been going to cherry oak school stop taking and or closing from children/ young adults with special needs we have nothing as it is! Social services have no support for me and my family everything we have has been a major struggle and with cuts/costs purposes will cause me not being able to take all three of my children to school on time or at all as its a struggle when one twin is unwell as it is
BVE131117	External	22.12.12	im am writing to today about the children service cuts i dont think that it is wright that you are cutting the service's its not fair on the children who have been going for along time i have been going for a number of years

		and i myself dont think it is wright that you are cutting the play service and also people will be bored at home or they will be on the streets bored and its not fair that the playworkers will lose there jobs and will be given other jobs within the council or will have to find another job and the perants wont be very happy that there children wont be able to see there friends from the play service and won't be able to got to the play sevice i hope that you take this into acount.
BVE131118		