

BUDGET VIEWS

Consultation Period Comments

31.12.12 – 6.1.13

Ref	Contact	Date	Comment
BVE131137	External	31.12.12	<p>I am deeply upset at the fact that Amazon may lose its funding from B.C.C , both myself , my husband and my daughter have used this service recently and without this service I am scared of the thought of other people being in the same situation as our family and not having a specialised team to talk with .</p> <p>My daughter continued with this counselling service for some time and it was such a great help , we can never forget the sexual abuse that has been suffered in my extended family but thanks to the staff at Amazon we can understand how we can try and re build our lives and indeed without the staff there I can not imagine where we may be now .</p> <p>Please do re consider this cut as Amazon provide an invaluable service .</p>
BVE131138	External	31.12.12	<p>Home Start is one of the most effective and useful charities that I have ever encountered. Its supportive approach to young families in need of assistance has all the hallmarks of effective parenting and acts to guard against future breakdown.</p> <p>Research indicates that such early intervention has a wide-ranging impact in later life and helps significantly to reduce school absenteeism, crime and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Investment in Home Start is repaid many times over in saved social costs and should be sustained.</p>
BVE131139	External	31.12.12	<p>Please add my comments to the budget consultation.</p> <p>PRIORITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No more ordinary worker job losses- -No further cuts to key Council services especially education/social services/care of the elderly/youth services. -No cuts to parks/nature reserves/green belt. -Less emphasis on city centre expenditure and more spent on suburban areas.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No cuts in street cleaning/anti social misbehaviour measures/sustainable refuse collections. -Less expenditure on road/highways/on measures to favour vehicles. -More money for pedestrians safety and well being. -Public transport is more important than private vehicles. -Birmingham urgently to move to being a 20 mph zone city. -Housing development should be on brownfield sites or using unoccupied properties not green belt and should all be cheaper social housing. -Substantial reductions in carbon emissions/pollution should drive council policy including roads/transport systems. -People/quality of life/favourable and safe living areas are more important than obsessions with economic development. -Stop putting council services out to the private sector for their profit.Take more council services into inhouse/Council run provision. <p>QUALITY OF LIVE FOR ORDINARY PEOPLE SHOULD DRIVE COUNCIL POLICY. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE THE ELDERLY/CHILDREN/PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.</p> <p>POSSIBLE SAVINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Much less expenditure on further big glamour city projects like the new library. -Reduction in major expensive big events. -Cut Council junkets/trips outside Birmingham (especially abroad) by the directorate/senior managers/councillors. -Directorate/senior managers/councillors should take substantial salary/allowances cuts to save lower council jobs and wages. -Senior staff and councillors should use public transport not taxis/own cars with petrol allowances.
BVE131140	External	31.12.12	<p>The ongoing revelations of child abuse that are emerging are representative of a problem which I believe we are only just starting to become aware of. I believe that the trauma that has been exposed since Jimmy Savile's abusive behaviours following on from the numerous cases of institutional abuse, are only the tip of a rather dark iceberg. It is therefore, the height of irresponsibility to even consider decommissioning the Amazon Counselling Service at this time. The Amazon Counselling Service is the only support for young people who have been abused in the Birmingham area. Given the fact that virtually all adult abusers were themselves abused as children but were unsupported through and after their experiences and that with appropriate help we can support abused young people to come through such traumatic experiences and develop into caring, responsible adults, it is absolutely essential that we put money into support services for young people and break the on-going cycle of abuse.</p> <p>I trust you will reconsider your commitment to support the Amazon Counselling Service and fight to protect against any reduction in their funding.</p>

BVE131141	External	31.12.12	<p>I am in the privileged position of being a teacher in a city academy. Every day I work with young adults, the future of this country and our city, who have experienced difficult situations and heart-breaking experiences that are difficult for myself to comprehend. Finding help for these young people is difficult and it the need to help a number of teenage girls, who had experienced unthinkable things, that led me to contact Amazon.</p> <p>The support that this agency offered to these students was fantastic and undoubtedly had a lasting impact. One student who they worked with for three years has now left school with nine A - C GCSEs, she is currently studying for her a levels and considering what university to study at. Do I think that she would have been able to emotionally succeed without the help of Amazon? Undoubtedly, no. When I initially contacted them I wondered, as did her father, what would become of her. Yet the support that was provided for this student gave her a safe outlet, it helped to restore her. Since then they have helped support other students, this is essential support; they have a positive impact on young people who have already been through too much.</p> <p>We have a responsibility as adults to provide young people with support and guidance, we can't take the most essential support and guidance away. Without Amazon where is the support for the young people who have suffered the most?</p>
BVE131142	External	31.12.12	<p>I understand that the funding for the Homestart Charity is at risk.</p> <p>I am the Hon. Treasurer for [REDACTED] Branch.</p> <p>I have recently transposed the details of all our current families (well over 100) onto computer records.</p> <p>I know in detail, therefore, what an invaluable service we are providing.</p> <p>ALSO.....WHAT AN ECONOMIC SERVICE WE ARE PROVIDING.</p> <p>The Council could not provide such a service at twice the cost.</p> <p>Discontinuing our funding would be short termism at its worst, because, in the end, the Council will have to pick up the pieces.</p>
BVE131143	External	1.1.13	<p>My child is a recipient of Home to School Transport Service. Earlier we were assured that the new policies were only to be applied to the new applicants unfortunately Council is now considering to apply new policies also on the current users. The impact of this could be very adverse on us because our child will not be able to travel to and from school if the provision of transport is altered or withdrawn.</p>

			Home to School transport should not be changed in any manner for the current users. As per the last annual review our child remains a very vulnerable child who is not yet able to travel independently.
BVE131144	External	1.1.13	<p>I write re the proposed budget cuts and their impact on Homestart.</p> <p>I am the [REDACTED]. It would be disastrous if our local Homestart were to cease to operate or be on a much more limited scale.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I am aware of a number of families connected with my church who have and continue to receive excellent and vital support from Homestart. 2. I see first hand the wide range of ways that Homestart supports families across socio-economic backgrounds, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. 3. I am aware of Homestart's excellent track record in partnership working 4. I am conscious of the unique position that Homestart is in as a non-statutory organisation respected by voluntary and statutory agencies alike and which offers both simple and complex expertise where other agencies might not be made welcome, eg because Homestart is not seen as a threat. <p>I find it unthinkable, especially in the current economic and social climate, that there might not be a Stockland Green/Erdington Homestart. Please do not even reduce their current budget.</p>
BVE131145	External	1.1.13	<p>I am writing regarding the proposed budget cuts and their impact on the Homestart organisation. I have been a Homestart volunteer for the past 5 years and have witnessed first hand the vital work they do.</p> <p>I have supported 3 different families and am currently supporting my 4th family. All 4 families have been very different, with different circumstances and needs. All 4 families have benefited greatly from the support and would have found it difficult to cope without it.</p> <p>Homestart works with families from all social groups and is successful because it does not judge and does not threaten. It is trusted by families and respected by other practitioners. It liaises effectively with other organisations and is able to signpost families to these services because of its many years of experience.</p> <p>I believe it would have a terrible impact if the above benefits and more were lost because of the impact of council budget cuts. Please therefore support Homestart in the council's budget for the year ahead and beyond.</p>
BVE131146	External	2.1.13	I am amid the "festive season" however any spirit I have has dissolved in the News that we will have no refuse collection until Jan 8/9th 3 weeks since our last and at a time when it is most required.

			<p>I suggest you use your budget wisely by tendering out to a competent refuse collection company who will actually do the job WE pay for. Private companies will collect on time and not leave our streets looking filthy and strewn with rubbish they have dropped from kerb to van. They will not leave bins unopened because they just couldn't be bothered to walk a few more steps. More importantly they will use extra collections following bank holiday and Xmas periods to ensure health hazardous filth is collected (providing the clowns negotiating can actually remember that!). You are supposed to be public servants and offer the best deal for us all, it is us the customer who should always be primary in your planning. If waste are not delivering - and they certainly are not - you should consider outsourcing. If you need to ask the public for how to spend the money, I suggest you employ someone who will make decisions regardless of political dogma, with real vision and professionalism. If there is a job going.....?</p>
BVE131147	Internal	2.1.13	<p>From today's news.</p> <p>What will happen in Birmingham when Connexions Birmingham is slashed, yet again?</p> <p>Princes Trust Survey. Concern over NEETS. Martina Milburn, chief executive of The Prince's Trust, said: "A frightening number of unemployed young people feel unable to cope - and it is particularly tough for those who don't have a support network in place. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-20885838http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2013/jan/02/children-depression</p> <p>Youth unemployment, which currently stands at 945,000, is predicted to rise again this year if the economy returns to negative growth. The study will revive fears that a "lost generation" of young people who left education during the recession will become stuck in a "downward spiral" of joblessness, debt and depression. Last month, the Institute of Public Policy Research predicted that youth unemployment could once again pass the one million mark. Joblessness among 16 to 24-year-olds hit records levels in late 2011 and the situation has only improved marginally since. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/thousands-of-young-people-cannot-cope-with-everyday-life-8434684.html</p> <p>Unemployment could rise gradually to a peak of 2.7 million towards the end of the year, or the beginning of 2014, giving an unemployment rate of 8.2%. Wage growth expected to be limited to just over 2% in 2013, while inflation could reach 3% early this year. http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2013/jan/02/reed-more-jobs-less-pay</p>
BVE131148	Internal	2.1.13	<p>Let people have voluntary redundancy that want to take it, BCC can then look at what is needed and post can be filled with staff who are under threat of losing their jobs, this will make better working relationships and ease stress among staff knowing they could still have a job. A happy work force will</p>

			always produce more.
BVE131149	External	2.1.13	<p>Given the reduction in library opening hours, we were shocked to see adverts for Saturday library staff. Surely the current staff should be doing the (reduced) Saturday hours within their normal contracted hours; and in addition fewer (not more) library staff be required, either by redundancies or at least by natural wastage and not replacing staff who leave.</p> <p>Also there are plans for a new West Heath library; even though I use this library it seems a waste of money given all the cuts required, and that there are 2 other libraries (Kings Norton and Northfield) little more than a mile away. This is probably a different (capital) budget, but surely in these dire times the money could be better spent on normal services.</p>
BVE131150	External	2.1.13	<p>NO to increasing council tax</p> <p>There should NOT be an increase in council tax. The economic situation is hitting council tax payers as well as the council, with many of us getting no increase to our incomes and this is a major household bill which cannot be economised on.</p> <p>The council has a high proportion of non-payers of council tax. The council should be more rigorous in chasing these up and taking payment by law from income from earnings or benefits; any defaulters in council houses should be evicted.</p> <p>Everyone should have to pay some council tax; there should not be full rebates.</p>
BVE131151	External	2.1.13	<p>The rent on council houses is well below the market rate; while this is acceptable for those in need, it is totally unacceptable that households who can afford to pay the market rate should receive subsidised housing at the expense of others who need it more.</p> <p>All council rents should be charged at realistic market values; those who cannot afford this should then get housing benefit to reduce this. This would have the added benefit of encouraging those who can afford market rents to move out of council to private housing and thus free up council houses for those who need them.</p> <p>Council houses should NOT be sold to sitting tenants; they should be kept for rental. And certainly not at a discount, given the tenants have had cheap rent all the time.</p> <p>While accepting there should be essential repairs to council houses, these should be the minimum necessary. There is not the money for upgrading e.g. double glazing etc, especially when many of us who are council tax payers in private housing still have still have single glazing and cannot afford double glazing. Council houses should be at a reasonable but minimal standard, not better than the minimum for people in their own houses; since this is unfair for people to be paying council tax to subsidise other people to be in better houses than they can afford and also the better the council housing the more likely people are to remain even when they could afford to move out, or to want to but the council house which depletes the council stock.</p> <p>Council housing should just be for those who need it and not for life. People should only have housing as big as they need; e.g. not a 3-bed house once their children have grown up; similarly charging a</p>

			market rate would encourage people not to want to stay in a larger dearer house.
BVE131152	External	2.1.13	The council could save a substantial amount on its power bills by reducing the temperature in all its buildings, both open to the public and internal offices etc, by a couple of degrees, and also by not having lights on when buildings are not being used. Going into libraries, day centres, council offices etc, these are all far too hot in winter, with staff often in 'summer' clothes; there is no harm in staff having to wear a jumper or jacket in winter, in fact it is more normal and having buildings too hot is unhealthy allowing germs to breed. Years ago there was a TV advert encouraging households to turn down their thermostats by 1 degree to save 10% of their heating bill, so the council could follow this advice and save a considerable amount. Similarly I have been to evening classes etc and seen not just the rooms required for that all lit up but many other rooms as well.
BVE131153	External	2.1.13	Is it in Amey's contract that they have to renew the lighting in a certain number (or percentage) of Birmingham's roads each year; similarly do they have to resurface a certain number of roads, and is there a penalty if they do not do this It is noticeable that they are doing all the short easy roads (often not needing it done yet) while the more difficult and complex longer main roads are left. Someone should be monitoring this and fining Amey for this and for their poor service to residents.
BVE131154	External	2.1.13	Given the council's dire financial position, it should no longer finance free or subsidised shows / fireworks etc. These should be stopped or be self-financing. They could be re-started when the economic situation improves.
BVE131155	External	2.1.13	Employee costs are one of the council's big items of expenditure, so need to be controlled. Why do council workers get increments as well as cost-of-living rises? These pay rises just for holding on to your job for another year are out-dated and disappeared from the private sector years ago. In fact many people have had no pay rise at all for a number of years and in some cases have had pay cuts; yet still have to pay the council tax to fund these increases. Also although the new living wage hourly rate may be a good idea in theory, this is not the time to implement it. There is already the minimum wage; many council-tax payers are only on that. It is not reasonable at the current time to increase pay above normal amounts. When the council (and council tax payers) are in a better financial position, then this could be done but not at present. Similarly final salary pension schemes which account for a significant proportion of the council tax. These are no longer affordable and have virtually disappeared from the private sector over the past few years; yet people in the private sector without these have to pay the council tax to fund these better pensions than they themselves have. These should be stopped for new staff and phased out for existing staff (they would not lose any pension rights already built up – these would be protected).
BVE131156	External	2.1.13	Purchasing should be much more monitored. Often public sector contracts buy goods such as

			stationery at higher price than I could buy them on the high street, which is ridiculous. Bulk buying should mean much cheaper prices not dearer.
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BVE131164	External	3.1.13	<p>As a resident of Birmingham I would like to briefly let my opinion be known, it is my opinion unless the City continues to provide services to and for "our" most vulnerable groups then as a city we should fear for the long term impact.</p> <p>Social Disorder and total disengagement.</p> <p>More children being placed on the child protection register</p>

			<p>Children failing at school</p> <p>No go areas</p> <p>Residence turning to crime</p> <p>Long term mental health issues for children and adults alike</p> <p>Residence living in silos</p> <p>A city that is no longer aspirational and no visitors ...</p> <p>People moving to other areas of the country.</p> <p>To a greater extent I am sceptical to the value of consultation as one tends to loose faith in "our" leaders often believing decisions have already been made despite the outcome of consultation, equally and making a huge assumption I question as to the true involvement of residence who would be most affected by any budget reductions would use the consultation process to have "their voice heard". This is maybe an area the City may wish to explore at another time.</p> <p>Therefore I hope Birmingham will continue to invest in the children and families budget and the Adults budgets , We have to invest in our children today, so we can invest in our children tomorrow.</p> <p>It is unfortunate as a residence you feel you have to be in a position to choose as to what services are provided as it feels very much like the survival of the fittest.</p> <p>However one only hopes the decisions made by the City Leaders will be measured considered and wisely made.</p>
BVE131165	External	3.1.13	<p>Why the Customer Relations Service should not be affected by the council's plans to reduce spending?</p> <p>The Customer Relations Service is a well established small and fundamental service which allows services users including vulnerable children to have their say. I have worked as an Independent Investigation Officer commissioned to provide an independent view within the complaints process for approximately 7 years and feel that the statutory complaints process (3 stages) is a vital part of the Children, Young People and Families Directorate to ensure that learning and development of service can continue.</p> <p>The Customer Relations Services not only provides reassurance to its service users but also to staff working within the Directorate who are able to take from complaints any learning that will benefit them</p>

			<p>as professionals and their teams.</p> <p>The role of the Customer Relations Service is extensive in that it manages a very effective three tier complaints process. The service also offers the skills of mediation to prevent the escalation of complaints from Stage 1 to Stage 2 which has proven to be very successful, hence saving money for the department.</p> <p>The Customer Relations Service has a role where it is required to ensure that area teams within the CYPF Directorate respond within a given timescale to complainants at Stage 1. The timescale for responses have often not been adhered to and there have been instances where managers have provided an inadequate response because they have failed to address all the points of a complaint or have failed to acknowledge short falls in the service provided. The Customer Relations Service takes steps to record and monitor the responses to all children's services complaints and provides feedback to managers in respect of the quality and effective handling of complaints at Stage 1 of the statutory complaint process.</p> <p>The Customer Relations Service commissions Independent Investigation Officers at Stage 2 of the statutory complaints process in order to provide an independent and unbiased view. The Stage 2 investigation is a much more robust and involved investigation which examines the Directorate's processes, policies and procedures and focuses on the Directorate's ability to safeguard its vulnerable children and others involved in the care of such children. Should this second stage be handed to managers to investigate, service users will not trust that they are being given a fair and unbiased response. The time required to undertake such an investigation will no doubt impact on staff (managers) time and their primary role and responsibilities. The Customer Relations Service also offers a very effective advocate service which is utilised wherever necessary by complainants. I would question whether this crucial part of the service would continue to be offered if the role of the Customer Relations Service was to be absorbed into individual Area Teams managed by its managers who are already under extreme pressures.</p> <p>The third and final stage (Stage 3) of the statutory complaint process is also managed by the Customer Relations Service. The organisation and preparation of such panels is time consuming and involves a number of people, some who are independent.</p> <p>Overall the role and function of this relatively small service is crucial and is a service that the public and our looked after children are entitled to. The experience of the service and its members over the years has grown and is meeting its purpose. I do not feel Birmingham City Council will be able to maintain or continue to deliver this statutory service without the support and management the Customer Relations Service currently provides.</p>
BVE131166	External	3.1.13	<p>Response to Questions:</p> <p>It seems to me more logical to take the questions in reverse order ie from the principles to the possibility of raising more income and then to the budget itself.</p>

Question 3.

- a) In considering the principles of decision taking, I would include explicitly the vulnerable and place more stress on encouraging independence and self sufficiency as an objective of intervention. **Furthermore, the guiding principles must include the principle of transparency and open information:** Birmingham should aim to be the best informed city in Britain where citizens have access to the information they need when they need it and where the decisions of the Council are up for scrutiny. It is not enough to talk of simply “using new technologies”.
- b) Having rightly emphasized early intervention as one of the Council’s principles, I think this should be reflected explicitly in the priorities: it fulfills a long term cost reduction strategy and signals that you are a responsive and decisive Council. In line with my comments under a), Priority 2 should lay the foundations for a “better informed and prosperous city.....” If Birmingham is to compete in the global economy of the future it must seriously improve in terms of “access to information” as well.
- c) Sadly, the Consultation gives very little context for the questions you pose. It would have helped to know the current expenditure levels for elements, or percentage reductions, than just absolute amounts and it would have been even more helpful to know the achievements of different elements in fulfilling priorities, even if that were at the price of greater aggregation within broad themes.

Question 2.

You state on P4 that the Council’s policy of moderation in Council tax increases has resulted in less Council tax income per head than other major cities. The Government has afforded the Council the opportunity to make its case for higher Council tax in the form of a referendum. It seems to me that, given the exigencies of the situation, the Council should make its case towards parity with others, in one or several steps depending on the difference.

Question 1.

Other than the point made in c) above, I have two observations on Appendix 2 which are related:

- Corporate Savings account for the lion’s share of cuts in the years ahead and the experience of other Local Authorities suggests that investment in secure integrated databases and new approaches to service delivery can generate significant cost savings, including the reduction of fraud in Council house lettings (avoiding sub-lets). However, in the Birmingham Plan there is no clue, other than in IT services, how these might be selected never mind achieved. One can only agree with the intent.

			<p>- Digital Birmingham (DB) is defined as a small upward pressure. My suspicion is that it represents a necessary investment in capability to enable the Council to achieve the significant cost reductions in service delivery which it is seeking. Indeed, given the size of the Corporate Savings noted above, it leads me to question whether Birmingham can achieve such savings without a major investment in developing new digital approaches and capability. Other than outright cuts to front line services, it would give much more credibility to your aim of realizing massive Corporate Savings if you were to define DB as your “skunk works” and resource a programme of change via DB as the chosen vehicle for achieving such savings. An investment of £5-£10 million would not be out of line with the Savings targets you have set; otherwise the plan simply reads like wishful thinking.</p>
BVE131167	External	3.1.13	<p>What is going on in the council right now is scandalous. It appears to all that all the useless managers (and there are a lot of them) have been given new posts to jobs which did not exist before, and the ones who are left WILL have jobs after all the lower paid and more useful people will have no jobs. I know for a fact this is true. You could get rid of at least 50% of managers on capability alone. But this will not happen will it. IT REALLY IS A DISGRACE</p>
BVE131168	External	3.1.13	<p>These comments relate to proposals of cutting Community and Play Grants and Youth Service proposals a false economy when the salary of one of your Directors could be used to maintain the grants. How do BCC justify cutting community and play commissioning and keeping arts commissioning? Why doe BCC need so many high paid Directors and Assitant Directors to manage reduced services? Youth Services - why is Youth Service proposing to cut it part-time front line workers while protecting all senior management posts?</p>
BVE131169	External	3.1.13	<p>As a resident of Birmingham and a parent of two teenagers I feel it important to outline the important role the youth service has played in the lives of both my children but in particular my son. I am in no doubt that my son would have taken a very different path without the support of youth workers and our local youth centre. They took the time to get to know him and offer him the support that was not available anywhere else. Because of the relationship he has with the workers he has been able to discuss concerns that he was not able to discuss with anyone else. With their support and guidance he has been able to transform his life, gain the confidence to go back to school and has now started an apprenticeship programme. Without the support of the youth service I am in no doubt my son would be a statistic either in the Youth Offending System or one of the NEETS.</p> <p>I fear that without a safe place to meet and the support of professionally trained youth workers our young people will not get the support and facilities they deserve and need.</p>

BVE131170	External	3.1.13	<p>In response to Birmingham City Council's proposals to reduce the Children Young People & Families Budget wherein your Consultation Document at page 31 Point 10, states <i>There are a range of customer referral and information enquiry services across CYPF. These teams will be reviewed and consolidated to simplify arrangements for customers to contact Children, Young People and Families and to improve our response'</i> does not give clarity on how this will be managed should the CRS Team be deleted. You do not however state how you expect to do this and maintain the Statutory Duty the Council has to provide Independent Investigation into its Complaints.</p> <p>The document is vague and merely describes that these services will be devolved to an already overburdened part of the Council. Area Team and Social Workers are constantly buckling under the strain of coping with an increasing workload. The Council (BCC) is unable to recruit and retain staff at present, with high rates of long term sick leave amongst its Area Team staff and agency workers, costing the Council significantly more than if it could recruit and retain its own staff. It is deeply concerning that there does not seem to have been investigation into why staff are leaving the Social Care arm of the Council and have a high level of long term sickness.</p> <p>It is appreciated that Birmingham amongst other Local Authorities has to make savings. Nevertheless its massive financial deficit, brought on by a number of factors, more recently by the issues surrounding Equal Pay settlements is of no surprise. The underlying issues of Equal Pay and staff bonuses have long been known to Senior Directors, Chief Executives and Elected Members within the Council for a number of years. Therefore it would have been expected that staff had a right to Equal Pay bonuses and that this would have a financial impact on the citizens and staff of Birmingham at some stage in the near future.</p> <p>In general my response relates to the suggestion that the Children, Young People & Families Customer Relations Service be 'deleted'. Although this is not directly referred to within the Consultation Document, it has been mentioned to members of the Independent Investigation Officer's Pool that this is the route the Council intends to take. The Independent Officers have provided an unbiased and cost effective support system to Birmingham City Council's citizens via independent investigation of complaints raised by vulnerable children, foster carers, parents and carers and other citizens alike.</p> <p>In response to this suggestion therefore, I am writing to put forward my views as to why the deletion of the Customer Relations Service (referred to as CRS) causes me great concern.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birmingham City Council (BCC) has a statutory duty under Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 which requires that Children's Service Departments have complaints procedures. The CRS is the conduit through which these complaints are
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			<p>made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The CRS provides services to the Citizens of Birmingham by taking account of Stage 1 complaints, recording and referring on to the various Area Teams with responsibility for that particular service. Complaints from children are relatively rare because of the hurdles they face and fear when raising their concerns about professionals and the decisions taken by them on their behalf. The CRS actively promotes complaints from children by using Advocacy Services and through the commissioning of Independent Investigation Officers and where relevant, Independent People, to support the most vulnerable children, their parents and carers and the various professionals involved in elements of their care.• The CRS provides an Annual Report wherein it records learning for the Directorate, trends and failings. It is part of the statutory process that requires BCC to monitor and evaluate on its handling of complaints. This is a valuable service provided by CRS. In addition to this, the CRS has saved BCC around £165K per year via its proactive mediation route, keeping the complaints budget to a minimum. The CRS ensures that those complaints that are escalated to the next stage (the Independent Stage) of the complaint procedure, are investigated impartially by a pool of very experienced Independent Investigation Officers and Independent People, using Advocacy where required, which ensures that complainants' concerns are heard, recorded and responded to within a statutory timescale and framework.• The most concerning element for complainants is their real fear that their concerns will not be heard. By the time they have made their complaint, they have already lost their 'faith' in the Council; they are suspicious of staff and voice this to the Independent Investigation Officers on every occasion.• The CRS Team provides advice and support to complainants, area teams and the pool of Investigation Officers. The complaints process independently ensures that Policy and Procedures are updated and that poor custom and practice is tackled.• The CRS Team and Independent Investigation Officers ensure that complaints are not part of the core work of Area Teams and Managers. The on-costs for those members of staff to do this additional work is not cost effective in terms of time taken away from core tasks on an already overstretched workforce.• The real concern however, is that without ensuring complaints are independently investigated is
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			<p>that poor practice becomes standard, that children are not safeguarded, nor are the people who provide services to them kept in check. The risk is that their Human Rights are not accounted for and their voice is not heard.</p> <p>I have worked as an Independent Investigation Officer for BCC for over 7 years. I am independent, do not require sick pay, holiday pay and only get paid for the work I do. The CRS Team has shown a consistently high value for money service for the Children and Young People of Birmingham. The Independent complaint investigations are recorded, monitored and responded to and Investigation Officers are commissioned on a case by case basis, with no superannuation costs to the Council. Each Investigation Officer is trained and their work monitored to provide a high standard of service to Birmingham Citizens.</p> <p>The impact of reducing an already cost effective service and devolving its responsibility to Area Teams and Managers, is that the complaints work will not get done. Children and Young People's voices will be lost. Poor practice could become standard, in a Council that prides itself in '<i>Putting the Customer First</i>'.</p> <p>The likely risks in not promoting independence to complaints investigations are the cost of potential legal involvement, Judicial Review and bad publicity. Complainants do not want investigations carried out by staff, nor do they want an autocratic service which they feel they cannot question or complain about to an independent party.</p> <p>The removal of the CRS team will remove the attention of managers across areas of service to those service areas which are experiencing problems and need to be improved.</p>
BVE131171	External	3.1.12	<p>I would like to let you know how vital the work of MENCAP West Midlands and the Inclusion Project are.</p> <p><u>MENCAP</u></p> <p>MENCAP takes our 5-year-old son who has autism and ADHD at least once a month, sometimes more, from 10am – 3.30pm on a Saturday or Sunday. This allows us to spend time with his little brother, have time to ourselves as parents and do normal day-to-day things like shopping or cleaning.</p> <p>Without this service we would have very little time to ourselves and would struggle to find respite care that is a) affordable b) suitable for our son's needs. His behaviour can be extremely challenging and staff have the training and experience to be able to deal with him. There are always plenty of educational and social activities for him to do and different secure spaces (e.g. sensory room, large hall, garden etc.) for him to explore. We need the break to be able to function.</p> <p><u>Inclusion Project</u></p>

			<p>The Inclusion Project offers 130 hours of childcare with a suitable child-minder. This means the child-minder is specifically chosen and matched to our son to ensure they have the special needs training and experience necessary to look after him. They also offer a secure, educationally stimulating environment.</p> <p>This service is vital to families for the same reasons as MENCAP. We need a break to do 'normal' family things as we can't go anywhere with him, his behaviour is too unpredictable and destructive. If we try to go out with him or do any family activities he is unable to sit still, drops to the floor and screams, kicks out, grabs things, spits etc. He also has no sense of danger, is on several medications and is not toilet trained.</p> <p>Please do not cut the budgets to these services, they really are vital to the mental and physical well-being of parents of children with special needs.</p> <p>The council also needs to take into account the fact that any budget cuts to such services will result in an increase in applications for Direct Payments.</p>
BVE131172	External	3.1.13	<p>I am a youth worker for a voluntary sector youth project [REDACTED], our organisation is very much reliant upon developing partnerships with other organisations and Birmingham Youth Service have formed an invaluable source of support over the last 4 years. If we are to lose this support then a number of our groups may suffer as a result.</p>
BVE131173	External	3.1.13	<p>I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed cuts to the Youth Service, a proposed 0.47 per year, for four years, and with a budget of a 3.26 million budget there won't be anything left!</p> <p>I understand The city's responsibility for core services and needing to ensure safeguarding of children and young people, as outlined in your priority one, however, there are huge numbers of very isolated and vulnerable Young people who rely heavily on local universal youth projects to gain support on a host of issues, that if removed, will create disastrous consequences for young people in this city.</p> <p>The Youth Service is a life line in many communities as they offer many projects and programmes to support young people into employment and training as you say "closing the gap" in some of our very deprived neighbourhoods. Local youth projects play a crucial role in working with some of the hardest to reach young people and without this service, young people will become more marginalised and at risk, surely costing the public purse more!</p> <p>In some of Birmingham's communities educational attainment is very low and therefore it is essential we find ways to re engage young people back into learning. Again, the youth service has a proven</p>

			<p>track record of doing this through a range of accredited vocational training programme getting young people to believe in their abilities and move onto further education, training and employment, making a real difference to tackling third/ fourth generation poverty/ unemployment.</p> <p>The youth service has a solid track record in working with young people in addressing antisocial behaviour by offering significant holiday schemes, diverting young people away from crime and working with gangs on the streets addressing issues like knife crime and gang culture, steering young people into more positive pathways. Without youth projects/workers many of these anti social problems will re emerge.</p> <p>I have just highlighted a few examples where the youth service not only demonstrates huge value for money, but makes a real contribution to addressing inequality and promoting community cohesion.</p> <p>I do hope you reconsider some of your proposals and not wipe out this value service and push some of society's very vulnerable young people into further poverty and disillusionment.</p>
BVE131174	Internal	3.1.13	<p>If everyone working for BCC gave up just one day of their leave entitlement = 26,000 days = equivalent 100 posts</p> <p>I've discussed this with my colleagues and most were supportive of the idea. Most of us on maximum entitlement (34 days) would be happy to forfeit up to four days each.</p>
BVE131175	Internal	3.1.13	<p>I live in Sutton Coldfield and would be interested to know whether the Council are incurring costs whilst the library is closed. If so, would it be more economical to reopen the library? Its facilities in the centre of Sutton Coldfield are a loss to the town.</p>
BVE131176	External	3.1.13	<p>Please rethink the budget cuts to this service. The youths are already under extreme pressures due to lack of jobs and the many who remain unemployed. The youths at school need the youth service as a place of refuge and to get advice to empower them to resist gangs which plight the communities they live in. No youth service then they are abandoned on the streets with negative influences becoming the norm.. The youth service must remain uncut..</p>
BVE131177	Internal	3.1.13	<p>There is another possibility of making savings to the yearly budget. You could close down all the main big buildings, i.e. Woodcock Street, Lifford House, Lancaster Circus etc over the Christmas and New Year. As you know there is only skeleton staff in, and the phones are quiet. This would save an enormous amount of money on heating, electricity, phone calls, security staff etc. All you would need to do is run an emergency only service for safeguarding etc. at another location.</p> <p>I understand that Solihull Council closed over the Christmas/New Year saving them quite a lot of money.</p>

			<p>If we did this then all staff would book this time out of their own annual leave/flex and those that did not have enough annual leave they could perhaps work from a different small location/work from home or take it as unpaid leave etc. Most of the private sector firms automatically close and it was in their contract they would have to save at least 5 days of their annual leave for the Christmas/New Year period etc. (I used to work for the private sector and this was in my contract). You may have to give 3 months consultation notice to the workforce.</p>
BVE131178	Internal	3.1.13	<p>In relation to the current budget consultation I would like to make the following comment/ suggestion.</p> <p>This is in relation to New Homes Bonus (NHB) which I consider is not being used to encourage growth and investment in the city and its potential is not being maximised.</p> <p>The purpose of the NHB is to encourage communities to increase the level of housebuilding. There are considerable benefits arising from this from creation of jobs in construction and supply chains to meeting housing needs and reducing pressures on service delivery by reducing the number of households living in stressful conditions.</p> <p>A key part of the concept is that the resource generated by the house building should, at least in part be utilised to reward the communities taking the growth. While the sums involved in NHB are not insubstantial (c£3m pa over each of the first three years, but accumulating over a six year period) they are small in relation to the overall scale of discretionary spend available to the City Council.</p> <p>My contention is that these funds could be used far more effectively to encourage and deliver growth rather than as they appear to be which is in a fashion which encourages economic stagnation while only marginally helping the budget shortfall.</p> <p>I would therefore like to propose that the full amount of the NHB should be utilised to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Facilitate housing growth through investment in the future planning of areas where growth can be encouraged. This could include the preparation of statutory plans (like the Longbridge AAP) or additional Neighbourhood Plans if communities are positively prepared to consider growth. This approach is being used to fund planning work in the Black Country. b) To directly fund the provision of social housing. c) To fund improvements in local infrastructure directly in the communities where growth has been encouraged. This could mean extra funding to Neighbourhood Planning areas or in areas where these do not exist to existing decentralised committees. d) To contribute to funds for strategic infrastructure - helping schemes that would otherwise not proceed to go ahead, or fund projects that would otherwise be unlikely to receive funding. e) To help bring sites forward for development through removal of constraints to development.

			<p>f) To extend the benefits of NHB through its use as match-funding for other funding sources. This is the approach being used to fund the work on the M42 Gateway in Solihull.</p> <p>If we were to do this then it is likely that the scale of housebuilding would increase thus helping the level of NHB to rise significantly - perhaps to double its current annual level thus creating a positive cycle of growth and investment rather than the current cycle of decline.</p>
BVE131179	External	3.1.13	<p>I have read your budget proposals. I would like to say that I am surprised as to how Birmingham city council will continue to deliver services to the vulnerable citizens in the city. You have a duty to protect these citizens. Your Children's and Adults proposals are most concerning.</p> <p>I specifically disagree with your home and transport proposal for disabled children, which outlines that the new strategy be applied to existing children attending special schools etc. I think this will cause a lot of developmental impact upon the children and create more pressure upon such families.</p> <p>In my opinion savings should be found through the commissioning of other cost-effective services across the city. I do hope you will reconsider your proposal and not apply it to existing children.</p>
BVE131180	External	3.1.13	<p>I'm 16 years old. I have recently heard about the government wanting to cut funding of the Amazon counselling service.</p> <p>I have to say that it is ridiculous. I am an ex-attender of Barnados Amazon. I attended for about a year. Without the support of Amazon, I do not think that I would be where I am today. It gave me a place to feel safe and felt like it was OK to talk about what had happened. They often provided me with food and drink. I even got bought a present by my councillor out of the kindness of her own heart. I benefited a lot from it. It helped me to feel normal. After a year of attending and not feeling depressed or suicidal anymore, I left Amazon late last year knowing that I was OK to cope on my own. I was in a good place.</p> <p>Please please please do not cut the funding because some children or adults may not be able to have a place to go to or someone to talk to about what happened and they may be in the same position I was and this time they might not be so lucky, they may feel worthless, alone and scared, they may not value their life and want to end it. Please do not let any child or adult feel like this. I felt like this but thanks to Amazon I don't anymore. Please don't close it.</p>
BVE131181	External	3.1.13	<p>Further to your letter of the 6th December 2012 I felt I had to respond.</p> <p>As a parent of an Autistic Young Person please let me tell you I have never felt over-consulted in fact far from it. Council is making plans again without any real experience how many have children with special needs? Our son has attended The Pines School and is now at Baskerville. Both of these schools are fantastic; they work tirelessly and supportively of both the pupil and the family. If it wasn't for these schools I dread to think what the future would have held for our son. Yes, special schools are</p>

			<p>expensive BUT the benefits for their pupils cannot be simply put into monetary figures. Our son has no awareness of danger so would be unable to make his own way to school. The home to school transport service is vital to him and the other pupils that need this service. These pupils dont want it for the sake of wanting something to them it is a key component in their slow integration into society.</p> <p>Why again does the so called second city Council seek to deprive its most vulnerable citizens of a quality of life that everyone else takes for granted? It seems every year this service comes under fire WHY? I am well aware of the current financial situation facing the Council however there are other areas that can and should be addressed first. I would like to know the current figures for unpaid Council Tax? The cost of the refuse collections that dont happen on the correct day and then come on a weekend at overtime rates? Children and Young People with special needs are just as important as you or I to the make up of our city. Birmingham talks of how its a multicultural all inclusive City can you imagine the uproar if the Council targeted some Ethnic communities? So instead it takes the easy option the small minority of its own people that cant defend themselves, cant express how they feel and think they can get away with it. I have said to many Councillors over the years please come and visit these special schools, come and spend time with the families, come and see the difficulties they face on a daily basis and then tell me these cuts are justifiable. Again this will fall on deaf ears and yet again the faceless Councillors will hide with shame as they cannot face the very people they seek to harm.</p> <p>As previoulsey said I for one dont feel over consulted, lets have more of it and lets see the people who are supposed to represent ALL the City's people come out and meet them.</p>
BVE131182	External	3.1.13	<p>Birmingham youth service has helped young people over many generations It is a service which has helped young people . Young people have gained positive out comes and have reformed themselves throught the engagement of the service. The professionalism and the expertise of the service will be lost , these drastic cuts will finish a valuable service and the young people will suffer. The young people are the future of the city and we need to maintain this service. Please do not cut the service .</p>
BVE131183	External	4.1.13	<p>Birmingham Youth service has worked with young people from a variety different backgrounds, the service has engaged with young people with multiple needs. It is a befreinding service which will tailor make the solutions for the young people it serves. The service has helped many you ng people, bringing them through their adolescent years, guiding them , supporting them , being paitent and caring. Not all size fits all, the young people are treated as individuals .The service acts as a support , through difficult times, helps with education,employment and training.The service is there for young people when they are at risk of being excluded and committing crime. Youngf people have been given a purpose . The 1.5 million cut will destroy the future of all young people in the city, from the needy to those who have a lot to offer , as the service offers opportunities for young people to take on leadership roles.</p> <p>A service of this nature is priceless and once destroyed can not be replaced, Birmingham youth service can keep the young people of birmingham safe , guided and help reduce crime on the streets, they are</p>

			the future of birmingham . Please do not destroy the Youth service. The youth service has had drastic cuts, no more cuts to the youth service , in the long term the city will end up paying a lot more .
BVE131184	External	4.1.13	<p>As invited the following are the views of Birmingham Women's Foundation NHS Trust on our proposed budget for 2013/14 and subsequent years up to 2016/17.</p> <p>We would like to make 2 key points:</p> <p>Firstly that there appears to be a disproportionate number of budget reductions within the Children, Young People and Families Services. This is likely to put an additional pressure on NHS services in general, although not Women's healthcare in particular.</p> <p>Secondly, the suggestion to reduce the Safeguarding and Development Service would have a direct impact on our ability to provide safeguarding services. The Trust invested more in this area as a direct result of the current service provided by Birmingham City Council being assessed as inadequate and this will put additional pressure on the Trust.</p> <p>Thank you for giving us the opportunity to respond</p>
BVE131185	External	4.1.13	<p>The new round of cuts to the Youth Service will leave a lot of young people not only with somewhere constructive to go but also with no one to talk to about issues that they might have. I my self grew up with the Youth Service being a integral part of my life. I like most young people need someone who they can confide in who is not part of a establishment like school. If the Youth Service had not been there for me i would not be contributing to society today.</p> <p>Youth workers do a lot more than playing pool, for every game of pool played there is a challenging debate going on about a whole range of topics. It is that simple game of pool that lets the young person know they have someone who they can trust to support them. Who will be playing pool with them in the future? will it be the school teacher or school mentor who is already got a full work load? Will it be someone in a pool hall who has no interest in what happens around them?</p> <p>What is going to happen to all the young people who use the service at the moment? will they be expected to roam the streets? Young people need a service who supports them on there level, who challenges them shows them right from wrong. Understands them and is there to work for them?</p> <p>Please re consider these cuts as i fear it will cost society much more in the future, both in crime going up and then having to pay to bring back the youth service. Listen to young people they want and need this service</p>
BVE131186	External	4.1.13	I live in Handsworth, Birmingham [REDACTED] and would like to give my views on the budget proposals.

			<p>I attended one of the budget consultation meetings and it appears to me that the priority should be to challenge the Central Government on the inequity of the budget cuts across England and the disproportionate amount of cuts to Birmingham in relation to other authorities in England.</p> <p>This seems to me the most effective tactic, as the proposals for making the cuts leave us with services that are responding to crisis rather than taking a long term view of preventing further, future issues.</p> <p>I have particular interest in young people and within the budget proposals, while there appears to be a minimal cut to Youth Service budget, in fact this does not take into account the withdrawal of £1million as part of the schools forum funding.</p> <p>As you are aware, there was large scale concern about the proposed cut in youth service provision within the last round of budget cuts and steps were taken to protect as much as possible this valuable service. The subsequent scrutiny report highlighted the quality of services delivered.</p> <p>The Youth Service is a comparatively cheap service but saves money in the longer term through the preventative nature of the work. I would like to see more done to protect the service and to secure the funding from the schools forum in order to ensure that Birmingham is truly investing in its young people, not only in the formal education it provides, but also in the informal educational opportunities that can be life changing.</p>
BVE131187	External	4.1.13	<p>My daughter [REDACTED] attends Victoria School [REDACTED]. She has used school transport on minibus since she was 2.5 years old. I am concerned that my daughter may lose school transport from September 2013. She is 18 in September but will remain at Victoria until she is 19 nearly 20 (July 2015). What is Council's definition and criteria for 'severely disabled' and still getting transport. My daughter has Dystonic Cerebral Palsy, Autism, possible Frontal Lobe Epilepsy and Severe Learning Disabilities. My daughter is mobile indoors but is unable to walk far. She has no safety awareness and cannot travel alone. On the minibus at the moment she has a Houdini harness to keep her safe as she continually tries to undo her seatbelt as she does not use wheelchair for travelling or in school but she does have one to use for trips out. She has experienced guide and driver taking her to school. I am widowed, do not drive and do find her difficult to take out on my own as she can suddenly have stressful episodes and harm herself and I am having one or two health issues myself. She finds travelling on public transport very difficult and stressful. She travels supervised on minibus safely to and from school. She will always need care and will never be able to be independent and has highest DLA for both care and mobility. Also as she is over 16 and will be 18 in September the charge of up to £600 per school year would apply. How is the charge worked out, how would it be paid and how often, weekly, monthly, half-termly, termly as I am on Widows Benefit and do not work?</p> <p>Also just a general comment, I do think that in some cases the withdrawal of school transport will increase lateness and absenteeism within schools.</p>

BVE131188	External	4.1.13	<p>As one of the CAMHS Community Clinicians, I am writing in response to the proposed cuts to our services and to the voluntary sector by Birmingham City Council.</p> <p>As member of the CAMHS team for the last 10 years, I have worked across all levels of the service from one of the CAMHS Tier 4 In-patient units, to Tiers 1&2 early intervention Primary Mental Health Team, and now at Tier 3 Community CAMHS. In my roles, I have been privileged to work with parents and children and young people with emerging emotional problems right up to the most severe mental health problems.</p> <p>Throughout my career, I have seen many positive changes to the area of mental health such as tackling stigma and I believe Birmingham CAMHS have led the way in respect to this and developing much needed services for children, young people and their families, such as the Primary Mental Health Team and the new Home Treatment Team. However during this time I have always seen how under resourced CAMHS have been, yet expected to deliver class leading mental health care to families. As a link between CAMHS and universal services early intervention services, in my former role as a PMHW, I have seen some of these services cease to exist due to funding cuts. I have always believed the impact of this would be an increase in demand for CAMHS services. Sadly the reality is that in my view more and more children and young people are being referred to Specialist CAMHS because there are not enough services to offer early intervention services to them at a time when they need it most.</p> <p>I am therefore deeply concerned for children, young people and their families at the prospect of these proposed cuts. If the cuts go ahead it will sadly mean, not only will CAMHS be unable to help some of the most vulnerable families in Birmingham, there will also be insufficient support for less severe cases. Many of the less severe cases (and I do not mean less important cases, because all children's emotional and mental health is important), will have nowhere to turn and risk an escalation in their mental health, consequently putting further demand on specialist CAMHS and having a knock on effect on other specialist services. With a reduction in CAMHS staff, this simply would mean a service being unable to cope with the increase in demand and be disastrous for many families in Birmingham. This will surely have a knock on effect on the children and grandchildren of these families, because I believe helping one child early on, can influence how they care for their children and so on meaning positive changes can break generational cycles of poor mental health. The future cost to local authorities will clearly increase as a result of cuts to emotional wellbeing and mental health services.</p> <p>I think these cuts also send out a very clear message, that children and young people's mental health is not seen as important and will throw us back to a time when mental health was seen as taboo therefore further reinforcing stigma of mental health. Instead I believe Birmingham should be leading the way in tackling these problems early on and also leading the way in breaking down barriers rather than creating more barriers.</p>
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BVE131189	Internal	4.1.13	<p>I would like to register the excellent customer service I received from the Events Depot at Leslie Road, when as part of a group we were organising a high profile Awards event. The staff there went out of their way to assist in every way they could, and provided us with equipment to support our event - they delivered and collected - and were at the end of the phone for advice and guidance. I hope that this service will still be available in the future, and would like this taken into consideration when changes to service areas are discussed.</p>
BVE131190	External	4.1.13	<p>I appreciate the difficulties faced by the leaders of the Council in having to make universally undesirable cuts in the services provided by the Children, Young People and Families Directorate, but am concerned about proposed cuts to Strategic Support Services and in particular the suggested closing of the 'Customer Relations' office (para 11, page 31).</p> <p>It is suggested that the cuts will have "an impact on performance monitoring and support for strategic management of children's services" but to my mind the cut of the customer relations office (with a staff at two) will also put the City Council at risk of:-</p> <p>a. Failing to fulfil its statutory responsibilities under Children Act 1989 Representations Procedures (England) Regulations. 2006, Part 4 to provide a three stage complaints procedure based upon an independent investigation and hearing of service user's complaints;</p> <p>b. Substantial additional expense resulting from increased litigation and referrals to local government office. I believe that that this is likely because:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">i. Under the present system the Customer Relations office is able to resolve a substantial number of complaints at stage one of the process before a complaint is then referred to an independent investigation at stage 2.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">ii. In my experience a 'stage 2' investigation by an independent person frequently results in the amelioration of a dispute and the resolution of a complaint.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">iii. A 'stage 3' panel hearing by three independent people reinforces the possibility of the resolution of a complaint.</p> <p>If the three stage complaints process is to be cut and not replaced by a similar process involving the independent adjudication of complaints, I suspect that BCC will be faced by having to respond to a substantial increase in referrals to the LGO. The response will have to be picked up either by already overburdened area teams or by legal services.</p>

			<p>and c. Losing an independent performance monitoring process which relates not only to individual performance but also to systems of service delivery which may be performing inadequately.</p> <p>My concern about the budget proposals is that, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, it would appear that proper consideration has not been given to the real work of Customer Relations and that a bad decision may be made in the interests of short term economics - a decision which will result in increased expenditure and bad public relations.</p>
BVE131191	Internal	4.1.13	<p>Scale back all BEST activities - teams across the council now understand the concept and BEST issues could simply become a standing item on team agendas with perhaps one or two meetings a year where BEST is the main item. All training and future conferences/events for BEST leaders should be stopped as managers should be capable of facilitating a BEST discussion with their staff removing the need for a designated BEST leader for each team and therefore the need for this to be recognised as a challenging PDR objective and the associated additional increment that this attracts. A single BEST corporate co-ordinator is all that is required to maintain a web presence and collate and share/report on good practice from across the directorates.</p> <p>Simplify and further streamline the PDR process - valuable staff time is spent collecting evidence for the PDR objectives and the Birmingham Way attributes. Performance throughout the year should be monitored as part of the structured one to one meetings with your manager. Any perceived failure to either meet your objectives or the B'ham Way attributes should be raised and minuted at the one to one meeting. The minutes of the one to one meetings thereby provide all the evidence required for the PDR review process no additional evidence should be required because any failings in performance or attitude should have been raised during those sessions. In addition with continuing job cuts the whole concept of a Personal Development Review is brought into question. The majority of staff are now working more on a year by year basis and it is not possible to plan further ahead the objective for many becomes merely staying in a job, even if you exceed all your objectives there is no guarantee that you will be able to reap the rewards of your hard work as your post may not exist in the following year. Rather than an increment perhaps the achievement of targets/objectives could be rewarded with additional days leave during the course of the year.</p> <p>Reporting - hard copy printing, particularly colour printing, of all reports to each member of Cabinet, Scrutiny, EMT, CMT and EMCB should cease. This would immediately cut out the waste of the 'spare copies' produced each time there is a meeting that go straight to recycling. Reports should be available and viewed electronically on line via laptop , ipad or iPhone and we should move to a paperless decision making process.</p>

			<p>With continuing central government cuts should there be a discussion nationally regarding local representation and whether it is feasible and affordable to continue to have three councillors per ward or whether this could be cut to two with the associated savings in members allowances.</p> <p>In relation to the monies required to meet the equal pay obligations as this is a one off payment rather than an ongoing saving could consideration be given to selling some of the city councils assets to meet this debt e.g. consider selling selected art works that belong to the city and that are currently in storage to meet some or all of this cost.</p>
BVE131192	External	4.1.13	<p>My name is [REDACTED] Small Heath Baptist Church</p> <p>I am also the Chairperson of [REDACTED] for the last 13 years.</p> <p>I write on behalf of Stepping Stones Spurgeons Arch Service which has be identified as being at risk of loosing your funding which would result in the closure of Stepping Stones Spurgeons Family Support Project.</p> <p>I understand we are in a hard economical situation and the council has to shave a third off its current budget, but I want to say that Stepping Stones Spurgeons has been serving the communities in East and North Birmingham for over 16/17 years. They have done a magnificent job over the years supporting families and children in that time.</p> <p>Last year we lost a few of the family support services which left us with a smaller team doing the the Arch work in CAMHS. Any further cuts to our funding would result in the project's closure.</p> <p>The workers are the best and most dedicated worker we've ever had in the project. They go over and above in their duty, care, creativity, and support of local families and children. Their professionalism is exemplary</p> <p>They have always exceed targets set by yourselves and surely this kind of work which prevents, where possible, the break up of families. In the long run this must be more cost effective than picking up all the pieces break up of a family, especially with vulnerable children.</p> <p>I've sat at a number of presentations done by children and young people that this project has worked with and the overwhelming thing said by the children is how much their confidence has grown as a result of working with our team of dedicated workers. The parents have also remarked on what a difference it has made having our workers alongside them. Also the training given to women in situations of domestic abuse has proved to be invaluable in helping women to be more assertive and</p>

			<p>more able to find help to leave or resolve their abusive relationship.</p> <p>If we were not around especially in the area of Small Heath and East Birmingham in general. It would be another example of how anything designed to help people on this side of Birmingham is ripped out of the heart of the community, making the neighbours around the project believe that Birmingham has no desire to support them and is just letting people of Small Heath realise that local government has no real regard for its problems. With all the recent local projects, job centre, Neighbourhood office and other council buildings closed down in the last two/three years I can see why my area feels Birmingham Council doesn't care about us. Everything in Small Heath looks so rundown, we struggle to see any areas of investment by the council in this region.</p> <p>Taking away the funding from Stepping Stones Spurgeons Arch Project will just reinforce that sense of abandonment the community has been feeling over the last few years.</p> <p>The project has had such a great reputation and record, it also has such an experienced team of workers it would be difficult to replace once let them go.</p> <p>Can I ask you to reconsider your proposal in regard to Stepping Stones Spurgeons Arch Project and ask you to support this project long term as this will ensure less families and children will fall through the cracks of bureaucracy and we will have less Baby P's etc on our consciences</p>
BVE131193	Internal (Councillor)	4.1.13	<p>My comments on the following proposals within the Children & Families portfolio.</p> <p>Option 1 Voluntary Sector Funding.</p> <p>I do not agree with this option as described. There are no details on who it will affect, how it will affect them and how this will impact across the wards/districts. Without more details how can anyone consider this option.</p> <p>Option 2 Teenage Pregnancy Funding.</p> <p>I do not agree with this option. I presume that the reason this service is provided externally is to remove any stigma or peer pressure associated with teenage pregnancy. This option would increase the risk of teenage pregnancies within the city boundary and would impact negatively on both the young mothers education and the unborn child's future prospects.</p> <p>Option 3 Remodelling and Integration and Preventative and Targeted Services.</p>

Is this a new measure or a re-hash of the model that failed the recent Ofsted inspection? I am very sceptical of the statement implying that efficiencies and reductions will be available due to the reduction of the number of children in care. Based on what study? Will the best interests of the children be the main priority or will service provision be based on cost? My fear is that social care will be offered to children with the lowest cost options offered first regardless of the level of care required.

Option 4 Home to School Transport.

I do not agree with this option. Transporting children with special needs to school is very important both for the pupil and the parent. A number of residents in my ward have used the service extensively for years. They could not attend school without this service and the guide provided a safe and trusted personal service. I believe that to remove or reduce this service is morally indefensible and punishes those who need our help the most.

Option 6 Adoption.

This option requires far more detail and less jargon. I need to be convinced that changes to the service are not going to compromise children's safeguarding. I am always concerned whenever I read that service change is to meet targets. I would be far more convinced if the service improvement was to provide the best possible outcome for the child.

Option 7 Disabled Children's Services.

To target a service that provides a vital provision to the most needy in our communities and claim that the efficiencies will not impact on service users is highly improbable. Further details are required to show that our vulnerable children will be protected and receive the best possible outcomes.

Option 8 Safeguarding and Development Service.

Bearing in mind Birmingham City Council's poor record in this field, i do not see how this option **can help to protect Birmingham's children from harm.**

Option 10 Customer First.

No reference in this option to evaluate if the referral and information services are specialised. If the services to be reviewed and consolidated I hope this does not mean integrated into the contact centre. The problem with the contact centre is that some calls are lost in the system and when we are talking about services to children this could have tragic consequences.

Option 11 Strategic Support services.

More detail is required. **What services will be affected?**

Option 12 Youth Offending Service.

I do not agree with this measure. How does this save money in the long run? Surely cuts to this service will just **transfer spending burdens to other services such as the police, probation and prison services whilst increasing anti social behaviour.** More importantly the long term outcomes of the young people involved will be negatively affected.

Option 13 Rights and Participation.

To remove or reduce this service runs the risk of disenfranchising the youth community from the rest of the community. Is it possible to restructure this service into a model that encourages mentoring of young people by community volunteers?

Option 14 Parent Partnerships.

This option needs very careful consideration. It may be helpful if more details of the current service were made available. Again this measure targets the most vulnerable in our community who need the most help and can only impact negatively on the children we should be trying hardest to protect.

I am very disappointed to note that there are specific savings of **80k from the SEN Parent Partnership.** This is a significant cut in the current funding level of a small service that delivers on a City-wide basis. I understand that the Service has a plan to redesign in order to meet these savings and to ensure that frontline work is not affected by these cuts alongside the saving proposal there has been an intention expressed to review and possibly outsource the Service. There has been no rationale given for this or any evidence that a better Service would be provided for parents and carers as a result.

The current SEN Parent Partnership is a cost effective and efficient Service that meets the needs of parents and carers and children with SEN. It has the ability to redesign and meet the budget savings and continue to deliver a high quality service. The Service has been built up over these years by parents and carers active involvement in shaping the service and the expertise, to ensure that the service provided meets the needs of all of its service users. It has a Service Delivery Review Board made up of Independent Representatives to maintain the best service.

The Service enables parental confidence in the City Council and therefore minimises complaints and

		<p>litigation against the Local Authority. Maintaining the current Service and expertise is critical in relation to the new legislation and supporting parents and carers in interfacing with Academies and Free Schools.</p> <p>The Service supports 20% of the pupil population; in particular relation to the BME Community of Birmingham this enables support to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable service users and enables a partnership approach in relation to meeting needs.</p> <p>You will note that in the Labour Government's response to the Education and Skills Select Committee on SEN (October 2006) it said:</p> <p><i>'One of the most comprehensive and effective Parent Partnerships is wholly run and funded by the local authority; it involves parents directly in improving its services, supports them in taking cases to the SEN and Disability Tribunal, has voluntary sector involvement on a strong management group and it plays a key role in influencing the local authority's policies. We are not convinced therefore that funding services independently of the local authority of itself leads to a better outcome for parents.</i></p> <p>The current Service delivered in Birmingham fulfils all the points raised to deliver the most comprehensive and effective Parent Partnership with high levels of parental confidence.</p> <p>Option 15 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.</p> <p>I do not agree with this option. Again it appears that the neediest in our society are being targeted. Far more detail needs to be provided for this measure before an evaluation of the effects can be contemplated.</p> <p>Option 19 Admissions and Appeals.</p> <p>I presume that this service is charged to the academies? If not why not?</p> <p>Option 21 Hospital Social work Team.</p> <p>To assess this option it would be necessary to see a review of the current service and assess the results. I would expect that the reason for the teams being based in the hospitals is to provide a quick and efficient service at the initial service point and to reduce delays in urgent interventions.</p> <p>Option 22 Contact and Escort Service.</p> <p>The reduction in costs and children in care is based on what evidence base?</p>
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			<p>Option 23 Child Protection Specialist assessments.</p> <p>The proposal to complete these assessments in-house will only be possible if the specialist expertise is available within the council. It is most important that outcomes are not affected by poor assessments in an effort to save money.</p> <p>Option 24 Children’s Centres.</p> <p>Not enough detail for this proposal to be evaluated. There seems to be a change of stance as to what was discussed at the Labour group meetings? Please therefore advise what are the core elements that will be cut in the centres?</p>
BVE131194	Internal (Councillor)	4.1.13	<p>Option 1 Adults and Communities Transformation Financing.</p> <p>I do not understand this proposal. It implies that capital spend on IT systems has been allocated from other sources previously other than capital resources. “The capping of revenue expenditure and re-profiling of repayment costs” is just management jargon and without some explanation is not informative at all. This proposal is estimated to save £1.4m each financial year and it should be explained in much clearer terms to the general reader.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>Your point has been taken on board and the narrative has been revised as follows:</p> <p>This proposal relates to the Adults and Communities Transformation project which is now coming to a close. The project was funded by money borrowed from the Council that has to be repaid. By cutting the cost of the project by £13.3m and paying for new computer systems by selling land, the Directorate is able to spread the cost of what has been spent over the next 8 years and save £1.41m per year on its repayments.</p> <p>Option 3 One of use of reserves.</p> <p>This proposal contradicts an earlier statement on page 13 that clearly states that “It is therefore not appropriate to use reserves to help balance the 2013/14 budget without repaying them in the future” I would question whether this £2.9m saving would be better utilised to support other areas of the Adults and Communities service.</p> <p>Response</p>

This proposal relates to the use of various reserves and under spends in 2012/13 to make a one off saving in 2013/14 to allow time for the service reviews to be completed and is made up as follows:

Refurbishment reserves (£1.65m) In order to have resources available to meet future capital refurbishment costs at the Care Centres and Summerhill House, the Directorate has set up revenue reserves which may be drawn on to avoid prudential borrowing. Contributions to the reserve began in 2011/12, and by the end of 2013/14 a total of £1.65m will have accumulated. Rather than use revenue, which would be better employed in meeting care needs; it is proposed that a matching reserve will be established using the retained capital receipts from the sale of care homes in line with the commitment set out on page 13 of the consultation document.

Under spends in 2012/13 carried forward (£1.32m) – These unplanned under spends relate to the contact centre, pension costs and funding brought forward from 2011/12. The judgement at this stage is that this money will be more effectively used to defend services next year rather than spent in a rush at the end of March 2013.

Option 7 Additional use of NHS funds to support eligibility criteria.

Is this a saving? My interpretation of this proposal is that the NHS will provide extra funding for a specific purpose. So is the £3.1 saving proposed actually the NHS funding a council function and the council reducing the service?

Response

Since 2011/12 the Council has received funding from the NHS which is allocated for adult social care that benefits health. The money is ring fenced and requires the PCTs to approve the plans for its use. PCTs and the NHS Trusts have stressed the importance of using this funding to keep eligibility criteria at substantial and critical and reduce the level of delayed discharges from hospital.

Like many councils across the country, Birmingham is using this funding to offset pressures and prevent cuts to services with the full agreement of our NHS partners. You are correct to say that the NHS is funding a council function, but this funding is being used to prevent a reduction in service and allow eligibility criteria to be kept at substantial and critical.

Option 8 Framework contracts and market shaping for residential and home care.

This proposal lacks any detail at all. It assumes savings from development of new models of care but does not explain what this means. I am always sceptical of predictive savings based on market

forecasts and would reference the planning department who also predicted a balanced budget based on predictive income from applications only to discover that with the downturn in the economy the increase in income failed to materialise.

Response

The council has currently budgeted to spend £213m on residential and home care provided by external suppliers, and this proposal is seeking a 1.5% saving on these costs by using framework contracts and market shaping.

Framework contracts were approved by Cabinet in 2012, and introduced for homecare services in September 2012. The frameworks set out terms and conditions under which the Council will purchase homecare. A micro tendering computer software package is used to commission homecare for individual service users. Although the prime weighting for assessing bids from care providers is given to quality, the initial evidence is showing that increased competition is also reducing costs.

Market Shaping will mainly be targeted on reducing the cost of agreements for service users with a learning disability that transferred over from the NHS where residential care providers have seen reduced financing costs for their premises debt.

Option 11 Reduce subsidy to University Hospital for delayed discharge schemes.

What does this mean? Again no details.

Response

The council is currently supporting additional capacity at University Hospital Birmingham as part of its arrangements for reducing delayed discharges. Whilst such schemes are desirable, the alternative sacrifices that would be required to maintain them would have a greater impact on the social care needs of citizens. The Directorate will seek to work with UHB to find alternative ways to manage delayed discharges, which have considerably reduced since this capacity agreement was made. In particular, mitigation will be sought from the use of reablement funding (administered by the NHS) that is invested in the Kenrick Centre specifically to assist with reducing delays from the Trust.

Option 12 Planned under spend on third sector commissioning in 2012/13.

No details of the small sum of funding to be held back. Require more details.

Response

There was considerable support in the 2012/13 Budget Consultation to try and protect the 3rd sector from the worst of the Government's deficit reduction agenda. Following the approval of 3rd sector contracts by Cabinet in July there was some £3.5m of budget that remained uncommitted for commissioning services later in the year. It is proposed that a small sum of this funding is held back to make a non recurrent contribution to the savings requirement, whilst continuing to leave expenditure in the 3rd sector as the most protected part of the Directorate's budget.

Option 13 Supporting people.

Again more details required.

Response

In total, it is proposed to save £6.7m from the Supporting People budget in 2013/14. £4.7m of this target was set by the previous administration in February 2012 with the remaining £2.0m being needed to deal with the financial challenge referred to by the Leader in his introduction to the Budget Consultation document.

A strategic review of the programme in consultation with service users and providers has developed a plan to deliver the original savings target of £4.7m over three years. A contract management reserve has been carried forward from 2011/12 to minimise the impact on services and allow £3.8m of the savings to be made as existing contractual agreements expire. It is proposed that £0.9m will be saved by ceasing to fund the community alarms service, which is mainly provided to council house tenants.

At this stage it is proposed to meet £1.5m of the additional savings requirement by a 4% reduction in contract values across the programme and the remaining £0.5m from under spends brought forward from 2012/13.

Existing service providers have been consulted through the Supporting People Business Development Groups. The Supporting People Citizens Panel has been consulted on the implications for service users. The contract management reserve brought forward from 2011/12 will provide a degree of protection to service continuity for vulnerable groups such as the young homeless and victims of domestic violence as the savings are made. Consultation is underway on the proposal to cease funding the community alarms service. Further consultation on the 4% cut in contracts values will be required with stakeholders.

BVE131195	Internal (Councillor)	4.1.13	<p>My impression from the whole document is that it lacks any informative detail to such a point that it is impossible to evaluate many of the options.</p> <p>I assume that the authors of this document have access to reports that have assessed and evaluated all of the options in relation to outcomes to the end service users. It would be useful if such detail was also made available to the public.</p> <p>The biggest disappointment is that most of the options are cuts to services. There are very few options to raise income to offset the need to cut services.</p> <p>A possible source of income would be to offer to collect waste metal from residents homes free of charge and then sell this for a profit. If its profitable for sole traders to provide this service then a city council wide operation may provide some income. This also applies to all city contracts. I wonder what happens to all the metal waste produced by city council activities? For example, the gas boiler replacement programme in the city, what happens to all of the old boilers, pipework and radiators? Similarly, when refurbishing of demolishing city buildings is the cost of the recyclable metals taken into account?</p> <p>In addition I would have no problem in charging some residents for a bulky collection. We currently provide a free bulk collection service to all residents in Birmingham. If I have bulky items to dispose of I would either hire a skip or take them to the tip myself. Surely the bulk collection service should be chargeable for those that can afford it. So residents on certain benefits should receive the service for free whilst those in work should pay. The house adjacent to me is rented and when the tenants change over the landlord simply stacks bulky items on the roadside and calls the council to collect for free. This cannot be right.</p> <p>If however we go down the road of charging all residents for bulky items i think this will lead to an increase in fly tipping, and it will no doubt transfer the cost of clearing to other agencies such as the British Waterways Board, and Severn Trent.</p> <p>I am glad that we are proposing to charge for the collection of green waste. If residents want green waste collected for free then we can sell them the appropriate official green bags or bins. Again those on benefits should receive a free service. The only caveat i will have is that this may lead to an increase in garden fires which could lead to injuries to persons, and again transfer a burden onto outside agencies such as the West Midlands Fire Service. Also please bear in mind that in the near future household and green waste will become a commodity to be used as fuel in anaerobic and pyrolysis plants for the generation of heat and power. (Clean green energy that burns gas driven off biodegradable material). Has this been factored into the budget predictions?</p>
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There may be many other opportunities to raise income such as the sale of certain strategic assets that do not carry any debt or at least the selling of naming rights for example for the Alexander Stadium that should be explored before we embark on these crude cuts and yet this does not seem to be considered in the consultation.

I have a major concern with the Business Charter for Social Responsibility. Although I welcome the fact that we have introduced the living wage for contractors I am not sure whether this is simply a way of lessening the burden on central government. For example an employees wages are matched with the living wage but he/she may see a fall in his/her tax credits? Do we have any figures to show that we are not giving with one hand whilst central government is taking with the other? It would have been extremely helpful if this could have been explored. As you are aware the BCSR will have an impact on the amount of cuts being forced upon us so the question is it worth it?

Anyway my response to the specific proposals outside of Steve & Brigid's portfolio who I have emailed separately.

Corporate resources Directorate

Option 1 Review the level of housing benefit payments to claimants in properties that are exempt from the local housing allowance.

More details are required. How does this impact spatially across the wards/districts? What is the effect on the residents?

Option 2 Benefit Advice Centre – service redesign.

More details are required. Savings appear to be based on a restructure that has not yet been completed.

Option 3 Corporate Resources Savings.

The description for this option is far too vague for such a large potential saving. How can this option be assessed without more details?

Development & Culture Directorate

Option 1 Forward 4 work service – Disposal of lease of the Inkerman building.

This option presumes a rental income from a building during a recession!

		<p>Option 2 Secure external funding and recover our associated staffing costs.</p> <p>Not really a saving more a sleight of hand. Obviously any funding re-directed to salary costs will have an effect on the original project and will mean that the project will be underfunded by that amount.</p> <p>Option 6 Discretionary Services Review.</p> <p>The description of this option provides no details of how these savings are to be realised. Require far more detail and much less council jargon.</p> <p><i>Local Services Directorate</i></p> <p>Option 1 FWM – New Future Service Model.</p> <p>Not sure I quite understand this measure. The descriptor would appear to imply that the £29.8m is the savings. Not really a saving because the funding is coming from central government. What happens after the initial funding period?</p> <p>Option 2 FWM – Review current street cleansing levels – City centre.</p> <p>No detail. How will the street cleansing rounds be determined? What is the effect of less cleaning in the city centre?</p> <p>Option 3 FWM – Street Cleansing – Mechanical Sweeping.</p> <p>If the amount of mechanical sweeping is to be reduced then it would be helpful to know where this will take place and with what consequences to highways maintenance, drainage and public health.</p> <p>Option 4 Parks & Highways – nursery and Floral services.</p> <p>This option presumes an income from external sources. Risky assumption.</p> <p>Option 5 Highways horticulture.</p> <p>Requires more details and assessment of the consequences of this measure.</p> <p>Option 7 Car parking service review.</p> <p>Requires more details. Will extending the current on street parking schemes generate more income?</p>
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			<p>What impact would such an extension have on the local economy and has this option passed the equality test?</p> <p>Option 8 Events – Increased net income.</p> <p>Another option that presumes an increase in income rather than identifying savings.</p> <p>Option 9 Strategic Library – Library of Birmingham.</p> <p>If we are saving £200k from the opening festival costs the question must be how much is the opening festival costing overall?</p> <p>Option 10 Community play and development.</p> <p>A detailed report is required outlining the consequences and potential outcomes to end service users. Again this requires spatial analysis of the impact across wards/districts.</p> <p>Option 13 Public Protection & Licensing.</p> <p>Another proposal that assumes income generation schemes will be successful.</p> <p>Option 17 Youth Service.</p> <p>The descriptor provides no details on how savings are to be realised and what consequences this will have on youth outcomes.</p> <p>Option 19 Private sector housing.</p> <p>I do not understand this option.</p> <p>Corporate Savings</p> <p>Service Reviews.</p> <p>This descriptor is far too vague for the amounts of money presumed to be saved. More details would be required before evaluating this option.</p>
BVE131196	External	4.1.13	<p>In the current economic climate and with the budget pressures facing Birmingham City Council in particular it is clear that some difficult decisions need to be made around the level of future service provision offered by the council. There is a need for all current services to be looked at to ensure</p>

essential services are maintained and that best value for money is obtained. The proposed Business Plan is seen as an attempt to undertake this and make some proposals for future provision. Some of these proposals are clearly radical, which is probably inevitable. However it is a concern to learn that some proposals are actually much more radical than presented in the consultation paper, which seems at the very least to be rather disingenuous? It is also a concern that in some of the proposals there may be a presumption of achieving levels of savings that in reality can only be achieved at the cost of much higher expenditure in other areas.

I am particular concerned at the proposals for the future of the **Customer Relations Service** which appear to show on the Plan as indicating a budget reduction, but I am led to understand that in reality what is proposed is a deletion of the whole service.

I am aware that the Customer Relations Service operates on a relatively small budget of little more than £250K pa, however I believe that [REDACTED], the CRS Manager, and her team offer particularly good value for money in the service they provide. The Service fulfils a vital function in responding to the high number of complaints against the Children & Families Directorate. I am aware that last year the Service undertook around 120 Stage 2 Complaint Investigations. Over the last 3 years the Service has undertaken 'Mediations' with nearly 240 Complainants against the Directorate, effectively preventing over 80% of these continuing into expensive Stage 2 investigations. The Customer Relations Service can therefore be seen to be an essential service to a Directorate that continues to generate such a high volume of complaints. It can also be seen to be an efficient and effective service in preventing significant sums of unnecessary expenditure.

There is clearly a longstanding issue of the number of complaints that are made against the Directorate and it is essential that ways are found to improve service delivery and reduce complaints. I am aware that this has been a long-standing aim of the Authority, but that the solution remains elusive. Removing the Customer Relations Service will do nothing to address this problem and its demise appears likely only to increase numbers of expensive Stage 2 complaint investigations and compensation claims.

My knowledge of the CRS is based upon being an independent social worker who has regularly undertaken work for the Customer Relations Service since 2000, investigating complaints made against the authority.. I believe I am therefore in a position to have a good knowledge and understanding of the Service provided. Undertaking periodic work for the Service I may be perceived to have a particular vested interest in its continuance, however, I am not financially dependent on the work I do for the CRS. The Business Plan inevitably lacks detail but any alternative delivery of a service to investigate and address complaints against the Children's Directorate is likely to still require the commissioning of external resources, as occurs currently, to fulfill its statutory obligations concerning complaints. So I comment here in the belief that my own services could still be required whatever decision is reached about the CRS. I do also believe that the nature of my work for the

			<p>Service over the past 12 years has shown a continued commitment to raising awareness of failings in order to improve the performance and efficiency of Birmingham's social services for both adults and children. The existence of the Customer Relations Service provides an essential role in this, which I believe cannot be dispensed with.</p> <p>The radical proposals for the Customer Relations Service may be perceived to assume an absorption of its functions into other areas of the Directorate, or Council. This would seem very unrealistic given the volume and range of work involved, which includes not only the Stage 2 complaint investigations and mediation but also the Stage 3 Review Panels, the advocacy service for complainants; the provision of independent persons for young people making complaints and, importantly, the dissemination of learning from such a volume of complaints. Area Teams are currently already overloaded with work - a significant factor, I believe, in the current high volume of complaints received. My own experience, and that of other independent social workers undertaking Stage 2 complaint investigations, is of the inability of area social work teams to adequately address complaints at Stage 1 of the Complaints Process and of the high levels of mistrust of service users and complainants towards area social workers and their managers. In this context it is impossible to envisage the role of the CRS being effectively absorbed by the Areas.</p> <p>Whilst I do appreciate that the Council has a major budgetary dilemma and must make some hard and difficult decisions, I would suggest that re-consideration is given to the proposal to axe the Customer Relations Service. As I have outlined above the CRS provides an essential and cost effective service that cannot simply be absorbed into other existing services and attempts to do this seem highly likely to result only in a much poorer service to the citizens of Birmingham and increased costs to the Authority.</p>
BVE131197	External	4.1.13	<p>These cuts under the false narrative of austerity measures must not go ahead. Labour council you will be making a rod for your own back if you follow the ConDem Gov's instructions.. You will witness and feel the effect of the youth of this city dis-engage with society and become embittered, angry and lawless.</p> <p>It is up to you now to stand up to these directives from a Government that wants to abolish society as it stands and replace it with their own facistic model, and no, I am not being over dramatic..</p>
BVE131198	Internal	4.1.13	<p>as an employee of [REDACTED], I find there are team which are being created when these roles could be carried out by existing staff. for instance I believe that adults and communities can make a Direct saving of approximately £800,000 if the current work force team within the adults and communities social work area, which monitors the PDR, learning and development was carried out by existing Grade 5 staff and social work practioners. we are currently massively over staffed with Grade 5 social workers</p>

			<p>there need to be audit of staff within the social work team. As an employee of [REDACTED], I believe it would make sense that social worker had to work with one manger rather than three, we have the team manager, the work force manager, and delivery manager, do we really need work force managers? When we have over 100 grade 5 staff, who could be trained to do some of the human resources job role which is currently being done by workforce mangers. One import fact is we are now better equipped with software hard ware and IT support. There is more transparency on what staff do it would make more financial since that our Birmingham City human resources are better managed so that it is economical to the city and it is not a source of stress for existing staff to have to please different manager when some roles could be better managed by a single manager, and staff are not being deskilled by taking away their expertise and skills.</p>
BVE131199	External	4.1.13	<p>I was upset to here of the proposed £1.5 million cut to Birmingham Youth Service. if this cut goes ahead it will completely destruct the service and alot of young people will be left with nothing to do. The youth service provide invaluable support to marginalised young people and provides a safe space for young people to go. I urge you to rethink this proposal and to save birmingham youth service.</p>
BVE131200	External	5.1.13	<p>I am writing with regard to the budget consultation currently taking place. My principle area of interest is in services for young people.</p> <p>It astounds me that the people of Birmingham are being once again asked to show their support for the youth service, Connexions, and other services for young people. Haven't we been here already? Oh yes, last year the Labour party made political hay from its support for services for young people and children. They led the chorus of disapproval at the Conservative/Lib Dem plans to cut the Youth Service. They presented the 16000 signature petition that represented the opinion of the citizens of Birmingham to the appropriate scrutiny committee, calling for the protection of the youth service and now one year on, the citizens of Birmingham are being asked to confirm that they still like and value youth services. Our Labour Council is now double checking whether young people REALLY liked having a youth project to attend. I wonder is this going to be an annual event until such time as the citizenry of Birmingham tires of having to repeatedly show its support for one important and needed service over another important and needed service?</p> <p>It is difficult to not feel anger and frustration at being faced with another 'Hobson's Choice' because of the actions of a few. Mistakes made in the Equal Pay case, Government decisions regarding the role of local government are two are among the circumstances cited for the massive cuts being faced once again. This isn't consultation about what is best for Birmingham, it is a population being asked to choose it's punishment. Punishment for mistakes made by others.</p>

			<p>Also can I ask for honesty in your language. Last year I responded to the consultation and made a similar point in my letter. Then they spoke about savings and efficiencies. The section on the youth service suggests the savings (or cuts) will be achieved by reorganisation and efficiencies. No they won't. They will be achieved by cutting jobs and reducing the service provided.</p> <p>A large part of me wants to use this email to continue to rant and rave, but I realise the futility of the exercise. My contribution to your consultation is to ask that the current administration respects the political support it was offering 12 months ago. I ask that it respects the opinions offered in last year's consultation. I ask that it protects services to young people. Youth Service, Connexions, Mental Health Services, Young People in Care.</p> <p>These services are not liabilities to the city, they are an investment in the city and its future. They are preventing expenses in the future, they are limiting damage in the present. With Birmingham Youth Service you are getting a quality service ON THE CHEAP!! Don't throw the baby out with the bath water. Open your eyes to the benefits that this small investment will bring.</p> <p>What kind of youth services do you want? What makes them fit for purpose? Make that decision and back it up? Birmingham has an opportunity to buck a trend. It can stand up and state that it values youth work and youth workers. That it will continue to support the work done by those in the statutory and voluntary sector, and it does so because it knows it will pay dividends in future.</p> <p>Thank you for allowing the opportunity to add my voice to the consultation. I await the results with interest</p>
BVE131201	External	5.1.13	<p>am writing to urge the Council to continue to fund Home Start schemes in Birmingham. I appreciate that the Council is having to make many cuts, but it seems to me that Home Start should continue to be funded because of the support it brings to a large number of the most vulnerable families in Birmingham, at comparatively little cost.</p> <p>Most of the work done by Home Start is carried out by volunteers, and they help hundreds of families across the city. These families need the support that they currently receive from Home Start, All of the families are referred to Home Start by health visitors, social workers etc because of that need.</p> <p>Money spent on the Home Start schemes is money well spent, because, unless that money is spent on Home Start, there is every danger that the Council would have to spend far more money if those vulnerable families, without Sure Start's support, cannot keep going.</p>
BVE131202	Text Message	5.1.13	<p>Regarding the proposed cuts to mental health services for children and young people, these services are vital for those who use them. Birmingham City Council should feel proud that people want these services to continue. Families need to know that the difficulties faced by their loved ones due to mental health issues can be managed, with the right input from health care professionals with knowledge of</p>

			<p>their condition/situation. They need to know that the voluntary sector will be there also to offer support. Life is difficult enough for these families; they desperately need these services to continue in their current form. Please give these families a thought when making your decision.</p>
BVE131203	External	5.1.13	<p>I would like you to consider, in the light of the stringent spending cuts looming to services within the Birmingham City Council area, whether the most highly-paid officers within the authority (those on salaries of £50,000 per annum and upwards) are now over-represented. For example, (and this has been a matter for consideration for over three years now), should every directorate have a Director and Assistant Director (salary range £70,000 to £75,000)? Can we really be sure that there is no duplication of function?</p> <p>Take, for example, the Benefit Service, where in the last two years, full-time posts have been reduced from 341 to something like 260. However, there is currently, at senior level, the following management structure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Assistant Director, Revenues and Benefits 2) Substantive Head of Benefits (currently undertaking project work to prepare the way for localised Council Tax Support from 1 April 2013) 3) Acting Head of Benefits (deputising for the substantive postholder). <p>Taken together, these posts attract a combined salary of £175,000 or so. Can that really be justified when the size of the department has contracted by a quarter, with the attendant impact on the frontline service?</p> <p>This kind of "top-heavy" structure may well be replicated in other departments. Management for management's sake in the present economic climate is a luxury we cannot afford.</p> <p>In addition, the City Council needs to carefully consider whether a service is "frontline" or expendable on its own merits, rather than its position within the directorate structure. Again using the Benefit Service as an example, its position within the the Corporate Resources Directorate appears to have left it exposed to the mooted "higher than average savings" demanded in that part of the Council. However, the Benefit Service is certainly a frontline department, given its remit to financially support the most vulnerable members of the metropolitan area.</p> <p>Contrast the short-termism of staffing cuts with the long-term investment view of Walsall Council, currently recruiting 7 or 8 processing officers with the same salary grade of £23708 to £27849 per annum for a Senior Benefit Officer in Birmingham- and then reflect on what has been carried out in Birmingham, predicated on a view that automation will reduce the staffing requirement. Walsall Council is aware that the localised Council Tax Support System (incidentally, they are not imposing the</p>

			<p>demand for all non-protected categories to pay 24% of the charge in 2013-14), along with the transfer of the Social Fund's administration to local authorities, means that staffing reductions are not appropriate, whether or not Housing Benefit claims start transferring to the DWP from October 2013.</p> <p>I pay my Council Tax to Birmingham. I appreciate that the £149.00 per capita saving imposed by the misguided national coalition is more than double the national average of £74.00, but further assaults on essential services this fiscal year will see Europe's largest metropolitan authority grind to a halt.</p>
BVE131204	Text Message	5.1.13	<p>i agree with the business plan and budget for 2013, and would accept a council tax increase above 1.64% up to 3%. Waste management is critical, and I agree with appendix 1 priorities and appendix 2 proposals, and hope funding will prioritise prevention e.g. Supporting People. I find it hard to identify less important services as we need our city to look smart and attract jobs and new businesses, and be good to live in.</p>
BVE131205	External	5.1.13	<p>I'm writing in response to your proposal to cut still further the Youth Services budget at Birmingham City Council. I believe by a further £1.5million.</p> <p>This causes me considerable concern.</p> <p>Can I please ask for further information regarding why you have decided to consider cutting this budget and what other budgets are to be cut. Can you also outline what budgets will remain intact.</p> <p>In addition I have no evidence that you have endeavoured to consult with me as a resident regarding this matter. I have come across this issue by chance only via a friend who works for the service. Can you please outline the process the City have adopted to identify your basket of budget cut options and the process by which you will consult with residents upon whom these proposed cuts will have an impact.</p>
BVE131206	External	5.1.13	<p>I would like to strongly object to the severe cuts in the Birmingham Youth Service.</p> <p>Please see below for the reasons that I believe such drastic cuts will affect the fabric of our society as we know today.</p> <p>Youth Work provides a safe environment for vulnerable young people and helps to reduce:</p> <p>Violence and anti-social behaviour on the streets and at home. Criminal Activity Drug and alcohol misuse Gang Violence</p>

NEET Young people or those who are or at risk of becoming so.
 (Not in Education Employment or Training)
 Teenage Pregnancy, sexual health and sexual exploitation
 Prevention of Violent Extremism

Some of the costs local government and the state has to pay when things go wrong for young people:

Being in Local Authority Care		£40,000 p.a.	
Being Homeless		£25,000 p.a.	
Cost of Prosecution		£30,500	
Cost of Stabbing		£300,000	
Cost of a shooting		£1.2m	
Cost of being in a Youth Offenders Institution		£100,000 p.a.	
Being unemployed, JSA alone		£3000 p.a.	

Youth work provides the opportunity for thousands of young people to develop and achieve their full potential.

If we are to progress in line with the Government paper '**Every Child Matters**' then clearly, not to provide a more than adequate Youth Service, opposes all the rights that a child (young people are children until 16 years of age) in the UK is deemed to be entitled to.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this. Please act now so that Birmingham's vulnerable young people can have a future worth living for.

BVE131207	External	5.1.13	<p>I want to start with something that is not mention in consultation.</p> <p>This is the number Councilors. I propose this be reduce to 40 Councilors. I am aware this may not produce much in the way of spending reductions but given that in recent years the cabinet has only had a maximum membership of 11 currently 8 membwarders. I believe that the 29 remaining members would be able oversee the cabinet role and Ward work.</p> <p>But more importantly it show Birmingham that there are no no go areas when it comes to reductions.</p>
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BVE131208	External	5.1.13	<p>Councillor Ian Ward visited two projects run by national children's charity, Spurgeons, on Friday 4 January to meet with children and young people who have benefitted from the vital services currently under threat due to the budgetary cuts. The two services affected are 4 Kids Who Care (young carers project) and Stepping Stones which incorporates ARCH, CAHMS and work with those affected by domestic violence amongst its family support activities.</p> <p>I carried out interviews with Councillor Ward, staff and children and these can all be found on this page: http://audioboo.fm/boos/1140686-saving-spurgeons-services-in-birminghamcouncillor-ian-ward. I also live tweeted some of Councillor Ward's conversations with the young people and these tweets can be found at www.twitter.com/SpurgeonsUK. We would be very grateful if these could be included in your consultation and decision making.</p> <p>I do hope that this information is useful and helps to give a more in depth understanding of the kind of work that these projects carry out to improve children and young people's current situations as well as helping them to build resilience for the future. These interviews may also give some insight into the impact that the loss of these services would have on these young lives.</p>
BVE131209	External	5.1.13	<p>No more trusts The transfer of city assets like libraries and museums to independent trusts removes them from democratic control. I used to walk into the Art Gallery and think all this belongs to me - I'm proud to be a citizen of Birmingham. The collections of books, photographs, painting etc. were often donated to the City and it is the City that has the responsibility for their protection - not some self appointed elite</p> <p>Save the Markets Historically Birmingham owes its existence to the creation of the market area by Peter de Bermingham. I was a market trader back in the '80's so know from experience just how many shoppers and visitors the market area attracts. People come from far afield. The range of fabric stalls in the Rag Market is arguably the best in the country and world famous but this doesn't happen in a vacuum. All the stalls are dependent on each other to increase trade and the fruit and veg stalls are</p>

			<p>dependent on the wholesale market next door. I know some people see the wholesale market site as just a valuable piece of real estate but they are just missing the point. A city centre isn't just about Selfridges - it needs to have personality. The market caters for all Birmingham citizens - the diversity of its customers is far greater than that of the Bullring shopping centre just a few yards away. Pensioners in particular are able to afford to eat well despite the dire economic situation they find themselves in. This is the inclusive economy in action.</p> <p>Protect the bus pass for the over '60's Long before there was a national scheme Birmingham offered free travel passes to it's pensioners. Free travel means that us pensioners get out and about, do voluntary work, meet people, exercise, visit places, spend money. This keeps us healthy for longer and less dependent on social care.</p> <p>I don't mind an increase in council tax up to the level that requires a referendum (holding a referendum would cost a lot of money) but as a recipient of benefit it isn't really up to me to say.</p>
BVE131210	External	5.1.13	<p>I would like to register my views regarding the proposed cuts to youth service cuts. I worked as a volunteer at our local Connexions shop where I witnessed first hand what fantastic work Youth Workers do. When young people have no where else to go or no one that they trust they were able to go into the shop and talk to someone who would listen and not be judgemental. The youth workers helped with housing needs, bullying, sexual health and numerous other issues.</p> <p>I think that in the absence of this help many of the young people would be living on the streets, there would be more drug and alcohol abuse. This would make the street unsafe and the crime rate would increase.</p> <p>I have 2 sons in their early twenties. When they were growing up they had issues that they did not wish to discuss with myself or their father. These issues were not ones they could have discussed with a teacher or a policeman. Thank goodness for youth workers they were able to get the help they needed and are now well rounded confident adults.</p> <p>In these cash strapped times I think it would be false economy to reduce this service further as young people are our future and we need to invest in our future.</p>
BVE131211	External	5.1.13	<p>I think it's necessary to increase council tax payments because the government seems intent on weakening the ability of local council's to provide vital services by with-holding funding.</p> <p>I think this is fair if BCC remains in control and accountable for the services it provides for its' citizens, and does not farm them out to private companies. For that reason, I do not want BCC to award trust status to the new Library of Birmingham. I want it to remain a true part of the community that has made it possible and who will want to make use of it, and not let it fall prey to the organisations that see Local Government as a soft target for their own economic gain.</p>

BVE131212	External	5.1.13	<p>As a group, we are deeply concerned about the cuts suggested around home to school transport for children accessing Special Provision and the idea of out sourcing the Parent Partnership service. Parents of children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities do not have a wide choice of provision which appropriately supports their child's needs. Often the Authority place children in provision which is not within walking distance. It is morally imperative that children with SEN/D are treated with dignity and respect. The provision of appropriate transportation with trained guides to and from school is essential for the safety and well-being of these vulnerable children. The Parent Partnership service is known to be a good quality service and it is a legal requirement for the Authority to provide this service. Parents entering the SEN/D process rely on information from the people who currently work in this service, who have a wealth of knowledge and experience in supporting families.</p>
BVE131213	External	5.1.13	<p>I am emailing you today to air my views on what it would mean the for youths of today if the cuts that you are looking to make on the budget for the youth service go ahead. People already complain that there is nothing for the youths to do, nowhere for them to go other than hanging streets, drinking and making general nuisances of themselves, but if you go ahead with these cuts then I feel that there would be more young people having nowhere to go and this would have an impact on the crime rate going up.</p> <p>When I was a young girl in the 70's there was a community centre that I used to attend with my brother and sisters where we were taught many different social activities. Not only was there a disco for us to burn off excess energy but you could also do tap dancing, football, and other games that helped us socialise with others. There was always people there to listen to you if you had no one at home that you could talk to, as not everyone wants to confide in teachers especially if they have a problem with people who are at their school.</p> <p>Children and youths still need the guidance and support of the many different people who give their time, patience and understanding to help them along the correct pathway of life. Please do not close this door to them, help the youngsters of our future to become the adults that we would like by keeping the youth service within Birmingham going.</p>
BVE131214	External	6.1.13	<p>I recently received an email from our local Home-start in [REDACTED] being under a risk of closing down due to massive cuts. I was shocked at this decision. Home-Start has been invaluable to our family. I am disabled, my husband works full time and we have a young child. This organisation has been exceptional in helping me on every step of motherhood. I would not have been able to come this far without their help. Initially when my child was a newborn I needed help every other day both physically and emotionally. They were there every step of the way. In fact the circle of friends and useful contacts and a very helpful volunteer I have today would not have been if it was not for this organisation and their lovely Playgroups. They would be at my doorstep to help me and my child to attend these sessions. Also the key volunteer who would visit me once a week looked after my child,</p>

			<p>play with her using educational material and would take us on day trips too! I have also had to call upon Home-Start many times for help taking me to the doctors for appointments when my husband couldn't get away from work, this again has been of great help. And also recently on many occasions to help my child to get to school and back. I am very worried that if Home-Start were to be closed down vulnerable families similar to ours will suffer even more. Home-Start provide an incredible service to the local community and should be given the required funding to continue this excellent service. I cannot implore enough for you to reconsider your decision.</p>
BVE131215	External	6.1.13	<p>I am amazed by the disproportionate proposed budget cuts which has highlighted the lack of value placed on the Voluntary Sector. With a proposed cut of 50% it would appear that little consideration has been given to the added value these services bring to the otherwise strained Statutory services. It is to the Voluntary Sector that Statutory agencies often approach for the direct support families need which they have not the time and often expertise to do.</p> <p>Whilst I can appreciate the pressures on the Local Authority to make cuts I would hope that consideration would be taken to ensuring that the essential services still remain. If not we lay the foundation of what will be long-term impacts on the wellbeing of children, young people and their families. This will in turn result in more severe cost to society at a later date.</p> <p>I would urge you to consider the impact on the lives of those individuals affected by the Jimmy Saville scandal and the impact of the disparities in wages which has now resulted in a back pay to those affected. We are now feeling the impact of this as a society but these individuals have been suffering in silent. Surely there are other ways we can approach this that seeks to minimise the devastating impact on children, families, professionals and society as a whole. I trust that you will explore all the possible avenues and ensure that you obtain adequate information regarding the services you have in the city in order to make the best decision regarding cuts.</p>
BVE131216	External	6.1.13	<p>I don't envy the council in having to make these hard decisions. But I must say that I find the presentation of budget and decision-making information hard to get my head around. I think people find it had to relate to tables of numbers. I think it would be much better if budgetary information was presented along the lines of the guardian's diagram of government public spending (attached).</p> <p>I think that behind every number there is a story, or a set of stories, so the detailed information, as per the fact sheets, also needs to be present; but even a lot of the fact sheet information could be presented in a similar way.</p> <p>I have a number of other suggestions for the council in this particular situation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I think that the council leaders should co-operate with other councils around the country to lead a people's march on Westminster, demanding change in council allocations from central government.</i> • <i>At a consultation meeting I also mentioned the participatory budget setting process, as used in</i>

			<p><i>e.g. porto alegre, as described in www.participatorybudgeting.org.uk. It would be good to see more follow-through from the council for future budget consultations - bottom-up consultations, rather than top-down consultations. (Principles: the greatest good for the greatest number; nobody gets totally screwed; prefer the less-privileged over the more-privileged.) As mentioned above, the amount of detail involved is overwhelming, so:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils around the country could co-operate with the open-source community to devise a simple "game" for citizens to play around with the budget and see consequences - e.g. changes in child mortality, morale and wellbeing of council workers, waiting lists for services, etc.
BVE131217	External	6.1.13	<p>Please accept this e-mail as my response to the Budget Consultation.</p> <p>As a volunteer Trustee with a small charity local to where I live I am dismayed by the proposals put forward by CYPF to reduce funding to the Third Sector by £4.430m, 50% of current investment. This flies directly in the Council's vision statement:</p> <p><i>Reviewing our arrangements for commissioning services.</i> <i>We believe that community and voluntary organisations, co-operatives and social enterprises can deliver the very best services. We have designed a new performance system which will first report in January 2013.</i></p> <p>I fully recognise that reduced central government funding and a growth in the City's population places the Council in a position of making difficult decisions. I accept that some services will have to stop. However I have serious concerns about a number of issues:</p> <p>Firstly, the range of CYPF services being proposed for efficiency savings will impact on over 5,500 children and families. This reduction in direct service delivery is likely to result in increased pressure for any remaining services including Integrated Family Support Teams, front-line social work as well as internal and externally commissioned provision. The recent Ofsted inspection singled out the IFST as not being fit for purpose but the proposal is to retain and further invest in this function whilst wiping out the specialist services that the IFST refer to and rely on to address the complex issues that children, young people and families are faced with, including sexual abuse, violence and exploitation, life-limiting illness, mental health, social isolation. I believe a strategy of re-specifying IFST to meet additional roles is unlikely to be successful.</p> <p>The services identified for savings are all supporting children who are between Levels 2 and 4 of the CAF thresholds. At a minimum they will all be receiving services under Section 17 of the Children Act. I am deeply concerned about the Council ceasing to discharge its statutory obligations to these children without having re-assessed their needs, identified alternative sources of support or having sufficient time to assist in the arrangements of transferring children</p>

			<p>between providers. In some cases such as CAMHS, the provision is so specialist that there are no alternatives. This presents legal risks to the local authority as well as increasing the vulnerability of individual children and families. As pointed out above, it heightens my concern over the capacity issues of IFSTs/ Children’s Social Care.</p> <p>The Council must not ignore the lateral connections between the whole set of CYPF proposals as they are likely to result in a cumulative and detrimental impact for particular groups of Children in Need and their families, for example children with disabilities. It appears that the timescales and arrangements for collecting the proposals has been linear, service-led and done in a closed manner i.e. the majority of people only became aware of the full range of proposals after they were published. If the Council had taken a person-centred approach and placed children and families at the core of all the proposals, the “ripple effect” would have been obvious whereby some families are affected by several proposals simultaneously. Insufficient time has been allowed prior to or during the consultation to look closely enough at this issue, to understand how critical the “jigsaw of services” are to the day-to-day survival of these families or how the Council might mitigate against the risks.</p> <p>There appears to be a contradiction between CYPF strategic priorities, findings of the recent Ofsted inspection and the CYPF budget proposals – it gives the impression that the Directorate is doing the opposite to what is required in respect of early intervention and prevention. The relationship with users and partners will be reduced at a time when those relationships offer a route to mitigate the impact of savings for children and families. Our focus should be on increased transparency and a firm commitment to re-design and integrate services so they are fit for the future. It is unclear how disinvestment in early intervention and prevention services supports the Directorate’s journey to turn its position from “Inadequate” to “Excellent”.</p> <p>Likewise the proposals are misaligned with the Council’s strategic priorities, particularly in respect of economic growth and quality of life. With almost 40 providers affected by the CYPF voluntary sector proposals this will result in redundancies for many staff and likely to lead to increased unemployment in the City.. This includes the loss of highly skilled, qualified and specialist staff with experience of working with families with complex needs. This culling of skills may be irreversible in the longer term.</p> <p>The timescales for consultation have prohibited meaningful engagement internally within the Council, with our partners and with providers to identify alternative ways to deliver efficiencies without reducing direct service delivery. It is also not clear whether all the possible avenues for savings have been identified. For example, looking at the Council’s contracts as a whole it is difficult to ascertain why its contractual arrangements with Acivico or CAPITA remain unaffected when vital contracts that support vulnerable children are being proposed for cuts? Likewise the</p>
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BVE131218	External	6.1.13	<p>I have filled in the online questionnaire so most of my views are recorded there. However, there was not an opportunity on that questionnaire to record all my views.</p> <p>Many colleagues working for Birmingham City Council have already been through one set of redundancies where they lost many good and skilled colleagues. They were then given a job to do that has been a question of handing their job over to someone else. Therefore, for about three years, they have been in a job that has been going nowhere and has been carried out in a most difficult context. I would like councillors to bear this in mind and would suggest that one of the best ways now to really save money would be to ask who wants VR/VER and let those people go as quickly as possible e.g. before the new financial year. Many people have had their personal and professional lives upset for too long with great repercussions on their personal and their families' well being. Bear in mind too that in some cases both partners will be made redundant and the stress that will bring. Therefore, if the cuts are coming, please don't hang around and please be flexible allowing those who want to go to go as quickly as possible to try and rebuild their futures thus leaving those who wish to stay with the council to have a fighting opportunity to do so.</p> <p>The selection process for jobs last time was very expensive and wasteful as regards resources. Psychometric tests are expensive to run and for everyone to take and there is no real evidence that they select the right people for the job.</p> <p>I would also ask that some enhancement is offered to those who are willing to go early e.g. re. pensions, possible garden leave etc.</p> <p>Please also brief HR well so that people about to be made redundant are treated with efficiency, respect and dignity. This did not happen last time. A redundancy pack for everyone with their accurate</p>

			<p>figures, the procedures and FAQs and support would be a minimum.</p> <p>Finally, I would ask that no clause 'in restraint of trade' be added to the redundancy settlement e.g. last time it was stated that colleagues who left with VER could not work with Birmingham City Council for three years and those who left with VR could not work for one year. This makes very skilled people not only unemployed but also unemployable. It also means that BCC loses access to a lot of skills and experience.</p>
BVE131219	External	6.1.13	<p>I have just a couple of questions that I would value your consideration and reply.</p> <p>1. Where specific services are not mentioned in your proposals, are these services to continue at their current levels? If not, where and how is the consultation process going to be managed such that the public can consider any changes?</p> <p>2. Is BCC interested in any strategies for growth (economically, upskilling young people and the wider population to be fit for the jobs of tomorrow etc) and if so, where and how are the public encouraged to submit these?</p>
BVE131220	External	6.1.13	<p>At the Budget Consultation meeting, held on Tuesday 11th December, at South Yardley Library; the Cabinet Member for Adults and Communities - Steve Bednar - acknowledged that long term implications of the Labour Cabinets Budget Proposals and estimates that the gap between what Birmingham City Council needs to spend and income will rise to £600m by 2017. Will mean that Birmingham City Council would not be able to fulfill its Statutory obligations to provide Social Care to senior citizens and vulnerable adults who have been assessed as being in substantial or critical need, and are therefore eligible and legally entitled to receive that Social Care from their Local Authority. As a senior citizen and active member of the Pensioners Convention Movement, I, for one would find this situation totally unacceptable. And believe that because this financial crisis facing our city is; as the Leader of the Council makes clear, entirely the consequence of savage cuts to Central Government Grants to Birmingham; it is the responsibility of the Labour Controlled Council to challenge the Legality of cuts to Central Government Grant Provision to our City.</p>
BVE131221	External	6.1.13	<p>I hope you will have an opportunity to read my reports regarding and overview of Birmingham Children's Services sent to Councillor Young People & Families and Councillor Anita Ward. Furthermore, I also sent an additional report regarding a scrutiny meeting observation on Birmingham Children Services with recommendations.</p> <p>In regards to Rights and Participation (RAP), I would urge you to consider the importance of keeping the advocacy work for children in all aspects of care and child protection. I remind you that in all legislative reports regarding children advocacy is a statutory role and must be maintained. However,</p>

			<p>I do agree that there should be better management and a clear vision for the future regarding advocacy services.</p> <p>If there is an intention to go into partnership with another agency whether it is a third sector, then consideration must be given to the format of tendering and presentation with a panel representation from the Children in Care Council. There has been many instances in other local authorities where third sector advocacy services have not fulfilled their tender bid promises. One must be mindful that charitable advocacy services will be under pressure to present a good bid but not necessarily fulfill its promises in a practical way.</p> <p>I am a strong believer in co-operatives. In these economic financial difficulties working within a co-operative model is advantageous and flexible to incorporate and partnership departments in Birmingham City Council, thereby saving costs. There would have to be a new style of management under the co-operative model. However, each member of the co-operative would have an equal say and be involved in strategic and business planning. It would further enhance moral and members' pride in their co-operative.</p> <p>In regards to small premises, I am aware that central government decides on business rates. However, I do think there should be a review of business rents in and around Birmingham City Council; which are expensive or at least provide six months free rent or discount on rent. Thus, to provide small business an opportunity to continue to maintain their staff or for a new start up package for new business.</p> <p>I hope I will get a response to my budget consultation views.</p>
BVE131222	External	6.1.13	<p>Re: Business Plan and Budget Proposal 2013+</p> <p>As a Birmingham citizen I appreciate the opportunity to feedback on the Council's Business Plan and Budget Proposal. The challenge to cut costs is immense and I wish the leaders of the Council well in their difficult decision-making.</p> <p>I wish to comment on one particular section of the proposed cuts of services within the Children, Young People and Families Directorate - point 11 concerning Strategic Support Services (Appendix 2). I am concerned to read of the proposed closing of the Customer Relations' office.</p> <p>1) My understanding is that there is a legal obligation under the Children's Act 1989 Representations, Procedures (England) Regulations 2006, Part 4 to provide a three stage complaints procedure based upon an independent investigation and hearing of service user's complaints. Would the Council not be failing to fulfil its statutory responsibility if it terminates this service?</p>

			<p>2) In an increasingly litigious society I am concerned that the Council is highly likely to incur significant legal costs if Birmingham citizens find they are only able to pursue complaints through legal action rather than through the present system of the Customer Relations' office.</p> <p>3) I write with some knowledge of the experience of a colleague in the voluntary sector who assisted 2 sisters in submitting a complaint. The advantage of current practise is that the complainant feels listened to and affirmed in the process of an independent investigation, court action can be avoided, the chances of resolving the complaint are strong, and ultimately if lessons have to be learnt, the practice of Social Services can be improved.</p> <p>4) Lastly, I have before me a Birmingham Mail report (dated 19 October 2012), which states "Birmingham's child protection services have been deemed failing for the fourth year running". In the light of that damning Ofsted report pointing to 'inadequate' service, but nevertheless the Council's strong commitment to turn the service around, I question the proposed action concerning Strategic Support Services. It is suggested in your document that the cuts will have "an impact on performance monitoring and support for strategic management of children's services". Is it therefore wise and ethical to cut services that seek to improve customer relations, resolve disputes, and enhance performance and strategic management of children's services?</p>
BVE131223	External	6.1.13	<p>I am concerned that it would appear from the above budget document that the Customer Relations Service is to be disbanded and responses to complaints concerning Children's Services will be absorbed. As an Independent Investigations Officer is commissioned by a number of local authorities to independently undertake complaints investigations at stage 2 and chair reviews at stage 3 of the complaints procedure, I have seen other authorities try to make 'in house' responses to complaints and in each case the outcome has been a significant rise in complaints being made by service users and more complaints being referred to the Local Government Ombudsman.</p> <p>As you are aware, local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there is an independent element within the complaints process and if my interpretation of the 2013 budget proposal is correct, this will be lost. In my experience of undertaking work for several authorities, I am confident in saying that the current complaints procedure in operation in Birmingham, is the best. The service is efficient in terms of complaint resolution and cost effectiveness, particularly in relation the mediation process. I have undertaken work for Birmingham Customer Relations for over twenty years. It is significant that even after all that time, responses at Stage 1 of the process remain inadequate because managers don't have the time to respond and service users have no trust in the impartiality and fairness of a local authority response.</p> <p>I would urge you to reconsider your proposal to absorb this service as this will be a false economy. The number of complaints being progressed to judicial review or the Ombudsman will significantly increase, which will be costly. In addition Children's Services will lose the benefit on an independent perspective</p>

			which can ultimately only have a negative effect on service delivery, customer understanding and customer satisfaction.
BVE131224	External	6.1.13	<p>I attended the bespoke disabilities consultation held on Monday 17th December at the Deaf Cultural Centre having been invited by Autism West Midlands (I have an Asperger's diagnosis).</p> <p>Whilst I was happy to contribute to that, having also reflected on the proposed savings for Adults & Communities for 2013/14, it appears clear that its not this particular consultation round that is important but rather what follows in how BCC engages with service users and providers to redefine service delivery that BCC affects (whether statutory requirement or is deemed a social priority). The 2013/14 budget savings for Adults and Communities are mainly based on efficiencies, budget shaving and some opportunistic behaviour. Fairly high hanging fruit as it were.</p> <p>Going into 2014/15 onwards, as your consultation document makes clear, the council is looking at coppicing (taking the fruit metaphor on a step) through its "service reviews". It is this which offers both opportunities and concerns for me. I left the meeting on the 17th with a clear impression that in order to cope with and mitigate the cuts imposed upon it, BCC has to experience a change in culture in order to allow partners, in particular the 3rd sector, to help with the mitigation. This will probably have to see BCC adopt new behaviour and practises in order to facilitate working with potential partners to maintain existing delivery (statutory or not).</p> <p>In order to do so requires that the service reviews are not just focused on BCC delivery but what takes place outside of BCC and what additional capacity exists beyond the council sphere so open and frank discussions need to occur. This is almost a local equivalent of a royal commission to tackle BCC's "jaws of doom" because the shrinkage of local activity to delivering just statutory responsibilities is problematic based on what has been provided in your consultation documents. In order to tackle the challenges ahead requires what has previously been internal dialogue and bilateral dialogues into a clear external dialogue structured over a period of months to allow information to be considered and responded to. This current consultation has been honest but pretty restrictive in its information provision and looks more to seeking approval for what has been decided for 2013/14. However BCC needs help in order to tackle budget decisions from 2014 onwards which means a more open culture is needed.</p> <p>For me BCC needs now to be developing a structure for open dialogue to occur between April and November 2013 so that a general budget consultation can occur in December 2013 for financial year 2014/15 based on decisions coming out of that process. This isn't about criticising existing communication but rather setting it in a larger and structured context. The Adults & Community budget is a very large contributor to the "jaws of doom" in terms of budget pressures. It is therefore, in my view, entirely appropriate to tackle it head on and see what is possible in terms of rethinking service</p>

			<p>requirements and delivery to avoid seeing other council services swallowed up as in the Barnet "Graph of Doom" as this wouldn't be healthy for the city.</p> <p>It is inappropriate to be asking what savings can you suggest without having a fuller picture as to the consequences of any such decision. This requires a level of engagement which goes beyond what the city has ever done but given we're in an unprecedented position in terms of budget decisions, can the city afford not to commit? The last thing anybody needs is BCC finding itself dragged before the courts over various breaches of statutory requirements.</p> <p>The thing I was encourage by in the consultation on the 17th was that thinking and questions were coming out of the BCC officers about this challenge because of the difficulties in achieving the budget cuts. I felt very much at the start of a process rather than something self-contained. That process does needs to be developed, structured and comprehensive. I hope for an early commitment from BCC towards a process such as described above because to mitigate the consequences of the cuts effectively will require greater cooperation and some creative thinking. Best to take that from as wide a pool as possible.</p>
BVE131225	External	6.1.13	<p>Please find below my views on the proposals for Birmingham's 2013/14 budget.</p> <p>My feedback is particularly in relation to proposals for the CYPF Directorate.</p> <p>CYPF1 Voluntary Sector Funding</p> <p>Firstly the proposals do not specify which services will directly be affected making it difficult to give meaningful feedback - the proposals should have included an outline of which services would be affected. The proposals suggest that critical services for children and young people will be affected. If these services are withdrawn it will not only lead to a deterioration of problems already experienced by vulnerable children and young people, making them increasingly vulnerable but will increase pressure on front line social work services. This is extremely worrying as it is clearly already a service that is struggling to deliver effective services for very vulnerable children and their families in Birmingham.</p> <p>The deterioration of problems experienced by children & their families, resulting to a need for more acute services is only likely to result in a greater cost to society on a short and long term basis and therefore, withdrawing funding for at least some of these services does not make social or economic sense and would not be in the best interests for birmingham citizens.</p> <p>CYPF15 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</p> <p>As we are aware children in care are some of the most vulnerable people in society and as a result can</p>

			<p>be very costly to the tax payer in their child and adult years e.g. are more likely to commit crime and end up in prison. We know children in care are often damaged as a result of their experiences of being parented and abused - there is substantial evidence to suggest that if children who have been traumatised receive help to address the trauma, problems in later life can be prohibited. Children in care experience extreme emotional problems as a result of their experiences and currently may not always receive a service in a timely manner.</p> <p>If these proposals go a head there will be additional pressure on the service which will only result in further delays in children in care receiving a service to address the emotional impact of the abuse/poor parenting they have received. This is concerning as this is likely to affect their outcomes further in relation to their overall wellbeing, educational/employment and anti-social behaviour. Further this will add additional pressures on existing services responsible for their care e.g. residential care/foster care and potentially leading to a higher rate of placement breakdown if the young person is not receiving the interventions required.</p>
BVE131226	External	6.1.13	<p>I am totally opposed to the proposed cuts to Birmingham Youth Service.</p> <p>What is left for young people in Birmingham;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over 20 youth clubs and projects citywide will be forced to close. 2. To close or drastically reduce the service at any of them would send a very negative signal to our young people and deprive significant numbers of them of a crucial service. 3. Youth Clubs stand as a symbol of our belief in our young people. 4. The Youth Service remains a key player in ensuring young people are engaged as active citizens and in helping Birmingham City Council achieve its priorities. 5. Young people are the voters of tomorrow. In 2011 Cllr Ian Ward presented a petition of 15606 signatures. This brought £2m of funding back and we were grateful for their support. 6. Thousands of young people are supported by Youth Workers each year to overcome issues that will increase spending by Birmingham City Council. Youth workers have a significant affect on young people's lives. 7. Youth Work provides a safe environment and helps reduce Violence and anti-social behaviour on the streets and at home. Criminal Activity, Drug and alcohol misuse, Gang Violence, NEET Young people or those who are or at risk of becoming so. (Not in Education Employment or Training) Teenage Pregnancy, sexual health and sexual exploitation Violent Extremism 8. Youth work provides the opportunity for thousands of young people to develop and achieve their full potential. 9. We know the cut is because of central Government cuts but believe this is a cut to far that will cost the Council more money. The Government owes Birmingham £79m !S 10. It makes clear economic sense to invest a relatively modest amount of the Council budget in

			the Youth Service making not only economic but also social savings.
BVE131227	External	6.1.13	<p>I am totally opposed to the proposed cuts to Birmingham Youth Service. What is left for young people in Birmingham;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over 20 youth clubs and projects citywide will be forced to close. 2. To close or drastically reduce the service at any of them would send a very negative signal to our young people and deprive significant numbers of them of a crucial service. 3. Youth Clubs stand as a symbol of our belief in our young people. 4. The Youth Service remains a key player in ensuring young people are engaged as active citizens and in helping Birmingham City Council achieve its priorities. 5. Young people are the voters of tomorrow. In 2011 Cllr Ian Ward presented a petition of 15606 signatures. This brought £2m of funding back and we were grateful for their support. 6. Thousands of young people are supported by Youth Workers each year to overcome issues that will increase spending by Birmingham City Council. Youth workers have a significant affect on young people's lives. 7. Youth Work provides a safe environment and helps reduce Violence and anti-social behaviour on the streets and at home. Criminal Activity, Drug and alcohol misuse, Gang Violence, NEET Young people or those who are or at risk of becoming so. (Not in Education Employment or Training) Teenage Pregnancy, sexual health and sexual exploitation Violent Extremism 8. Youth work provides the opportunity for thousands of young people to develop and achieve their full potential. 9. We know the cut is because of central Government cuts but believe this is a cut to far that will cost the Council more money. The Government owes Birmingham £79m !S 10. It makes clear economic sense to invest a relatively modest amount of the Council budget in the Youth Service making not only economic but also social savings. 11) As a teacher I have referred pupils to the Youth Service and they were able to provide support and real help to vulnerable young people,
BVE131228	External	6.1.13	<p>The youth service in birmingham has consistently been highly regarded by the young people who use the service,their parents and the community.</p> <p>Yet it continues to be cut year on year this time by £1.47million. This is at a time when young people face high unemployment and need safe places to go with their friends where they can get good quality information and advice from youth workers and can take part in a range of positive activities. It is not young peoples fault that services are being cut because of the greed of the banking community and a government that appears not to care about young people. In birmingham we should be supporting young people by keeping the services they need and want. I would ask birmingham city council to stop cutting the youth service which has already been cut to much. This is a very efficient and well run service and needs to be supported. If the cuts continue Councillors will no longer have youth centres in their area but they will have young people in need of places to go and things to do. Once the centres</p>

			<p>are closed down they will be lost to future generations as well. Have the city council costed the impact of increased anti social behaviour, possible increase in crime, the loss of an early intervention and prevention service and the loss of the many positive experiences young people will no longer have through their involvement in the youth service. This cut does not make economic sense and will have social consequences for communities. Birmingham please invest in young people they are the future of our city.</p>
BVE131229	External	6.1.13	<p>I would like to express my view on the birmingham city council cuts to young people and yes I did say 'young people' As that is in fact what you will be doing! You are considering cutting Vital and invaluable service to young people.</p> <p>I know that times are hard although why now punish the citizens of the future! Toni Blair said Education, Education and education, I say invest, invest and invest as they are going to be the citizens of the future who the majority of council members making this decision will need to invest in them.</p> <p>Please reconsider this already stigmatised generation already known as the lost generation!</p>
BVE131230	External	6.1.13	<p>As a former service user who then became a youth worker herself, I am a product of positivity regarding the impact of a great youth service.</p> <p>Giving back to a service that has enabled me become the person I am today, and sharing my experiences, views and opinions is something I feel very strongly about I enabling young people achieve there goals.</p> <p>Realise that these young people who you are taking these services away from have hopeful, ambitious minds, which one day have a say in what is done with the city they live in.</p> <p>Do NOT turn these hopeful, ambitious minds to contempt and distrust.</p> <p>You may think this is the "solution" to problems faced, however, Cutting the Birmingham youth service will indefinitely cause more problems long term as shown below:</p> <p><u>10 Quick Reasons for NOT cutting Birmingham Youth Service</u></p> <p>Birmingham City Council is proposing devastating cuts of £1.5m. This is just wrong and here are 10 quick reasons why?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over 20 youth clubs and projects citywide will be forced to close. 2. To close or drastically reduce the service at any of them would send a very negative signal to our young people and deprive significant numbers of them of a crucial service.

3. Youth Clubs stand as a symbol of our belief in our young people.,
4. The Youth Service remains a key player in ensuring young people are engaged as active citizens and in helping Birmingham City Council achieve its priorities.
5. Young people are the voters of tomorrow. In 2011 Cllr Ian Ward presented a petition of 15606 signatures. This brought £2m of funding back and we were grateful for their support.
6. Thousands of young people are supported by Youth Workers each year to overcome issues that will increase spending by Birmingham City Council. Youth workers have a significant affect on young people's lives.
7. Youth Work provides a safe environment and helps reduce, Violence and anti-social behaviour on the streets and at home. Criminal Activity, Drug and alcohol misuse, Gang Violence, NEET Young people or those who are or at risk of becoming so. (Not in Education Employment or Training) Teenage Pregnancy, sexual health and sexual exploitation, Prevention of Violent Extremism
8. Some of the costs Local government and the state has to pay when things go wrong for young people

Being in Local Authority Care	£40,000 p.a.
Being Homeless	£25,000 p.a.
Cost of Prosecution	£30,500
Cost of Stabbing	£300,000
Cost of a shooting	£1.2m
Cost of being in a Youth Offenders Institution	£100,000 p.a.
Being unemployed, JSA alone	£3000 p.a.

			<p>9. Youth work provides the opportunity for thousands of young people to develop and achieve their full potential.</p> <p>10. We know the cut is because of central Government cuts but believe this is a cut to far that will cost the Council more money. The Government owes Birmingham £79m!</p> <p>11. It makes clear economic sense to invest a relatively modest amount of the Council budget in the Youth Service making not only economic but also social savings.</p>
BVE131231	Text Message	6.1.13	<p>1) Leave children's services including disabled and looked after children's services- these are already weak budget cuts will further undermine efforts to improve</p> <p>2) leave vulnerable adults services as they are- ageing population, migration, complex health care means this client group likely to increase and get more complex</p> <p>3) increase council tax</p> <p>4) increase fees for adult learning</p> <p>5) promote council assets that can be hired out eg highbury hall, council house for weddings etc- I'm brummie born and bred and I only just realised individuals can hire these at such reasonable costs</p> <p>6) contract out fleet and waste management</p> <p>7) no need for individual admin officers in teams contract or centralise admin support</p>
BVE131232	External	6.1.13	<p>Whilst I do by no means envy the position you are in as regards the budget for 2013 and the difficult decisions you have to make I feel that I must stress the damage that any further cuts will have upon Birmingham Youth Service.</p> <p>This is a service that has already received massive funding cuts over the past years and further it's would destroy a valuable service that is used by thousands of young people across the city.</p> <p>In its purest and simplest form the youth centres and youth workers off young people places to go and things to do or in the view of many - keeps kids off he streets. Even using this simple analogy means that cuts to the youth service and the resulting closure of centres would mean that young people affected would have no where to go, sadly resulting in increased crime and incredible fear of crime as a result of groups of young people 'hanging around the streets'. However, in reality the youth service offers far more than this from advice and support on major issues affecting your people such as teenage pregnancy, drug abuse and homelessness to unique opportunities and experiences that help develop the young people of today into the teachers, lawyers and politicians of tomorrow.</p>

			<p>I firmly believe that Birmingham is a great city that should be at the forefront and be innovators for other local councils to follow and learn from, and that we owe it to our people to make every effort for them to have a great city to call their home, and this includes a first class youth service. I therefore call upon you to reject and proposal of reduction to the Youth Service budget and seek to pressure schools services to reinstate the £1m lost through the IFST withdrawal.</p>
BVE131233	External	6.1.13	<p>I am pleased to respond to your consultation as noted above.</p> <p>Whilst regretting that BCC has to make considerable cut backs during the next few years, I would thoroughly endorse their aims to secure preventative services, services which work co-operatively; and to ensure that services are targeted at those most in need.</p> <p>It is to achieve those ambitions for children with " sensory processing difficulties" (including dyspraxia, ADHD and autism) that I respectfully suggest that an expert "Sensory Integration" service capable of assessing and treating children in order to achieve their maximum functional ability be established within Birmingham. Research suggests that 5% of Primary school children will present with a problem of this kind and that children do not "grow out" of these difficulties, but that the difficulties become increasingly challenging for children (their families and associated professionals) to live with as they grow and their world's becomes more complex.</p> <p>A programme targeted at those most in need would potentially, long term, for example decrease the need for exceptionally expensive long term care (in the case of some children with a learning disability who currently present for example with challenging behaviour) & help others to develop further Activity of Daily Living (ADL) skills or, with mainstream children, help them to perform better during their school career, potentially reduce teaching staff stress in schools and increase the children's chances of later employment (in the case of dyspraxics and those with developmental delay)</p> <p>We have been undertaking a small project within Mayfield School, Birmingham over a period of 7 months during 2012 in which the teachers have seen benefits for their pupils. During this time we have also started treating some mainstream children, again with success. (Eg a child with dyspraxia who had previously consistently scored around 1% in her school tests (and flumoxed her teachers) has recently made great strides and progressed 2 educational sub levels in 4 months)</p> <p>Additionally training and then working with students in Walsall we have developed the preventative programme called COOL KIDS which supports those children with developmental issues in mainstream schools who may not be in need of specialist help but need a specific excercixe programme to help develop their immature neural pathways helping them to start to perform as competently as their peers in class /gain self esteem - for some they go on to need specialist help too!</p>

			<p>(NB The children who respond to COOL KIDS are those who would be unable to benefit from programmes such as BRAIN GYM due to their immature neural pathways / learning difficulties.)</p> <p>We would be pleased to discuss with you the potential of developing a range of Sensory Integration assessments / services which I am sure would benefit many of your children who currently access a range of your Children's Services; additionally it would help you to achieve successful early intervention, cooperative working and to target those most in need.</p> <p>Having trawled through your web site and found no sign of such a service, we trust that you will note and take action on this " Invest to Save" suggestion.</p> <p>We realise that you will not generally be responding to consultation responses, but, we do hope that you will consider it worth your while to arrange to meet with us to discuss the potential of developing a Sensory Integration service, which has a substantial evidence base and, we are sure could be of great value in contributing to the physical and mental well being of many of Birmingham's children.</p>
BVE131234	External	7.1.13	<p>In response to the consultation on the proposed cuts, I am emailing on behalf of the Rape and Sexual Violence Project (RSVP) and I also act as a voice and representative of the survivors of sexual violence and abuse that RSVP supports.</p> <p>This email refers specifically to the cuts which are proposed from the Voluntary sector, from the Children, young people and families directorate (CYPFD). We are one of the agencies highlighted as in threat of losing the entire funding we receive from CYPFD.</p> <p>I have severe concerns about the cuts which are outlined below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed cuts to the voluntary sector seem very high, compared to the total cuts under the CYPFD. They seem disproportionately high, seeming to target the voluntary sector, meaning that we are more severely affected by the cuts. This is totally against the principles of the Compact, as agreed by the council. 2. The proposed cuts to the voluntary sector agencies, have been suggested following a series of decisions which: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) We (and I assume other affected agencies) have not seen, been consulted on or been part of. b) Were made based on outdated information, derived largely from statistical returns we (and the other affected agencies) made from April 2011 to March 2012. This information is not up to date and is not currently an accurate picture of the number of children, young people and families we support. For

example the total numbers of sexually abused children and young people that we will support this year, April 2012 to March 2013, will be higher. And the impact of the Jimmy Savile disclosures has meant more people in total have requested our support. On our counselling service alone our average new requests for counselling each month are usually 45. In October, the month after the Saville disclosures, requests increased to 72, a 60% increase.

So the proposed cuts come at a time when MORE vulnerable children, young people, parents and families need our support following sexual abuse. The hidden costs of cutting specialist services like ours and like Amazon's, and of not providing early and specialist support could be huge. There will be costs relating to:

- i) health, as mental illnesses, like depression, anxiety and post trauma stress increase, meaning more use of GPs, community health care and hospitals.
- ii) crime, as drug and alcohol misuse and crimes related to this use increase
- iii) unemployment, as people continue to suffer from lack of confidence and esteem which holds them back in life
- iv) the loss of lives, as sexually abused people are already 12 times more likely to attempt suicide. Without specialist support and intervention these attempts could increase.

Also, looking at numbers alone, rather than the outcomes/differences we make to the lives of children, young people and families, gives a very incomplete picture of the value of the support we provide.

3. The proposed cuts to RSVP and to Amazon, run by Barnardo's, mean that CYPFD are cutting funding to the city's ONLY two specialist agencies supporting sexually abused children, young people, parents, families and adults. This seems alarming, given the city's extremely poor record on child safeguarding. Whenever the audits have been made evaluating the city's safeguarding practises, more and closer partnerships have been identified as necessary to the ongoing protection, safeguarding and safety of children. Cutting funding to the only two specialist services for sexually abused people seems very much at odds with this recommendation and with the city's overall outcome regarding safeguarding.

4. While I can see the city's extremely difficult predicament regarding the cuts, I think there are a few alternatives:

- a) Introduce cuts which affect all the voluntary agencies CYPFD currently fund, eg. by offering the same % cut across all agencies. This will ensure that the Council continues to support agencies which safeguard children, like ours and Amazon. It's also avoids making permanent decisions on which agencies to continue to fund/not continue to fund, based on outdated and inaccurate information. Additionally, it seems fairer.
- b) Phase in the cuts over a longer transition period since it takes some time to gain alternative funding.

			<p>For some funders, like the Big lottery, it can take up to 9 months to make an application and to know of the final outcome.</p> <p>Finally I have also attached 24 questionnaires** from survivors themselves, which were completed in the few days we had to consult, before we broke up for the Christmas period. All the comments state similar facts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no other specialist service in Birmingham where survivors can go to receive support from. 2. That the council needs to continue to fund services like our own, in order to protect and safeguard children, young people and families. 3. That the service we offer is vital and has been a lifeline and integral to the recovery of people from sexual abuse and violence. <p>I await the outcome of the cuts, but in the meantime hope these views will be taken on board.</p>
BVE131235	Internal	7.1.13	<p>The team had a wide ranging discussion re how fostering and adoption enquiries could be progressed more speedily in context of anticipated new regulations re tackling delay publicised in the national media and the context of the LA financial situation. Capacity, with previous reductions is challenging especially with the large number of enquiries we deal with, taking into account Birmingham's population size</p> <p>The issue of non-agency adoption (this is where a step parent or relative applies to adopt a child). We are suggesting this work is charged for, particularly as it can be time consuming particularly if this has international elements</p>
BVE131236	External	7.1.13	<p>I am a parent of a child who accesses Acorns Children's Hospice in Selly Oak Birmingham. The support provided for my child by the hospice is specialist palliative care short-breaks.</p> <p>The paediatric palliative care nurses and trained staff group offer bespoke individualised care for children with complex needs which are not accessible through other short break providers in the city.</p> <p>The grant Birmingham City Council provides to Acorns supports vital learning opportunities and developmentally important activities for children. Our children are disadvantaged due to physical disabilities, learning difficulties and prognosis. They need this specialist input in the hospice.</p> <p>As a parents and resident of Birmingham I would ask you <i>NOT</i> to withdraw this funding. Our children have a right to their social and educational needs being met which contributes to their wider emotional well being.</p>

BVE131237	External	<p>am writing separately to you and Tony Phillips- Jones to express my great worry at the risk that Spurgeons Stepping Stones Arch and CAMHS projects are to be decommissioned as Birmingham City Council undertake to rein back on their spending.</p> <p>I briefly set out my links with Stepping Stones and present a case study to illustrate the work and the impact of this service.</p> <p>My particular area of work as a paediatric doctor is in the area of behaviour disorder. I have lead responsibility for the ADHD service amongst the consultant paediatricians in Birmingham. My case load of children with ADHD and Autistic and Conduct Disorders is large. As a paediatric doctor, I have worked in partnership with Stepping Stones for the past 12 years. During that time Stepping Stones have provided support to many faltering families with extremely difficult children. They have offered direct support to families, helping them to manage their children and have salvaged many a family from the teeth of disintegration.</p> <p>If Stepping Stones were to be lost, many of my future patients and their families would be without recourse to such an important and genuinely useful service.</p> <p>A CASE of mine has been chosen to highlight the wide ranging nature of the intervention provided to parents, child and family unit. Holistic is a misused term, but the Stepping Stone approach is genuinely holistic.</p> <p>The completion of work has resulted in a much safer and calmer and enjoyable environment for the whole family. Family breakdown was prevented.</p> <p>I referred this case requesting support for Mum and Dad at home in managing behaviour of their 11 year old son who was undergoing assessment by myself. The child was displaying extremely aggressive behaviours at home, such as punching Mum in the face, throwing objects at Dad, being extremely verbally threatening and abusive, and staying up until 1 o'clock in the morning refusing to go to bed without a fight.</p> <p>Stepping stones addressed the Safeguarding issues immediately with Children's Social Care and myself. A program of support was agreed with the family which included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sessions with Mum and Dad to implement parenting techniques from Teen Triple P, • 1:1 work with the child around positively expressing and managing emotions, • A series of whole family sessions to address communication and enjoying family time again. <p>Both Mum and Dad engaged really positively with the Triple P techniques and reported it was "like seeing our family through different eyes". The young person reported that the 1:1 sessions allowed</p>
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BVE131238	External	7.1.13	<p>After forty-three years of teaching in Birmingham schools, mostly in the Inner Ring, I retired in 2006. I wished to make best use of skills that I had acquired over the years when working with children and young families.</p> <p>To this end I became a volunteer with two national charities, namely Home-Start and Volunteer Reading Help (Now known as Beanstalk). My work as a school governor and an assessor of schools' achievements in the basic skills of English and mathematics also complemented my work and helped to keep me in touch with unprecedented changes in primary school education.</p> <p>However my experience with Home- Start has enabled me, more than any other aspect of my work, to appreciate the barriers to learning that many young children face every day.</p> <p>In my visits to families I observe situations where there are no books or bedtime stories but plenty of large screen televisions. No breakfast before leaving for school where children are expected to learn, but expensive ready meals by the television at night. No clean bedding or privacy where they sleep. Often there is little understanding of behaviour management where children learn self-respect and consideration for others. Many families have limited experience in initiating conversation and supportive interaction to promote self - esteem and aspiration.</p> <p>Only in exceptional circumstances are the above problems within the remit of social services. This is where the role of Home Start is invaluable in supporting young families and children. Volunteers provide life-enhancing experiences; they give emotional support through empathy and listening; they transport families to essential appointments; they provide exciting learning opportunities for young children – above all – they really care.....</p> <p>Please, in considering cuts in spending, conserve the excellent work that Home-Start provides for the children of Birmingham.</p>

BVE131239	External	7.1.13	<p>NO to increased council tax</p> <p>There should NOT be an increase in council tax. It is a major household bill which cannot be economised on, so should not be increased in these difficult economic times.</p> <p>But if there is an increase, it should be limited to the 1.6%. It should NOT be bigger than that; but if there was to be a vote on it, the vote should be limited to those people who actually pay the tax not all residents, i.e. limited to a maximum of 1 or 2 adults only per household and exclude those whose council tax is paid by others (e.g. council tax benefit etc) and also exclude those in arrears. It would be most unfair for those who do not pay council tax to vote to impose an increase on those who do.</p> <p>Everyone should have to pay some council tax; there should not be full rebates.</p> <p>And the council should chase up the high proportion of non-payers of council tax.</p>
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