

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE BUDGET FOR 2013+

FINAL REPORT

14 February 2013
CSK Strategies Ltd

HEADLINES

This draft final report summarises responses from:

- 575 people at four public meetings led by the Council's Leader and Cabinet;
- 723 responses to the online survey;
- 24 written responses from external organisations;
- A consultation meeting of 26 people targeted at people with disabilities and their organisations;
- A consultation meeting for business rate payers;
- A consultation meeting for voluntary organisations organised in partnership with the Birmingham Voluntary Services Council (BVSC);
- Two meetings with 66 members of Birmingham's People's Panel facilitated and written up by ORS; and
- 830 individual responses sent in directly to the Council.

Council Directorates are supplementing this over-arching consultation with more detailed consultations with users about their specific proposals.

The consultation referred to the **£70m of new savings** required in the coming 2013/14 financial year and the longer term financial challenge that would mean that by 2016/17, the Council would have had to reduce its controllable expenditure by about half (£600m) from what it was in 2010/11.

The consultation asked for views in the following four broad areas:

1. The Council's priorities and principles upon which to base budget decisions.
2. The options for the level of Council Tax in 2013/14.
3. The detailed savings proposed in the Council's 2013/14 Budget.
4. Possible changes in the services the Council delivers, including no longer providing some services, in order to deal with the difficult financial situation beyond 2013/14.

The Council's Service Priorities

There was strong support in responses to the on-line survey for the Council's three priorities, particularly tackling inequality and deprivation, ensuring dignity for our elderly and safeguarding children (a positive balance of 85%).

The other two priorities were: laying the foundations for a prosperous city and inclusive economy; and involving local people in the future of their local area and their public services.

Additional priorities were also suggested including the importance of prevention work to avoid greater problems and costs emerging in the future. Other priorities suggested included: health and wellbeing (including mental health); including reference to protecting disabled and vulnerable people; education; young people and youth unemployment; the environment and sustainability; community safety; arts and culture; the transport infrastructure. In addition, the importance attached to tackling inequalities and the Public Sector Equalities Duty was stressed again and again at public meetings, in answers to open ended questions on the questionnaire and in written submissions.

Council Tax Options

The option put forward by the Council's Cabinet of increasing Council Tax next year by an amount that would not trigger a referendum was the clear favourite of responders to the on-line survey amongst the three options put forward. Very limited opposition to this proposal was in evidence at the consultation meetings. Some organisations' written submissions also supported this option.

There was frustration at the public meetings with the Council's lack of power to amend Council Tax bands so that those who could most afford it paid a higher amount than at present.

Views on the proposed savings and cuts in 2013/14

Service Reviews

A large majority of on-line respondents were in favour of Service Reviews but concern at their size in future years and that there be full, more participative and well-understood consultation over the details of the proposals that emerge from these Reviews.

Adults and Communities

Cuts to services for the vulnerable and disadvantaged were one of the areas of greatest concern for attendees at the public consultation meetings. There was a high degree of concern at public meetings about the increased risk of the "safety net" for particularly vulnerable people breaking as a result of a combination of the Council cuts, savings from other agencies, and the various Welfare Benefit Reforms and Council Tax changes. Collaboration between the council, voluntary organisations and other service providers was seen as an essential counter to this.

There were large or significant majorities of on-line respondents agreeing with the proposals for this Directorate where they involved one-off savings or use of reserves, efficiencies, and seeking funding from or lowering subsidies to the NHS. However, there was concern from some NHS organisations about the impact of the withdrawal or lowering of subsidies.

Many at the public meetings stressed the importance of getting the balance right between crisis management/protecting the most vulnerable on the one hand, and making sure that the agencies in the City work together better on prevention activity on the other.

Although more agreed than disagreed about the 'full year effect of meals subsidy reduction', a significant minority (27%) disagreed. There was some disquiet expressed at the public meetings because this might mean a valuable service being lost to vulnerable, elderly people.

Although a majority of on-line respondents agreed with the savings proposed in the Supporting People programme, there was opposition to this proposal at public meetings and

concern about the long-term impact on specialist voluntary organisations. It was pointed out that users of the Supporting People programme need more than just advice; they need skilled workers to support them in implementing that advice. Supporting People providers, supported by other organisations, submitted detailed evidence and arguments to show that their preventative services saved money in the long run and that the proposed cuts would affect frontline services and lead to an increase in homelessness and rough sleeping in the city.

There was a great deal of disquiet about the impact of proposals on the voluntary sector. Most of the written submissions from organisations and many from individuals were about the impact of decommissioning of a service provided by a voluntary organisation. They also emphasised that Council cuts could reduce the other external funding these organisations bring in.

On a number of occasions, questions were asked about the equality impact of the proposals and whether these were being undertaken. In addition, many stressed the importance of equality impact analyses needing to be more nuanced than the legal categories and the way multiple factors of disadvantage interact should be recognised.

Children, Young People and Families

Proposals for this Directorate were the most controversial in the public consultation. Three of the four negative balances in the on-line survey were recorded for this Directorate's proposals and they attracted many of the most impassioned and heated comments at the public meetings as well as many of the comments in the written submissions.

Voluntary sector: the cuts here received the largest negative balance of all proposals and they were strongly opposed at all the public meetings. Most of the written submissions from organisations and many from individuals were about the impact of decommissioning of a service provided by a voluntary organisation. Cuts here were described as 'disproportionate'. They also emphasised that Council cuts could reduce the other external funding these organisations bring in. Maintaining and continuing to build the capacity of these organisations, an area where Birmingham had made real positive strides in recent years, was seen as a real priority by consultees in the face of wider cuts in public spending and the welfare reforms. However, voluntary organisations also suggested a number of ways of delivering services differently to mitigate the effect of the cuts and were keen to be involved in constructive future discussions around coping with the financial challenges.

Vulnerable children, children in care, adoption and fostering: Much of the concern was around the impact of a number of the proposals on vulnerable children. The need to champion children in care was raised at a couple of meetings. While there was strong support for increasing adoptions and fostering, there was some concern that this could not be rushed without the quality of care suffering, particularly as the economic situation might be pushing some people into fostering without sufficient training. The closure of residential homes should not be rushed therefore.

The possibility of outsourcing the **parent partnership service** received a very large number of opposing written submissions.

CAMHS: The proposed cuts to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) was opposed at some of the public meetings and received a significant negative balance of -18% in the on-line survey. Consultees argued that this was a false economy, with long term consequences for the lives and future health and wellbeing of users of CAMHS. Similar points were made in many of the written submissions including those from the Children's Hospital and the Social Work Action Network West Midlands.

Youth Offending Service: This was the third proposal to receive a significant negative balance (-24%) in the on-line survey. While direct reference was not made to this service in the public meetings, the many references to the impact on crime of cuts to youth services in general are relevant to this proposal.

Youth service: A significant feature of the public meetings was the large number of young people present at many of them with the closure of youth clubs being of great concern given the important role that they perform in improving work and life opportunities. The need to monitor and challenge the responsibilities and funding that schools have in these areas was acknowledged, as were the greater opportunities for linkages and co-ordination with other locally-based activities provided through the transfer of both of these services to the Local Services Directorate. (This issue is covered in greater depth under Local Services.)

Connexions and youth unemployment: There was great concern about the further cuts proposed to Connexions (careers) service expressed at every public meeting and concerns about the variable quality of the careers advice being provided by schools. The context of high and increasing level of youth unemployment in the City and the need for Council action here was stressed. The need for action by schools in this area was acknowledged.

Home to school transport: Although there was a significant positive balance in the online survey for this proposal, concern was reflected in written submissions particularly from schools.

Children's centres: Continuing concern at reduced funding here was expressed although there was a weak positive balance for this proposal in the on-line survey. Barnardo's wrote that the cuts were 'manageable'.

Role of schools: it was noted that schools now had responsibilities in areas that had been the responsibility of the Council directly and had had resources transferred to them, especially where they had converted to academies. While acknowledging the need for schools to provide good education to their pupils, many consultees wanted to see schools discharging their wider responsibilities to the city's young people and collaborating more closely with others to do so. Examples given included, restoring the Schools' Forum's funding to the Integrated Family Support Service and the Youth Service, providing careers advice and sharing the use of school buildings.

As for Adults and Communities, there were large or significant majorities of on-line respondents agreeing with the proposals where they involved one-off savings or use of reserves and efficiencies.

Corporate Resources

On-line survey respondents were in favour by large majorities of the proposed savings proposals put forward by this Directorate.

The impact of Welfare Reforms on the poorest was raised at most public meetings, together with a call for the Council to co-ordinate support in this area with the voluntary sector and others. The important role of Citizen Advice Bureaux was spelt out by some and the Council's Cabinet committed itself to see if they could be protected from closure.

The importance of maintaining work on integrating small communities, such as Eritreans and Somalis, into wider society was made at one meeting, including around issues of education, gender, language and disability. This linked with an underlying theme of many contributions that Birmingham was a very diverse city and that the Council had an important role in promoting equality of opportunities for all.

Some consultees insisted that the transfer of assets to the community should be done properly and at sensible and sustainable rate.

Development and Culture

All of this Directorate's proposals except that around the BRIDGE programme for staff had a majority of support, reflecting a similar preference across all Directorates for savings to be made through efficiencies, attracting other funding or income and one-off savings.

There was also a request at many meetings that Council staff be treated fairly and with respect and consideration when redundancy and restructuring proposals were being implemented.

Opposition to cutting the Shelforce business which employs people with disabilities featured at a number of public meetings, with the Cabinet responding that the Council would be increasing employment of people with disabilities so that their proportion in the Council workforce reflected their proportion in the city.

The importance of seeking external funding and working closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership to create new jobs was discussed at some of the public meetings.

Providing help to young people to find work was seen as a high priority amongst many attendees at consultation meetings

Local Services

As for other Directorates, there were large or significant majorities of on-line respondents agreeing with the proposals where they involved one-off savings or the use of reserves, additional income generation, external funding and efficiencies.

There was significant opposition to a reduction in **street cleaning** in the on-line survey which broadly balanced those who agreed with the two proposals here. However, other cuts in environmental maintenance and floral decorations received stronger support.

Wheelie bins: There was strong support in the on-line survey for the government grant which would help introduce a new service model for waste collection, but fears were raised at public meetings re whether this meant privatisation and foisting wheelie bins on all residents. It was clarified that this did not necessarily mean the privatisation of waste collection services and that there would be consultation on the introduction of the new service model so that the specific needs of different parts of the city were addressed.

Community Play and Development: Those agreeing/ strongly agreeing with this proposal (44%) to cease these services were only slightly more than those disagreeing/strongly disagreeing (35%).

The Library of Birmingham: Strong support for spending less on the opening ceremony in the on-line survey. Contributors at public meetings also questioned the amount spent on large capital projects of this nature. On the other hand, other contributors spoke up strongly for libraries, some suggesting they be used more as hubs for other community services. There was also a call for swimming baths to be reopened.

Youth Services: A significant feature of the public meetings was the large number of vocal, young people present. The closure of youth clubs was of great concern with eloquent contributions by young people on the important role that they perform in improving work and life opportunities. The need to monitor and challenge the responsibilities and funding that schools have in these areas was acknowledged, as were the greater opportunities for

linkages and co-ordination with other locally-based activities provided through the transfer of both of these services to the Local Services Directorate.

Community Safety: Although a small majority of on-line respondents supported the proposals for reductions in these services, a significant minority disagreed.

Alternatives

Many contributors to the public meetings suggested that the Council should set a needs-based, deficit budget. The Leader and Cabinet explained that they would not be doing this as it was illegal and would lead to central government taking over, but that they were lobbying the Government to reduce the cuts substantially.

The written submission from Supporting People providers asked for Council contracting mechanisms to be simplified with a shift towards contracting on outcomes rather than inputs.

Alternative ways of meeting the funding gap suggested were:

- Borrowing and reducing capital projects.
- Selling assets including remaining shares in the airport.
- More sub-contracting or joint investment with the voluntary sector. For example, Friends of Parks could play a bigger role in maintenance.
- Integration of services across Directorates.
- More attention to income raising possibilities.
- Learning from other service providers such as the NHS.
- Seeking donations from local people and businesses.
- A local lottery.
- Coordinating funding bids.
- Sharing buildings and other infrastructure.

Future Service Provision

For on-line survey respondents high priority future services are protecting vulnerable citizens, community safety, youth services, refuse collection and creating and helping people into jobs.

Welfare services were not seen as a high priority by many respondents to the survey and physical infrastructure was seen as being less important than people delivering services to other people.

There is a well of willingness to volunteer amongst Birmingham's citizens that could be tapped into.

Future Consultation

Participatory budgeting methods should be looked at for future consultations on budgetary matters. Responses from organisations showed a keenness to be involved in discussions and planning radical new ways of delivering services.

More thought needs to be given to providing information on budget proposals in ways that are meaningful and that are accessible by all.

Dialogue should continue beyond the formal end date for consultation on the 2013/14 budget proposals because most residents had not absorbed how bad things are and the stark choices the city faced.

Meetings should also be held in areas with high Black and Asian populations next time.

Other Points:

- Prevention services should not be cut as that means greater needs and costs later. There needs to be a balance with services addressing immediate needs.
- Equality impact analysis needs to be more nuanced than the legal categories and the way multiple factors interact should be recognised. This linked with an underlying theme of many contributions that Birmingham was a very diverse city and that the Council had an important role in promoting equality of opportunities for all.
- There was a need to be alert to the interaction of Welfare Reforms with the cuts in Council services.
- Concern expressed at the costs of outsourcing services which could be more expensive and less effective. Were major private contractors being asked to contribute to the required savings?

1. Introduction

Cuts in central government grants to local authorities form a large part of the Government's deficit reduction plans. These cuts, along with growing cost pressures, mean that Birmingham City Council (BCC) will need to implement, **£70m of new savings** in the coming 2013/14 financial year if it is to meet its legal requirement to have a balanced budget. Together with savings agreed last year following a public consultation, these new savings will bring total savings in 2013/14 to about £110m. This will be the third successive year of cuts in Council spending and jobs.

Central government grant reductions and rising cost pressures are projected to continue for a further three years bringing the total savings required by BCC in the six years from 2010/11 and 2016/17 to £600m. This is **about half** of the Council's annual spending over which it has any control.

This was the context of the public consultation that the Council organised on its budget for 2013 and beyond. The consultation asked for views in the following four broad areas:

1. The Council's priorities and principles upon which to base budget decisions.
2. The options for the level of Council Tax in 2013/14.
3. The detailed savings proposed in the Council's 2013/14 Budget.
4. Possible changes in the services the Council delivers, including no longer providing some services, in order to deal with the difficult financial situation beyond 2013/14.

The public consultation was launched on 6th December 2012 and closed on 6th January 2013. It involved:

- Production and wide distribution of a Consultation Document explaining the background to the decisions that had to be made for April 2013 onwards and listing the specific savings/cuts proposals being made for the 2013/14 financial year. More detailed Fact Sheets on each proposal were also produced. The Consultation Document and the Fact Sheets were also available on the Council's website.
- 575 people attending four public meetings which were led by the Council's Leader and Cabinet. (Where people were known to have attended more than one meeting, they have been only counted once.)
- 723 responses to an on-line survey accessed via the Council's website.
- 24 detailed, written responses from external organisations, listed in Appendix I, along with the 125 organisations identified by people attending the public meetings. The responses from organisations are detailed and often on specific aspects of the Budget proposal. While they are referred to in outline in this report, they have also been passed on to the relevant Directorates for more detailed consideration.
- A consultation meeting of 26 people targeted at people with disabilities and their organisations.
- A consultation meeting for business rate payers.
- A consultation meeting for voluntary organisations organised in partnership with the Birmingham Voluntary Services Council (BVSC).
- Two meetings with 66 members of Birmingham's People's Panel facilitated and written up by ORS.

- 830 individual responses sent in directly by post or email to the Council, although 567 were on the same topic and virtually identical.

In addition, individual Directorates are conducting detailed consultations with the users of their services. Views expressed during the overall budget consultation have been fed into these individual Directorate consultations. These views will also feed into the legally required equality impact assessments of the proposals that are currently underway. There is also a consultation process taking place with Council staff and their trade unions.

Timescale, Representativeness and Qualitative Information

The start of the consultation was later than desired by the Council, in the main because of delays in receiving information on central government grants and a number of administrative arrangements that would impact on its Budget. Nevertheless, strenuous efforts were made to publicise ways that people could contribute their views and to encourage people to attend and take an active role in consultation meetings.

A number of measures were taken to include groups often excluded from expressing their views. For example, a specific meeting was held for people with disabilities including people with learning disabilities. The on-line survey also collected information on respondents that allowed an analysis of whether specific equality groups were responding to the survey in proportion to their numbers within Birmingham's population. Data was also collected on factors such as whether a respondent worked for Birmingham City Council or not.

How well were different groups represented in the consultation process? Details are contained in Appendix II, but in summary, (based on registrations and observations at public meetings and on the 400 to 450 people who answered the Personal Profile section of the questionnaire):

- Participants in the public consultation meetings were from at least 42 different postcodes across the city although numbers did vary considerably by postcode – see Appendix III. Those completing the questionnaire were from 44 postcodes across the city.
- Almost the same number of women and men answered the on-line questionnaire.
- There was an under-representation of the city's minority ethnic population amongst respondents to the on-line questionnaire. For example, 37(8% of responders) were Asian and 15 (3%) were African/Caribbean. At the public meetings, the minority ethnic population was best represented at the city centre meeting.
- The large majority (87%) of those completing the on-line survey were aged between 30 and 65 with 9% being under 30 and 5% over 65. However, in contrast to last year's Budget consultation process, significant numbers of young people did turn up at the public meetings.
- In addition to the meeting targeted at people with disabilities, 68 (17%) on-line questionnaire respondents reported a disability or long-term illness.
- 381 (87%) of respondents live in Birmingham and 183 (45%) work for the Council.

Open access was an important principle of the consultation process, including the on-line survey, in order to maximise the number of participants. However, this has meant that the responses cannot be claimed to be statistically representative of the views of Birmingham residents. As well as the lower representation of some groups of residents than their proportion in the city's population outlined above, responders to any consultation process tend to be those concerned about a particular issue. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to say that therefore these responses should be discounted as they do reflect the views of a large number of people in the city.

Perhaps more importantly, the value of the consultation process is in the qualitative information provided. It has allowed many who will feel the impact of specific proposed savings to express their concerns, to provide details of what they expect the impacts to be and to make many other suggestions. In particular, the concerns of some vulnerable groups and those who work with them have been captured. This is important and valuable information that Councillors and Council officers will want to consider before making budget, staffing and service organisation decisions.

Furthermore, the public consultation has also played an important **role in informing** a large number of Birmingham residents, Council service users and organisations about the wide range of services that the Council provides, the opportunities and constraints of Council funding and spending (for example, that only one tenth of its revenue is raised via Council Tax), how Birmingham has fared in relation to central government grants compared with other local authorities, and the difficult decisions that it is faced with over the coming four years in the face of huge financial pressures.

The impact of this **important informing role** of consultations is often neglected in assessing the impact of public consultations. The numbers responding to the consultation and the depth of their responses was certainly significant given the relatively short timescale of the process. For example, the numbers attending the public meetings was almost twice as high as those attending more than twice as many meetings during last year's Budget consultation. Of course, an even larger response would have been better. However, the foundations have been laid for a more in-depth and participatory consultation process in the future.

Detailed notes were taken at each public consultation meeting and summarised in a report for that meeting. These reports are available on the City Council's website at www.birmingham.gov.uk/budgetviews. (Note, at some of the public meetings, attendees were asked how they had heard about the meeting. Results are available in Appendix IV.)

All responses from organisations and individuals that were sent to Budget Views have been recorded and analysed, and referred to throughout this report. They are summarised in Appendix I.

The individual written responses will also be available in full on the City Council's website.

In addition, this report will be placed on the website.

Structure of Report

This report summarises the responses submitted through the different channels (on-line survey, consultation meetings and written responses) under the broad consultation questions. The next section summarises views expressed on the Council's priorities followed by a section on Council Tax options. Section 4, the longest section, is organised by Directorate and covers views on the detailed proposals for the 2013/14 Budget. Each of the five sub-sections (one per Directorate) starts with a summary of key points made, followed by broad issues raised before providing a table with comments on each specific proposal made in the Consultation Document.

Alternative approaches suggested to that of the Council's leadership are covered in Section 5, while Section 6 shows initial responses on the services the Council provides in the future. Section 7 summarises ideas put forward for future budget consultation methods that the Council should use. Finally, Section 8 covers other views and ideas put forward that do not fit neatly into the other parts of the report.

This detailed notes on the four public meetings contained summaries of the detailed responses from the Leader and other Council Cabinet members so as to provide more information on the rationale of the proposals and on the constraints the Council faces in setting a Budget. References to these responses are far fewer in this report as it aims to draw together all the comments on the Budget proposals from the public and from Birmingham-based organisations.

A Note on the Presentation of the On-Line Survey Results

Many of the questions in the on-line survey asked respondents to choose from a five point range of strongly agree/agree/neither agree or disagree/disagree/strongly disagree. The answers to these questions are summarised as a 'balance', by adding together the percentage of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing and subtracting from this the percentages disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. A positive 'balance' signifies a larger proportion agree with a proposal than disagree with it whilst a negative balance signifies a larger proportion disagreeing with a proposal, that is, more respondents believe the proposal should **not** be implemented. For example, if 50% of respondents agree with a proposal and 30% disagree, then there will be a positive balance of 20%. On the other hand, if 20% of respondents agree with a proposal but 50% disagree, then there will be a negative balance of 30%.

A chart showing the spread of answers is also provided.

The percentages are percentages of the number of people answering that question, not of the 723 who submitted an on-line survey response. Only the postcode question was answered by all 723. The questions on priorities and on the level of Council Tax were answered by 662 and 644 respectively while the numbers answering the rest of the questions varied around the mid-400s. The numbers answering each question are provided whenever a percentage is given in tables throughout the report.

2. Views on the Council's top service priorities

The presentation of the on-line questionnaire results is explained in a note at the end of Section 1.

Key Points

There was strong support for the Council's three priorities, particularly tackling inequality and deprivation, ensuring dignity for our elderly and safeguarding children (a positive balance of 85%).

Additional priorities were also suggested including the importance of prevention work to avoid greater problems and costs emerging in the future. Other priorities suggested included: health and wellbeing (including mental health); including reference to protecting disabled and vulnerable people; education; young people and youth unemployment; the environment and sustainability; community safety; arts and culture; the transport infrastructure.

In addition, the importance attached to tackling inequalities and the Public Sector Equalities Duty was stressed again and again at public meetings, in answers to open ended questions on the questionnaire and in written submissions.

Public and Other Consultation Meetings

While the Council's three priorities were not discussed explicitly at the public meetings, the tone of most contributions was strongly in favour of the first of these priorities – 'Tackling inequality and deprivation, promoting social cohesion, and ensuring dignity, in particular for our elderly and safeguarding children'. Some, including some written submissions, appeared to suggest that young people, people with disabilities and vulnerable citizens should also be included as groups to prioritise.

The tone of the discussion also supported the other two priorities although a few suggested that less should be spent on physical regeneration, transport infrastructure and large-scale capital projects such as the new central library. (A similar tendency was reflected in the answers to the on-line survey questions on future service provision – see section 7 ahead.) For example, some participants in the meeting targeted at people with disabilities suggested that 'trams and Eastside developments' were 'wasteful public spending'. In addition, the spending on the central library was raised at a couple of public meetings.

On the other hand, a desire to see more progress on the reopening of swimming baths was expressed by one contributor to the central meeting in the Council House.

A key point made at several public meetings and through written submissions was that prevention services should be a priority for the Council. Getting the balance right between crisis management/protecting the most vulnerable and making sure that the agencies in the City work together better on prevention activity was seen as being critically important.

In addition, the importance attached to tackling inequalities and the Public Sector Equalities Duty was stressed again and again at public meetings, in answers to open ended questions on the questionnaire and in written submissions.

On-line Survey

The on-line survey contained a specific question on whether respondents agreed or disagreed with the three top priorities put forward by the Council. These priorities were strongly supported by respondents, particularly the first, as shown in the table below.

Priorities	Balance	Number of respondents
Tackling inequality and deprivation, promoting social cohesion, and ensuring dignity, in particular for our elderly and safeguarding children.	85%	661
Laying the foundations for a prosperous city and inclusive economy.	76%	650
Involving local people in the future of their local area and their public services.	75%	655

Suggested additional Priorities

However, 70% of the respondents to this question thought that the Council should have other priorities, with 419 suggesting additional priorities. Many comments involved other ways of wording the basic concepts behind the above three priorities (e.g. tackling unemployment, boosting investment in the city, reducing poverty; contract with more local firms). Many referred to a variety of approaches to savings such as reducing rent arrears, not contracting out services to the private sector and lobbying the Government for a fairer deal for Birmingham. Yet others referred to the importance of maintaining specific services such as CAMHS.

In terms of broad priorities, the most frequently mentioned additional ones (in no particular order) including priorities suggested at the ORS meetings, were:

- The environment and sustainability;
- Education;
- Young people and youth unemployment;
- Health including mental health and wellbeing: one contributor referred to the need to promote wellbeing of citizens as well as their prosperity;
- Community safety: reducing crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Promoting an active city;
- Improving the transport infrastructure;
- Arts and culture;
- Decent housing;
- Social cohesion.

One of the most succinct suggestions was that the Council's priority should be: "Safety and welfare of the city."

3. Views on Council Tax options for 2013/14

The presentation of the on-line questionnaire results is explained in a note at the end of Section 1.

Key Points

The option put forward by the Council's Cabinet of increasing Council Tax next year by an amount that would not trigger a referendum was the clear favourite of responders to the on-line survey amongst the three options put forward. Very limited opposition to this proposal was in evidence at the consultation meetings. Some organisations' written submissions also supported this option.

There was frustration at the public meetings with the Council's lack of power to amend Council Tax bands so that those who could most afford it paid a higher amount than at present.

The Consultation Document sought the views of Birmingham citizens on three options for the Council Tax next year and the following year:

1. Freezing the Council Tax and accepting a temporary Government grant.
2. Increasing the Council Tax by the maximum amount possible before triggering a referendum, thought to be a rise of 1.64%. (This is the option that the Council's Budget proposals are based upon and therefore the one recommended by the current administration.)
3. Increasing the Council tax by a higher amount and campaigning for a yes vote in a local referendum. (See table below for more details on these options.)

The on-line questionnaire asked respondents to express an order of preference for the three options. Of the 644 people who answered this question, 48% chose the 1.64% rise first, well ahead of the 30% who chose a freeze. A further 36% chose this as their second preference. (See table below.)

Option	Number of first preferences	Number of second preferences
No increase in Council Tax which would mean receipt of an additional Government grant of £2.6m each year for two years but still a need to find further savings on top of those proposed here of £1.6m in each of the next two years and a further £4.2m in 2015/16.	195	156
Increase Council Tax by 1.64%. This will generate £4.2m more resources and is the basis of the current proposed savings.	307	235
Conduct a referendum to increase Council tax by more than 1.64% which will reduce the amount of savings proposed here but require Council Tax payers to contribute more.	131	187

The Council Tax options took up only a small portion of the discussion at the consultation meetings. Questions on the cost of a referendum on a Council Tax rise were asked at three meetings, the response being probably between £1.5m and £2m. At two meetings it was suggested that the Government's offer of a grant if the Tax was frozen should be accepted (because Birmingham is a 'poor city' one participant said), but this view attracted little verbal support at either meeting.

Some attendees appeared not to realise the relatively low proportion of the Council's spending that was covered by Council Tax revenues. Nor did some realise that the Council had no ability to change the structure of Council Tax with one attendee asking if there was any 'wriggle room' to increase the Tax only on those owning or living in more expensive properties. Similar frustrations over the Council's lack of power to change the structure of Council Tax were expressed in the earlier consultation on the replacement of Council tax benefit.

Questions were also raised about the room for increasing the Council Tax take by reducing fraud and the number of people who don't pay the Council tax they are supposed to. It was explained that, at 98%, the proportion of Council Tax due that was collected in Birmingham was amongst the highest in the country and generally believed to be just about the highest that could be raised. Benefit fraud was always an issue but the Council was believed to have good fraud prevention systems in place, and that at some point the costs of fraud prevention outweighed the fraud prevented.

In addition, some questions reflected a mistaken belief that the Council had direct access to other tax revenues which, in fact, are collected by central government.

At the ORS meetings with recruits from the People's Panel, raising Council Tax was unpopular although a minority were in favour.

4. Views on the proposed savings and cuts in 2013/14

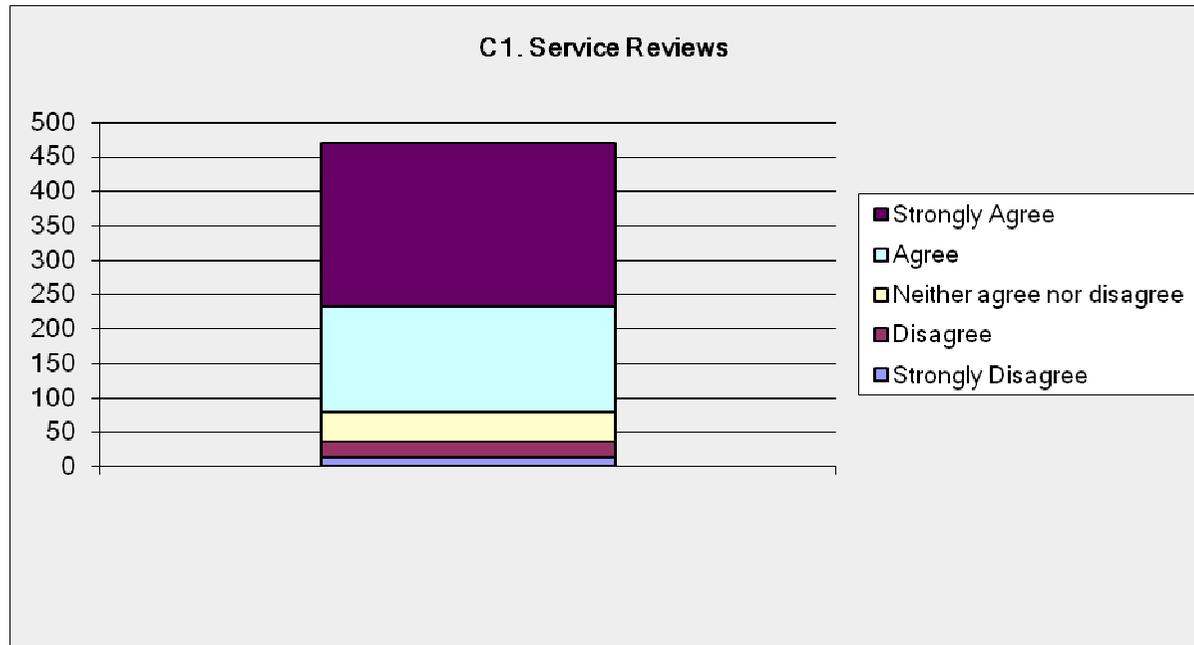
The presentation of the on-line questionnaire results is explained in a note at the end of Section 1.

4.1 Service Reviews

Key Points

Large majority of on-line respondents in favour of Service Reviews but concern at their size in future years and that there be full, more participative and well-understood consultation over the details of the proposals that emerge from these Reviews.

Service Reviews	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
Service Reviews: a thorough review of Council services, including the contract for IT services with Service Birmingham, assessing the level of value for money they provide and the contribution they make to local priorities and legal requirements. This is likely to result in decisions to provide some services in new ways, and to de-commission some others. (Savings in 2013/14: £9.8m)	<p>On-line survey respondents were almost all in agreement with the proposal to review services thoroughly, with just over half strongly agreeing. However, there was some disquiet at some public meetings about what a 'Service Review' actually meant: 'Was it a cut?' one attendee asked.</p> <p>A participant at the large meeting at The Council House pointed to the large size of the savings itemised against this general heading. This comment linked to the concern expressed at most meetings that future consultation should be more participative and that more time was needed for residents of the city to understand what the savings or cuts proposals meant.</p>	75%	471



4.2 Adults and Communities

Key Points

Cuts to **services for the vulnerable and disadvantaged** were one of the areas of greatest concern for attendees at the public consultation meetings. There was a high degree of concern at public meetings about the increased risk of the "safety net" for particularly vulnerable people breaking as a result of a combination of the Council cuts, savings from other agencies, and the various Welfare Benefit Reforms and Council Tax changes. Collaboration between the council, voluntary organisations and other service providers was seen as an essential counter to this.

There were large or significant majorities of on-line respondents agreeing with the proposals for this Directorate where they involved one-off savings or use of reserves, efficiencies, and seeking funding from or **lowering subsidies to the NHS**. However, there was concern from some NHS organisations about the impact of the withdrawal or lowering of subsidies.

Many at the public meetings stressed the importance of getting the balance right between crisis management/protecting the most vulnerable on the one hand, and making sure that the agencies in the City work together better on **prevention activity** on the other.

Although more agreed than disagreed about the 'full year effect of **meals subsidy reduction**', a significant minority (27%) disagreed. There was some disquiet expressed at the public meetings because this might mean a valuable service being lost to vulnerable, elderly people.

Although a majority of on-line respondents agreed with the savings proposed in the **Supporting People** programme, there was strong opposition to this proposal at public meetings and concern about the long-term impact on specialist voluntary organisations. It was pointed out that users of the Supporting People programme need more than just advice; they need skilled workers to support them in implementing that advice. Supporting People providers, supported by many other organisations, submitted detailed evidence and arguments to show that their preventative services saved money in the long run and that the proposed cuts would affect frontline services and lead to an increase in homelessness and rough sleeping in the city.

There was a great deal of disquiet about the impact of proposals on the voluntary sector. Most of the written submissions from organisations and many from individuals were about the impact of decommissioning of a service provided by a voluntary organisation. They also emphasised that Council cuts could reduce the other external funding these organisations bring in.

On a number of occasions, questions were asked about the equality impact of the proposals and whether these were being undertaken. In addition, many stressed the importance of equality impact analyses needing to be more nuanced than the legal categories and the way multiple factors of disadvantage interact should be recognised.

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Adults and Communities	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
1. Adults and Communities Transformation Financing: savings by financing future capital spend in a new way. (Savings in 2013/14: £1.410m.)	A significant majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	48%	441
2. Reduction in directorate running costs as a result of the transfer of Public Health to the Council. (Savings in 2013/14: £1m.)	A large majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	58%	444
3. One off use of reserves. (Savings in 2013/14: £2.965m.)	A majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	35%	442
4. Alternative TeleCare financing: using Dept. of Health grants and capital receipts. (Savings in 2013/14: £1m.)	A large majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	58%	439
5. Full-year effect of Homecare restructuring: savings on salaries of those taking voluntary redundancy. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.500m.)	A majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	41%	434
6. Birmingham Contract mitigation: ending of mitigation payments to staff who lost out on the new Birmingham Contract. (Savings in 2013/14: £1.200m.)	Although more on-line respondents agreed than disagreed with this proposal, a quarter did disagree, perhaps reflecting the number of BCC staff responding to this survey.	27%	443
7. Additional use of NHS funds to support eligibility criteria: one-off increase in funds from the NHS to keep social care eligibility at 'critical and substantial'. (Savings in 2013/14: £3.185m.)	A large majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal for a large one-off saving.	62%	443

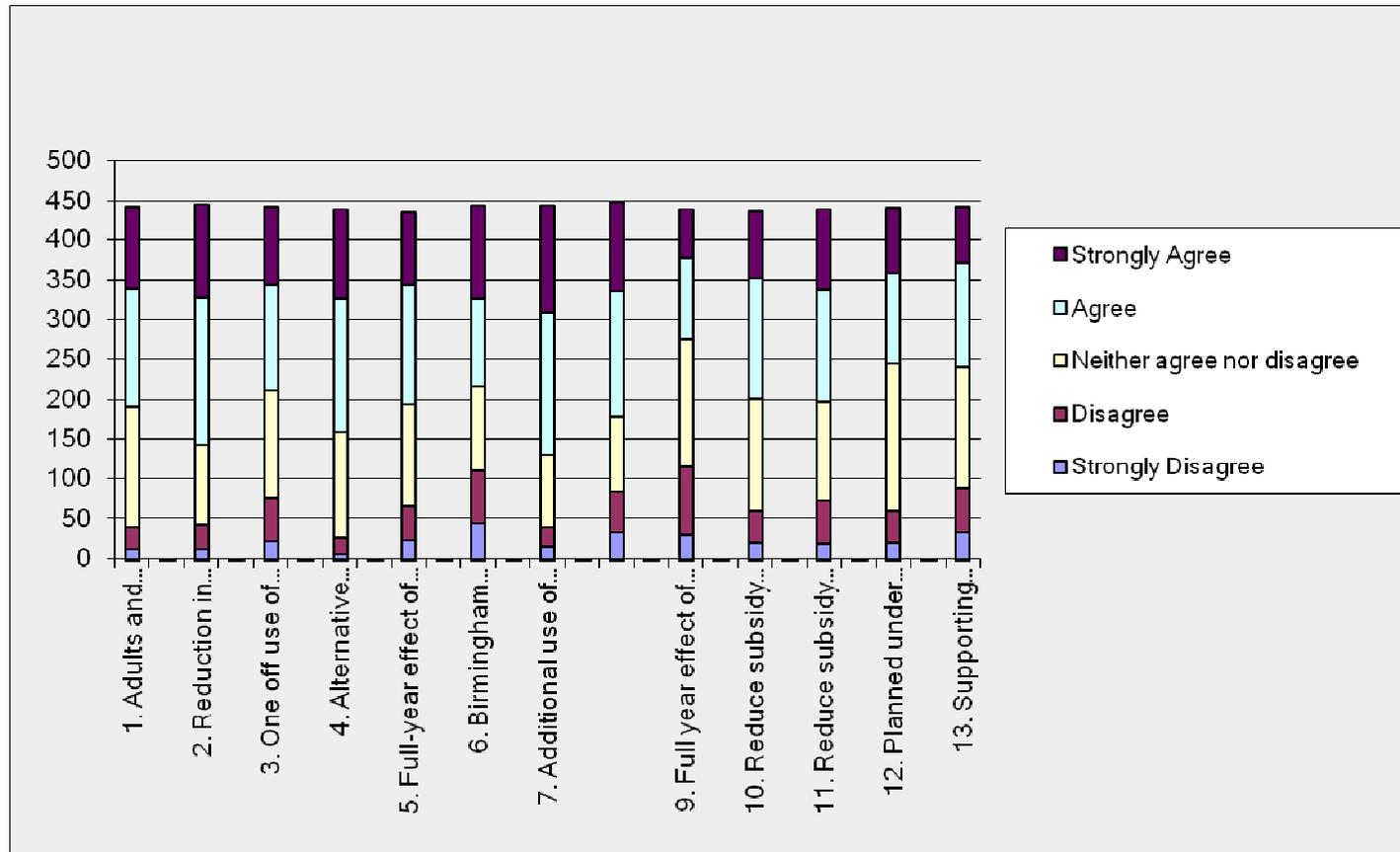
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Adults and Communities	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
8. Framework Contracts and Market Shaping for residential and home care: allowing more competitive pricing of contracted social care and enabling the development of new models of care which are affordable and sustainable, and providing an opportunity for not-for-profit organisations to enter Birmingham's care market. (Savings in 2013/14: £3.200m.)	A significant majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal. However, one written submission argued that insufficient information was provided on this initiative and it risked forcing down quality and closures of provision leaving vulnerable people without a service; an alternative approach was suggested.	42%	448
9. Full year effect of Meals subsidy reduction. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.400m.)	Although slightly more on-line respondents agreed than disagreed with this proposal, over a quarter disagreed. There was some disquiet expressed at the public meetings because this might mean a valuable service being lost to vulnerable, elderly people.	11%	439
10. Reduce subsidy for intermediate care at the Norman Power Centre: bringing NHS services there into line with agreements with other care centres. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.400m.)	A majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal. However, there was concern from some NHS organisations about the impact of the withdrawal or lowering of subsidies.	41%	435
11. Reduce subsidy to University Hospital Birmingham for delayed discharge schemes. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.500m.)	A majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal. However, there was concern from some NHS organisations about the impact of the withdrawal or lowering of subsidies.	39%	439
12. Planned under spend on third sector commissioning in 2012/13 one-off saving but keeping expenditure in the third sector as the most protected part of the Directorate's budget. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.225m.)	Although more on-line respondents agreed than disagreed with this proposal, a large proportion (42%) neither agreed nor disagreed, perhaps reflecting the suspicion expressed at public meetings that this might be a forerunner of cuts in third sector funding at a future date. This reading of the survey results is based upon the many contributors at public meetings who expressed concern about cuts to voluntary organisations. There	31%	440

Adults and Communities	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
	<p>was a real fear that specialist capacity that had been built up in this sector over many years might be lost. Specific reference was made to specialist capacity around disabilities, homelessness and victims of domestic violence.</p> <p>Most of the written submissions from organisations and many from individuals were about the impact of decommissioning of a service provided by a voluntary organisation. They also emphasised that Council cuts could reduce the other external funding these organisations bring in.</p> <p>A large cut for such organisations could mean that they closed down as they are not as large as the Council and do not have the same capacity to absorb cuts within their overheads and core costs.</p> <p>There was a high degree of concern at public meetings, particularly at the one targeted at people with disabilities, about the increased risk of the "safety net" for particularly vulnerable people breaking as a result of a combination of the Council cuts, savings from other agencies, and the various Welfare Benefit Reforms and Council Tax changes. Collaboration between the council, voluntary organisations and other service providers was seen as an essential counter to this.</p>		
<p>13. Supporting People: further 4% reduction in contract values and carrying forward of underspends. (Savings in 2013/14: £1.992m:)</p>	<p>Although slightly more on-line respondents agreed than disagreed with this proposal, over one third (35%) neither agreed nor disagreed, perhaps reflecting a lack of understanding of what was being proposed and a suspicion that this meant a cut in support to specialist voluntary organisations.</p> <p>Supporting People providers, supported by other organisations, submitted detailed evidence and arguments to show that their</p>	26%	442

Adults and Communities	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
	<p>preventative services saved money in the long run and that the proposed cuts would affect frontline services and lead to an increase in homelessness and rough sleeping in the city.</p> <p>A number of contributors, including those at the meeting targeted at people with disabilities, pointed out that organisations in the Supporting People programme worked with people with complex needs. They need more than just advice. They need skilled workers to help them and support them in implementing that advice.</p> <p>Many at the public meetings stressed the importance of getting the balance right between crisis management/protecting the most vulnerable on the one hand, and making sure that the agencies in the City work together better on prevention activity on the other.</p> <p>On a number of occasions, questions were asked about the equality impact of the proposals and whether these were being undertaken. In addition, many stressed the importance of equality impact analyses needing to be more nuanced than the legal categories and the way multiple factors of disadvantage interact should be recognised.</p>		



4.3 Children, Young People and Families

Key Points

Proposals for this Directorate were the most controversial in the public consultation. Three of the four negative balances in the on-line survey were recorded for this Directorate's proposals and they attracted many of the most impassioned and heated comments at the public meetings as well as many of the comments in the written submissions.

Voluntary sector: the cuts here received the largest negative balance of all proposals and they were strongly opposed at all the public meetings. Most of the written submissions from organisations and many from individuals were about the impact of decommissioning of a service provided by a voluntary organisation. Cuts here were described as 'disproportionate'. They also emphasised that Council cuts could reduce the other external funding these organisations bring in. Maintaining and continuing to build the capacity of these organisations, an area where Birmingham had made real positive strides in recent years, was seen as a real priority by consultees in the face of wider cuts in public spending and the welfare reforms. However, voluntary organisations also suggested a number of ways of delivering services differently to mitigate the effect of the cuts and were keen to be involved in constructive future discussions around coping with the financial challenges.

Vulnerable children, children in care, adoption and fostering: Much of the concern was around the impact of a number of the proposals on vulnerable children. The need to champion children in care was raised at a couple of meetings. While there was strong support for increasing adoptions and fostering, there was some concern that this could not be rushed without the quality of care suffering, particularly as the economic situation might be pushing some people into fostering without sufficient training. The closure of residential homes should not be rushed therefore.

The possibility of outsourcing the **parent partnership service** received a large number of opposing written submissions.

CAMHS: The proposed cuts to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) was opposed at some of the public meetings and received a significant negative balance of -18% in the on-line survey. Consultees argued that this was a false economy, with long term consequences for the lives and future health and wellbeing of users of CAMHS. Similar points were made in many of the written submissions including those from the Children's Hospital and the Social Work Action Network West Midlands.

Youth Offending Service: This was the third proposal to receive a significant negative balance (-24%) in the on-line survey. While direct reference was not made to this service in the public meetings, the many references to the impact on crime of cuts to youth services in general are relevant to this proposal.

Youth service: A significant feature of the public meetings was the large number of young people present at many of them with the closure of youth clubs being of great concern given the important role that they perform in improving work and life opportunities. The need to monitor and challenge the responsibilities and funding that schools have in these areas was acknowledged, as were the greater opportunities for linkages and co-ordination with other locally-based activities provided through the transfer of both of these services to the Local Services Directorate. (This issue is covered in greater depth under Local Services.)

Connexions and youth unemployment: There was great concern about the further cuts proposed to Connexions (careers) service expressed at every public meeting and concerns about the variable quality of the careers advice being provided by schools. The context of high and increasing level of youth unemployment in the City and the need for Council action here was stressed. The need for action by schools in this area was acknowledged.

Home to school transport: Although there was a significant positive balance in the online survey for this proposal, concern was reflected in written submissions particularly from schools.

Children's centres: Continuing concern at reduced funding here was expressed although there was a weak positive balance for this proposal in the on-line survey. Barnardo's wrote that the cuts were 'manageable'.

Role of schools: it was noted that schools now had responsibilities in areas that had been the responsibility of the Council directly and had had resources transferred to them, especially where they had converted to academies. While acknowledging the need for schools to provide good education to their pupils, many consultees wanted to see schools discharging their wider responsibilities to the city's young people and collaborating more closely with others to do so. Examples given included, restoring the Schools' Forum's funding to the Integrated Family Support Service and the Youth Service, providing careers advice and sharing the use of school buildings.

As for Adults and Communities, there were large or significant majorities of on-line respondents agreeing with the proposals where they involved one-off savings or use of reserves and efficiencies.

Children, Young People and Families	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
1. Voluntary Sector funding: reduction in funding for a range of services provided by voluntary	A significant majority (59%) of on-line respondents disagreed with this proposal, with more than a quarter strongly disagreeing. This	-33	448

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Children, Young People and Families	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
<p>organisations. Will affect more than 5,500 children. (Savings in 2013/14: £4.430m.)</p>	<p>viewpoint was well represented at the consultation meetings.</p> <p>Most of the written submissions from organisations and many from individuals were about the impact of decommissioning of a service provided by a voluntary organisation. Cuts here were described as 'disproportionate'. They also emphasised that Council cuts could reduce the other external funding these organisations bring in. Maintaining and continuing to build the capacity of these organisations, an area where Birmingham had made real positive strides in recent years, was seen as a real priority by consultees in the face of wider cuts in public spending and the welfare reforms.</p> <p>However, voluntary organisations also suggested a number of ways of delivering services differently to mitigate the effect of the cuts and were keen to be involved in constructive future discussions around coping with the financial challenges.</p> <p>Opposition to cuts in voluntary sector funding was strong at the public meetings. Consultees at the people with disabilities meeting felt that the Council had made great strides over the last ten years in accessing and working with vulnerable people via the voluntary sector. These positive changes should not be lost and barriers start to return as a result of the proposed cuts. The importance of continuing to build the capacity of specialist voluntary organisations and their support workers was emphasised, including the capacity to help young people access jobs, sports, housing etc. Support workers were crucial for many people with disabilities and special needs, in addition to advice, as support was needed to ensure that the advice was implemented. There was also a risk that other added value of voluntary organisations would be overlooked when making decisions about funding priorities. For example, Shopmobility helped break down social isolation as well as providing direct assistance with</p>		

Children, Young People and Families	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
	<p>shopping.</p> <p>Similar points were made at all the public meetings together with a stress on the importance of maintaining the preventative services provided by voluntary organisations which saved the public sector money in the long run.</p> <p>A 50% cut in funding for some voluntary organisations could mean that they closed down as they are not as large as the Council and do not have the same capacity to absorb cuts within their overheads and core costs.</p>		
<p>2. Teenage Pregnancy funding: integrating support to young women with an increased risk of becoming a teenage parent into the Integrated Family Support Teams. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.140m.)</p>	<p>A majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal although one quarter disagreed.</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>450</p>
<p>3. Remodelling and integration of preventative and targeted services: efficiencies through integration of the Education Welfare Services, Integrated Family Support Teams, Connexions, elements of the Children's Social Care and Children's Centre services configured around Council-managed Children's Centres. Also reducing number of children in care through offering alternatives to Local Authority care. (Savings in 2013/14:</p>	<p>A majority (57%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal although one quarter disagreed.</p>	<p>32</p>	<p>449</p>

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Children, Young People and Families	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
£3.312m.)			
4. Home to School Transport: applying new policies for students receiving home to school transport. These are currently being consulted upon. (Savings in 2013/14: £1m.)	A significant majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, although concern was reflected in written submissions particularly from schools. To quote: "It is imperative that before any proposed changes to a child's transport assistance each child's complexity of needs are comprehensively assessed when making transport assistance assessments."	40%	449
5. Children's residential homes: review of the Council's residential estate and other services for children in care (Savings in 2013/14: £1.600m.)	<p>A majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal although almost one quarter disagreed.</p> <p>The need to champion children in care was raised at a couple of the public meetings. While there was strong support for increasing adoptions and fostering, there was some concern that this could not be rushed without the quality of care suffering, particularly as the economic situation might be pushing some people into fostering without sufficient training. The closure of residential homes should not be rushed therefore.</p> <p>'I do not support closures in children's homes. Fostering is not an easy alternative, but extremely difficult and demanding. With the state of the economy as it is, people will be looking for possible jobs and income including fostering. However, they do not always have the background and training to become good foster parents and the children they foster may not get the support they need with long term consequences.'</p> <p>The importance of the advocacy service for children in care was raised at one public meeting and the vital link it provides for young people, particularly vulnerable young people, whose care is outsourced all over the country</p>	32%	446

Children, Young People and Families	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
6. Adoption: improvements in timescales for both children and prospective adopters and improve outcomes for children. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.100m.)	A very large majority (79%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with 47% strongly agreeing. However, the need to proceed with care on adoption and fostering was also raised at public meetings: see above.	72%	450
7. Disabled Children's services: staffing efficiencies with no impact on service users; review of the eligibility criteria for families to receive direct payments; better value for money from contracts for placements and reducing the number of disabled children in residential care by providing targeted support to families in need. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.500m.)	A significant majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	42%	449
8. Safeguarding and development service: efficiencies in support to Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board and related functions. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.250m.)	A majority (54%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	37%	443
9. Professional support services: efficiencies by bringing business support and admin activities under a single management structure.	Two thirds of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, far more than disagreed.	60%	447

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Children, Young People and Families	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
(Savings in 2013/14: £1.370m.)			
10. Customer First: review, and consolidation and simplification of arrangements for a range of customer referral and information enquiry services (Savings in 2013/14: £0.470m.)	Two thirds of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, far more than disagreed.	58%	440
11. Strategic support services: reducing staffing and non-staffing costs of teams supporting Governance and Policy, Commissioning, Information Management Team, and Customer Relations. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.675m.)	A significant majority (60%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	45%	441
12. Youth Offending Service: reductions in delivery of prevention work for young people who commit offences. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.400m.)	A majority (53%) of on-line respondents disagreed with this proposal, with one in five strongly disagreeing. While direct reference was not made to this service in the public meetings, the many references to the impact on crime of cuts to youth services in general are relevant to this proposal.	-24%	443
13. Rights and participation: redesign and budget reductions for service which: helps children become involved in decisions that may impact on their lives; and which provides advocacy for children in care and care leavers. (Savings in	Those agreeing/ strongly agreeing with this proposal were fairly evenly matched with those disagreeing/strongly disagreeing.	3%	441

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Children, Young People and Families	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
2013/14: £0.300m.)			
14. Parent partnerships: review and possibly out-source service for parents of children with special educational needs. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.0800m.)	Those agreeing/ strongly agreeing with this proposal were only slightly more than those disagreeing/strongly disagreeing. An objection was raised to this proposal at one of the public consultation meetings. This was also the proposal that attracted 567 virtually identical letters strongly opposing the out-sourcing of the service, pointing to its professionalism, responsiveness and quality, and praise for the service from OFSTED and national sources, all leading to 'high levels of parental confidence'.	8%	445
15. Child & adolescent mental health services (CAMHS): staffing efficiencies in service for children and adolescents with mental health difficulties. (Savings in 2013/14: £1.430m.)	Just short of half of on-line respondents were opposed to this proposal, a significantly larger proportion than those agreeing/strongly agreeing with it. This view was also reflected at the public meetings. It was argued that the proposed cuts to CAMHS will affect the most vulnerable. It is a false economy, as it will have long term consequences for their lives and future health and wellbeing. The cuts will mean their social needs will not be addressed. Similar points were made in many of the written submissions including those from the Children's Hospital and the Social Work Action Network West Midlands.	-18%	445
16. Connexions: focussing Council's resources on the most vulnerable young people over the age of 16 and those not in education employment or training. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.750m.)	Just short of half of on-line respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal but well over a quarter disagreed/strongly disagreed. This was also one of the major controversies at the public meetings, particularly given the large cuts the service has faced in previous years. While contributors at the public meetings acknowledged that schools now had the major responsibility in this area and that the Council only had limited statutory responsibilities, there was concern that the service commissioned by schools might be of variable quality	21%	446

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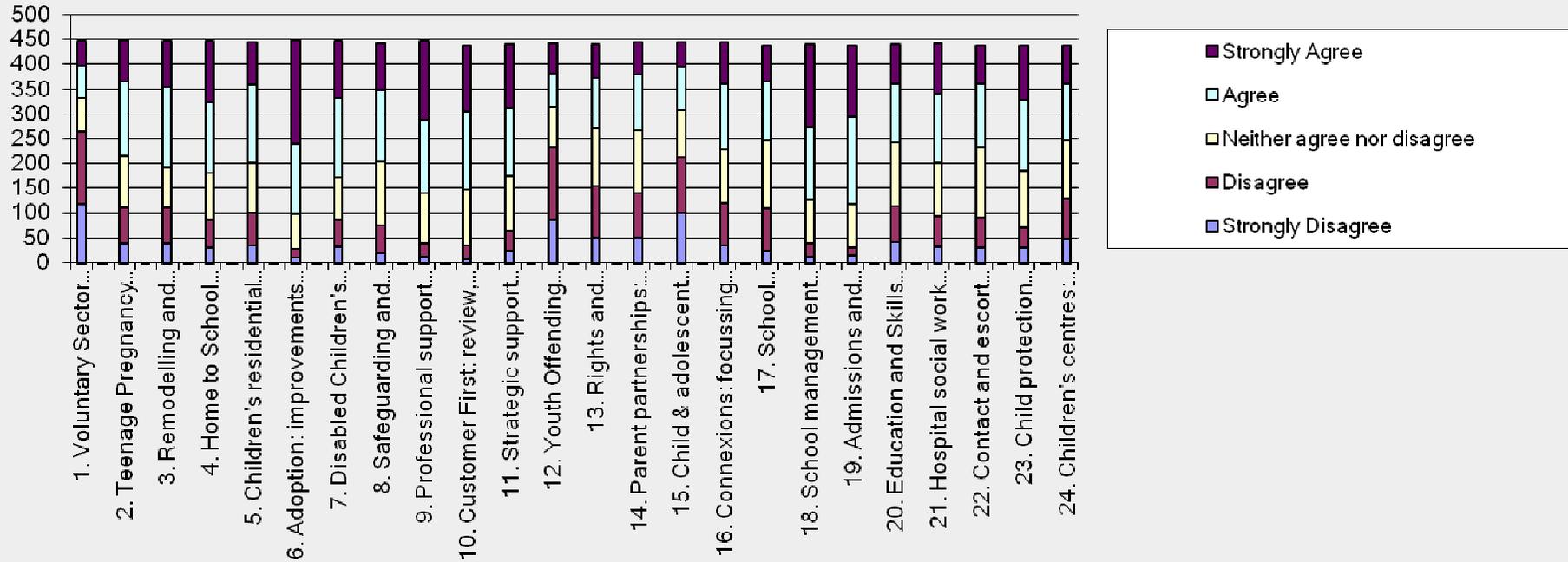
Children, Young People and Families	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
	<p>and that not enough resources would be available to maintain the required quality of the Council's statutory service.</p> <p>Concern over Connexions reflected a deeper concern about the need to take action over the high and increasing rates of youth unemployment in the city.</p>		
17. School settings/improvement: reduced level of service to provide with information needed to identify and provide support to vulnerable schools. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.500m.)	Under half (44%) of on-line respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal but a quarter disagreed/strongly disagreed.	19%	439
18. School management and governor support: schools will now meet the full cost of this (Savings in 2013/14: £0.039m.)	A large majority (71%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with 38% strongly agreeing.	62%	441
19. Admissions and appeals: efficiencies and greater use of web-based information and applications. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.150m.)	A large majority (73%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with 33% strongly agreeing.	66%	439
20. Education and Skills infrastructure: staff reductions in service which provides statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient, local, education provision for all young people and management of buildings, health and safety etc. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.820m.)	Under half (45%) of on-line respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal but a quarter disagreed/strongly disagreed.	19%	442

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Children, Young People and Families	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
21. Hospital social work team: moving social workers from hospitals to area based social work services. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.488m.)	A majority (54%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, but one in five disagreed/strongly disagreed.	33%	443
22. Contact and escort service: reduction in support and supervisory service for contact between parents and children in care as a result of a reduction in the number of children in care. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.333m.)	Under half (46%) of on-line respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal but one in five disagreed/strongly disagreed.	26%	438
23. Child protection specialist assessments: delivering court-commissioned assessments in child protection cases in house as far as possible. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.500m.)	A significant majority (57%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	41%	439
24. Children's centres: Reducing central budgets for non-core elements of provision (£2m) and budget reductions to centres taking into account deprivation levels. (Savings in 2013/14: £3m.)	Under half (44%) of on-line respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal but a little less than one third disagreed/strongly disagreed. Continuing concern at reduced funding here was expressed at consultation meetings and in written submissions. However, Barnardo's wrote that the cuts were 'manageable'.	14%	440

C3. Children, Young People and Families



4.4 Corporate resources

Key Points

On-line survey respondents were in favour by large majorities of the proposed savings proposals put forward by this directorate.

The impact of Welfare Reforms on the poorest was raised at most public meetings, together with a call for the Council to co-ordinate support in this area with the voluntary sector and others. The important role of Citizen Advice Bureaux was spelt out by some and the Council's Cabinet committed itself to see if they could be protected from closure.

The importance of maintaining work on integrating small communities, such as Eritreans and Somalis, into wider society was made at one meeting, including around issues of education, gender, language and disability. This linked with an underlying theme of many contributions that Birmingham was a very diverse city and that the Council had an important role in promoting equality of opportunities for all.

Some consultees insisted that the transfer of assets to the community should be done properly and at sensible and sustainable rate.

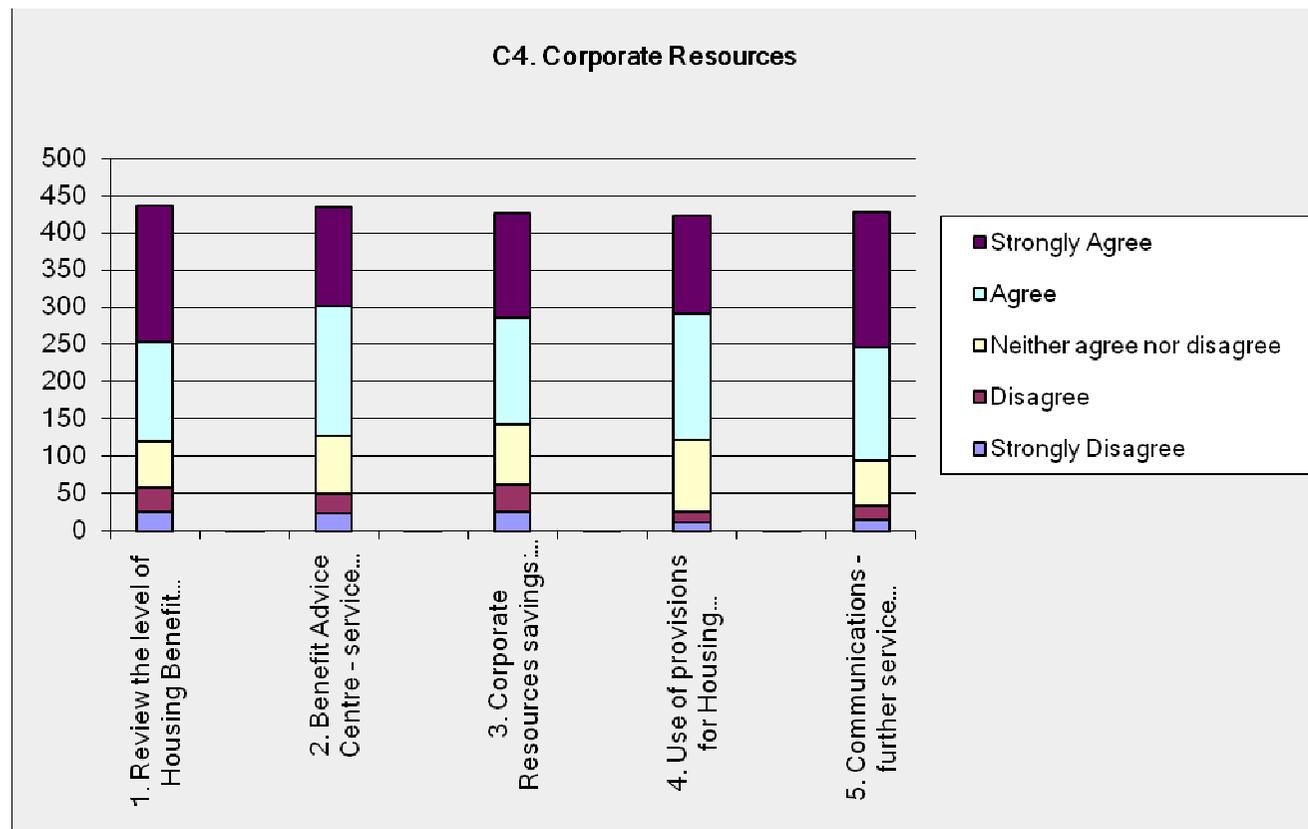
C4 Corporate Resources	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
1. Review the level of Housing Benefit payments to claimants in properties that are exempt from the Local Housing Allowance: discontinue discretionary payments above the Local Housing Allowance for landlords affecting almost 600 homes. (Savings in 2013/14: £1.250m.)	A large majority (73%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with 42% strongly agreeing. However, the RNIB urged caution in its written submission: "What checks will the council put in place and what procedure will be put in place to ensure that vulnerable people that require supported accommodation will continue to receive the support and care that they need? Will reducing the budget mean that some people that require services will not receive them because the budget has been set at a certain level? We believe that the services available should be based on the individuals need alone."	60%	436
2. Benefit Advice Centre – service redesign: new structure of Benefit Advice Team. (Savings in	A large majority (71%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	60%	435

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C4 Corporate Resources	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
2013/14: £0.250m.)	<p>Nevertheless, the impact of Welfare Reforms on the poorest was raised at most public meetings, together with a call for the Council to co-ordinate support in this area with the voluntary sector and others.</p> <p>'A typical comment was: 'Welfare Reform, Universal Credits and Bedroom Tax; all of these will be affecting me. I do not mind downsizing but it will take time and it will be hard to find extra money to pay the landlord in the meantime. How will the Council help and will there be a safety net for me if and when I get myself in debt, as I cannot afford the payments from benefits?'</p> <p>The important role of Citizen Advice Bureaux was spelt out by some in this context, and the Council's Cabinet committed itself to see if they could be protected from closure. In addition, the RNIB argues that disabled people will be even more in need of advice when the new arrangements are introduced.</p>		
3. Corporate Resources savings: staffing/ non-staffing cost savings in admin and support services provided across the Council. (Savings in 2013/14: £3.325m.)	Two thirds of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, far more than disagreed. Some consultees raised the amount of money spent on agency and temporary cover staff as an area where savings should be sought. The Cabinet responded that this was being done except where specialist skills were needed with a degree of urgency.	53%	426
4. Use of provisions for Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit Subsidy reimbursements from national Goyt: one-off saving. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.600m.)	A large majority (71%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	65%	423
5. Communications - further service redesign: completion of current redesign and ceasing publication of fortnightly Jobs4U.	A very large majority (79%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with 43% strongly agreeing.	70%	427

C4 Corporate Resources	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
(Savings in 2013/14: £0.300m.)			



4.5 Development and Culture

Key Points

All of this Directorate's proposals except that around the BRIDGE programme for staff had a majority of support, reflecting a similar preference across all Directorates for savings to be made through efficiencies, attracting other funding or income and one-off savings.

There was also a request at many meetings that Council staff be treated fairly and with respect and consideration when redundancy and restructuring proposals were being implemented.

Opposition to cutting the Shelforce business which employs people with disabilities featured at a number of public meetings, with the Cabinet responding that the Council would be increasing employment of people with disabilities so that their proportion in the Council workforce reflected their proportion in the city.

The importance of seeking external funding and working closely with the Local Enterprise Partnership to create new jobs was discussed at some of the public meetings.

Providing help to young people to find work was seen as a high priority amongst many attendees at consultation meetings

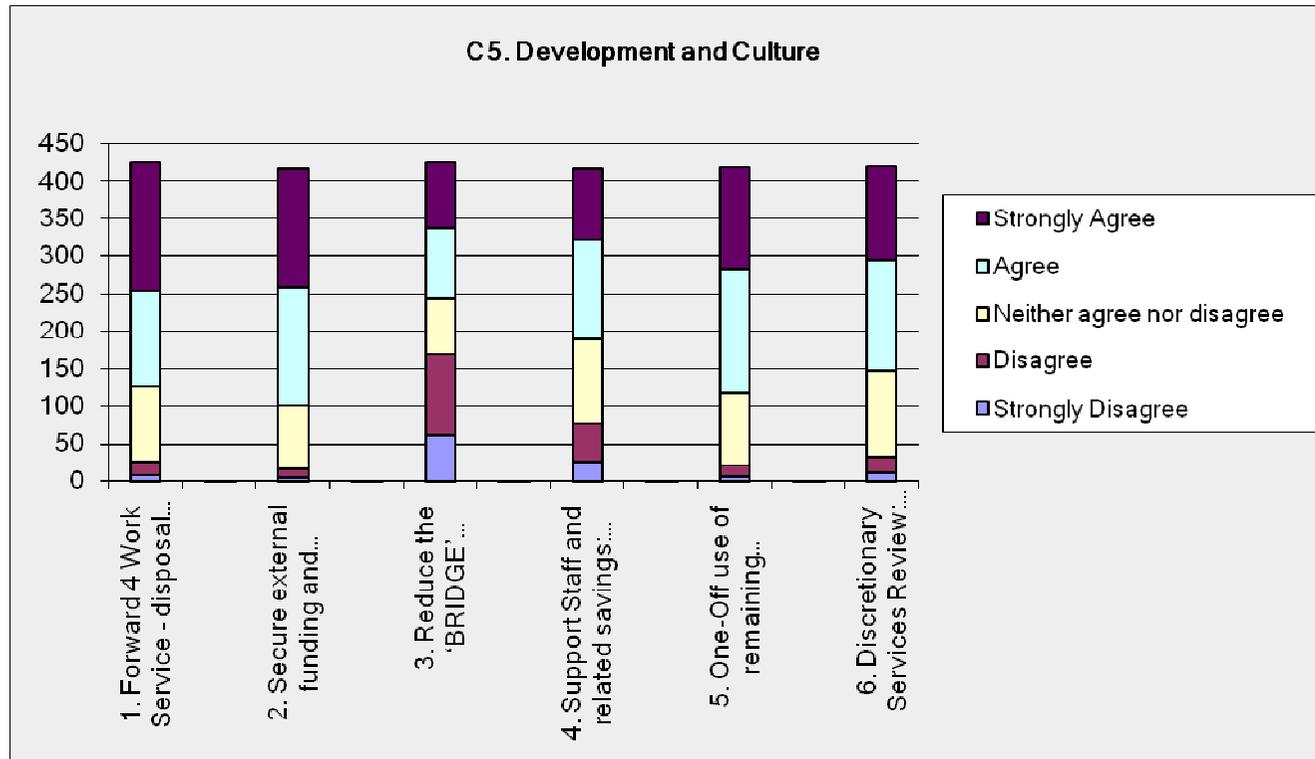
Development and Culture	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
1. Forward 4 Work Service - disposal of lease of the Inkerman St Building. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.060m.)	A large majority (70%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with 40% strongly agreeing. Opposition to cutting the Shelforce business which employs 81 people with disabilities featured at a number of public meetings, with the Cabinet responding that the Council would be increasing employment of people with disabilities so that their proportion in the Council workforce reflected their proportion in the city.	64%	426

Development and Culture	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
	Other Council jobs would be sought for current Shelforce employees.		
2. Secure external funding and recover our associated staffing costs: (Savings in 2013/14: £0.345m.)	A very large majority (76%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with 38% strongly agreeing.	72%	417
3. Reduce the 'BRIDGE' programme that helps city council employees at risk of redundancy find jobs with other employers: (Savings in 2013/14: £0.195m.)	Those agreeing/ strongly agreeing with this proposal were fairly evenly matched with those disagreeing/strongly disagreeing, perhaps reflecting the large number of BCC staff responding to the survey. At a number of the public meetings the importance of treating Council staff fairly and with respect and consideration when redundancy and restructuring proposals were being implemented was stressed.	3%	426
4. Support Staff and related savings: rationalisation of staffing and other costs for service support. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.687m.)	A majority (55%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal.	36%	417
5. One-Off use of remaining Development Directorate balances: one-off use of unspent 2011-12 budget. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.550m.)	A large majority (71%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with one third strongly agreeing.	66%	419

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Development and Culture	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
<p>6. Discretionary Services Review: review of services provided ensuring that resources are used to make the most strategic difference and benefit the greatest number of people. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.300m.)</p>	<p>Almost two thirds of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, far more than disagreed.</p> <p>Providing help to young people to find work was seen as a high priority amongst many attendees at consultation meetings.</p> <p>Arts and culture seen as important by a number of consultees, making a major contribution to Council priorities including investment in the city. Birmingham Arts Partnership in its written submission recognises the severity of financial challenge and is keen to collaborate in discussions on change and innovative forms of funding.</p>	<p align="center">57%</p>	<p align="center">421</p>



4.6 Local services

Key Points

As for other Directorates, there were large or significant majorities of on-line respondents agreeing with the proposals where they involved one-off savings or the use of reserves, additional income generation, external funding and efficiencies.

There was significant opposition to a reduction in **street cleaning** in the on-line survey which broadly balanced those who agreed with the two proposals here. However, other cuts in environmental maintenance and floral decorations received stronger support.

Wheelie bins: There was strong support in the on-line survey for the government grant which would help introduce a new service model for waste collection, but fears were raised at public meetings re whether this meant privatisation and foisting wheelie bins on all residents. It was clarified that this did not necessarily mean the privatisation of waste collection services and that there would be consultation on the introduction of the new service model so that the specific needs of different parts of the city were addressed.

Community Play and Development: Those agreeing/ strongly agreeing with this proposal (44%) to cease these services were only slightly more than those disagreeing/strongly disagreeing (35%).

The Library of Birmingham: Strong support for spending less on the opening ceremony in the on-line survey. Contributors at public meetings also questioned the amount spent on large capital projects of this nature. On the other hand, other contributors spoke up strongly for libraries, some suggesting they be used more as hubs for other community services. There was also a call for swimming baths to be reopened.

Youth Services: A significant feature of the public meetings was the large number of vocal, young people present. The closure of youth clubs was of great concern with eloquent contributions by young people on the important role that they perform in improving work and life opportunities. The need to monitor and challenge the responsibilities and funding that schools have in these areas was acknowledged, as were the greater opportunities for linkages and co-ordination with other locally-based activities provided through the transfer of both of these services to the Local Services Directorate.

Community Safety: Although a small majority of on-line respondents supported the proposals for reductions in these services, a significant minority disagreed.

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Local services	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
1. Fleet and Waste Management Services (FWM) – New Future Service Model: review and improvement of service following the allocation of £29.8m of resources from national government to maintain weekly collections for the next 5 years. (Savings in 2013/14: £6.570m.)	A very large majority (79%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with 46% strongly agreeing. However, at the public meetings concern was raised that accepting this grant meant privatisation and that introducing wheelie bins a part of this service change would cause problems for people living in terraced houses and in conservation areas such as Bournville Village. It was clarified that this did not necessarily mean the privatisation of waste collection services and that there would be consultation on the introduction of a new service model so that the specific needs of different parts of the city were addressed.	70%	434
2. FWM – Review current Street Cleansing levels – City Centre: likely reduction in level of street cleaning. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.220m.)	Those agreeing/ strongly agreeing with this proposal were fairly evenly matched with those disagreeing/strongly disagreeing, reflecting a polarisation of opinion rather than indifference as those neither agreeing nor disagreeing were a relatively low percentage (15%) compared with this category in other questions.	4%	434
3. FWM - Reduce Street Cleansing – Mechanical Sweeping. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.320m.)	Those agreeing/ strongly agreeing with this proposal were fairly evenly matched with those disagreeing/strongly disagreeing, the latter having a slight edge. This again reflected a polarisation of opinion rather than indifference as those neither agreeing nor disagreeing were a relatively low percentage (18%) compared with this category in other questions.	-1%	435
4. Parks & Highways – Nursery and Floral Services: reducing operating costs and selling services to other local authorities. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.383m.)	Almost two thirds of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, although one fifth disagreed/ strongly disagreed.	46%	429
5. Highways Horticulture: reduction in grass cutting and	A significant majority (59%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly	33%	432

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Local services	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
floral decorations. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.225m.)	agreed with this proposal, but one quarter disagreed/strongly disagreed.		
6. Highways – Review and optimise current Maintenance levels. (Savings in 2013/14: £1.250m.)	A significant majority (61%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, but one in five disagreed/strongly disagreed.	42%	430
7. Car Parking Service review: measures to increase income and reduce overheads. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.100m.)	A significant majority (59%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, but one in five disagreed/strongly disagreed.	38%	433
8. Events - increased net income: (Savings in 2013/14: £0.050m.)	A large majority (70%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with very few disagreeing.	66%	427
9. Strategic Library - Library of B'ham: reduce the scale of opening festival for new Library. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.200m.)	A very large majority (83%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with 56% strongly agreeing. This corresponded with the contributors at public meetings who questioned the amount spent on large capital projects of this nature. On the other hand, other contributors at the public meetings spoke up strongly for libraries. One suggested that they could be defended financially in neighbourhoods by using them more as hubs for other community services. There was also a call for swimming baths to be reopened.	76%	433
10. Community Play and Development: ceasing service, primarily grants to the voluntary sector and their management (Savings in 2013/14: £0.500m.)	Those agreeing/ strongly agreeing with this proposal (44%) were only slightly more than those disagreeing/strongly disagreeing (35%).	9%	425

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Local services	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
11. Building Support Services - Porters, curators & security - reduced provision: (Savings in 2013/14: £0.200m.)	Just under half (48%) of on-line respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal but a little less than one quarter disagreed/strongly disagreed.	26%	427
12. Local Services Directorate - Vacancy Management: delaying recruitment. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.500m.)	A significant majority (58%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, with less than one in six disagreeing/strongly disagreeing.	43%	424
13. Public Protection & Licensing: increasing income generation of a range of services including Trading Standards. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.631m.)	A large majority (68%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with only one in ten disagreeing.	56%	427
14. Redesign of Customer Services: efficiencies (in the Contact Centre as well) including greater use of the internet. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.459m.)	A large majority (72%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with only one in ten disagreeing.	62%	430
15. New Support Service Structure for District Quadrants: efficiencies in supporting the new District Committees and delivery of Business Support Services. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.300m.)	A significant majority (58%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, with a low proportion, less than one in fourteen, disagreeing/strongly disagreeing.	51%	420

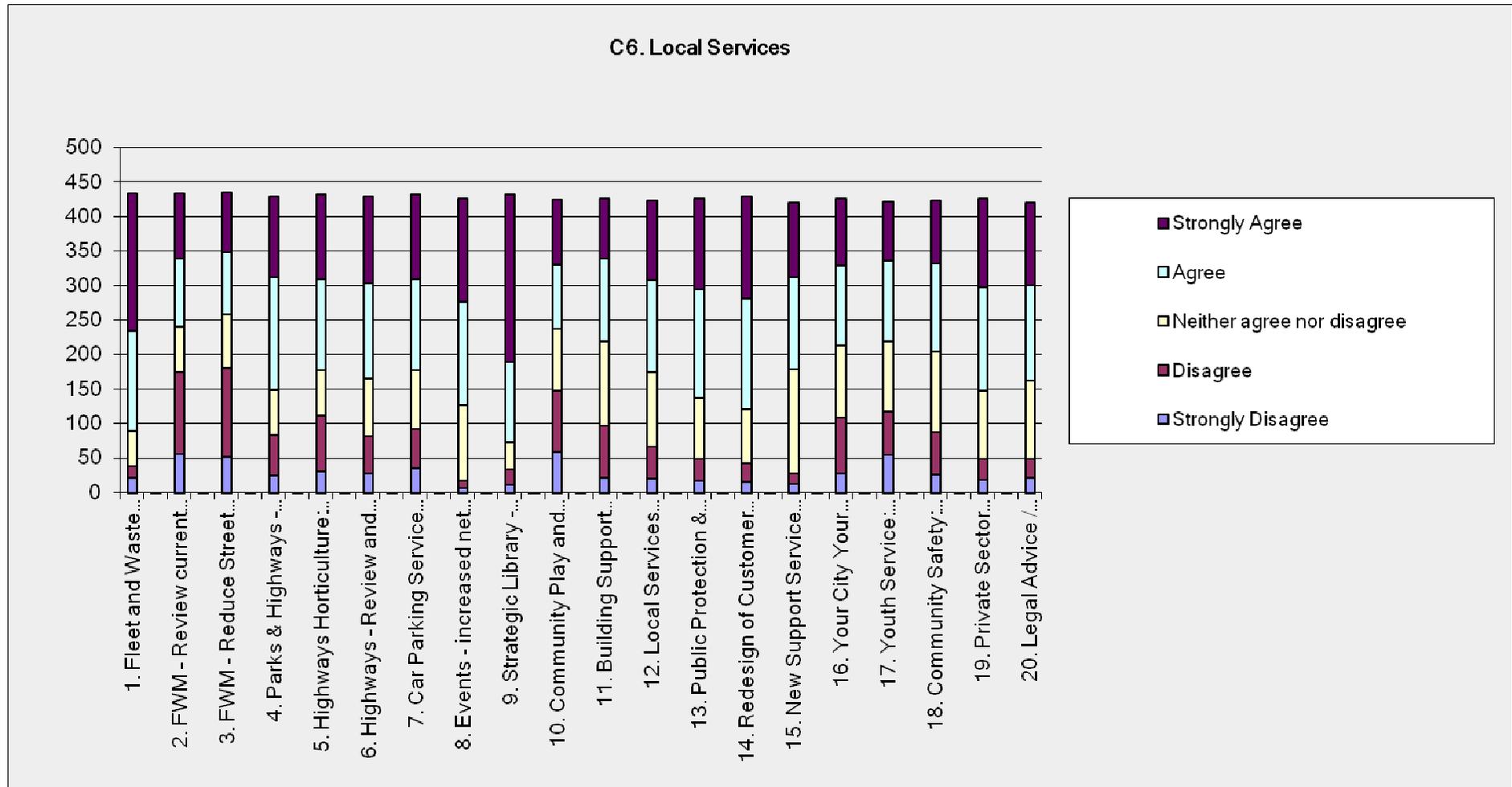
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Local services	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
16. Your City Your Birmingham: ending of additional levels of cleaning. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.527m.)	Marginally under a half agreed/strongly disagreed with this proposal with one quarter disagreeing/strongly disagreeing.	24%	426
17. Youth Service: reorganisation and efficiencies. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.470m.)	<p>Under half (48%) of on-line respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal although this was more than the 28% (over one quarter) who disagreed/strongly disagreed.</p> <p>A significant feature of almost all the public meetings was the large number of vocal, young people present as well as people who worked with young people. Impassioned and eloquent pleas not to close youth clubs were made by a large number of young contributors to the meetings. The important role that Youth Services perform in improving work and life opportunities for young people was also an area of great concern.</p> <p>The need to monitor and challenge the responsibilities and funding that schools have in these areas was acknowledged, as were the greater opportunities for linkages and co-ordination with other locally-based activities provided through the transfer of both of these services to the Local Services Directorate. It was noted that the Schools Forum had cut the £1m it provided to Youth Services in next year's budget and some contributors called for a campaign to reverse this decision.</p>	20%	422
18. Community Safety: savings by reviewing existing services. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.117m.)	A small majority (52%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, but one in five disagreed/strongly disagreed.	31%	424
19. Private Sector Housing: new service delivery model and	Almost two-thirds of on-line respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this proposal with only one in ten disagreeing.	54%	426

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Local services	Comments	Balance %	Number of respondents
savings on provision of temporary accommodation. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.526m.)			
20. Legal Advice / Entitlement: savings through management of existing contracts for independent legal advice. (Savings in 2013/14: £0.37m.)	A large majority (62%) of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal with only one in ten disagreeing.	50%	420



5. Alternatives

Key Points

Many contributors to the public meetings suggested that the Council should set a needs-based, deficit budget. The Leader and Cabinet explained that they would not be doing this as it was illegal and would lead to central government taking over, but that they were lobbying the Government to reduce the cuts substantially.

The written submission from Supporting People providers asked for Council contracting mechanisms to be simplified with a shift towards contracting on outcomes rather than inputs.

Alternative ways of meeting the funding gap suggested were:

- Borrowing and reducing capital projects.
- Selling assets including remaining shares in the airport.
- More sub-contracting or joint investment with the voluntary sector. For example, Friends of Parks could play a bigger role in maintenance and greater use could be made of self-funded organisations such as St John's Ambulance.
- Integration of services across Directorates.
- More attention to income raising possibilities.
- Learning from other service providers such as the NHS.
- Seeking donations from local people and businesses.
- A local lottery.
- Coordinating funding bids.
- Sharing buildings and other infrastructure.

Setting a Needs-Based Deficit Budget

Much of the debate – and much of it heated - at the public meetings was around how best the Council and the people of Birmingham could campaign against the Government imposed cuts. A number of contributors to the discussion stated that the cuts would impact the most on the poor and the vulnerable and that civil unrest could be a real consequence. Reference was made to how local authorities were having to make much larger cuts than central government departments and that Birmingham, along with other major cities, was having to make much larger percentage cuts than other Councils. Impassioned calls were made for the Council to set a deficit/needs based budget and for the cabinet to lead a campaign against the cuts.

The Leader and the Cabinet explained that it was illegal to set a deficit budget and that if attempts were made to do so, then central government would take over making much worse cuts. The Council was campaigning against the unfairness and impact of the cuts and called on citizens of Birmingham to join in this campaign. A joint letter has been sent to the Local Government Minister signed by all the Leaders of England's large, core cities.

Borrowing and reducing capital commitments

A suggestion was made that the Council borrow to cover the deficit. Linked to this was a suggestion that it reduced its large capital projects, thereby reducing its borrowings and interest payments. It was explained that the Council had had to increase its borrowing to cover the Equal Pay award. This would cost £75m a year in interest and repayments by

2015. As a result the Council had had to review its capital programme and stop or delay projects that were not already committed.

Possibility of Local Donations

Some attendees were prepared to donate or pay more for services to continue while others were concerned about the impact of increases in Council Tax on personal incomes.

Other income and learning from others

Birmingham South Central Clinical Commissioning Group suggested that the Council should think more about income raising possibilities. It also asked: "The NHS has utilised a QIPP (Quality, Innovation, Prevention & Productivity) approach to seeking savings, aiming to deliver more, higher quality services at reduced cost. Has the Local Authority followed such a process in a systematic way?"

A Local Lottery:

Could a Birmingham Lottery be set up to raise income? The response was that the Council has looked into the possibility of running Birmingham Lottery. It has sought expressions of interest and information on the order of income likely to be raised and the costs. Nothing concrete has come back. All of the companies that would have tendered have advised that they consider set up costs of a local lottery to be prohibitive. However, the dialogue will continue.

Identifying and Securing Funding in Partnership

It was suggested that the Council should work with the voluntary sector and service providers to identify other sources of funding, coordinating and supporting bids. It could also lead lobbying of funding bodies such as the Lottery, Trusts and Foundations.

Sharing Buildings and Other Infrastructure

A further way of saving resources was for public sector bodies, including schools, to share the use of their buildings and other infrastructure. In addition, it was suggested that savings could be made if the Children Young People & Families and Adults & Communities Directorates came together on some service provision.

Changing the Council's Contracting Mechanisms: Focussing on Outcomes

The written submission from Supporting People providers asked for Council contracting mechanisms to be simplified with a shift towards contracting on outcomes rather than inputs. This was seen as a real way to 'minimise the impact of the proposed cuts on service users and prevent a number of services from closure or severely reduced capacity.' Such an approach was also advocated at the consultation with voluntary organisations held at the BVSC.

Business Rate payers

Many of the points made above were also raised at the business rate payers' consultation meeting. Attendees questioned the Leader in detail about whether savings had been considered on staff salaries, maximising Council Tax collections, selling off surplus property especially empty shops, reducing payments to precept authorities, scope for further reducing operational costs and joint delivery with other local authorities.

6. Future Service Provision

Key Points

For on-line survey respondents high priority future services are protecting vulnerable citizens, community safety, youth services, refuse collection and creating and helping people into jobs.

Welfare services were not seen as a high priority by many respondents to the survey and physical infrastructure was seen as being less important than people delivering services to other people.

There is a well of willingness to volunteer amongst Birmingham's citizens that could be tapped into.

As a forerunner of the consultations that will be needed in future years around what services the City Council will need to decommission (i.e. stop delivering) in order to close its funding gap, the on-line survey trialled two questions:

1. Which five of the following Council services would you *least* like to see savings made? (I.e. most like to see protected from further cuts.)
2. Which five of the following Council services would you *most* like to see savings made? (I.e. are you least worried about protecting.)

The seven services receiving the most responses to each question are shown in the two tables below. It is clear that protecting vulnerable citizens is a high priority as are community safety, youth services, refuse collection and creating and helping people into jobs.

Welfare services were not seen as a high priority by many respondents to the survey and physical infrastructure was seen as being less important than people delivering services to other people.

This is a fairly crude assessment. Some respondents pointed out that the list of services was too restrictive and that they could not use it to identify the services that were most precious to them, such as Supporting People.

Which five of the following Council services would you <i>least</i> like to see savings made?	Numbers	Percentage of 455 respondents
1. Disabilities & mental health support for children & adults	277	61%
2. Child protection & family support	276	61%
3. Older people's services	192	42%
4. Community safety: services to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour	160	35%
5. Youth Services	138	30%
6. Refuse collection and recycling	135	30%
7. Services to create jobs and help people into	125	27%

Which five of the following Council services would you <i>least</i> like to see savings made?	Numbers	Percentage of 455 respondents
jobs		

Which five of the following Council services would you <i>most</i> like to see savings made?	Numbers	Percentage of 429 respondents
1. Benefits & other welfare services	203	47%
2. Town halls, museums & our heritage	162	38%
3. Leisure centres & sports development	154	36%
4. Subsidies for local bus and community transport services	137	32%
5. Physical regeneration to improve the environment	134	31%
6. Parks & nature reserves	131	31%
7. Libraries	129	30%

A range of similar questions were asked at the two ORS meetings. At these, the following services were identified as most important:

- Create jobs and support new business
- Child protection
- Care of the elderly
- Education standards
- Disabled and mental health services
- Refuse and recycling
- Basic janitorial services such as street cleansing, road and pavement maintenance
- Bin collections
- Libraries.

The least important services suggested were:

- German market
- Libraries – the majority don't use them
- Wholesale market; it's an asset you could sell and it ought to be run by private enterprise
- Voluntary sector
- Any golf courses although I understand these are going
- Wheelie bins aren't important round my way.

Different ways of delivering services

Many general ideas were put forward on delivering services differently, for less but better, in written submissions and in a specific open question in the questionnaire. These have been

summarised in the previous section on alternatives. A key point was that there would need to be far greater emphasis on strategic partnerships and collaboration across and between the public, private and third sectors. As pointed out at the voluntary sector consultation meeting and in the written submission from the CAB, such partnership working could take into account the 63% of Council funding that is not controllable as it is also used to commission service delivery from non-Council bodies.

Finally, this section of the on-line questionnaire asked 'On a scale of 1 to 5, how willing would you be to take on more responsibility for what happens in your neighbourhood?' 1 being the **least** willing and 5 being the **most** willing?' Responses suggested that there is a well of willingness to volunteer amongst Birmingham's citizens that could be tapped into (see table below).

1 - Least willing	2	3	4	5 - Most willing	Rating Average	Response Count
35	39	156	135	87	3.44	452
8%	9%	35%	30%	19%		

A similar discussion on local people being more involved in delivering local services took place at the ORS meetings where the following points were made:

- *It's a good idea but it may be difficult to implement in practice...would they be able to get enough people involved.*
- *A large proportion of people will only do something if they are forced to do so.*
- *I tried to set up an organisation and leafleted 500-600 houses. I got in the order of 15 minutes. People are not interested in putting in the time to give to the community.*
- *It's largely down to the people themselves and they're not interested...there's a lot of apathy.*
- *My daughter tried to volunteer but she was told she couldn't as they didn't have what she wanted to do in our local area.*

7. Future Consultation

Key Points

Participatory budgeting methods should be looked at for future consultations on budgetary matters. Responses from organisations showed a keenness to be involved in discussions and planning radical new ways of delivering services.

More thought needs to be given to providing information on budget proposals in ways that are meaningful and that are accessible by all.

Dialogue should continue beyond the formal end date for consultation on the 2013/14 budget proposals because most residents had not absorbed how bad things are and the stark choices the city faced.

Meetings should also be held in areas with high Black and Asian populations next time.

Views were sought on improvement that could be made in the consultation process and, in particular, ways to have a more participative and in depth consultation process on the difficult decisions on service provision in future years.

During the public meetings, there was some criticism expressed that the consultation process was not a fully consultative one. A point was also raised as to why meetings were not being held in areas with high Black and Asian populations.

At the meeting targeted at people with disabilities, serious concerns were voiced that service users had not been included directly in the consultation process. From the users' viewpoint, it was advised that the proposals were not broken down sufficiently, so that the impacts were fully clear. It was suggested that consultation documents should be in a variety of easy to read and tailored formats, especially for those that need access to technology for communication at the same time as recognising that many other vulnerable users do not use I.T. Some also needed support to comment on proposals. Similar points were made in a number of written submissions.

There was also major concern expressed at this meeting that services would be cut before users and providers were aware of the changes. One attendee thought that the 'average Brummie' does not yet understand how bad things are, nor realise the stark choices that have to be made. This reinforces the need for information on the current proposals to continue to be given and for on-going and deeper consultation. Dialogue should continue beyond the formal end date for consultation on the 2013/14 budget proposals.

Participatory Budgeting Techniques

A number of consultees suggested that the Council look at participatory budgeting methods as pioneered in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Cabinet Members accepted that these methods should be looked at for the future.

Many of the organisations submitting written responses were keen to engage in detailed discussions on radical options for new ways of delivering essential services and outcomes to Birmingham's vulnerable citizens over future years. Supporting People providers stressed that this should be done collectively.

8. Other points raised during the consultation

Key Points

Prevention services should not be cut as that means greater needs and costs later. There needs to be a balance with services addressing immediate needs.

Equality impact analysis needs to be more nuanced than the legal categories and the way multiple factors interact should be recognised. This linked with an underlying theme of many contributions that Birmingham was a very diverse city and that the Council had an important role in promoting equality of opportunities for all.

There was a need to be alert to the interaction of Welfare Reforms with the cuts in Council services.

Concern expressed at the costs of outsourcing services which could be more expensive and less effective. Were major private contractors being asked to contribute to the required savings?

There were a number of other points made that do not fit neatly under the other section headings of this report:

- None of the services provided by Adults & Communities and Children Young People & Families should not be got rid of at all.
- Equality impact analysis was important but there needed to be a more detailed appreciation about equality impact than the broad, legal categories. For example, there are no specific services for people with visual impairment within Adult and Communities. In addition, many people had a combination of disabilities. This linked with an underlying theme of many contributions that Birmingham was a very diverse city and that the Council had an important role in promoting equality of opportunities for all.
- Many vulnerable people might appear independent, but nonetheless have a range of perhaps more hidden dependency conditions. These are likely to result in them being adversely affected in multiple ways when faced with a particular event or crisis. Additionally, vulnerable people do not fall neatly into particular boxes. The triage process utilised by Warwickshire for assessing vulnerable people was advised as being a better system than tick boxes for identifying the multiple impacts arising from disabilities.
- Prevention activities were considered as being necessary to avoid matters escalating and generating further needs. It is critically important to have the right balance between preventative services and crisis management for vulnerable adults and young people. In areas such as autism, early support can both reduce the impact of a later event and create massive savings right down the line. The Council, the NHS and other agencies need to work together on creating that framework.
- There were major concerns expressed by service providers, users and carers at the meeting about the combined impact of the cuts and imminent welfare benefit / Council Tax changes on vulnerable people and their families. Would there be a

sufficient safety net through the Council and other provision to catch the people who may have a multiplicity of disabilities; not all of them visible?

- Concern was expressed in a written submission that insufficient attention was being paid to the risk that some cuts would be undeliverable leading to emergency cuts being introduced without consultation.
- Concern that outsourcing Council services was funding more expensive, less effective provision and the profits of private companies was raised at a number of meetings and in many written submissions and answers to open ended questions in the questionnaire. Questions were asked about whether companies such as Capita and Service Birmingham were contributing to the savings required.

APPENDIX I

Responses from Organisations

No.	Organisation name	Topics Covered
1	Barnardo's	"The funding cuts made to the Voluntary Sector as a whole are entirely disproportionate to cuts made elsewhere within the plan." Reduction in funding to Children's centres is manageable and working with them remains a priority for Barnardo's. Commission more work from third sector with more joint investment and commissioning and possible merger between projects such as the two below.
1a	Barnardo's ARCH Project	Details of projects achievements and what will be lost if decommissioned.
1b	Barnardo's Amazon Project	Details of projects achievements and what will be lost if decommissioned.
2	16+ Care Leavers' Mental Health Service	Details of organisation's achievements and what will be lost if decommissioned.
3	Midland Heart	"The value of strategic partnerships with providers will be crucial in order to deliver a very tough agenda. As a key partner, we therefore welcome working with you to help deliver the strategy moving forward." Need more mention of closer working between health and BCC. Supports protecting preventative work and that of Supporting People. More flexible contracts needed, encouragement of innovation and alternative financing methods such as social impact bonds. Yes to prolonging independence, preventative work and the Living Wage but the latter will need to be reflected in contract values.
4	St Basil's	Endorses Supporting People providers' response. Early intervention should be maintained to prevent later problems and costs emerging. Impacts of funding reductions cross-cut for those reliant on multiple services so need cross-cutting, collaborative and radical working between agencies. Change cost-inflating Council contractual methods and focus on outcomes, open book and joint investment approaches to prevent increase in youth homelessness.
5	Birmingham Children's Hospital	Level of funding withdrawal from CAMHS will significantly impact service provision. (Details on impact given in an appendix.) Request to refer to Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Concern about proposal to withdraw hospital social work team and at impact of other cuts on multi-agency preventative work.

No.	Organisation name	Topics Covered
6	Birmingham Arts Partnership	Represents all major arts companies and venues in central Birmingham. Arts and culture make a major contribution to Council priorities including investment in the city. Recognises severity of financial challenge and keen to collaborate in discussions on change and innovative forms of funding.
7	Birmingham Community Health Care NHS Trust	Detailed comments and questions on individual Adult and Communities and CYPF proposals although states that too little detail on how cuts will be made and their impact. Wants more information so as to be able to make more detailed comments. Supports efficiencies and innovations such as Telecare but concern on impact of withdrawal of subsidies to NHS organisations/services. Concern over the cumulative impact of individual cuts.
8	Birmingham South Central Clinical Commissioning Group	BCC and NHS services closely linked. Detailed comments and questions on individual Adult and Communities and CYPF proposals although states that too little detail on how cuts will be made and their impact. How have proposals been prioritised; why such large percentage for CYPF cuts? "The NHS has utilised a QIPP (Quality, Innovation, Prevention & Productivity) approach to seeking savings, aiming to deliver more, higher quality services at reduced cost. Has the Local Authority followed such a process in a systematic way?" Should think more about income raising possibilities.
9	Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid	Details of organisation's achievements, contributions to delivering Council's priorities, additional finance brought into Birmingham and what will be lost if it closes. Recognises need to be involved in discussions on how to target resources and meet financial challenges however.
10	Cherry Oak School	Re Homes to School Transport: "It is imperative that before any proposed changes to a child's transport assistance each child's complexity of needs are comprehensively assessed when making transport assistance assessments."
11	Crossroads Moving and Handling Service	Concern that consultation was too quick and might be a 'done deal' on some decommissioning. Looks like proposals are disproportionately affecting the third sector. Lack of interface with Carers' Strategy. Their service is important for prevention and safeguarding.
12	Deaf Children's Society	Detailed comments on individual CYPF proposals highlighting the needs of deaf children. Contains a summary of recommendations to ensure that the needs of deaf children are taken into account and that services for them are protected.

No.	Organisation name	Topics Covered
13	Home Start	"Many of the vulnerable families we work with are subject to child protection plans and Home-Start is part of the support package around the child." This submission details service and value added impact if Home Start is decommissioned, summarises views from its own consultation with other agencies and families it supports and suggest ideas for restructuring Home Start and other family services to make savings.
14	Supporting People Providers	A collective response which supports the council's 'clear vision for Birmingham' but seeks 'to correct the misconception that the cuts {to the Supporting People programme in 2013/14} can be implemented without any effects on front line services.' Details given and asks that 'the Council reconsider any further disproportionate cuts to this fund.' Offers a shift in contracting from 'chargeable hours' to a more direct focus on outcomes.
14a	Keep Supporting People (SP) Consultation Response: Prepared by GHK	Report which shows contribution of SP to Council and other partners objectives. Summarises evidence on the long range savings that the preventative SP services provide and therefore the increased costs that will result from any cuts in funding.
15	Acorns Children's Hospice	Details of organisation's achievements and what will be lost if decommissioned.
16	Friends of Resources for Autism	A collective response in support of Resources For Autism. Stresses need for the service, the value families get from it and the importance of early intervention.
17	RNIB West Midlands and the Association for Blind People (AfBP)	Detailed comments on a number of proposals across all Directorates and how they might affect blind people. Importance of advice (especially benefits advice) and support services such as Supporting People. Calls for an Equality Impact Assessment to be carried out regarding all cuts to services that may affect vulnerable people. Any future consultations take in to account the accessibility needs of blind and partially sighted people.
18	Spurgeons	Details of organisation's achievements and what will be lost if decommissioned in the form of comments from users, parents and professionals.
19	Victoria School	Re Homes to School Transport: "It is imperative that before any proposed changes to a child's transport assistance each child's complexity of needs are comprehensively assessed when making transport assistance assessments.'

No.	Organisation name	Topics Covered
20	Social Work Action Network West Midlands	"Opposed to the totality of the proposed cuts" but focuses particularly on the negative consequences of the cuts in CAMHS and the cuts in voluntary sector funding by CYPF. Also criticises the speed and lack of detail in the consultation process.
21	Garden Organic	'The silo approach to the cuts fails to recognise the savings that can be made through the integration of services across the Directorate functions.' Allow social enterprises to use underused assets and involve community groups in park management.
22	CYPF Vol Sector Reps	Do not cut the BVSC's contract for supporting the CYPF agenda as this produces real value for money. Concerned that cuts will very adversely impact on the most vulnerable. Supports 1.64% CT rise option. Concern on cumulative impact on voluntary sector of both direct grant cuts and cuts in other areas such as children's centres and teenage pregnancy. Social workers' case loads are too high. VCS infrastructure support important and should be protected. Many other detailed comments.
23	Birmingham Citizens Advice Bureau Services Ltd	Consider selling assets to raise funds e.g. remaining Airport shares. Look at how interaction between controllable and uncontrollable budget to make savings. Greater clarity needed on the impact of many of the cuts proposed.
24	Public Law Solicitors	Submitted on behalf of four clients. Consultation didn't provide enough information or time. Priorities should include reference to disabled and vulnerable people. Concerns that Public Sector Equality Duty is not being implemented adequately. Opposed to 'Frameworks Contracts and Market Shaping for Residential and Homecare' proposal in Adults and Communities Directorate arguing that there are better alternatives. Believes proposals that 'have already been consulted upon' have not been consulted upon adequately and that many savings are not implementable risking new cuts being imposed without proper consultation. In favour of Council Tax rise below referendum point.

Organisations represented at public meetings:

- 641 Youth House
- ABS (Midland) Ltd
- ACCA
- Access Committee for Birmingham
- Action for Blind People
- Action for Children
- Advocacy Matters
- Age Concern Birmingham
- ASH Services
- Autism West Midlands
- Barnardo's
- BCC Rights & Participation
- BID Services
- BIRINUS
- Birmingham Academy
- Birmingham Against the Cuts
- Birmingham Buddhist Centre
- Birmingham Children's Hospital
- Birmingham HCA
- Birmingham Health & Wellbeing Board
- Birmingham Open Spaces Forum
- Birmingham Trades Union Council
- Birmingham Youth Parliament (Voice Is Power - VIP)
- Birmingham Youth Service
- Bordesley Green East C/C
- Care Assets
- Castle Vale Community Housing
- Castle Vale Community Regeneration Services
- Castle Vale N&CC
- CERS
- Citizens UK
- Community Environmental Trust
- Connexions
- Cotteridge Against the Cuts
- CSPA
- CUCRS
- Deaf Cultural Centre
- Dens of Equality
- E R Mason Youth Centre
- EWS
- Extracare Charitable Trust
- Faith Forum
- Fields Millennium Green Trust
- Focus Birmingham
- Foundation Years Parenting Support
- Fox Hollies School
- Friends of Cotteridge Park & B'ham Open Spaces
- Friends of Holders Lane & Pebble Mill Playing Field
- Friends of Sparkhill Baths
- Friends of Walkers Heath Park
- Friendship Care & Housing
- Gilgal, Birmingham

- GMB
- Holland House Children's Centre
- Homestart Castle Vale
- Homestart Northfield
- Homestart UK
- Jamaica Cultural Association
- Jenoirine Creations
- Keyring
- KNLNR
- Labour Party
- Labour Party - Erdington
- Labour Party - Yardley
- LDYP
- Liberal Democrats
- LINK - Birmingham LINK
- Lisieux Trust
- Lozells Methodist Church Centre
- LRG
- Making it Real Resident
- Midland Heart
- Midlands Mencap
- Muath Trust
- Nesby Centre
- New Hall
- Nishkam Centre
- NYOT
- Oaklands
- PCS
- Penderels Trust
- Phoenix Green
- Polish Senior Citizens Day Centre
- PPS
- Prisonlink
- Prostate Support Group
- Pype Hayes Neighbourhood Forum
- Queensbury School
- Ransom Road
- RAP
- Rathbone - Birmingham Rathbone
- Resources for Autism
- River Cole & Chinn Brook Conservation Group
- RNIB
- Sandcastles Day Nursery
- SCCB
- Shelter
- Shenley Fields Nursery School
- Six Ways Baptist Church
- Socialist Party
- Socialist Worker
- SOLO
- Summerfield Residents Association
- South and City College
- SPT
- Spurgeons
- St Basils
- Stepping Stones

- Stirchley Neigh Forum
- Stockland Green Against the Cuts
- Supporting People
- The ALL Group
- The Drum Arts Centre
- The Pump
- The Vibe
- Trident Reach
- UCU
- UK Youth Parliament
- Unison
- University of B'ham Guild of Students
- UoB
- Visual Impaired Forum
- West Midlands Campaign for Better Transport
- Woodcraft Folk
- YMCA Birmingham

APPENDIX II

Profile of On-Line Survey Respondents

E1. Gender		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	49.4%	222
Female	50.6%	227
<i>answered question</i>		449

E2. Age		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
25 or younger	3.3%	15
26 to 29 years	5.3%	24
30 to 34 years	11.1%	50
35 to 39 years	11.8%	53
40 to 44 years	13.8%	62
45 to 49 years	16.2%	73
50 to 54 years	16.4%	74
55 to 59 years	10.4%	47
60 to 64 years	6.7%	30
65 to 69 years	3.6%	16
70 to 74 years	0.9%	4
75 to 79 years	0.4%	2
80 to 84 years	0.0%	0
85 to 89 years	0.0%	0
89 years or older	0.0%	0
<i>answered question</i>		450

E4. Disability - Do you have any of the following long-standing conditions? (More than one answer is acceptable)		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Deafness or severe hearing impairment	2.2%	9
Blindness or severe visual impairment	0.2%	1
Limited physical ability	5.0%	20
A learning difficulty	1.5%	6
A long-standing illness	7.9%	32
None of these	87.6%	353
<i>answered question</i>		403

E3. Ethnicity		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
White English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	76.9%	339
White Irish	3.9%	17
White Non-British	1.6%	7
Other White Background	1.1%	5
Asian or Asian British Indian	4.1%	18
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	3.4%	15
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	0.0%	0
Asian or Asian British Chinese	0.0%	0
Asian or Asian British Other	0.9%	4
Black or Black British Caribbean	2.0%	9
Black or Black British African	0.2%	1
Black or Black British Other	1.1%	5
Arab	0.2%	1
Gypsy / Romany / Irish Traveller	0.0%	0
Mixed Race - Asian and White	0.9%	4
Mixed Race - Black African and White	0.2%	1
Mixed Race - Black Caribbean and White	0.7%	3
Sikh	0.5%	2
Jewish	0.0%	0
Other Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Background	2.3%	10
<i>answered question</i>		441

E5. What is your religion or belief?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Buddhist	1.1%	5
Christian	41.8%	183
Hindu	2.3%	10
Jewish	0.0%	0
Muslim	3.4%	15
Sikh	1.6%	7
No Religion	32.0%	140
Prefer Not To Say	14.6%	64
Other (please specify)	3.2%	14
<i>answered question</i>		438

E6. What is your sexual orientation?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Heterosexual/ Straight	73.2%	319
Gay or Lesbian	6.2%	27
Bisexual	1.4%	6

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Prefer Not To Say	19.3%	84
<i>answered question</i>		436

E7. Please tick one or more of the following

Answer Options	Yes	No	Response Count
Do you live in Birmingham?	381 87%	59 13%	440
Do you work for Birmingham City Council?	183 45%	227 55%	410
Do you work for an organisation based in Birmingham? (non-Council)	142 39%	225 61%	367
<i>answered question</i>			453

E8. Are you responding to this consultation as a representative of any of the following? Please tick as appropriate

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Voluntary Organisation	10.7%	15
Housing Association	1.4%	2
Public Sector Organisation	32.9%	46
Private business	7.9%	11
Other (please specify)	47.1%	66
<i>answered question</i>		140

APPENDIX III Postcode Analysis

Postcode	Public meetings	Questionnaire
B1	2	11
B2	1	2
B3	0	13
B4	2	8
B5	3	3
B6	5	3
B7	1	5
B8	9	8
B9	11	4
B10	8	11
B11	16	10
B12	9	8
B13	17	40
B14	22	54
B15	14	15
B16	25	11
B17	20	32
B18	9	5
B19	16	7
B20	11	20
B21	14	8
B22	1	0
B23	35	20
B24	36	16
B25	14	10
B26	24	19
B27	13	11
B28	17	16
B29	22	37
B30	41	32
B31	14	38
B32	2	15
B33	11	10
B34	17	7
B35	8	0
B36	0	5
B38	11	15
B42	3	10
B43	0	2
B44	6	15
B45	6	10
B72	5	7
B73	14	14
B74	0	15
B75	7	22
B76	8	17
Not Birmingham	45	82

Total	575	723
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APPENDIX IV

How Attendees Heard About Public Meetings

How heard of meeting	Numbers at each meeting				Total
	Erdington	Yardley	Cotteridge	Council House	
Word of Mouth/Friend	6	9	9	14	38
website (assume BCC)	11	4	16	8	39
Internet	3	1	3	11	18
Facebook			1	5	6
Twitter	1	1		1	3
media		1			1
Local news (TV)	1		1	1	3
Newspaper/press	4	1	7	8	20
Radio	1	1		4	6
Radio - free radio			1	1	2
Radio - Capital			1		1
Flyer/leaflet	1			4	5
Council officer/worker - e-mail	2	6	7	3	18
Youth Service	1	9	6	16	32
Youth Parliament				10	10
Community worker/centre			3	4	7
Library	1			3	4
Ward Committee			2		2
Trades Union		1	2	4	7
Labour Party	3	3	2	3	11
SWP			1		1
Anti-Cuts organisation			6	1	7
Church	3				3
Business meeting			1		1
disability support group	2		1		3
via school			2		2
via college	1				1
Birmingham Open Spaces Forum		1	2	2	5
Homestart	3				3
BVSC	1			1	2
Barnardo's	1				1
citizens panel				1	1
e-mail from BCC	6	2	1		9
e-mail (mainly ppl from organisations)	33	7	9	18	67
by invitation				5	5
					344