

Tough Time Tough Choices

Spending Review and Public Sector Cuts

Communication and Engagement 2010-11 Briefing

1. Purpose

The briefing sets out a summary of the consultation and communication with residents, communities, business and partners from the Tough Time Tough Choices events between November 2010 and February 2011. The events were set up to enable Blackburn with Darwen Council and Care Trust to inform residents, business and partners about the impacts of reductions in public sector resources and to enable residents, business and partners to feed their views, concerns and priorities into the budget planning process which, for the Council will culminate at Finance Council on 7th March where the Budget for 2011/12 will be set.

2. Programme of Events

Following the Comprehensive Spending Review published on 20 October 2010 Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council set up an ambitious programme of communication, research, consultation and public involvement about the impact of public spending cuts on the Borough under the banner of Tough Times Tough Choices. The programme comprised:

- **8/11/10 King George's Hall Public Event** – a public meeting attended by more than 100 local residents from across the Borough led by Cllr Kate Hollern, Leader of the Council and Sir Bill Taylor, Chair of the Care Trust. The session provided people with analysis of what the Spending Review would mean for the Council and Care Trust Budgets in broad terms and provided a chance for public questions and discussion of priorities.
- **29/11/10 King George's Hall Young People's Event** - a public meeting attended by almost 100 young people from across the Borough led by Cllr Maureen Bateson, Council Executive Member for Children's Services and Strategic Director for Children's Services Gladys Rhodes White. The session provided young people with analysis of what the Spending Review would mean for the Council and Care Trust Budgets in broad terms and provided a chance for public questions and discussion of priorities.
- **November 2010 Citizen's Panel** – Panel survey of a representative sample of 1,184 residents aged 16+ to identify views on service priorities.
- **November 2010 Staff Events** – programme of meetings to inform and listen to Council staff
- **16/12/10 Business Event** – event for local business held at Blackburn Town Hall attended by more than 20 business representatives to inform business about the Comprehensive spending review and to listen to views and concerns
- **16/12/10 Adult Social Care Event** – event for users of adult social care services and carers to consider the impacts of the Spending Review and Adult Social Care Services.
- **January to February 2011 YouChoose** – website budget survey to enable public and business to consider how to reduce the Blackburn with Darwen Council budget to meet available resources.
- **24/2/11 Darwen Academy Public Event** – a public meeting to update residents on the budget position and to listen to views concerns and understand priorities.

3. Main Findings

For each part of the research consultation and involvement the key priorities are set out in this section. Full details of each event are available in a separate report which can be found on the Tough Times Website. There were no conclusive priorities overall although many of the same themes emerged from a range of sources. A summary of the priority services and service area is included at Annex A.

3.1 Public Event 8/11/10

Participants for this event were recruited through the five Neighbourhood Teams and following the presentations, participants were provided with two opportunities to identify their priorities for spending and cutting services. Firstly the session involved round table discussions about the full range of council services and participants were given the opportunity to complete an individual response.

The Round Table discussion identified key priorities for **services that should be protected** and the top nine priority areas were:

1. Community safety and neighbourhood police
2. Environment, refuse collection, street cleansing and recycling
3. Adult Social Care
4. Health and Fitness and prevention including the Beez card
5. Leisure facilities
6. Children's Services
7. Drug and Alcohol Services
8. Parks and Open Spaces
9. Neighbourhood Teams

Services which could be cut were:

1. Tourism
2. Events and Festivals
3. Museums and Galleries
4. Customer Services

These round table responses were mirrored in the **individual responses** where Police and PCSOs and Adult Social Care were the top priorities as Public Services that needed protecting. Areas highlighted for cuts were festivals and events, leisure and cultural services and Tourism.

3.2 Young People's Event 29/11/10

This event was planned by a small group of young people and participants were recruited through a range of young people's organisations and groups. The young people were provided with two opportunities to identify their priorities for spending and cutting services. Following round table discussions each table was asked to rank priority services. The top ten priorities were:

1. Children's Social Care
2. Youthwork
3. Education
4. Public Transport
5. Child protection
6. Support for young people with special needs
7. Homelessness
8. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
9. Children and Young People's Health Service
10. Drug and Alcohol services

Services which could be cut were:

1. Events and Festivals

2. Parks and Playgrounds
3. King George's Hall

3.3 Citizen's Panel

The Citizen's Panel was run in November and the early part of December 2010 and resulted in a representative sample of 1,184 residents across the borough aged 16+. The sample was designed to be representative by age, gender, local area and ethnic group. The survey was designed to ask people about how they used council and health services and the services that respondents felt should be protected and those that could be cut.

Services to be protected – one in six respondents (16%) were unable to identify services that should not be cut, however the five services that respondents felt should not be cut were:

1. Education (16%)
2. Bins and refuse collection (14%)
3. Care services for adults and children (12%)
4. Leisure Services and facilities (11%)
5. Children and Young People services (5%)

Services that the **Council should spend less** on – almost three out of five (58%) were unable to identify services where the Council should spend less. The top five identified for lower spending were:

1. Administration/bureaucracy (10%)
2. Advice Services (5%)
3. Roads – traffic calming and minor road works (3%)
4. leisure services/facilities (3%)
5. sculpture and street decoration (3%).

When asked to identify services that the **Council should stop providing** more than three quarters were unable to say (78%) and a further one in ten (10%) felt there should be no cuts.

3.4 Business Session

The business session on 16th December 2010, led by Cllr Andy Kay Executive Member for Resources and Cllr Dave Harling Executive Member for Regeneration, was attended by more than 20 representative of business and voluntary organisations. No specific priorities were identified during the question and answer session, although the discussion suggested the following priorities:

1. continuation of key infrastructure projects such as Pennine Gateway and the Furthergate Road scheme
2. Development of local procurement strategy to maximise benefits for local business
3. Consideration of public sector investment as a means of achieving financial return.

3.5 Adult Social Care Session

The adult social care session on 16th December 2010, led by Cllr Mohammed Khan, Executive Member for Adult Social Care and David Kerambrum, Director for Adult Social Care, was for users of Adult Social Care, carers and representative of relevant support organisations.

The session did not identify specific service priorities in relation to cuts, but set out key issues for the future development of services.

3.6 YouChoose

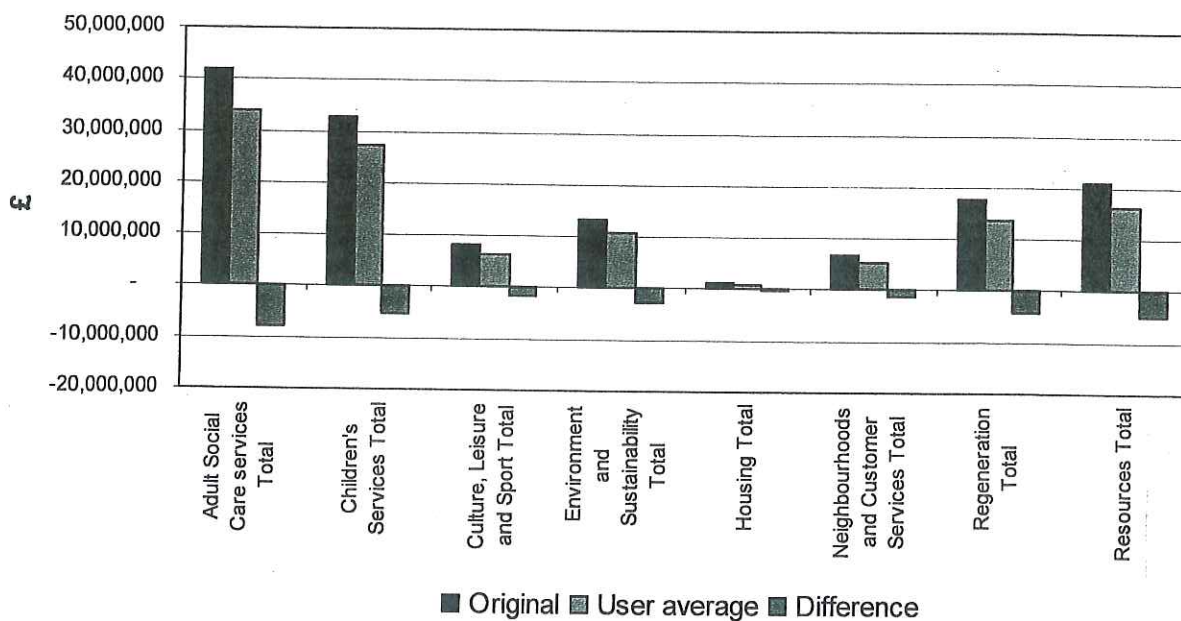
The YouChoose website was set up and promoted through the Council's own website and the Tough Choices website and events consultations. YouChoose enables users to study and evaluate choices about the budget for the Council in order to achieve a balanced budget which takes into account available resources. Each user completes the session individually and the system aggregates the choices made to provide an overall budget for the Borough which is a reflection of the individual views. The website was open from January to 23 February 2011 and there were 246 responses.

The table on the next page shows the numbers of responses which identified reductions and increases in portfolio budgets and the average reduction in each portfolio from the 246 responses.

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of the agenda.

Portfolio	Reduce	Increase	£000s Change
Adult Social Care services	245	0	-7,956,974
Children's Services	235	9	-5,433,603
Culture, Leisure and Sport	236	8	-1,822,806
Environment and Sustainability	239	4	-2,740,684
Housing	230	3	-221,586
Neighbourhoods and Customer Services	237	4	-1,466,071
Regeneration	241	3	-4,104,837
Resources	244	1	-4,931,277

The graphic below shows the changes by portfolio compares with the 2010/11 budget.



3.5 Darwen Event 24/2/11

The public session on 24th February 2011, led by Cllr Kate Hollern at Darwen Academy involved more than 40 participants recruited through the Neighbourhood Team. Following the presentations, participants were involved round table discussions about council services. The Round Table discussion identified key priorities for **services that should be protected** and the top priority areas were:

1. Community Safety
2. Adult Social Care
3. Leisure Facilities
4. Children's Services

Services which could be cut were:

1. Reduce refuse collection
2. Reduce the refresh programme and introduce charging
3. Capita.

Further information and contact

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Summary of Priorities

Event	Priority Services		Could be cut	
	Discussion	Individual	Discussion	Individual
Public Session 8/11/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Safety Street cleaning Adult social care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police/PCSOs Adult Social Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Events/festivals Museums/galleries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism Events/festivals Museums/galleries
Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Social Care Youthwork Education Public Transport Child protection 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Festivals and events Parks and playgrounds King George's Hall 	
Citizen's Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Refuse collection/street cleaning Care services for children and adults Leisure facilities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice services Administration Road works Don't know/no cuts (78%) 	
Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> key infrastructure projects local procurement strategy public sector investment to achieve financial return. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact assessment needed 	
Adult Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Importance of fair access to care Innovation in commissioning Signposting between services to max utilisation Build community resilience 			
Darwen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Safety Adult Social Care Leisure Facilities Children's Services 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce refuse collection Reduce the refresh programme and introduce charging Capita. 	