

Budget consultation

YouChoose Budget Calculator results

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1. Executive summary

Over the next four years, the county council will have to make savings of £300m, the equivalent of 38% of the current budget. Of this, some £75m of savings will have to be made in 2014/15. Residents were invited to share their views on how to make £75m of savings in the next financial year by completing an online budget calculator. In total, 687 responses were received.

1.1 Key findings

- Respondents made a reduction in the overall current budget, on average, of 12%.
- Respondents made the highest proportional reductions in spending for libraries (23% reduction), museums (23%) and democracy (22%).
- Respondents made the lowest proportional reductions for highway maintenance (7% reduction), children's social care services (8%) and supporting collection services (9%).
- Services respondents were more likely to reduce spending for were democracy (94% of respondents), customer services, communication and public information (93%) and finance, Human Resources and Information Technology (93%).
- Services fewer respondents chose to reduce spending for were highway maintenance (71% of respondents), road safety (75%) and traffic management (75%).
- A small number of respondents chose to increase spending in a number of areas. The services respondents were most likely to increase spending for were highway maintenance (17% of respondents), traffic management (14%) and road safety (13%).
- The largest absolute reductions (ie the largest reduction by monetary amount) were services for people with a learning disability (£19m), older people (£16m) and waste recycling and recovery (£6m).
- Respondents were informed about ways the county council could bring in money or save money. Around three-quarters of respondents were in favour of improving efficiency of back office support (73%) and improving efficiency in the delivery of front line services (72%).
- Respondents' changes to the budget would produce a decrease in council tax, on average, of 7%.

2. Introduction

Over the next four years, the county council will have to make savings of £300m, the equivalent of 38% of the current budget. Of this, some £75m of savings will have to be made in 2014/15. Residents were invited to share their views on how to make £75m of savings in the next financial year by completing an online budget calculator. In total, 687 responses were received. The results should be treated as indicative only, as they do not form a representative cross-sample of Lancashire residents. Data are unweighted.

3. Methodology

YouChoose is an online budget simulator that encourages members of the public to consider where council budget cuts should fall, where efficiencies might be made, and where income might be generated.

YouChoose was available online from October until the start of December. It was promoted externally to members of the public through the Lancashire County Council website and press releases, and was promoted internally to Lancashire County Council employees on the intranet using team talk and staff notices.

4. Main research findings

Respondents made a reduction in the overall current budget, on average, of 12%.

Respondents made the highest proportional reductions in spending for libraries (23% reduction), museums (23%) and democracy (22%).

Respondents made the lowest proportional reductions for highway maintenance (7% reduction), children's social care services (8%) and supporting collection services (9%).

Table 1 Current budget (2013/14), average proposed spending and average proposed percentage change.

Service	Current budget	Average proposed spending	Average proposed percentage change
People with a learning disability	£137,120,000	£118,155,641	-14%
Older people	£125,661,000	£110,063,906	-12%
Child protection services	£64,935,000	£59,198,631	-9%
Waste recycling and recovery	£60,191,000	£53,908,581	-10%
Placements for looked after children	£47,676,000	£43,492,244	-9%
Support for bus services	£38,783,000	£34,061,136	-12%
People with physical disabilities or sensory impairment	£36,556,000	£31,754,736	-13%
Support for children in schools	£31,974,000	£28,698,476	-10%
Children's social care services	£30,340,000	£27,811,790	-8%
People with mental health needs	£29,329,000	£25,651,913	-13%
Highway maintenance	£27,488,000	£25,427,801	-7%
Supporting collection services	£25,552,000	£23,152,084	-9%
Democracy	£16,881,000	£13,122,405	-22%
Libraries	£15,974,000	£12,333,986	-23%
Finance, Human Resources and Information Technology	£14,458,000	£11,281,326	-22%
Landfill	£13,056,000	£11,520,253	-12%
Street lighting	£13,004,000	£11,622,395	-11%

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Early support services for young people and families	£12,648,000	£11,171,086	-12%
Customer Services, communication and public information	£9,931,000	£7,925,441	-20%
Public protection services	£4,249,000	£3,761,134	-11%
Road safety	£3,766,000	£3,252,927	-14%
Planning	£3,406,000	£2,878,690	-15%
Trading Standards	£2,722,000	£2,367,362	-13%
County Analysts	£2,702,000	£2,339,844	-13%
Countryside Services	£2,418,000	£2,085,493	-14%
Traffic Management	£2,162,000	£1,972,259	-9%
Museums	£1,945,000	£1,502,553	-23%
Environment and community projects	£1,418,000	£1,202,174	-15%
Total	£776,345,000	£681,716,270	-12%

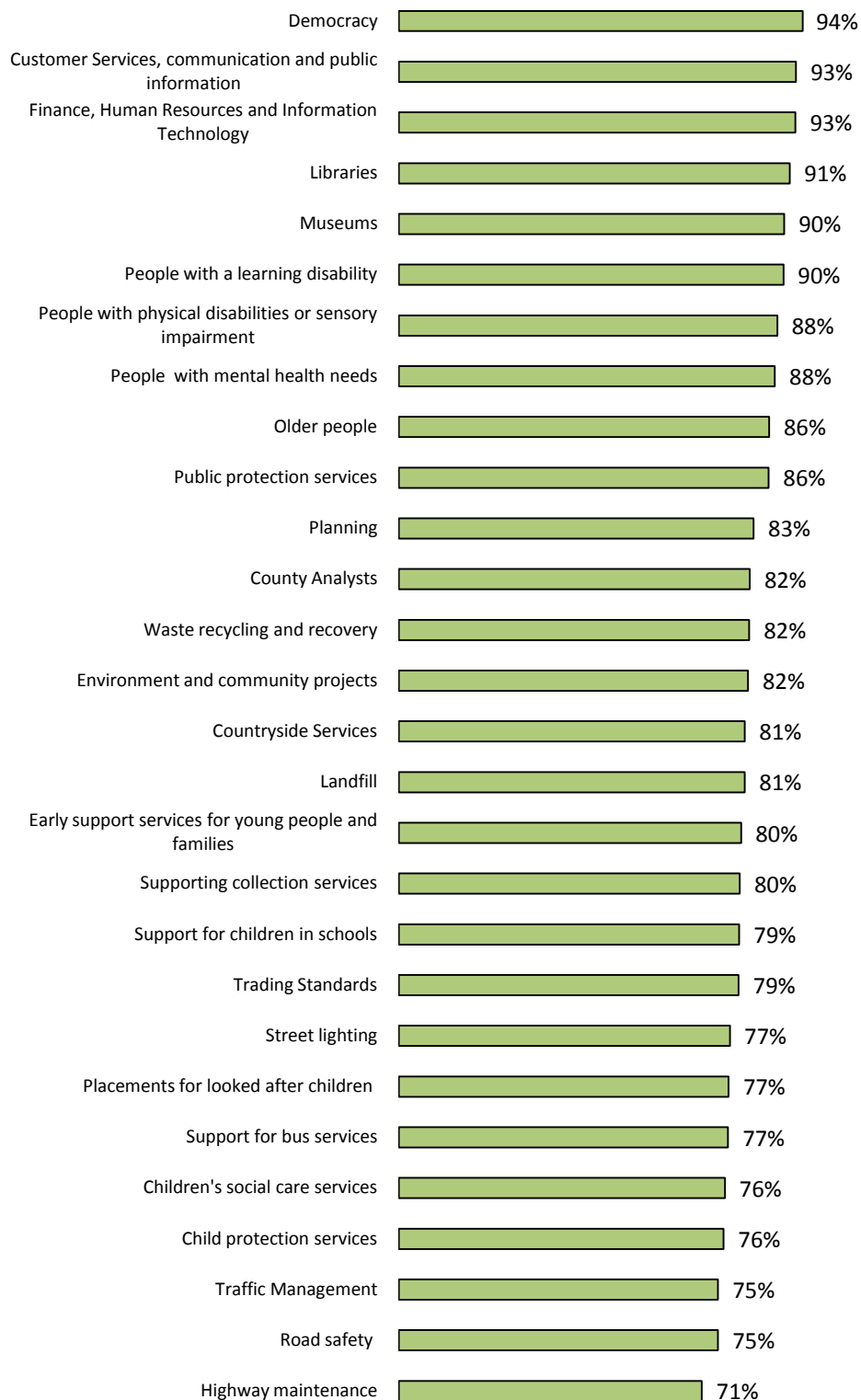
Base: All respondents (687)

Services respondents were more likely to reduce spending for were democracy (94% of respondents), customer services, communication and public information (93%) and finance, Human Resources and Information Technology (93%).

Services fewer respondents chose to reduce spending for were highway maintenance (71% of respondents), road safety (75%) and traffic management (75%).

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Chart 1 - % respondents who reduced each service budget

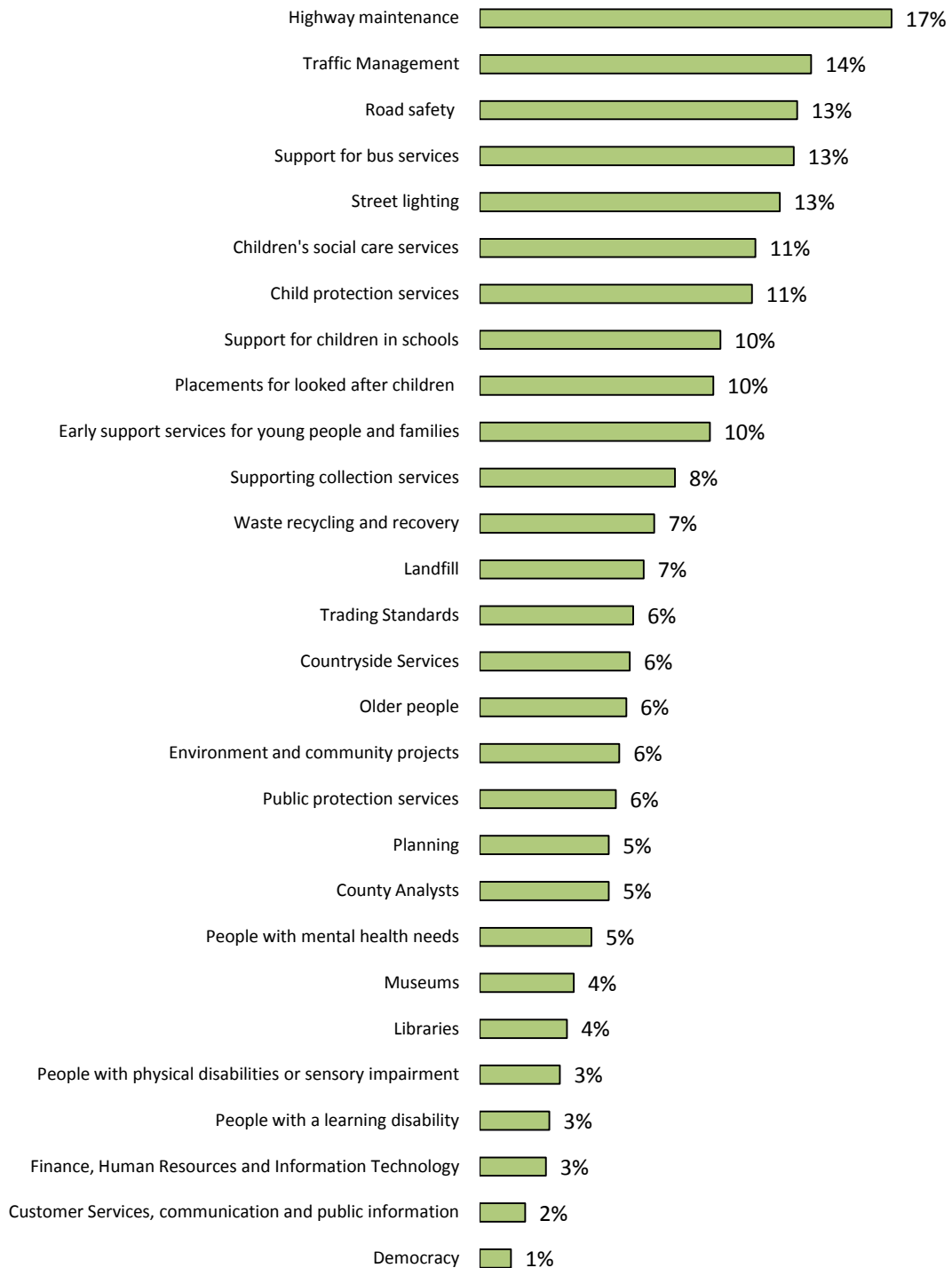


Base: All respondents (687)

Budget consultation – YouChoose Budget Calculator results

A small number of respondents chose to increase spending in a number of areas. The services respondents were most likely to increase spending for were highway maintenance (17% of respondents), traffic management (14%) and road safety (13%).

Chart 2 - % respondents who increased each service budget

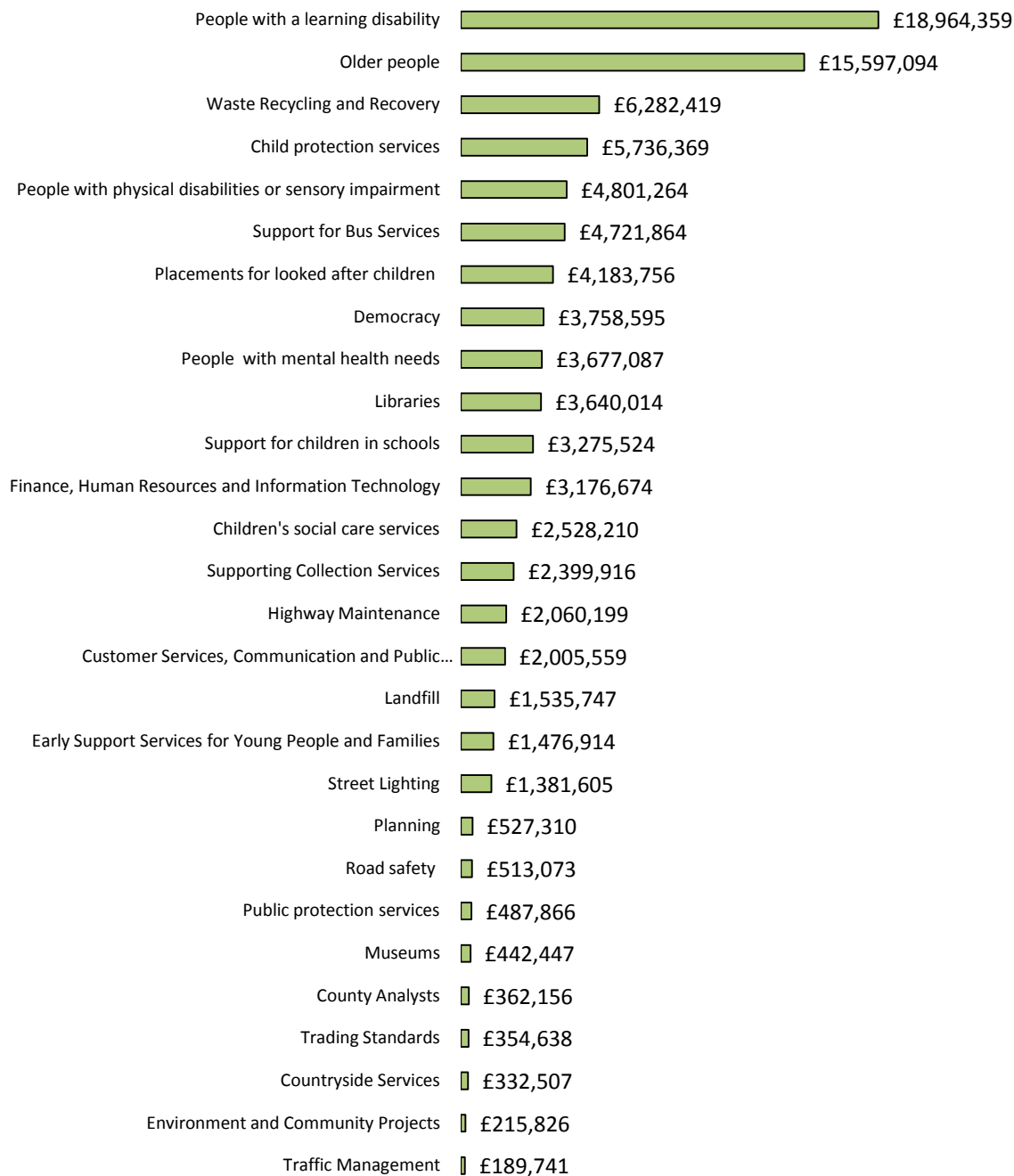


Base: All respondents (687)

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The largest absolute reductions (ie the largest reduction by monetary amount) were services for people with a learning disability (£19m), older people (£16m) and waste recycling and recovery (£6m). Although the two highest absolute reductions (people with a learning disability and older people) are much higher than the other service absolute reductions, as a percentage of the service budget (-14% and -12% respectively) they are not unusually high. The large absolute reductions are a consequence of having the largest service budgets.

Chart 3 - Absolute average reductions for services

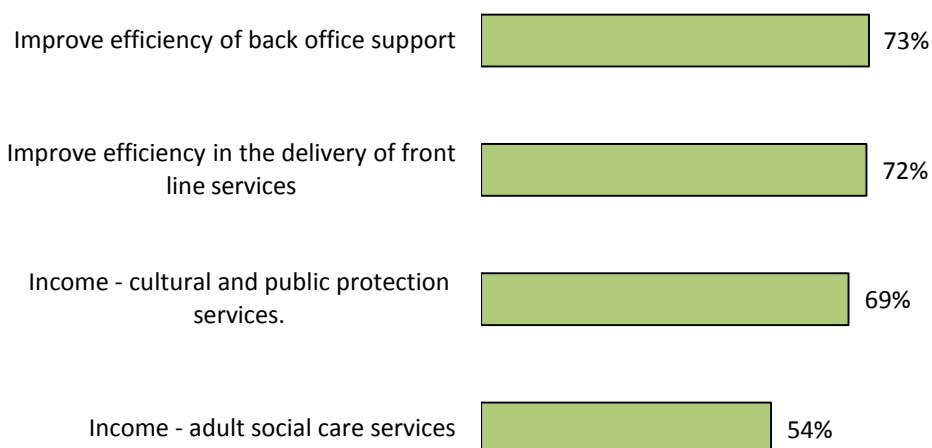


Base: All respondents (687)

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Respondents were informed about ways the county council could bring in money or save money. Around three-quarters of respondents were in favour of improving efficiency of back office support (73%) and improving efficiency in the delivery of front line services (72%).

Chart 4 - % respondents supportive of increasing income/efficiency savings



Base: All respondents (687)

Council tax

Respondents' changes to the budget would produce a decrease in council tax, on average, of 7%.

Suggestions

Respondents were invited to leave any suggestions they had for saving money, or comments about YouChoose.

There were a lot of different ideas given, but the most common suggestions made were:

- cap/reduce senior management pay;
- reduce the number of middle managers;
- merge or collaborate resources with district councils;
- switch off or dim street lights when not needed;
- use video conferencing for meetings;
- reduce spending on councillor expenses; and
- cut cultural services, eg museums and libraries, or charge visitors.

The full text for all suggestions is in a separate appendix.