



2011 Wirral budget consultation

Analysis of YouChoose results for
the Borough of Wirral

December 2011

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1 Background

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The 2011 Wirral budget consultation gave residents the opportunity to have their say on expenditure within eight council service headings. These were:

- Your Council – Support for Services
- Your Economy – Housing & Community
- Your Economy – Supporting Business
- Your Family – Adult Social Services
- Your Family – Children & Young People
- Your Neighbourhood – Culture & Leisure
- Your Neighbourhood – Public Protection
- Your Neighbourhood – Roads & Waste Management Services

1.1.2 The aim of the consultation was to obtain the public's views on how the council could keep council tax rises to less than three per cent despite funding cuts from central government.

1.1.3 The consultation went live on Friday 19th August 2011 and 1,355 completed submissions were received up until Wednesday 30th November 2011. Submissions that did not contain demographic data have been excluded.

1.2 Are the results representative?

1.2.1 The results have been weighted to be representative of the borough in relation to age and gender. Data from the 2009 based population estimates by local authority published by the ONS has been used to derive targets for the data. To undertake the weighting the responses were divided by gender and within each gender they were further sub-divided by five agebands (under 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54 and 55 and over). This gave 10 interlocked age and gender sub-divisions. Each of these sub-divisions was then weighted

so that it was in line with the proportion of the total population who falls into that sub-division. This means that the data are representative of the local population.

1.3 The results

1.3.1 The report presents results for each budget heading. It shows the mean average budget expenditure chosen by respondents, the difference between the chosen budget and the current budget and the percentage difference from current expenditure. The service delivery consequences are also highlighted.

2 Overall choices

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 In this section, the overall changes residents suggested in the budget simulator tool are shown by each of the eight groupings the Wirral use for their budget. These sub headings are:

- Your Council – Support for Services
- Your Economy – Housing & Community
- Your Economy – Supporting Business
- Your Family – Adult Social Services
- Your Family – Children & Young People
- Your Neighbourhood – Culture & Leisure
- Your Neighbourhood – Public Protection
- Your Neighbourhood – Roads & Waste Management

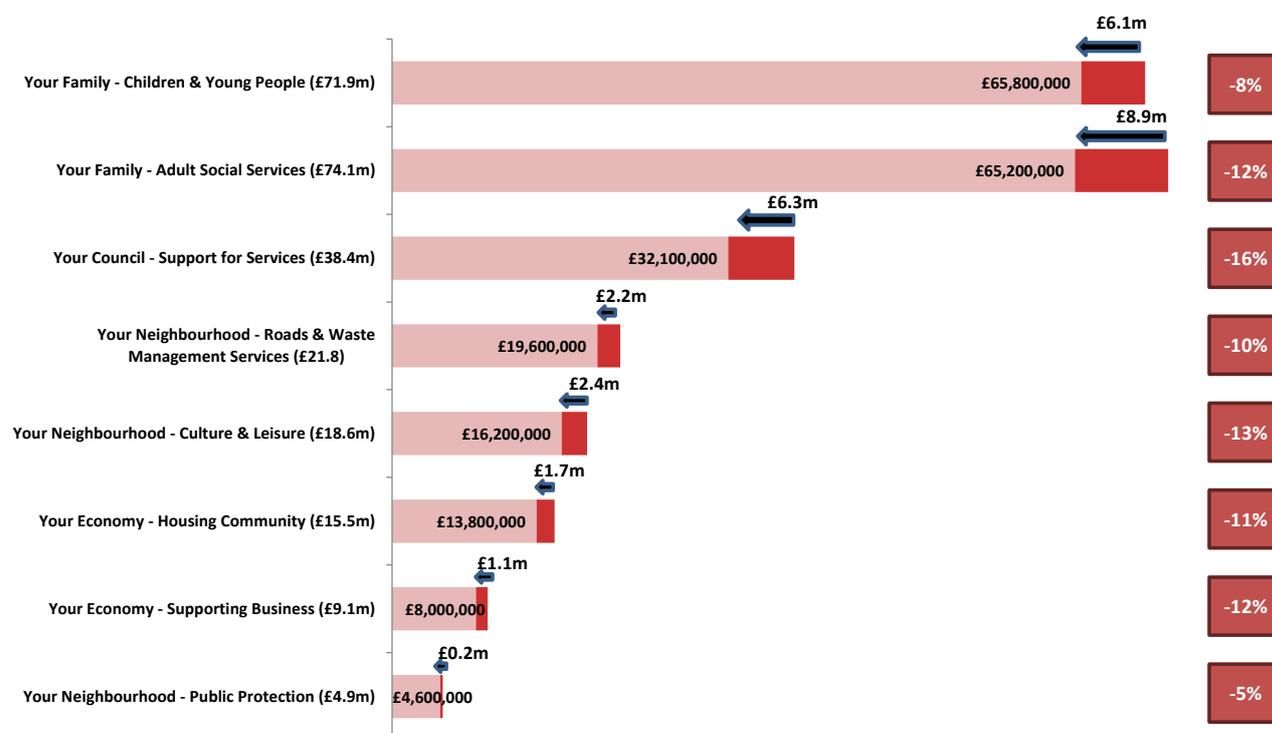
2.1.2 Following this chapter, each of these headings will be broken down to their constituent parts to allow a deeper analysis of where savings have been suggested. They are investigated in accordance to the overall budget area amount.

2.2 Overall decisions made

2.2.1 A total of £28,965,658 worth of savings were made by the residents of Wirral within the budget simulator. This represents an 11 per cent saving on the £254 million total budget.

2.2.2 As Figure 1 shows, the largest saving in numerical terms was in the adult social services category, where £8.9 million was saved. The biggest proportional saving was made in the council support services category, where residents saved a total of 16% of the budget.

Figure 1 : Overall budget choices



2.2.3 Those residents who described themselves as not being of white British origin made the biggest savings overall – suggesting savings of 16 per cent. There were also some interesting differences by postcode areas, with those in postcodes CH45, CH49, CH60 and CH62 suggesting only ten per cent savings compared with 14 per cent savings suggested by those in CH61.

3 Your Family – Adult Social Services

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 In this section the views of residents in relation to adult social services are presented.

Areas of council responsibility covered by this service heading include:

- Early support and advice
- Market management and development
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults
- Services for regaining independence
- Social work teams in the locality
- Social work teams providing specialist support
- Support for commissioning
- Support to meet personal choice

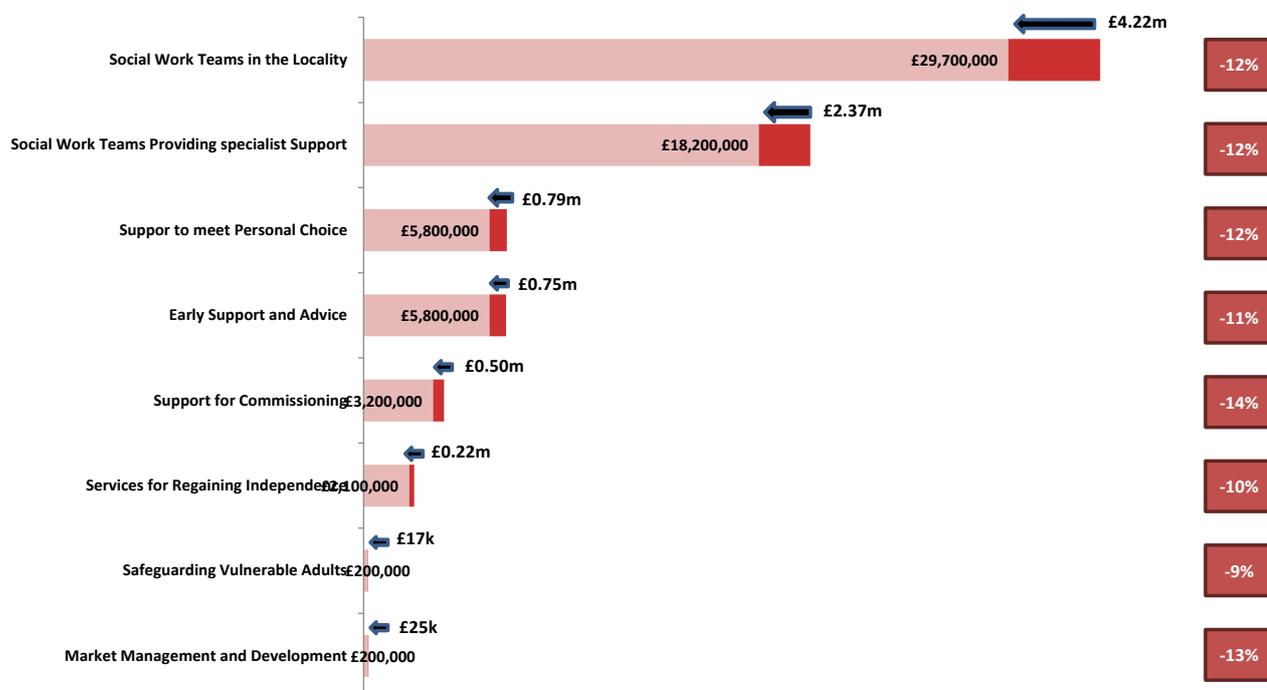
3.2 Adult social services - choices

3.2.1 As was seen in the previous chapter, adult social services was the area in which residents made the biggest cut in monetary terms. The total budget decided for this area was £65.2 million, a 12 per cent cut from the original budget of £74.1 million.

3.2.2 Those aged under 35 made the biggest cuts of any age group (both the under 24 year old group and those aged between 25 and 34 cutting the budget here by 13 per cent). A 13 per cent cut was also made by male residents compared with 11 per cent from women within the borough.

3.2.3 The largest cut was made to social work teams in the locality - £4,22 million being saved here (the equivalent of a 12 per cent budget decrease). Proportionally, the biggest cuts were in the support for commissioning category, where 14 per cent of the budget was cut (a saving of £500,000).

Figure 2 : Your Family – Adult Social Services



3.3 The consequences of budget choices

3.3.1 The following are some consequences that may result from the choices made by residents within the adult social services section of the consultation.

- Reduced staffing levels across the whole service
- Safeguarding and delayed access to services for vulnerable adults
- Increased private sector costs and a need for recipients of services to contribute more toward them
- A reduced investment in using technology in solutions

4 Your Family – Children & Young People

4.1 Introduction

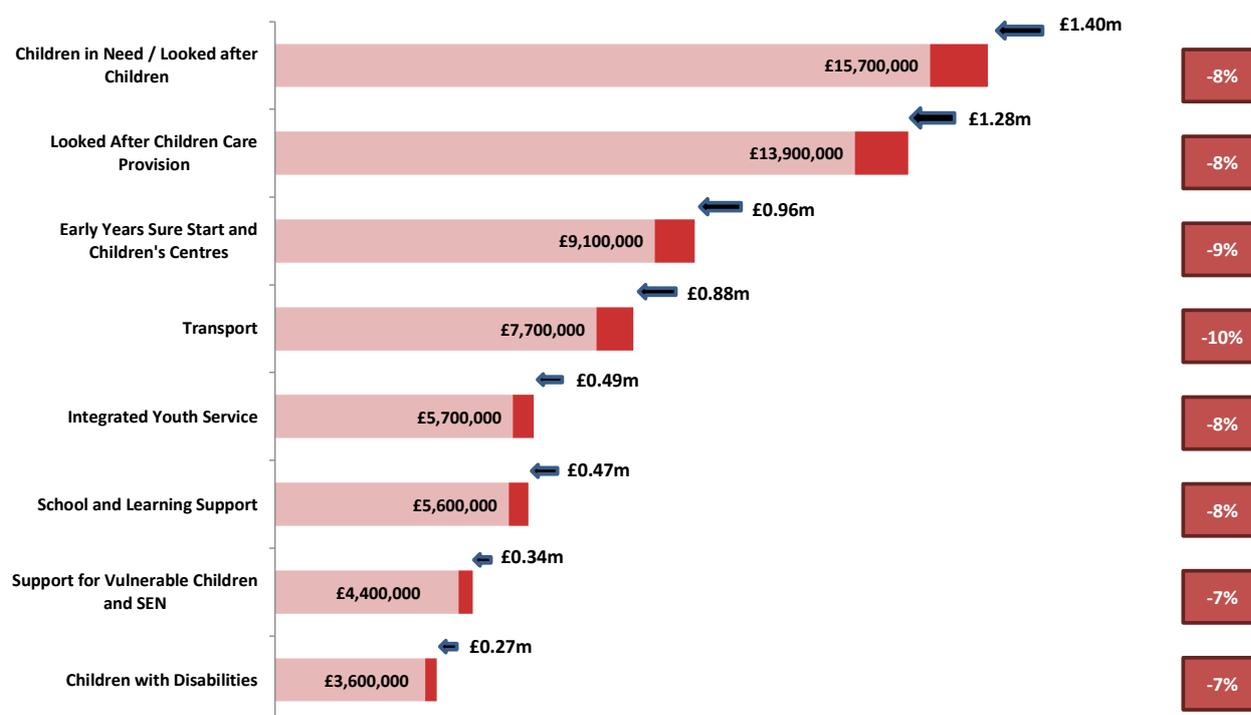
4.1.1 The next largest area of council expenditure in the budget consultation tool was that of children and young people's services. This area includes:

- Children in need / looked after children
- Children with disabilities
- Early years', Sure Start and children's centres
- Integrated youth services
- Looked after children – care provision
- School and learning support
- Support for vulnerable children and those with special educational needs
- Transport

4.2 Children & young people - choices

4.2.1 On average, residents suggested a total of £6.1 million worth of cuts in this budget area, equating to an eight per cent cut in the overall budget. Within each area of this budget, between seven and ten per cent of budgets were cut, with the largest in monetary value being in the children in need / looked after children category (£1.4 million being saved here).

4.2.2 Perhaps as they felt they would be most affected by cuts, those aged under 24 suggested cutting the budget overall by only five per cent. Those aged over 45 suggested a ten per cent cut. By postcode areas, cuts ranged from between 13 per cent (suggested by those in CH61) and five per cent (those in CH62).

Figure 3 : Children & Young People


4.3 The consequences of budget choices

- A negative impact on service delivery across all areas, including: youth services, services for children with disabilities, early years, Sure Start and children's centres and services for looked after children.
- An impact on the transport needs of vulnerable adults (as the council has statutory duties with regards the transport needs of children with special educational needs).

5 Your Council – Support for Services

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Areas within this category of the budget include:

- Asset management
- Benefits and revenues
- Call centres
- Financial services
- Human resources, organisational development and payroll
- Information technology services
- Legal and member services
- Planning council services and monitoring improvements
- Supporting our services

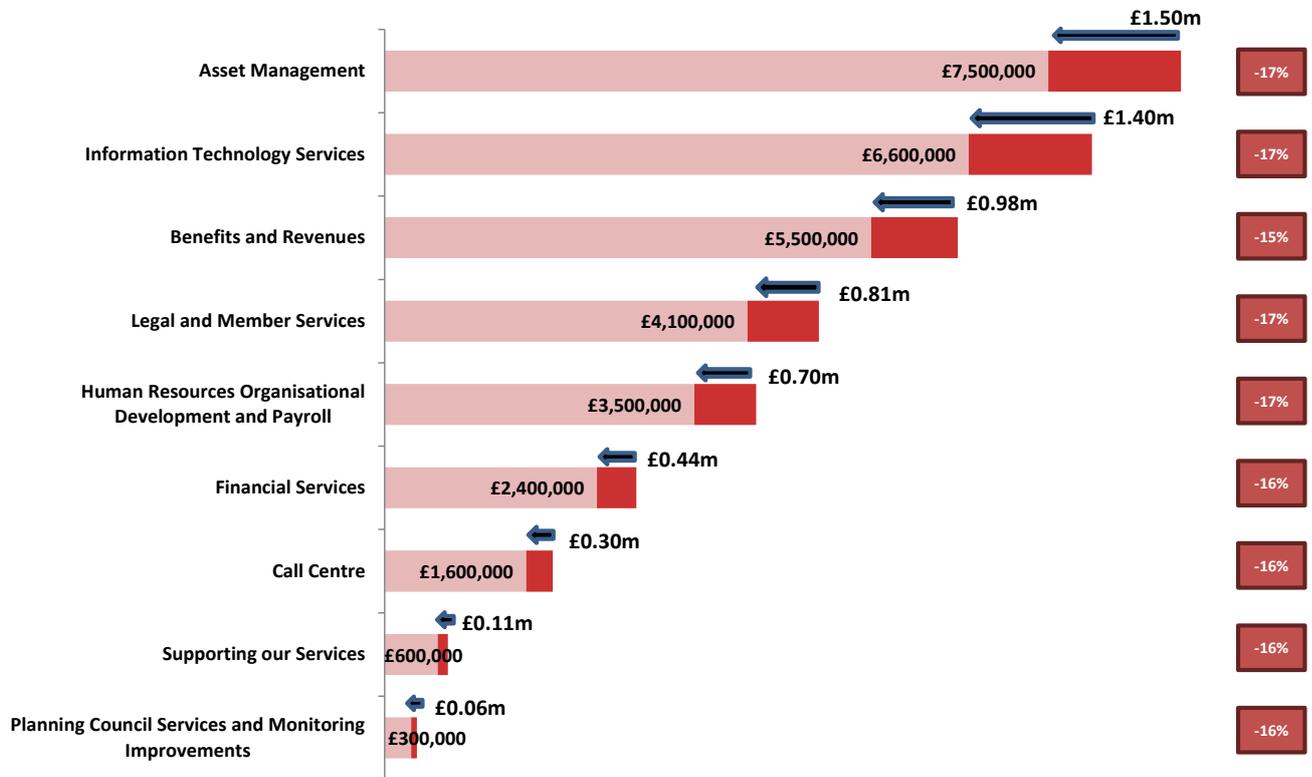
5.2 Support for services - choices

5.2.1 Residents reduced the budget in this area by 16 per cent, the largest cut in any area.

5.2.2 Asset management had the biggest overall cut, with residents suggesting that £1.5 million is taken off this budget (a reduction of 17 per cent). A 17 per cent cut was also the average result for information technology services, legal and member services and resources, organisational development and payroll.

5.2.3 There was a slight gender difference in the level of cuts with men suggesting a total of 15 per cent savings compared with women suggesting 17 per cent. Those who described themselves as an ethnicity other than being white British suggested 23 per cent of savings in this area.

Figure 4 : Your Council – Support for Services



5.3 The consequences of budget choices

5.3.1 Some of the many consequences that may result from this level of budget reduction in the area of council support services include:

- A reduction in staff causing some staff to work in areas in which they are not trained / experienced and an overall impact on services as a result.
- The possible loss of income including from council tax collection which may lead to increased council tax rates in the future.
- A reduction in performance management resulting in a potential loss of quality in council services.
- Delayed payments of benefits to those in need as well as a reduction in the amount of advice given to those who may be qualify for benefits but not claim.
- An increased risk of fraud.

6 Your Neighbourhood – Roads & Waste Management Services

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Highways management, traffic management and waste collection and street cleaning are all budget areas included in the roads and waste management section of this consultation.

6.2 Roads & waste management services - choices

6.2.1 On average, ten per cent of the budget was cut for this area – a total saving of £2.2 million. Over half of this saving was made from the waste collection and street cleaning category where £1.29 million was cut.

6.2.2 Those who describe their ethnicity as being white British made savings in this area of expenditure of ten per cent compared with 14 per cent among those who did not identify as white British. Those aged under 24 also suggested a 14 per cent reduction here on average. Male residents cut this budget by only seven per cent compared with a 12 per cent suggested reduction from female residents.

Figure 5: Your Neighbourhood – Roads & Waste Management Services



6.3 The consequences of budget choices

- A reduced ability to carry out effective road traffic management and a reduction in the frequency of traffic signal repairs resulting in increased likelihood for junction failures, delays to motorists and road safety collisions.
- A worsening of the conditions of the roads and pathways leading to increases in financial claims against the council for slips, trips and falls.
- Increases in parking charges in the 26 Council run pay and display car parks.

7 Your Neighbourhood – Culture and Leisure

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The following areas are included in the budgets for culture and leisure:

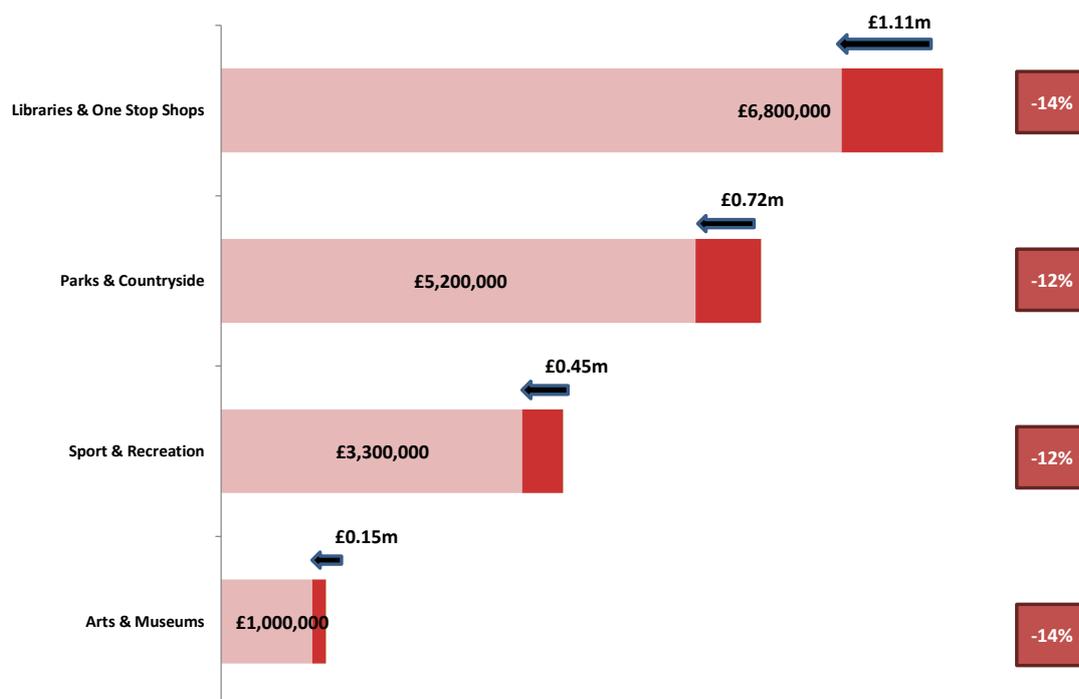
- Libraries and one stop shops
- Parks and countryside
- Sport and recreation
- Arts and museums

7.2 Culture and leisure - choices

7.2.1 Residents chose to reduce the overall budget for culture and leisure by £2.4 million, a 13 per cent decrease. This would leave the area with a budget of £16.2 million.

7.2.2 Residents suggested that libraries and one stop shops should have the largest budget reduction – a total of £1.11 million of cuts being suggested (14 per cent of the budget). It was also suggested that arts and museums should face a 14 per cent cut, with the budget reduced by £150,000.

Figure 6 : Your Neighbourhood – Culture & Leisure



7.3 The consequences of budget choices

- Reduced library services, opening hours and stock updating as well as a reduction in one stop shop services.
- A reduced maintenance of green spaces impacting the frequency of grass cutting, weed control, beach cleaning and litter removal.
- Increased leisure centre charges, reduced opening times and the closure of one swimming pool.
- Reduced school visitors to museums, reduced opening hours of museums and theatres and increased theatre ticket prices.

8 Your Economy – Housing and Community

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This section looks at expenditure in relation to the following areas:

- Housing strategy and homelessness
- Private sector housing
- Resident engagement, consultation and communication
- Support for the voluntary community and faith sector
- Supporting people and adaptations

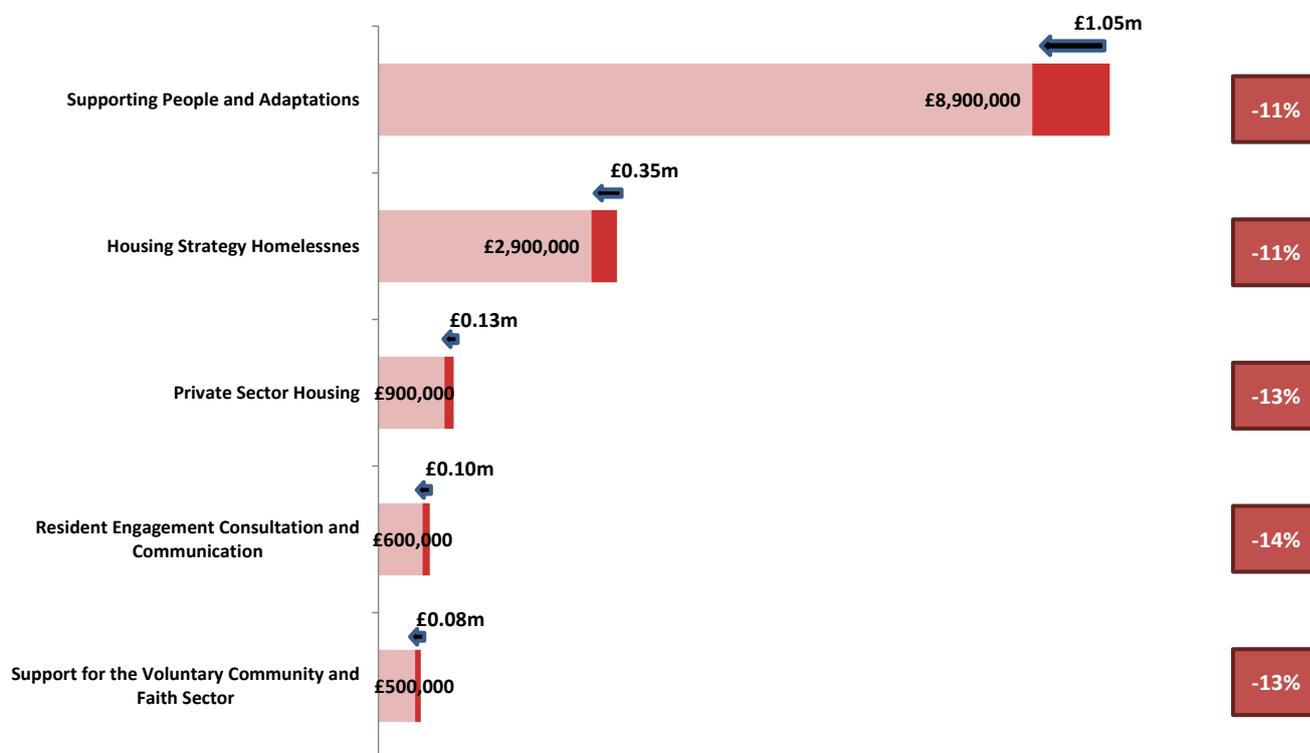
8.2 Housing and community - choices

8.2.1 An 11 per cent reduction in expenditure was suggested in this area, equivalent to £1.7 million. This leaves an overall budget of £13.8 million for housing and community expenditure.

8.2.2 Within the constituent parts of expenditure, between 11 and 14 per cent savings were suggested, the largest amount proportionally sitting within resident engagement, consultation and communications (14 per cent). In monetary terms, most was cut from the supporting people and adaptations category – a cut of £1.05 million.

8.2.3 Those aged 45 to 54 suggested the biggest savings of any age group - 13 per cent. This compares with just a nine per cent cut suggested by those aged 35 to 44. Looking at the cuts made by postcode, those in postcode area CH61 suggested the highest saving of 16 per cent. This compared with just a seven per cent cut from those in CH44.

Figure 7 : Your Economy – Housing and Community



8.3 The consequences of budget choices

- Approximately 800 people would lose the support they need to live independently, resulting in the use of more expensive residential nursing homes or hospitalisation (which in turn would put a strain on the social care budget).
- Increased levels of tenancy failure, resulting in more people sleeping rough. Changes also mean a raised level of homelessness within the borough.
- 2,107 less energy improvement installations, resulting in increased risks of ill health due to excess cold in properties.
- A reduction in grants and support to voluntary, community and faith sector organisations.

9 Your Economy – Supporting Business

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 The area of supporting business covers the following categories:

- Business support and attracting inward investment
- Development, management and building control
- Economic development
- Forward planning
- Tourism

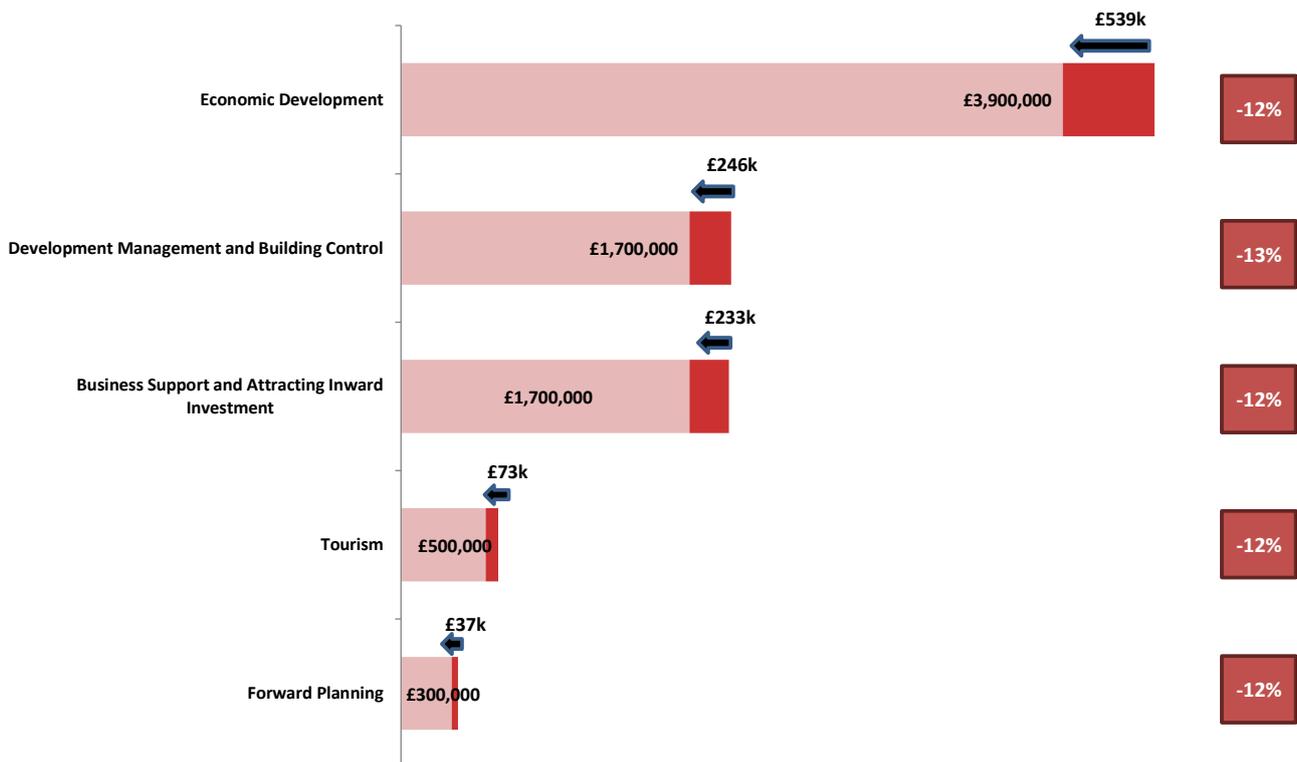
9.2 Supporting business - choices

9.2.1 Respondents chose, on average, to reduce expenditure in this area by £1.1 million or about 12 per cent.

9.2.2 Twelve per cent was also the amount by which residents chose to reduce each area of spending within the supporting business category with the exception of development, management and building control (13 per cent). The biggest cut in monetary terms was in economic development, where £539,000 was cut.

9.2.3 The amount cut in this area generally declined with age, from 11 per cent among those aged under 24 to 15 per cent of those aged 45 to 54. There were also differences between the genders, with women suggesting an average 14 per cent reduction in budget compared with ten per cent among men.

Figure 8 : Your economy – Supporting Business



9.3 The consequence of budget choices

- A reduction in support for events such as the Hoylake RNLI day and Port Sunlight Festival. Losing such events would lead to a loss in revenue from visitors from outside the Borough and a loss of the opportunity to promote the reputation of the borough both national and internationally.
- A reduced income in the promotion of the borough to external investors and less external investment due to losing out on time-limited opportunities such as the Wirral Water Enterprise Zone.

- Reduced income (and possibly employment) from a reduction in the promotion of the borough to external investors.
- Less advice for planning applications and delays in the approval processes.

10 Your Neighbourhood – Public Protection

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 The council currently spends £4.9 million on public protection. This includes community safety, environmental health, health, safety and resilience and trading standards.

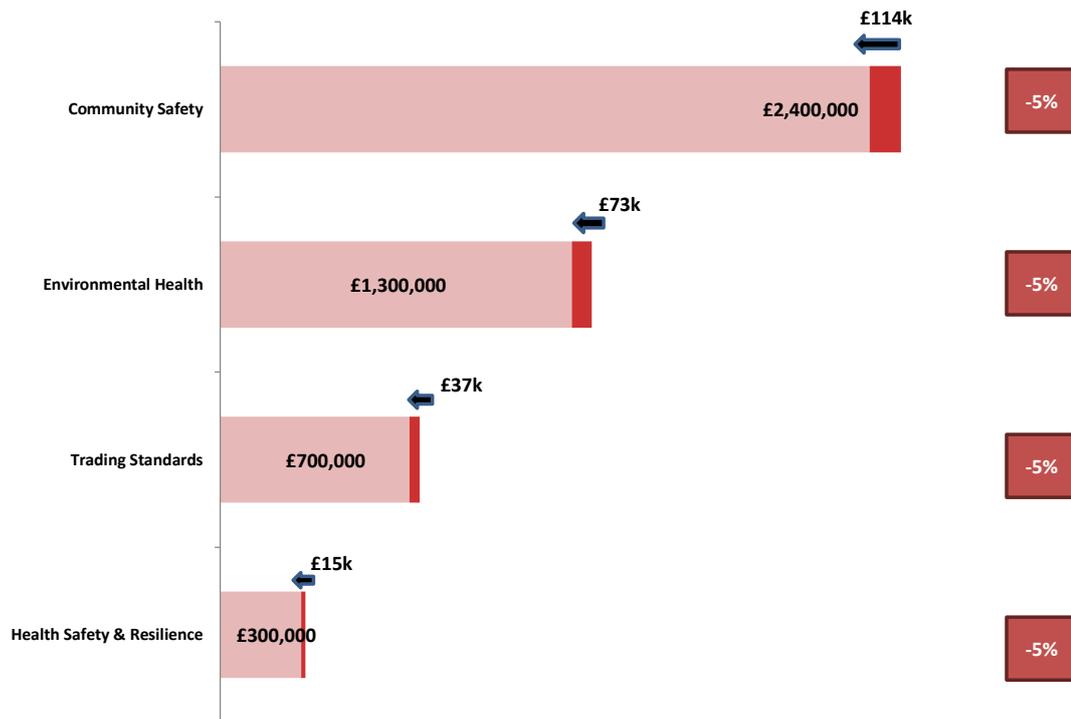
10.2 Public protection - choices

10.2.1 Although starting from a small base, this area of consultation was the least reduced by residents of Wirral in both monetary and proportional terms, being reduced by just five per cent – the equivalent of £200,000. This leaves the budget at a total of £4.6 million.

10.2.2 All areas within the public protection category were cut by an average of five per cent. The biggest loss in monetary terms was to the community safety category, which was cut by £114,000. The lowest was health, safety and resilience (cut by just £15,000).

10.2.3 While the budget in this area was cut by eight per cent of under 24 year olds, those aged over 55 saved just three per cent. Residents in postcode area CH44 chose, on average not to make any savings in this area. This compares with those in CH49 and CH63 where savings of 10 per cent were made.

Figure 9 : Your Neighbourhood – Public Protection



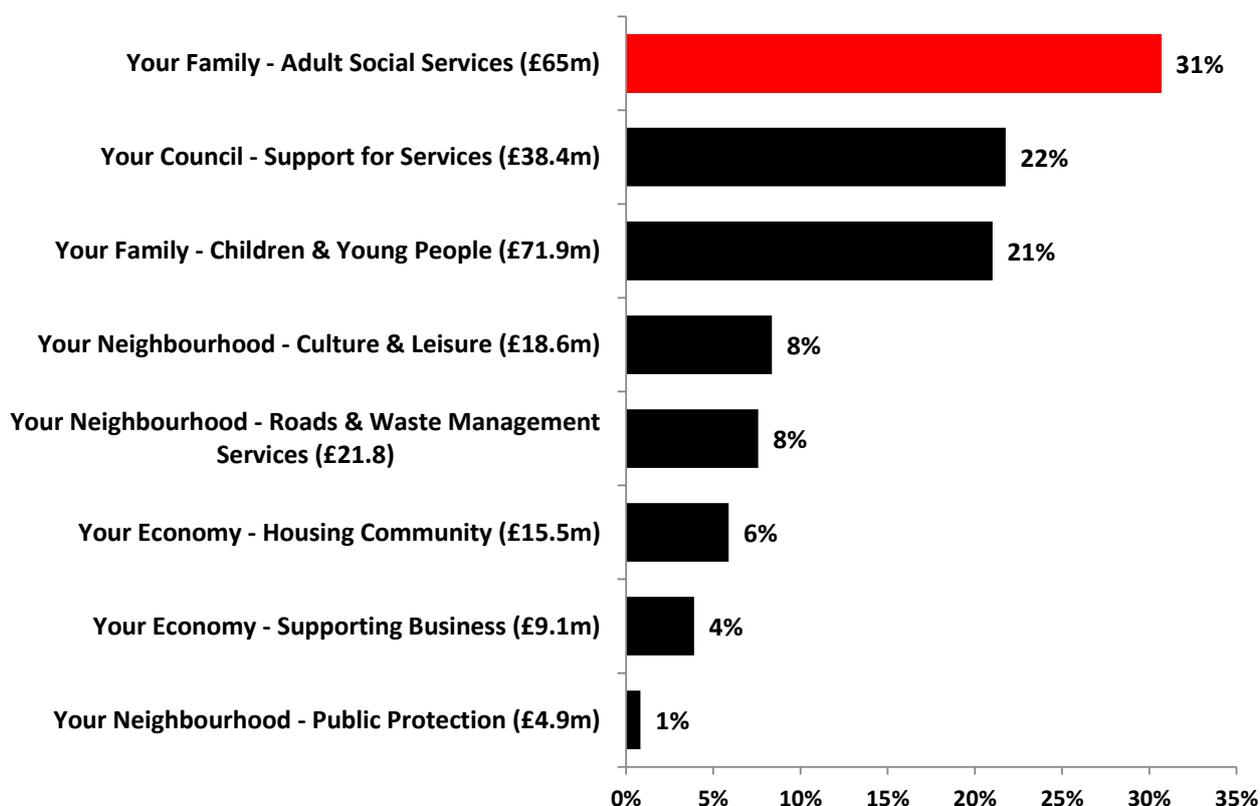
10.3 The consequences of budget choices

10.4 Reductions in spending in these budget areas are likely to have a negative impact on service delivery.

11 Where will the savings come from?

11.1.1 Residents suggested, on average, a total of £29 million worth of savings. The chart below shows how those savings were split across all budget areas.

Figure 10 : The source of service delivery savings



11.1.2 It can be seen that almost one third of the suggested savings were made within the adult social services budget. Additionally one fifth of cuts suggested by residents fell into support for services and children and young people's services

11.1.3 The level of cuts chosen by respondents will have a significant impact upon service delivery and the report has highlighted the consequences of these. The council faces some tough choices as it prepares for a reduction in its income. The 2011 Wirral consultation engaged with a large number of people on the difficult decisions ahead. The results presented in this

report, from a representative sample of the population, give clear direction to the council on where the public think that savings can be made.