

Making ends meet

Following a 39% reduction in funding from Central Government over the 4 years to 2015/16, we are seeking the views of Rossendale residents about Council proposals for making the cuts we need to balance our budget. We have already saved £1.5m over that past 2 years, but still need to cut a further £1.3m from our annual budget. At their meeting of 27th June 2012, Cabinet gave approval for us to begin consultation on a range of areas where we could make the cuts needed.

Please do spare 10 minutes to give us your views. Many thanks in advance for your contribution.

Refuse and Street Cleansing

We are looking to review the way that we run our refuse and recycling collections and the way we deliver our street cleansing services, to allow us to utilise our staff in a more flexible way, so we can save money. Residents would still experience the same level of service, but we may need to collect your bins on a different day to the one you have at the moment.

We think that we may be able to save around £80,000 a year from this change.

Q1	Do you agree or disagree that the Council should consider making this change? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

Collection of Garden Waste in Winter

Currently we collect on average 300 tonnes of garden waste per month from April - September (based on fortnightly collections, this is approximately 8.5kg per household per collection). In March and October, this reduces to an average of 175 tonnes per month (approx. 5kg per household per collection), and from November to January, this reduces further still, to only 43 tonnes per month on average (approximately only 1kg per household per collection). Many people do not put their garden bins out at all over the autumn and winter period.

In order to save on the cost of visiting all of the same households every week, and potentially having very few bins to empty, we are proposing to offer an 'on demand' service over the winter months, where householders could pick from allocated days, and let us know if they had any garden waste for us to collect on those days.

This change would allow us to utilise our staff more effectively on other tasks in the winter months.

Q2	Do you agree or disagree that The Council should move to an 'on demand' garden waste collection service over the winter months? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY			
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree - from October to March	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree - from November to January	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

Review of Democratic Processes

Number of Elections

Rossendale Borough Council consists of 36 elected Councillors. Each Councillor is elected for a term of 4 years, but our elections take place in 'thirds'. This means that there are 3 elections in every 4 years, and at every election, one third of the number of Councillors are elected (ie 12 Councillors at each election).

We are considering moving to holding only one election every 4 years, which would be similar to Parliamentary elections for MPs. This would mean that all Councillors would be elected at that time, and then they would be in office for 4 years.

We think that we may be able to save £25,000 a year from this change.

Q3	Do you agree or disagree that The Council should consider making this change? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

Number of Councillors

Currently we have 36 elected Councillors in Rossendale Borough Council. This equates to an average of one Councillor for every 1861 people who live in Rossendale (this is similar to the level of representation in Burnley and Pendle). There are 14 wards in the Borough, and every ward has either 2 or 3 Councillors. If we changed to 2 Councillors per ward, this would equate to an average of one Councillor for every 2,393 people (this would be similar to Bury, Rochdale and Hyndburn).

We would need to consult with the Local Government Boundary Commission if we were to propose this change, and they would take the ultimate decision on the number of Councillors in The Borough.

We think that we may be able to save £26,000 a year from this change.

Q4	Do you agree or disagree that The Council should consider making this change? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

The Mayor

The Mayor is a Councillor who has been nominated by other Councillors to be the Mayor of the Borough for a term of one year. We have a traditional Mayor in Rossendale, known as the 'First Citizen of The Borough' who wears the Council robes and gold chains and, along with their Consort (partner), they carry out civic duties such as attending a wide range of community, charity and school events both within and outside Rossendale. It is a non-political role and is supported by attendants who drive the Mayor and their Consort to events in a civic car.

Some other areas have modern Mayors. This role is different to a traditional Mayor in that they may not necessarily wear the robes and chains to events and may not have attendants to accompany them. Some modern Mayors drive their own cars to events and may attend a more limited number of events outside the area, which are about promoting the Borough.

We are proposing that in Rossendale we move towards having a modern Mayor.

We think that we may be able to save up to £50,000 a year from this change.

Q5	Do you agree or disagree that Rossendale should have a Mayor? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY	
<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

Q6	If you agree that Rossendale should have a Mayor, do you think we should have a traditional Mayor (as we currently do), or a Modern Mayor? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY
<input type="checkbox"/> Traditional	<input type="checkbox"/> Modern

One Stop Shop

The Council has a One Stop Shop in Rawtenstall, where customers can speak to members of staff face to face about a range of issues. In the last Citizens' Panel questionnaire, 18% of respondents told us that they prefer to contact the Council face to face.

82% of respondents said they would prefer to use other methods such as the telephone or internet. The Council can be contacted on 01706 217777 in office hours, 0845 300 6478 out of office hours, or via email at generalenquiries@rossendalebc.gov.uk.

Respondents told us that, if they were to contact us face to face:

- 15% would do so to talk through a licensing application;
- 13% would do so to find out about a planning application;
- 12% would do so to enquire about a claim for benefits (such as housing or council tax benefit);
- 7% would do so to submit a Freedom of Information request; and
- 7% would do so to advise us of a change of address.

As part of our savings plans, we are proposing to reduce the number of buildings that we have, and deliver most of our services from one place. For example, we have identified that it is likely to cost around £400,000 to bring the One Stop Shop building in Rawtenstall up to modern building standards. One option may therefore be to move services to one of our buildings in Bacup which may cost around £150,000.

We think that we can save around £35,000 a year (plus future capital costs) from this change.

Q7	On average, how often do you visit the One Stop Shop in Rawtenstall? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Annually
<input type="checkbox"/>	Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Less than annually
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quarterly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never
<input type="checkbox"/>	Once every 6 months		

Q8	If we did move the One Stop Shop to Bacup, what impact would this have on your usage of the service? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY						
<input type="checkbox"/>	Increase	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decrease	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stay the same	<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't use it

Q9	Please tell us why your usage would increase, decrease or stay the same.
<input type="text"/>	

Q10	Do you think that the Council needs to have a One Stop Shop? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Your local Museum

Currently, Rossendale Museum, at Whitaker Park in Rawtenstall, is open 17.5 hours, over 5 days per week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday) throughout the year.

Q11	Have you ever visited Rossendale Museum? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, more than once a month	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, less than once a year
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, more than once a year	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, once in the last few years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, once a year	<input type="checkbox"/>	No, I have never visited Rossendale Museum

Q12 If you have visited the Museum, what was the nature of your visit? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

Personal visit out of interest Visit as part of an organised group Visit for an organised event

The Museum is managed by Lancashire County Council (LCC) but Rossendale Council pays for the service. LCC have confirmed that in order to reduce costs, they would need to reduce the opening times of the Museum. We think that we can save between £10,000 and £50,000 by doing this.

Q13 Do you agree or disagree that we should consider options for reducing the opening times of the Museum in order to save money? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Agree Disagree Don't know

Q14 We are also considering the option of inviting any other interested parties to run the Museum, at their expense. Do you agree or disagree that we should consider this option? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Agree Disagree Don't know

Your local Swimming Pools

Currently, there are three swimming pools in Rossendale, at Whitworth, Marl Pits and Haslingden. Rossendale Borough Council currently pays money towards the running costs of swimming pools in the Borough.

Q15 Have you ever been swimming in one of the three swimming pools in Rossendale, and if so, how often? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Yes, more than once a month Yes, less than once a year
 Yes, more than once a year Yes, once in the last few years
 Yes, once a year No, I have never been swimming in a pool in Rossendale

Q16 If you answered 'Yes' to the above question, which swimming pool did you visit most often? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Whitworth Marl Pits Haslingden

Rossendale Council is currently working with Rossendale Leisure Trust and users of the pools to look at options to reduce the running costs of one or more of the swimming pools in Rossendale. It is focusing its work on Haslingden Pool as this pool alone currently requires around £137,000 each year of council money to keep it running and will need approximately £1.5m to be spent on it in the next few years to bring it up to an acceptable building standard.

Q17 Do you agree or disagree that we should consider options to reduce the running costs of Haslingden Swimming Pool? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Agree Disagree Don't know

Q18 We are also considering the option of inviting any other interested parties to run one or more of the swimming pools in Rossendale, at their expense. Do you agree or disagree that we should consider this option? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Agree Disagree Don't know

Q19 If no other option can be found to reduce the costs, the Council may need to consider closing Haslingden Pool. Do you agree or disagree that we should consider this option as a last resort? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Agree Disagree Don't know

Changes to Other Services

In the last Citizens' Panel questionnaire, we asked you what you thought the council priorities should be. The top three priorities were:

- 1.Ensuring rubbish is collected regularly (88%);
- 2.Ensuring streets and open spaces are clean (86%); and
- 3.Value for money council services (80%)

In addition, respondents also told us that good customer services were important (62.4%) and improving The Borough's town centres (59.3%) and improving the health of people locally (59.1%) should also be priorities.

Here we have outlined the range of services that we deliver and the amount of money that we spend on these services per year.

Q20

What other services, if any, do you think that we should look at to make the £1.3m savings?

Please note the spend per annum is listed in brackets. PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY

- Community Management and Partnerships (£165,000)
- Community Safety (£50,000)
- Voluntary Sector Support, Grants and Events (£152,000)
- Area Management Teams, including Markets, Town Centre Caretakers, Street Cleansing, Enforcement (£404,000)
- Bereavement Services, including Cemeteries (£168,000)
- Open Spaces, including Parks and Playgrounds (£811,000)
- Emergency Planning (£8,000)
- Housing and Council Tax Benefits (£132,000)
- Collecting Council Tax and Business Rates (£423,000)
- Information Technology (IT) and Electronic-Government (£632,000)
- Concessionary Travel (£40,000)
- Dog Warden and Pest Control (£41,000)
- Leisure Services Grants (£715,000)
- Environmental Health (£477,000)
- Economic Regeneration, including tourism and business support (£261,000)
- Housing Regeneration and Homelessness (£198,000)
- Museum at Whittaker Park (£91,000)
- Refuse and Recycling (£909,000)
- Street Sweeping (£690,000)
- Planning Services and Land Charges (£179,000)
- Building Control Services, including Safety Standards (£128,000)
- Public Protection (Licensing and Enforcement - taxis, entertainment venues) (£152,000)
- Legal Services (£205,000)
- Democracy, including Elections, Member Allowances and The Mayor (£587,000)
- Corporate Management and Support Services (£375,000)
- People and Policy (Human Resources, Payroll, Performance Management, Communications) (£402,000)
- Finance, Treasury Management, Audit and Insurance (£599,000)
- Corporate Estates (Land and Property Management and Depreciation) (£872,000)
- None of the above

About you

So that we can analyse the results of this survey by different groups of residents, answering the following questions will be really helpful in enabling us to understand local differences and to ensure that we take any necessary action to address this. All responses are completely confidential and will be used for no other purpose.

Q21	Are you...	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to disclose
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Q22	What is your age group?	<input type="checkbox"/> Under 20	<input type="checkbox"/> 30-39	<input type="checkbox"/> 50-59	<input type="checkbox"/> 70+
		<input type="checkbox"/> 20-29	<input type="checkbox"/> 40-49	<input type="checkbox"/> 60-69	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to disclose

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

Q23	Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to disclose
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Q24	How would you best describe your ethnic origin?	<input type="checkbox"/> White or White British	<input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
		<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British	<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed or multiple ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to disclose

Q25	Finally, to help us analyse responses from different sections of the borough, please provide your postcode below.
	<input type="text"/>

Thanks for taking the time to share your views. Please return your completed questionnaire using the Freepost envelope provided by 30th September 2012.

Results of this and other consultations will be presented to Cabinet on 28th November 2012 to inform decision making on cuts. Papers will be available on The Council's website (www.rossendale.gov.uk) one week in advance of the meeting.

WE ALSO NEED YOUR VIEWS ON CHANGES TO COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT

We would also very much value your opinion on our other consultation which is ongoing at the moment, in relation to Changes to Council Tax Benefit. Further to the cuts set out previously, from 1 April 2013, The Government will give us around 10% less than we currently need in Rossendale to pay for Council Tax Benefit. This means that there will be a further shortfall in local funding of around £600,000 per year. We would also very much value your opinion on how we can make up the £600,000 shortfall in relation to Council Tax Benefit.

There is a different questionnaire for this and it can be found online at www.rossendale.gov.uk/ctsupportscheme, or you can email us for a copy of the questionnaire, at counciltaxsupport@rossendale.gov.uk.

Please ask in the One Stop Shop or telephone us on 01706 217777 to request a copy of any of the questionnaires if you would like them to be posted to you.