

Council Priorities and Budget Consultation. Have your say.

Rossendale Council needs to reduce its spending as part of the national effort to balance the public finances. We have been seeking your views on the budget, areas of priority and where savings can be made and what should we do about Council Tax rates. Only 16% of the Council Tax collected goes to Rossendale Borough Council.

The Council is committed to careful management of its finances and introducing new ways of working but despite this, the Council is facing a number of challenges in light of the latest national changes of reducing government grants and falling income from areas such as property rents and planning.

We would like to hear your views and suggestions on the Council's priorities and on how we can make the required savings. Please spare 5 minutes to give us your thoughts. The deadline for responses is 31st Jan 2013. Many thanks in advance for your participation.

Council priorities

What are your views and comments on the Council's Priorities (see below for a reminder of these)?

82 (100.0%)

Reaction to priorities (coded)

35 (42.7%)	<i>They seem reasonable</i>	6 (7.3%)	<i>No business plan to support the priorities</i>
4 (4.9%)	<i>But can they be achieved?</i>	8 (9.8%)	<i>Don't waste money</i>
7 (8.5%)	<i>Value for money is top priority</i>	6 (7.3%)	<i>Clean and green is important</i>
16 (19.5%)	<i>Regeneration should be top priority</i>	4 (4.9%)	<i>Better road maintenance</i>
8 (9.8%)	<i>Too broad a question with no detail</i>	4 (4.9%)	<i>Work better/ more in partnership</i>
5 (6.1%)	<i>Priorities OK but implementation poor</i>	16 (19.5%)	<i>Other</i>

In light of the current feedback from our consultations the Council is proposing the following priorities:

Regenerating Rossendale

This priority focuses on regeneration in its broadest sense, so it means supporting communities that get on well together, attracting investment, promoting Rossendale, as well as working as an enabler to promote the physical regeneration of Rossendale.

Responsive Value for Money Services

This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.

Clean Green Rossendale

This priority focuses on clean streets and town centres and well managed open spaces, whilst recognising that the Council has to work with communities and as a partner to deliver this ambition.

The Council priorities inform the budget setting process.

Financial outlook

Please give suggestions on how Rossendale Borough Council could bridge the identified funding gap of approximately £600,000 to £800,000 per annum both in the immediate coming year of 2013/14 and future years (see below for further details)?

81 (100.0%)

Saving suggestions (coded)

7 (9.6%)	<i>Reduce no. of councillors</i>	2 (2.7%)	<i>Reduce council meetings</i>
9 (12.3%)	<i>Reduce councillor expenses</i>	12 (16.4%)	<i>Look at cost savings for everything</i>
11 (15.1%)	<i>More joint working</i>	5 (6.8%)	<i>Cut staff</i>
4 (5.5%)	<i>Become more business like</i>	3 (4.1%)	<i>Centralise offices</i>
8 (11.0%)	<i>Reduce senior management</i>	18 (24.7%)	<i>Wage reductions</i>
6 (8.2%)	<i>Reduce the range/ quality of services</i>	15 (20.5%)	<i>Try and generate income</i>
5 (6.8%)	<i>Tougher debt collection</i>	18 (24.7%)	<i>Other</i>

The Council's financial outlook is as follows: the Council has forecast its available revenue resources to be approximately £9.4m based on the following assumptions:

1) Rossendale Borough Council's share of the Council Tax collected will increase by 2%. This compares to the Governments offer of a 2 year only grant equivalent to 1% increase in Council Tax, for all councils choosing to freeze Council Tax for 13/14. The impact of this time limited offer is that after 2 years the equivalent financial resource is not available to the Council and therefore increases the need for further cost savings.

2) Other Central Government funding will continue to reduce in line with the Government's 2010 Compressive Spending Review. Over the Spending Review's 4 year period we are forecasting that our resources from Government will reduce by 39%. The Chancellor's latest Autumn Statement does not bode well for future Government financing and so we now anticipate further reductions over the medium term. We anticipate that funding resources for 2013/14 will be finalised by Central Government towards the end of December 2012.

The Council's annual net revenue costs, which despite certain inflation increases, is estimated to remain at approximately £9.9m. We are able to maintain costs at 2012/13 levels due to a number in efficiency savings of approximately £300,000. Given anticipated financial resources of £9.4m this still means there is a budget deficit of £500,000. The Council has identified a series of potential other savings totalling £400,000; however, offset by a number of additional cost pressures totalling £500,000. The revised estimated budget deficit is therefore almost £600,000 for 2013/14.

In order to balance the 2013/14 annual Budget the Council will have to utilise almost £600,000 of its accumulated reserves. However in future years the deficits are predicted to continue, which are in excess of our forecast available reserves. This leaves a permanent deficit in the Council's annual expenditure, after other cost pressures, of approximately £800,000 for future years.

More detail on the Council's financial challenge can be found in a report presented to Cabinet (Item D4) on 28th November 2012. The link to this report can be viewed on the Council's web page at www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/731/cabinet

About you

We are committed to equality of opportunity in service provision. To assist the Council to assess the impact of its policies, services and decisions and to ensure that they are fair and accessible we undertake equality monitoring. We would be grateful if you would complete the following information about yourself. You are under no obligation to provide the information but it would assist us greatly if you did. This information is confidential and will be collated on an anonymous basis and will be used to inform and develop Council services to ensure that they meet the needs of different customers.

Are you?

60 (60.6%) *Male* 36 (36.4%) *Female* 3 (3.0%) *Prefer not to disclose*

Do you currently live in the gender you were given at birth?

93 (94.9%) *Yes* 0 (0.0%) *No* 5 (5.1%) *Prefer not to disclose*

What is your age?

0 (0.0%) *Under 20 years* 11 (11.1%) *30 - 39 years* 23 (23.2%) *50 - 59 years* 13 (13.1%) *70+ years*
 3 (3.0%) *20 - 29 years* 18 (18.2%) *40 - 49 years* 27 (27.3%) *60 - 69 years* 4 (4.0%) *Prefer not to disclose*

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as: A person has a disability if s/he has 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.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

13 (13.3%) Yes

81 (82.7%) No

4 (4.1%) Prefer not to disclose

If you have answered yes to the above question, what type of disability?

10 (76.9%) Physical or mobility impairment

2 (15.4%) Learning disability/difficulties

4 (30.8%) Hearing impairment

3 (23.1%) Mental Health condition

3 (23.1%) Visual impairment

6 (46.2%) Long term illness or condition

Other (please specify)

1 (100.0%)

How would you define your sexual orientation/sexuality?

1 (1.1%) Gay Man

0 (0.0%) Bisexual

11 (11.7%) Prefer not to disclose

0 (0.0%) Gay Woman/Lesbian

82 (87.2%) Heterosexual/Straight

Other (please specify)

7 (100.0%)

Are you legally married or in a legally registered same sex civil partnership?

70 (71.4%) Yes

18 (18.4%) No

10 (10.2%) Prefer not to disclose

Which best describes your ethnic background?**White**

93 (100.0%) British / English / Welsh/Scottish/Irish / Any other White background (please specify)

0 (0.0%) Gypsy/Traveller

0 (0.0%) Other White European

3 (100.0%)

Asian or Asian British

1 (100.0%) Bangladeshi

0 (0.0%) Indian

0 (0.0%) Pakistani

Any other Asian background (please specify)

2 (100.0%)

Black or Black British

0 (0.0%) African

0 (0.0%) Caribbean

Any other Black background (please specify)

2 (100.0%)

Mixed Ethnicity

0 (0.0%) White and Asian

0 (0.0%) White and Black African

0 (0.0%) White and Black Caribbean

Any other Mixed ethnicity (please specify)

2 (100.0%)

Other Ethnic Group

0 (0.0%) *Chinese*

Any other ethnic group (please specify) 2 (100.0%)

What is your religion or belief?

58 (65.2%) <i>Christian</i>	0 (0.0%) <i>Hindu</i>	1 (1.1%) <i>Muslim</i>	29 (32.6%) <i>No religion or belief</i>
1 (1.1%) <i>Buddhist</i>	0 (0.0%) <i>Jewish</i>	0 (0.0%) <i>Sikh</i>	
<i>Other (please specify)</i>	8 (100.0%)		

Are you currently pregnant or on maternity leave?

1 (1.1%) *Yes* 84 (92.3%) *No* 6 (6.6%) *Prefer not to disclose*

Which of these activities best describes your situation?

39 (42.9%) <i>Full time work</i>	0 (0.0%) <i>Full time education</i>	30 (33.0%) <i>Retired</i>
5 (5.5%) <i>Part time work</i>	1 (1.1%) <i>Unemployed but available for work</i>	3 (3.3%) <i>Looking after the home</i>
11 (12.1%) <i>Self Employed</i>	1 (1.1%) <i>Carer</i>	5 (5.5%) <i>Prefer not to disclose</i>
0 (0.0%) <i>Government Scheme</i>	1 (1.1%) <i>Unable to work due to illness/disability</i>	
<i>Other (please specify)</i>	6 (100.0%)	

Thank you for responding to this consultation. Please click the 'submit' button below to send us your thoughts.

Rossendale Borough Council will finalise its Corporate Priorities, annual Council Tax rates and its annual Budget for 2013/14 at its meeting of all Members on 27th February 2013. Findings from this consultation and how the information has been used will be available at this time via the Council's website.