

Local Authority Responses

‘The impacts of austerity measures on local services (2015)’

40 Local Authority Councillors responded to the survey on the impacts of austerity measures on local services.

Q1. Compared to 3 years ago how would you rate current public services?

Much Better	0%
Slightly Better	12.8%
Unchanged	25.6%
Slightly Worse	46.2%
Much Worse	15.4%

Q2 a) In respect of specific services how have these changed over the last 3 years?

	Much Better	Slightly Better	Unchanged	Slightly Worse	Much Worse	Don't Know
Recycling Collection	15.0%	20%	52.5%	7.5%	5%	0
Parks and open Spaces	2.6%	10.5%	60.5%	18.4%	2.6%	5.3%
GP Surgeries	5.0%	10%	47.5%	22.5%	10%	5%
Refuse Collection	10.0%	17.5%	65%	7.5%	0	0
Local Hospitals	0	15.8%	47.4%	21.1%	10.5%	5.3%
Schools and Colleges	0	23.7%	47.4%	10.5%	0	18.4%
Bus Services	0	10%	20%	32.5%	22.5%	15%
Street Lighting	2.6%	10.3%	51.3%	25.6%	7.7%	2.6%
Libraries	2.6%	5.3%	47.4%	21.1%	7.9%	15.8%
Street cleaning	2.6%	10.3%	53.8%	23.1%	7.7%	2.6%
Police	0	10%	27.5%	35%	25%	2.5%
Care for the elderly	0	8.1%	10.8%	27%	8.1%	45.9%
Road Maintenance	5.1%	12.8%	12.8%	30.8%	33.3%	5.1%
Meals on wheels	0	0	8.8%	5.9%	5.9%	79.4%
Social Services	0	2.6%	28.2%	23.1%	2.6%	43.6%
Housing Advice Services	2.7%	5.4%	27%	8.1%	0	56.8%

Planning Services	0	15%	32.5%	22.5%	17.5%	12.5%
Environmental Health Services	2.6%	7.9%	55.3%	7.9%	0	26.3%
Sport and Leisure Facilities	5.3%	7.9%	52.6%	18.4%	2.6%	13.2%

Q2b)

Respondent were asked whether they used the list of services above. The responses below therefore show the same areas of service with responses from the users of the services:

	Much Better	Slightly Better	Unchanged	Slightly Worse	Much Worse	Don't know
Recycling collection	15.4%	20.5%	51.3%	7.7%	5.1%	-
Parks and open spaces	3%	12.1%	60.6%	18.2%	3%	3%
GP surgeries	5.4%	10.8%	45.9%	24.3%	10.8%	2.7%
Refuse collection	10.3%	17.9%	64.1%	7.7%	-	-
Local hospitals	-	15.6%	46.9%	21.9%	12.5%	3.1%
Schools and colleges	-	31.3%	50%	12.5%	-	6.3%
Bus services	-	16.7%	16.7%	27.8%	38.9%	-
Street lighting	3%	12.1%	54.5%	21.2%	9.1%	-
Libraries	3.6%	3.6%	57.1%	17.9%	10.7%	7.1%
Street cleaning	3.1%	6.3%	56.3%	21.9%	9.4%	3.1%
Police	-	14.8%	18.5%	29.6%	37%	-
Care for the elderly	-	16.7%	-	33.3%	25%	25%
Road maintenance	5.6%	8.3%	13.9%	30.6%	36.1%	5.6%
Meals on wheels	-	-	-	-	-	-
Social services	-	-	50%	50%	-	-
Housing Advice Services	-	-	50%	-	-	50%
Planning services	-	16.7%	29.2%	25%	20.8%	8.3%
Environmental Health services	4.8%	4.8%	66.7%	14.3%	-	9.5%
Sport and Leisure facilities	8.7%	8.7%	65.2%	8.7%	4.3%	4.3%

Q3. Have you noticed any changes in the accessibility of services provided by your local Council(s) over the last 3 years in terms of:

(NB respondents could choose both yes and no in all elements of Q3 to signify some services where there are cuts, and some where there are not resulted in figures >100%)

a) The opening times when a service is available:

Yes- longer hours	5.3%
Yes –shorter hours	31.6%
No Change	63.2%

Shorter Hours included:

- Library reduced opening hours x2
- Shorter hours at Sort It Centre
- Complex Customer access often miss connection to relevant officer
- Many services discontinued

Longer hours included:

- Introduction of electronic communications extends hours when things can be done

b) How frequently a service is provided:

Yes- More often	0
Yes-Less often	45%
No Change	57.5%

Less often comments included:

- Not enough staff
- Library reduced opening
- Road maintenance decreased
- 'As staff are becoming less in number they each have to do more which means that for example in the care services it is harder to see a professional. Also as they are being put under more pressure the rates of sickness absence are increasing and with recruitment and retention being a big issue temporary staff are being brought in at additional cost.'

c) The location from which services are provided?

Yes - Wider range of locations	7.5%
Yes - Smaller range of locations	40%
No Change	55%

- Locations are worse
- Police Station is now only one in district
- Centralisation and less local knowledge
- Libraries and youth centres closed
- As Council buildings are being sold to bring in funding, the venues are becoming further from the communities they serve

d) The charges made for particular services?

Yes – Increased charges	38.5%
Yes – Decreased charges	-
No Change	61.5%

Increased charges included:

- Increase in all council charges and fees
- Planning fees
- Charges for services are having to increase to balance the books

Q4. Please list the three most significant impacts of changes in service provision affecting your local area over the last 3 years.

There were a range of responses to this question which can be collated into four main areas:

Negative Impact	Issues with Roads and Transport
<p>Increased thresholds for adult social services and mental health services with little provision for low to intermediate need (early intervention) leading to more crises and unsustainable potential long term costs.</p> <p>Much better identification of families in need of children's centres support (through Troubled Families Programme and (Halcon) One Team working) but insufficient frontline staff to deliver early help (to then reduce demand on 'inadequate' acute services).</p> <p>Library Services</p> <p>Threatened library closure</p> <p>Poor play provision</p> <p>Closure of community compost site</p> <p>Weaker local planning</p> <p>Cost of care provision increasingly hitting the most vulnerable, particularly in rural areas</p> <p>Availability of Doctors</p> <p>Minor injuries unit no evening or w/e cover community hospital</p> <p>Move to online services penalises those without internet connection</p> <p>Move to commissioned service provision has lost continuity established with LA departments over years 'Outside providers' have to be paid for</p> <p>Planning services overridden by Government legislation so too many new houses in the wrong place</p> <p>Electorate don't trust local councillors are they are comparing them to MP's</p> <p>Library hours reduced</p> <p>Long waiting lists for GP appointments</p> <p>No county general youth service</p> <p>Some libraries closed</p> <p>Promises on broadband not being met</p> <p>Parks not as well kept</p> <p>Planning services under greater pressure due to government legislation</p>	<p>Rural Bus Services including home to school transport</p> <p>Removal of bus service</p> <p>Few road repairs</p> <p>Less Rural transport</p> <p>Reduced road maintenance</p> <p>Reduced grass cutting and weeding of roadside verges</p> <p>Poor road maintenance</p> <p>Poor highways planning advice</p> <p>Less on road service</p> <p>Less verge cutting</p> <p>Bus services cut increasing social isolation</p> <p>Street lighting</p> <p>Road repairs less frequent</p> <p>Frequency reductions in bus services especially to hospital</p> <p>Failure to clear litter and overgrown foliage from public spaces and footpaths</p> <p>Highways maintenance</p> <p>County Council removal of bus subsidies and removal of post 16 school transport – hard on rural areas</p> <p>Poor highways response to pot holes repairs</p> <p>Declining bus services</p> <p>Maintenance of roads seriously affected</p> <p>Bus services curtailed</p> <p>Road maintenance slightly better</p>
Positive Impact	Police and Rural Crime
<p>Halcon One Team model of coordinated existing multiagency frontline staff working in disadvantaged areas sharing information and between them providing a more responsive, efficient and effective problem solving approach addressing issues which underpin historic deprivation.</p> <p>New planning rules in local plan will improve local participation</p>	<p>Rural Policing / Rare police presence</p> <p>Drastically reduced police services</p> <p>Reduction in number of police stations</p> <p>Continuing reduction in dedicated police officers with local knowledge</p> <p>Less police officers visible</p> <p>Policing much worse especially in rural areas</p>

<p>Better waste and recycling service Library now community run More recycling £30m removed from LA budget over last 4 years – fortunately little impact on front line provision Improved refuse collection Threat of library closure and steps to transfer to community run service</p>	
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Q5) Looking forward are you aware of any planned changes to local services that have yet to be implemented?

67% responded yes to this question and below are their responses in more detail.

<p>10% reduction to SLAs and small grants to the Voluntary & Community Sector, businesses and the arts; increasing charge of green waste disposal to cover costs; second class postage; charging for all but one remaining free car parks; creating an hourly rate car parking tariff for all car parks to rebalance use and promote two park and rides for workers to free-up town centre car parks for shoppers; implement charges for blue badge holders; increase cremation fees; no increase to members allowances. We have already cut our costs through back office efficiencies and are already part way through rationalisation of assets and hope to become part of a single public sector hub; have started building new council housing as we own our stock (low wage, low unemployment but high property value area); now have successful coordinated frontline one team multiagency service delivery in three areas of high deprivation; plan to transform service delivery across the council in the next four years to protect frontline services; simplify process, focus on outcomes supported by the necessary IT (learning from the Eastbourne model). We want to continue to deliver non statutory services valued by the public such as grass cutting, street cleaning, dog bins, homeless support, affordable housing, AONB service whose benefits aren't always quantifiable but make a big difference to overall health and wellbeing. We want to be more business like then reinvest in improved delivery of services and greater energy efficiency, more like a social enterprise. We have a Core Strategy in place and a Site Allocations Document with the inspector and more than a five year supply of building land. We plan for sustainable development with employment led housing and want to improve on our 78% of area who work in the county town already.</p>
<p>Further reduction in rural bus services Introduction of collection points in residential areas for household waste. Reduction of staff in every council department.</p>
<p>Threatened closure of branch GP surgery</p>
<p>New planning regulations in local plan will be on the whole positive.</p>
<p>Further reduction in police services further reduction in road and verge maintenance</p>
<p>Cuts in support for emergency help for elderly people.</p>
<p>Less rural buses</p>
<p>Financial constraints on all Councils will oblige Councils to find even more savings. Councils will find themselves concentrating on their duties while retreating from work which they have powers only. Most Councils will do their best to keep statutory services for vulnerable people, including all statutory children's services up to standard. Councils are highly reluctant to contemplate holding Referendums to obtain approval to raise Council Tax above the permitted thresholds for increase. This reluctance could cause acute hardship for some people in some areas - not all.</p>
<p>Another £55m of savings to be found from Cumbria County Council's budget over the next three years.</p>
<p>Adult services</p>
<p>Library consolidation</p>
<p>Commissioning of services - many Council functions to be done in this way.</p>
<p>Even more cuts to social services budgets</p>
<p>Nothing specific, just the predicted impact of further budget cuts and the implications for Adult Social Care provision, both in terms of likely increase in cost and in the tightening of qualifying criteria for applicants.</p>

Shropshire Fit. But then again this was originally set up to benefit people not to decide which Hospitals are kept open or closed.
Less libraries
There will be changes to many services due to reduced financial resources.
Another £38m to be removed over the next four years! We haven't yet heard what the impact will be.
Likely to be changes to social services, probable cuts to libraries, road maintenance under threat
LINCOLNSHIRE HAS TO SAVE A FURTHER 150 MILLION PER YEAR-SO EVERYTHING WILL BE CUT!
Transfer services to Council trading company
Library (as above)
Further cuts in bus subsidies
Adult social care services to be reduced
Cannot comment being a local Councillor
Doorstep recycling of plastic and cardboard