BUDGET VIEWS

Consultation Period Comments

6.12.12 - 9.12.12

Ref		Date	Comment
BVE131006	Internal email	6.12.12	If a voluntary redundancy trawl is to be made it should be open to all grades for consideration on a case by case basis. Previous VR has excluded grade 4 & 5 social workers.
BVE131007	Text message	6.12.12	Rather than making staff redundant and putting further pressure on our benefits system, reduce the hours they all work - eg down to 4 days a week. Also, research shows you generally get more out of part-time workers, hour for hour, so hopefully there should be less reduction in service.
BVE131008	Internal email	6.12.12	I have just received the information regarding the 2013/14 budget cuts, and find that they are most disheartening.
			Birmingham City Council is the largest council in Europe and the Revenues department caters for over 400,000 customers & residents. The quality, quantity, availability and access to BCC services is paramount for staff to deal with all the enquiries we receive.
			Reductions in staff & cuts in services cannot possible help us to improve. In fact it puts extreme pressure on the remaining employees to fail in their duties or produce inferior quality work.
			The number of customers is not decreasing, hence, staff will, inevitably be facing ever increasing backlogs. The Revenues department has been understaffed for several years now, and we know first hand how this affects the staff. Staff moral is constantly on a low as managers, pressurised by the senior revenues management team, constantly press us to complete more & more work, regardless! I feel like I am treated more like a machine than a human being, however, I am not allowed to break down or make mistakes, as this will result in me losing income due to being performance monitored.
			The emphasis must always be on quality of work, with increasing quantity, but should not come a t the cost of overworking staff or setting unreasonable workloads & targets.

			I hope members of the council can plead a strong case for BCC and it's budget so that the high standards of service we promote and provide, can be maintained, and staff welfare being high on the agenda too.
BVE131009	Internal email	6.12.12	There needs to be an urgent review in to the management structure within the housing repairs which currently consist of North, central and south contract. In my view 3 GR5 positions can be eliminated straightaway which are the post of contract team managers. There are also excessive post for service co ordinators across all 3 sites and these can be reduced significantly with a potential saving of over half a million pounds. Currently the situation is that there is more than one service coordinator who has the benefit of managing two member of staff who are more then capable of managing themselves due to the nature of their work. In my opinion management positions are top heavy compare to the level of staff on the ground when it should be the other way round to deliver an effective and value for money service.
BVE131010	External email	6.12.12	Plenty of research suggests that hourly productivity from part time workers is higher than that of full time employees. A quick google brings up a number of articles. So why should the budget cuts mean redundancy? Why have 4 staff working 5 days a week when you could have 5 staff working 4 days a week and less stressed because they have an extra day off? So my response to the cuts is to identify some loss in service, but primarily to reduce the hours each employees works.
BVE131011	External email	6.12.12	I write in praise of your Events Department who have very kindly helped us with our Community Projects over the last two years. The Events Department (have very kindly provided The BILL LLOYD Memorial Trust, of which I am the Operations Director, with support and facilities that have enabled us to raise many thousands of pounds at our Charity Cricket Days at Bournville Cricket Ground, Cadbury's Chocolate Factory during 2012 & 2013. Monies raised has gone as long way to support such Good Causes as The Royal British Legion, ABF The Soldiers' Charity (Army Benevolent Fund) and Birmingham Inner City Youth & Disability Cricket. Such support is vital to the success of these Community Projects and long may it continue. May I take this opportunity to thank everyone at the Events Department for their continued support, which is very much appreciated. They do a great job, are extremely helpful and professional and a credit to Birmingham.

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BVE131012	External email	6.12.12	my first thought is are you playing politics?
			my second is are you really exploiting and applying for all available income streams?
			my third is if this is truly the second city then you have to start behaving like you want that title. Stop
			moaning and get managing!!
			why has birmingham been treated unfairly as you say ? £74 instead of £149 why arent you getting
			local mps together to explain this to residents and lobby parliament together??
			in the great scheme of things as you set it out in your paper, a council tax makes naff all
			difference2.6m is nothing is it!by all means have a referendum on it let citizens decide.
			what % of council tax do you currently actually collect? ??
			fundamentals for a council are to keep the city clean, sanitary and hygienic.
			so priority one
			is refuse collectionafter that street cleansing and litter collectionignore these and the city
			becomes a cess pit and you will also really tick off residents! Remember birmingham is a big tourist
			destination ignore refuse and litter at your peril thus cutting back on street cleaning across the city is
			short term and short sighted!!You have 20 road sweepers. Give them to the districts to run? Why if
			you have 20 do i never see them on the road? roads need sweeping it is stupid not to do ite.g
			leaves fall, if you dont sweep they block drains= more on cost to clear drains!if you dont want to run a
			fleet then buy it in but dont abandon road sweeping.
			BCC procurement costs is still way above the private sector. E.g broadband costs, plumbing, heating
			etce.g. A local community hall bcc supplied broadband £133/monthlocal community changed to
			BT internet cost £10/mth. i rest my case!
			BCC still has too much and too complex paperwork in its dealings with community groups!
			BCC has many good, dedicated, enthusiastic employees you need to listen to them!
			Youth services must be provided such that we do not have a generation hanging about on street
			corners/joining gangs or doing drugs!
			if you want communities to get involved in schools you must support governors.
			be active is vital to a healthy city.
			Cut the number of councillors by 30%
			Parks have taken more than their fair share of cutsif you want a healthy city, they need places to go
			and enjoy/play. Dont cut back parks anymore. Use you contract power more wisely with bpn, caldron
			etc. get more for your money.Listen to BOSF they represent parks groups and have great
			knowledge.
			You mess with the roads contract at your peril. i note you say savings in pfi page 46 no. 6 if this
			equals more holes then i for one say never.!!
			well page 47. no 7 is written in gibberishi think it means you will put up parking charges and put in
			more metres?this will hit visitor numbers to the city. I dont shop in the city now because of this!
			page 47 no 9 of course do this and many more like it!!!scrap quangos.
			page 48 no 14 well if my experience is anything to go by i dont see how consumer services adds

			value. reform it with pleasure. scrap the birmingham community safety partnershipwhat does it do?? if you want to be a cycling city you have to sweep your roads!! = puctures and accidentscurrently you dont and as a result many residents are very angry about the state of city cyclingnot to all the mention pot holes!! i am bored now you were voted in to manage the cityWell get on and manage it!!
			hi further to this i have spent 10 minutes today trying to get a human being on 303 1111. after pressing buttons and waiting i conclude this number is a waste of space and money. i tred 303 1112 that was no better it kept telling me to go to the website. grrrrrrr. what was my tricky requesti just want to know whats happening over xmas re refuse collection. last year it was a shambles my conclusion is this year isnt going to be any better is it!!! the website gives 25th and 26th no collectionso we have 2weeks of refuse = slow collections/ kate collectionsoh i give up and you expect me to wonder why i doubt you can runa budget when you cant even run a phone number and a rubbish collection over xmas!!
BVE131013	External Email	7.12.12	I would like to say how helpful the Birmingham City Council Events Depot are to the Cathedral. They supply us with tables for events and barriers to corden off areas. They provide a valuable service to us and are extremely efficient and obliging. Birmingham City Council help to maintain Cathedral Square and without their valuable expertise and support we would not be able to function as well as we do. The events team work closely with us and we are the venue for many civic services.
BVE131014	Internal email		Money could be saved as we have top heavy management in local services housing repair accross all three contract area's. There are far to many GR5's and GR6 positions which could be streamlined to potentially save over half million pounds per year. I feel we less managers but more solders at ground level

BVE131015	Internal email	7.12.12	I would have liked to attend one of the public meetings however due to previous cuts, staff leaving and increased work loads this is impossible. Ithe Intensive Supervision and Surveillance team. supervise young people who are on court orders. These young people are deemed high risk so much so that they are at risk of going to custody. We are a multi agency team working closely with police, substance misuse staff, social services, court teams, education and employment. We also develop and deliver offending behaviour programme, family work including home visits, restorative justice and reparation projects. We also prioritise using external community providers to save costs. I continue to work evenings and weekends to meet business need despite losing 7.5% allowance, as I am unable to supplement my income by taking a weekend job (due to still working weekends) this has had a detrimental impact on my family life. I know other members of my team were unable to attend the staff Christmas party due to these cuts. A Youth Offenders Institute costs £60,000 per year a Secure Training Centre costs £160,000, a Secure Children's home costs £215,00 per year where as ISS costs £34,000 per year, it doesn't not make financial sense to cut more funding from a team that saves Birmingham City Council a minium of £26,000 per young person. If anything ISS should be given more financial support so we can accommodate more young people.
BVE131016	External email	7.12.12	Our company provided training for BCC this year, as you can appreciate budgets are tight for everyone at the moment, however we shouldn't lose sight of the work your events department has in the community. With everyone tightening their belts there is little opportunity to create a feel good factor therefore the events BCC organise help create the Dunkirk spirit the community need to ride the storm over the next few years. Staging events brings people into the city from all over the country and although the financial benefits are not visible at the time will have a lasting effect with businesses in the city. The events team I have trained are a dedicated group of individuals who take their work seriously and through conversations with Paul you can understand the commitment they dedicate to BCC and more especially the community of Birmingham. With these events this country can demonstrate to the rest of Europe that we are serious about climbing out of this recession and intend making Britain Great again, you just have to look at the Olympics. Who better that your events team to carry on with this tradition.

BVE131017	External email	7.12.12	I have heard about the recent budget cuts in the council and wanted to stress my concern over the importance of keeping the events depot running. The guys there provide an excellent service to the community and help form events that brings those communities together. The professional service that they give time after time should not go unnoticed and I genuinely feel that this would be a big mistake if you were to consider making cuts in this area. It's only at events when I see communities actually come together to celebrate or enjoy an event, at no other time does this happen. With the above stated I'm sure you will take my point about the importance of the depot.
BVE131018	External email	7.12.12	Whilst the front line services need to be maintained under local control, other supporting services do not necessarily bed to be. What investigations and analysis has taken place to amalgamate the back office activities of all of the 7 Midland boroughs. (B'ham, Sandwell, Solihull etc.) to provide a central specialist support service to all. Each council duplicates this activity and there is more waste and costs to be removed from here. Yes, ultimately it will be Jobs lost but that is how you streamline a council. I certainly do not accept a council tax increase until all opportunities have been examined and analysed to remove waste from the system. The Labour council need to make these difficult but correct decisions. Not just increase the tax.
BVE131019	External email	7.12.12	Acorns Children's Hospice uses large scale community events as a vital source of funding to support and care for local life limited children and their families. The Birmingham City Council Events Depot have consistently provided high quality infrastructure for our annual Midnight Walk and been an invaluable source of advice in the preparation for this event. We are very grateful for the support and expertise provided by Paul Madders and his team which has enabled us to raise over £40,000 from the Midnight Walk this year.
BVE131020	Internal email	7.12.12	After reading the consultation paper it seems that redundancies are inevitable within Bham city council. Obvioulsy this is the major concern for staff who shortley could find themselves unemployed. My suggestion is that as an alternative to compulsary redundancy for an individual ,would be to look

			at asking staff to reduce their working hours/week. This obviuosly would save money as well a possibly keeping someone in a job. 1 redundancy equals 2 staff reducing their hours by half. If given the choice between working 2 or 3 days a week or finding youself unemployed in the present climate Im sure people would choose to be still employed even with a reduction in hours. It is also still easier to find alternative employment if you are employed then it is as unemployed.
BVE131021	Internal email		I am currently seeing a very distraught team assistant and other admin staff reacting to potential job losses. As a team manager I would like to express my deepest concern regarding the need for Team Assistants in Social Work Teams although I appreciate teh 188 notice has a broader scope. Given we are under notice to improve as a Local Authority and achieve 'Good' by September 2013, a key consideration in this is how Social Work Teams function. It is more challenging to work as a team under agile working which is underpinned by the crucial work of team assistants in coordinating and liaising within the team regarding general communication between, children and families and social workers as well as coordinating information gathering and analysis around monitoring of our statutory social work function. Teams will not function with anything like the same degree of efficiency if we were to lose TA support and this will inevitably have a knock on effect for improvement working but ultimately will affect the quality of service we are able to provide to children young people and their families. I urge the Council to think very carefully before cutting vital admin staff as I for one may have to consider strike action which I have not previously done as I consider this issue is serious enough to do so. I trust that radical cost cutting and saving can be done in a way that does not pull the carpet from under the feet of front line workers which will seriously undermine improvement and tremendous effort that has been put in Citywide to date.
BVE131022	External email	7.12.12	I am writing to make a very heartfelt plea not to cut any funding to Resources for Autism. My 5-year-old has autism, ADHD, epilepsy, asthma, food allergies and eczema. He is extremely hyperactive and can be violent and destructive at times. My husband and I greatly value the respite given to us by Resources for Autism when attends their weekend club (Saturday afternoon) and holiday clubs. It allows us to spend time with each other, run errands and spend time quality time with our youngest son.

			creative projects and he has made friends with the staff who volunteer used to the surroundings and it is part of his routine – this is very important to children with autism. Most importantly, there are very few such organisations which offer the depth of understanding of autism that Resources for Autism does. Unlike a normal childcare group, they understand that he has communication issues, constantly tries to escape, has sensory issues, triggers, no sense of danger etc. It really would have a profound negative affect on our family's quality of life if any budget cuts were made to Resources for Autism.
BVE131023	Internal email	7.12.12	This is an obvious idea and one that will not be popular with many but should be addressed. It appears that most services are currently running with very little scope to reduce staffing levels. Any reductions in staffing level will inevitably put extra pressure on existing staff and would most likely lead to a lower level of service. By reducing every employees salary by 3% for a period of 3 years would help to maintain current staffing levels to deliver essential services.
BVE131024	External email	7.12.12	Over many years as a producer for BBC WM, and now as a manager for BBC Learning, I have had to organise many, many live events in Birmingham City Centre and the surrounding areas. One of the department teams I have dealt with whilst doing this at the council's Event Depot, managed by I just want to say what an amazingly supportive team they are. Always on hand for advice and guidance, and they take a huge amount of time to talk through your requirements, to make sure that what you order from the is exactly what you need. Their experience means they can highlight things that may have passed you by, and potentially make a huge difference to the success of any public events. I feel that to lose or even reduce that team, would be a real error on the part of the council. I appreciate, only too well, that money has to be saved, but people like Paul and his team can make the difference between an event being well and resourced, or potentially, falling into the area of being unsafe for the public to attend. The advice and support that comes from the team at the Events Depot is invaluable, and it would be a huge loss if they were to go.

BVE131025	External email	7.12.12	This is a message of support for the events depot at Leslie Rd. Over the years have provided us with a wealth of support, both in terms of products & services as well as expert advice. We very much hope that this continues for the foreseeable future.
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