



**Leicestershire
County Council**

Engagement on the Future Direction of the Council

Final report of findings 2019

Opinion Research Services

November 2019

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**Leicestershire
County Council**

Leicestershire County Council Engagement on the Future Direction of the Council 2019

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We would also like to thank the workshop participants without whose valuable input the research would not have been possible.

At all stages of the project, ORS' status as an independent organisation consulting the public as objectively as possible was recognised and respected. We are grateful for that trust and hope this report will contribute to decisions on LCC's future service provision.

1. Executive summary

The commission

- 1.1 In the context of a continuing need to make savings and balance the annual budget, Leicestershire County Council (henceforth LCC or the council) undertook a 12-week public engagement and consultation between June and September 2019 about its future priorities. In particular, LCC wanted to engage residents, businesses, organisations and other stakeholders to understand their views on how the council should balance its budget in future years, whilst maintaining or improving the services that people value.
- 1.2 As part of the process, LCC held a series of workshops with a representative group of Leicestershire residents to enable an informed, in-depth discussion around their: knowledge of and satisfaction with council services; priorities for future service provision; and views on value for money and future council tax levels, within the context of budget reductions.
- 1.3 Opinion Research Services (ORS) is a spin-out company from Swansea University with a UK-wide reputation for social research, undertaking a range of consultations for local government on topics from changes to individual services, to major local government reorganisations. ORS was appointed by LCC to design, recruit participants to, facilitate and report the events.

The workshops

- 1.4 Workshops, or “extended focus groups”, were used as they allowed for clear presentation of information by the council, questions and answers for clarification, and deliberation among participants on a range of subjects. The workshops encouraged members of the public to reflect in depth on the challenges facing LCC in the context of budgetary constraints, and to think about the ways that the council could respond to these challenges.
- 1.5 The workshops were successful in engaging a cross-section of 72 residents from across Leicestershire. A range of methodologies were used to stimulate discussion and capture people’s views and ideas. Questionnaires were used before and after the workshops to see if views had changed as a result of receiving background information about the council’s challenges and participating in the discussions.

Independent, qualitative research

- 1.6 As a well-established and specialist social research practice with wide-ranging experience of controversial statutory consultations and engagement processes across the UK, ORS is able to act as an independent and objective party. We were therefore able to ensure the process of recruiting for, running and reporting the residents’ workshops was conscientious, competent and comprehensive in eliciting opinions from those taking part.
- 1.7 It should be noted that public opinion does not automatically determine public policy; and the popularity or unpopularity of potential or proposed courses of action by government bodies should not displace professional and political judgement about what is the right or best decision in the circumstances. The levels of, and reasons for, public support or opposition are very important; and

residents workshops allow public bodies to consider the relevance and cogency of the various opinions and arguments put forward.

The report

- 1.8 An executive summary of the key findings of the workshops is presented below. The full report goes on to provide a detailed review of the opinions and judgements of the participants before, during and after the workshops. We encourage people to read the full report for detailed insights and to gain a better understanding of the assumptions, arguments, conclusions and feelings about LCC's future plans and priorities. The full report considers the feedback on each element of the council's service provision in turn and provides evidence for those considering the engagement and its findings.
- 1.9 ORS's role is to analyse and explain the diverse opinions emerging from the workshops. In this report, we seek to profile the opinions and arguments of those who took part, but not to make any recommendations as to how the reported results should be used.

Main findings

Participants' views changed with more information

Services targeted at vulnerable groups were generally not favoured for cuts

Services identified strongly as having potential for spending reductions had smaller budgets

Residents were open to new ways of working for the council

Though not a focus of detailed discussion, there were many positive comments about local government unitarisation

Residents were open to council tax rises, both before and after the workshops, and felt they should be in line with or slightly above the rate of inflation

Residents strongly encouraged LCC to continue to lobby for fair funding

Residents were positive about the opportunity to learn more about how the council works and to have their say. They recommended that such opportunities should be more frequent

Participants' views change with more information

- 1.10 Overall, participants were more likely to consider budget reductions after LCC's contextual presentation and the facilitated discussions about council services.
- 1.11 Pre- and post-workshop questionnaire responses were used to calculate the net score (the percentage of respondents in favour of increasing spending on a service, less the percentage willing to consider budget cuts). A comparison between the pre-and post-workshop net scores provides an indication of the extent to which participants changed their opinions on budgets for each service.
- 1.12 Figure 1 indicates that, prior to the workshops, the balance of opinion among residents was that spending should be maintained or increased in all but one service. After the workshops, this balance had shifted and, for 15 of the 26 services considered, more people were more accepting of budget reductions than increases; having received background information about the council's financial challenges and having discussed the importance of balancing the budget.

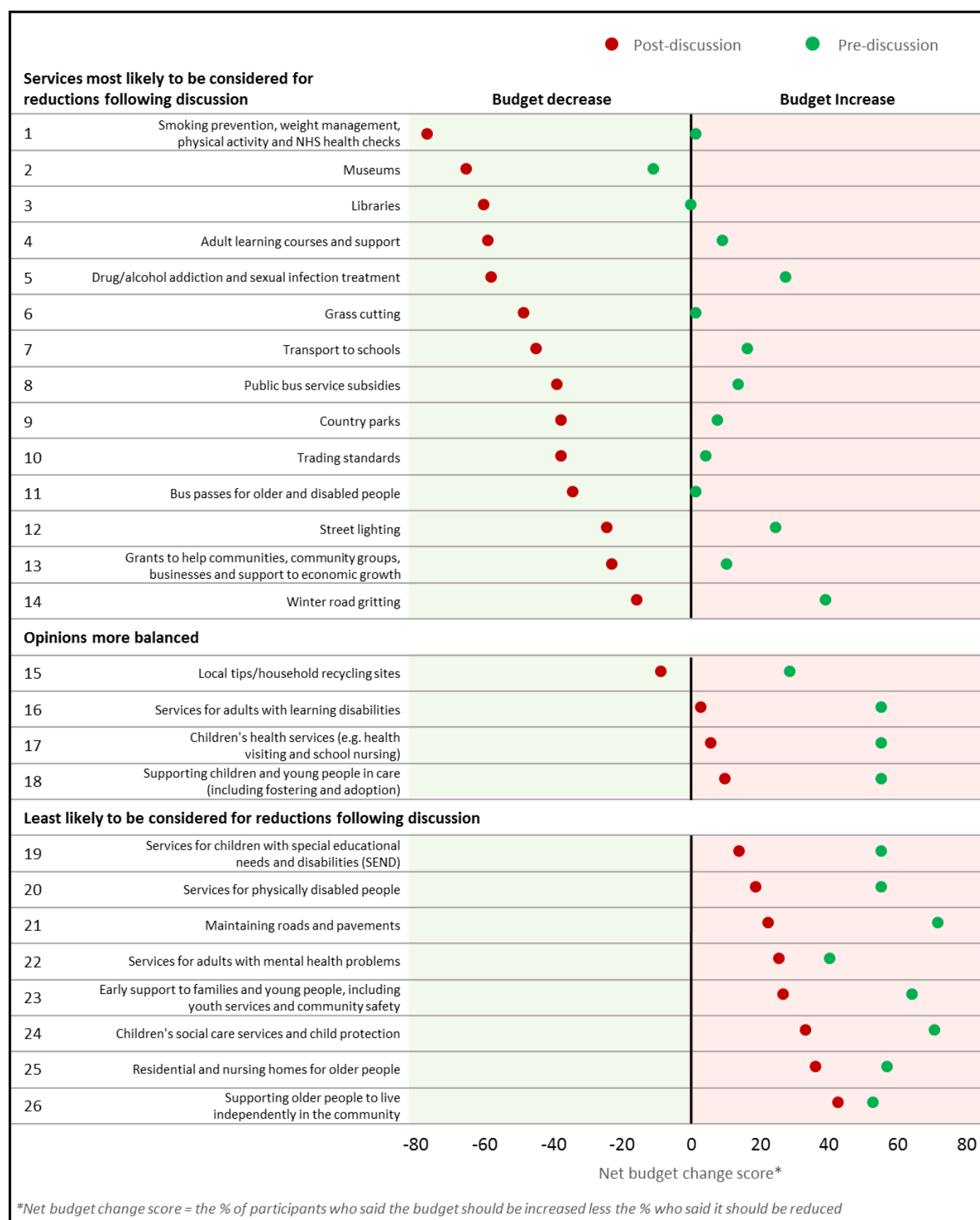


Figure 1: Residents views on changes to service budgets before and after the workshops, based on 72 participants over three events in July 2019.

- 1.13 When services are ranked according to the size of the change in net budget score, pre- to post-discussion (Figure 2), to show the extent to which the balance of opinion changed, there is an indication that more residents were willing to consider budget cuts to some targeted services with larger budgets at the end of the workshops than beforehand. This is likely due to recognition that the budget savings target of £74m cannot be achieved without funding reductions within these services.
- 1.14 It should be noted, however, that in many cases (e.g. services for adults with learning disabilities, children's health services, support for children and young people in care etc.), the balance of opinion remained in favour of budget increases, despite these considerable shifts.



Figure 2: Residents views on changes to service budgets before and after the workshops, based on 72 participants over three events in July 2019. Ordered by largest to smallest change in net score pre and post discussion.

Services targeted at vulnerable groups were generally not favoured for cuts

- 1.15 Post-workshop questionnaire responses indicated eight services for which more participants favoured an increase in spending than those who suggested scope for cuts, and a further four services where opinions were roughly balanced (Figure 3 below). With one exception (maintaining roads and pavements), the services favoured overall for increased spending were targeted toward vulnerable groups in society.

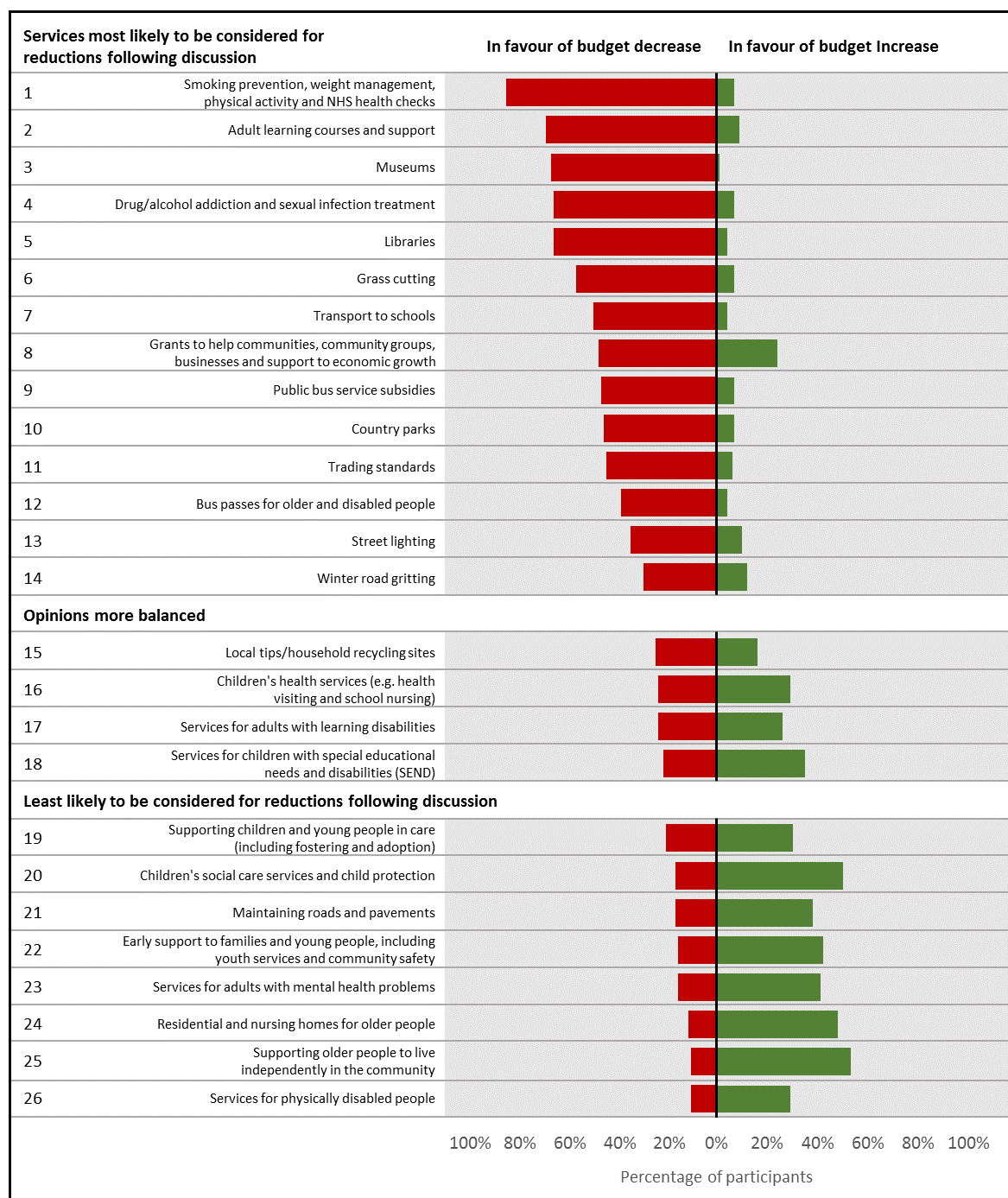


Figure 3: Proportion of participants in favour of budget changes following the workshops

- 1.16 In total, there were 14 services (figure 3 above) which, post-discussion, residents felt had scope for spending cuts. In contrast to those services favoured for spending increases, the majority are universal

services. However, as discussed below, it is not possible, even if severe cuts were to be made to those services, that these could make the required £74m of savings in these areas alone.

Services identified strongly as having potential for spending cuts had smaller budgets

- 1.17 During the workshops, residents recognised the challenge of making further budget cuts to services in the future, particularly to those viewed as being high priority and requiring maintained or increased spending. This is also reflected in the post-workshop questionnaire responses, in which the services identified by the highest proportion of residents as having potential for spending reductions were those with the smallest annual budgets (Figure 4).

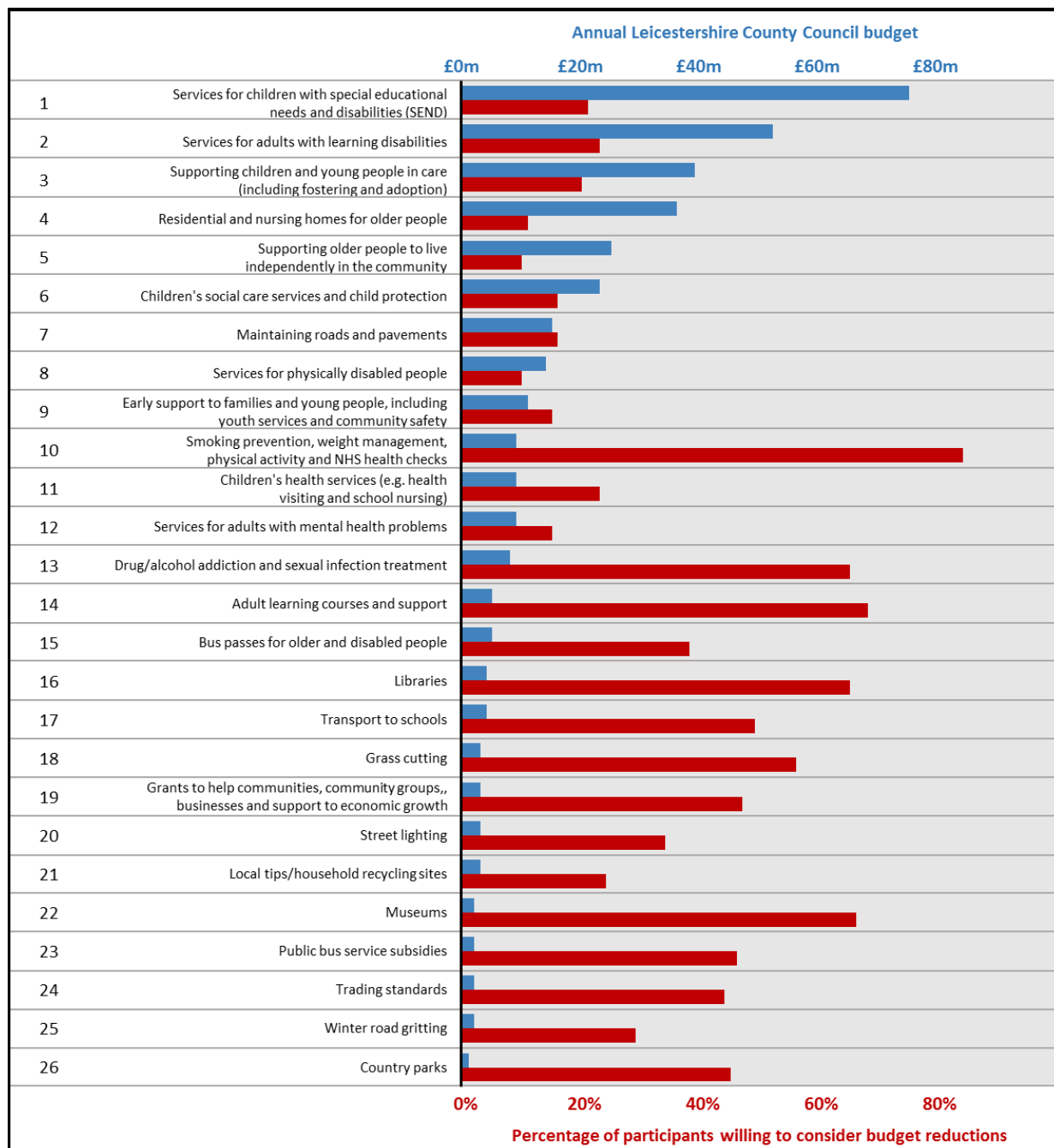
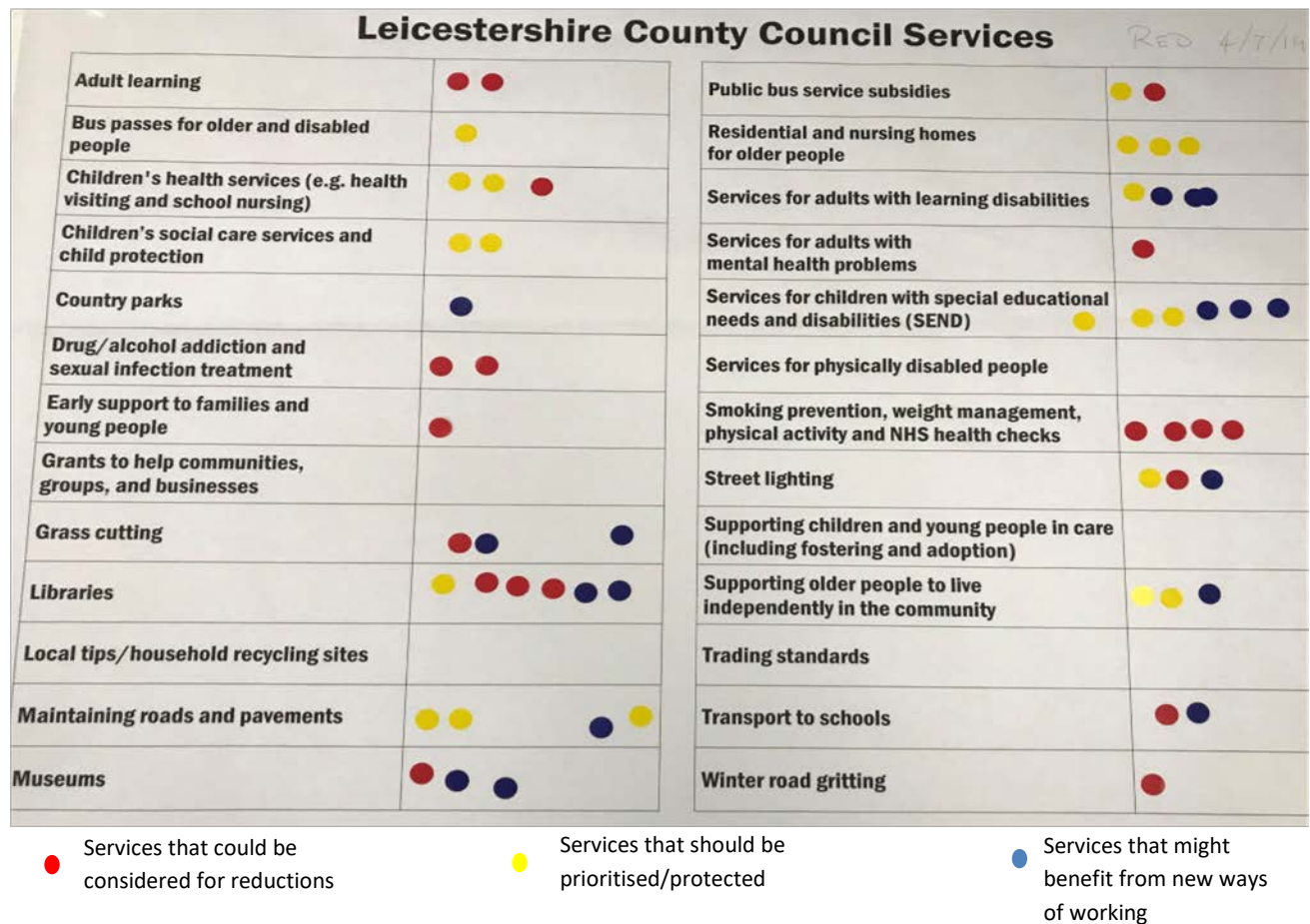


Figure 4: Services provided by LCC, ranked according to annual budget, compared to the proportion of workshop participants willing to consider making budget cuts in those areas

Residents were open to new ways of working for priority services

- 1.18 Perhaps in response to the dilemma highlighted above, targeted services with larger budgets were commonly suggested as candidates for new ways of working that could achieve savings, without resulting in a reduction in service level or quality. For example, one group of residents at the Wigston workshop highlighted services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and adults with learning disabilities as areas in which new ways of working could be considered. These are discussed in detail later in this report.

Figure 5: Workshop worksheet



- 1.19 Residents were also asked for their views (in their exit questionnaires and discussion groups) on new ways of working, for example more partnerships with other councils and public service providers, or more community involvement. Overall, the most common suggestions for services that might be suitable for more partnership working with other councils and public services were:

- » Smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks;
- » Services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND);
- » Drug, alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment;
- » Transport to schools; early support to families and young people; and
- » Children's social care services and child protection; and
- » Trading standards.

- 1.20 While the specific suggestions for partnership working varied according to the service in question, common themes included: joint frontline service provision with neighbouring local authorities, as well as sharing examples of good practice and combining or trading “back office” functions (IT and HR for example) with other local authorities.
- 1.21 Several specific services were highlighted as having potential for more community involvement, either from charities and organised groups, or by individual residents taking part. These included:
- » Libraries;
 - » Grass cutting;
 - » Museums;
 - » Country parks; and
 - » Winter road gritting.
- 1.22 Alongside the universal services listed above, it was also suggested by some that services to support older people to live independently could be supported by more community involvement and volunteering, as well as providing support to carers.
- 1.23 Suggestions for other targeted services which might benefit from the involvement of volunteers included:
- » Transport to schools;
 - » Services for adults with mental health problems;
 - » Services for adults with learning disabilities; and
 - » Early intervention for families and young people.
- 1.24 As well as suggesting that volunteers could help provide services, some residents felt that service users might also benefit from volunteering. Adults with mental health problems and learning disabilities, among others, were mentioned in this context, but it should be noted that this opinion was not universally shared, and some attendees were strongly opposed to the suggestion. It was also felt that relying heavily on volunteers for high priority services might be risky.
- 1.25 Many residents spoke in favour of encouraging more individual responsibility, particularly in areas related to health prevention such as weight loss and smoking cessation. Similar sentiments were expressed by some with regard to targeted services, ranging from drug and alcohol treatment to early support for families and parents of children with special educational needs. As with volunteering above, however, there was significant disagreement on some of these potentially controversial suggestions.
- 1.26 Some residents felt that government health services should step in to fill funding gaps. It should be noted, for some of the services identified (NHS health checks for example), responsibility has been transferred to local authorities. This is likely to continue to be the case, but residents were typically unaware of this until informed.
- 1.27 When asked about ways in which funding for services could be raised, charging (or charging more) for museums, transport to schools, country parks, libraries, adult learning courses and support, and bus passes for older people were suggested.

1.28 Residents were asked to consider other ways to reduce spending or raise income; the following were suggested in the exit questionnaires and workshop discussions:

- » Investments in property and land for the purposes of income generation;
- » Making better use of existing LCC assets;
- » Focusing on green energy and other environmental initiatives;
- » Selling services such as maintenance, legal services, IT and HR; and
- » Making better use of technology and identifying further efficiencies.

Residents were open to council tax rises, both before and after the workshops, and felt they should be in line with or slightly above the rate of inflation

1.29 Council tax rises were generally considered a somewhat inevitable 'necessary evil', given the scale of the cuts that would otherwise be needed to achieve a balanced budget. The majority (77%) favoured increases in line with inflation (37%) or slightly above (40%) and there was little difference in views before and after the discussions. It was said that increased public knowledge and understanding about how council tax is spent and the financial pressures faced by the council, could help to address residents' concerns around increases.

There were many positive comments from residents about possible unitarisation

1.30 As part of the briefing given to the residents prior to their deliberations, it was highlighted that a business case for a single unitary authority for Leicestershire was being developed and the preliminary assessment was that this could save £30m per year. While this was not a focus for detailed discussion, there were many positive comments from participants that a unitary authority, supported by stronger parish and town councils, was desirable; it was felt that it would offer a substantial, significant saving and reduce confusion around which authority provides which services.

Residents strongly encouraged LCC to continue to lobby for fair funding

1.31 When presented with information about the level of funding that LCC receives from the UK Government, particularly in comparison to other local authorities in England, and the budget cuts already made in preceding years, residents expressed significant concern. Furthermore, there was general agreement that receiving fair funding is vital and that the LCC should continue its lobbying efforts in this area.

1.32 It should be noted that, during the remainder of the workshops, the residents were asked to work on the assumption that there would be no increase in local authority funding apart from that already accounted for in the budget forecasts presented to them and to consider the matters for discussion within those constraints.

Residents were positive about the opportunity to learn more about how the council works and to have their say

1.33 The majority of participants reported that they felt much better informed about the way LCC works, following the workshops. This was the case in relation to:

- » The services LCC provides;

- » Local government funding; and
- » The way LCC reaches spending decisions and manages its budget.

1.34 Also, and in keeping with other comments about the benefit of more public awareness, residents' views on the performance of the council improved overall as a result of attending the workshops – primarily due to their increased understanding of the financial challenges facing it. At the end of the evening, a substantial majority of attendees agreed that the council provides value for money and that they are satisfied with the way that the council runs the area.

1.35 Finally, at the very end of the evening residents were asked for their opinions on the workshops themselves. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many comments suggesting that people had welcomed the opportunity to engage with LCC and to give their views on the issues under consideration.

In conclusion...

1.36 Based on the findings reported above, LCC could consider:

- » Funding reductions across a number of service areas with residents most receptive of reductions in:
 - Smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks;
 - Museums;
 - Libraries;
 - Adult learning courses and support;
 - Drug/alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment;
 - Grass cutting;
 - Transport to schools;
 - Public bus service subsidies;
 - Country parks;
 - Trading standards;
 - Bus passes for older and disabled people;
 - Street lighting;
 - Grants to help communities, community groups and businesses; and
 - Winter road gritting.
- » Examining new ways of working across its range of services by, for example:
 - Partnership working with other councils and public services; and
 - Involving individuals and communities in service provision (particularly through volunteering).

- » Examining ways to reduce spending or raise income by, for example:
 - Charging for certain services;
 - Investing in property and land;
 - Making better use of existing LCC assets;
 - Focusing on green energy and other environmental initiatives;
 - Selling services; and
 - Making better use of technology.
- » Council tax rises in line with or above the rate of inflation;
- » Continuing to consider the unitarisation of local government across Leicestershire;
- » Continuing to lobby for fair funding;
- » Increasing its communications and engagement around service provision, funding levels and challenges and spending decisions (in particular to ensure residents realise why services are being reduced or provided differently and why the aforementioned council tax rises are necessary, and to seek their views).

2. The consultation process

Background to the engagement

Local government still faces severe financial challenges. In Leicestershire, we've been ahead of the game and savings are identified to ensure a balanced budget until 2020. But soaring demand for services, plus uncertainty over national funding, means we need to look at all options to help protect services.

Byron Rhodes, deputy council leader

- 2.1 Like other councils in the UK, and in the context of reduced central government funding, Leicestershire County Council (LCC) has had to make year-on-year savings. The council has saved £200 million from the annual budget since 2010 and has produced a balanced budget until 2020. The savings and balanced budgets have been achieved via a combination of service reductions and reorganisations, changes to eligibility and more focused targeting of services, use of new technologies and expanding chargeable services to generate new income.
- 2.2 LCC has identified a funding gap of £74 million over the next four years and will need to take action to address this gap over successive years.

The commission

- 2.3 In the context of a continuing need to make savings and balance the annual budget, LCC undertook a 12-week public engagement and consultation between June and September 2019 about its future priorities. In particular, LCC wanted to engage residents, businesses, organisations and other stakeholders to understand their views on how the council should balance its budget in future years, whilst maintaining or improving the services that people value. As part of this consultation, the council commissioned Opinion Research Services (ORS) to design, recruit participants to, facilitate and report on three representative workshops with local residents.
- 2.4 The workshops, lasting approximately 3¼ hours, were held as follows:

Time and date	Location	Broad areas covered	Number of Attendees
6.30pm Tues 2 nd July 2019	Holiday Inn Wigston 299 Leicester Road, Wigston, LE18 1JW	Melton, Oadby & Wigston, Harborough	26
6.30pm Weds 3 rd July 2019	Ramada Loughborough 22 High Street, Loughborough, LE11 2QL	Charnwood, North West Leicestershire	25
6.30pm Thurs 4 th July 2019	Jury's Inn Hinckley Island A5 Watling Street, Hinckley, LE10 3JA	Hinkley & Bosworth, Blaby	21

Deliberative research

Workshops

- 2.5 Workshops, or “extended focus groups”, were used as they allow for:
- » Clear presentation of the challenges facing the council, including relevant evidence;
 - » Questions and clarification of ambiguous or difficult points;
 - » Deliberation in which participants think through their responses while having an opportunity to listen to the evidence and views of others;
 - » A variety of methodologies to capture people’s opinions during the meeting - so participants can feel confident that their ideas have been properly recorded;
 - » Comparison of people’s views at the start and end of the meetings.
- 2.6 It should be noted that in-depth, deliberative research through workshops, while rigorous and representative in terms of capturing the views of a diverse group of people, is not able to be used as a basis for quantitative analysis. Although, in this instance, pre- and post-workshop questionnaires were used to produce data about the opinions of the participants on a variety of subjects related to council funding and services, it is not possible or desirable to use statistical techniques to extrapolate the findings across the population of Leicestershire as a whole.
- 2.7 The clarification above does not undermine the value or outcomes of deliberative research. Rather, it highlights the significance of qualitative research methodologies in stimulating and facilitating detailed conversations in diverse groups, which shed light on the complex and frequently interconnected reasoning behind public opinion. On this basis, ORS is satisfied the outcomes reported below are broadly indicative of how residents’ views would lean if similar discussions were to take place elsewhere in the county.
- 2.8 The workshops were not used as, nor presented as being, referenda to make decisions about local government services and funding. The purpose was rather to capture and present the views of Leicestershire County residents to inform the decisions of elected council members in future planning efforts.

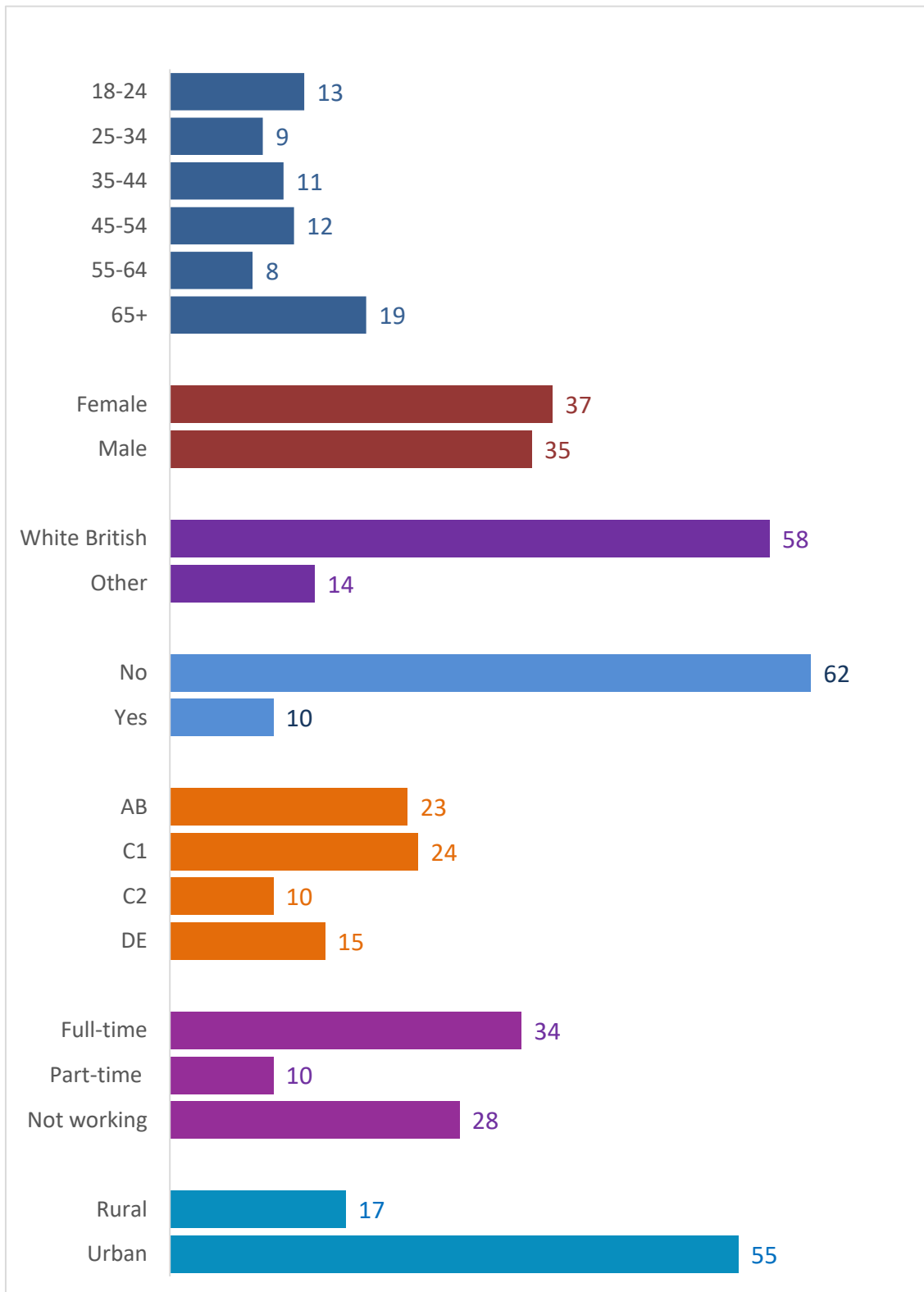
Recruitment

- 2.9 Most attendees were recruited by random-digit dialling from ORS’ in-house social research telephone unit. To ensure that certain hard-to-reach groups were included, a mobile telephone sample was used to target, for example, younger and BME residents.
- 2.10 Following initial telephone contact, participants received confirmation letters or emails with details of the invitation and arrangements. Those who agreed to come also received telephone, SMS or email reminders shortly before the meeting. According to standard good practice, participants received compensation (£60) for their time and also to cover expenses such as travel and childcare etc.

Inclusiveness and representation

- 2.11 A total of 72 participants attended the workshops (Figure 1). The process was monitored to ensure the sessions represented the population of Leicestershire over a wide range of criteria, including, for example: age, ethnic group, social grade, disability and/or long-term limiting illness (LLTI) and

geography. People's knowledge of the council and their general satisfaction with the way it runs services was also ascertained in order to ensure a broad mix of views and attitudes.



^{2.12} Only households who pay council tax and residents who have lived in Leicestershire for more than a year were included in the workshops. Furthermore, to make best use of this opportunity to gather the views of 'ordinary' residents, several groups were deliberately not included. These included journalists, advertisers, market and social researchers, PR professionals, local government employees (including

teachers and teaching assistants), parish, district and county councillors, and members of political parties. Residents who had taken part in any other discussion group or workshop related to public sector services in the previous 12 months were also excluded for the same reason. These groups were given the opportunity to take part in other aspects of the broader 12-week engagement and consultation process run by the council.

Questionnaires

- 2.13 Two questionnaires (see Appendix I) were given to the participants for completion at the workshops; the first as they arrived and registered, and the second at the end of the evening. The responses are included in this report.

Discussion guide

- 2.14 The workshops began with an introductory presentation by ORS to provide context. The participants were then split into three smaller groups based on age (18-34 years, 35-54 years and 55+ years) to have facilitated discussions on living in Leicestershire. The groups were also asked to identify different public services in Leicestershire and to assign them to the responsible bodies, e.g. county council, district council, NHS etc. This served to ascertain the level of awareness of LCC-managed services and local government organisation in the county, and to get people used to, comfortable and confident speaking up in a smaller group.
- 2.15 Following the first small group sessions, a standardised plenary presentation was given by a senior LCC finance representative to explain the responsibilities of the council, and to provide information about the past, current and future challenges facing the council in terms of funding, budgeting and service provision. The main focus was on the need for the council to find a further £74m of savings over the next four years at a time of growing demand and increasing costs. Opportunity was given for participants to ask questions for clarification.
- 2.16 Following the presentation, the participants returned to the same small groups as previously. They were invited to take on the role of a councillor and asked to consider the following questions within the context of finding £74m of savings and balancing the budget in future years:
- Which services should Leicestershire County Council prioritise/protect and why?
 - Where is there scope for service reductions or savings?
 - Where might new ways of working be deployed by LCC?
 - How might the council raise more money?
- 2.17 To facilitate the discussions, a variety of resources and worksheets were made available. These included handouts to provide information about the different LCC services (including annual budgets) and worksheets (Appendix II) and white boards/flipcharts for use during the group discussions. The small groups were first asked to discuss each question in pairs, followed by a facilitated discussion to capture and expand on the views expressed.
- 2.18 A senior member of LCC finance staff was present in each small group to answer specific questions and points of clarification arising in the discussion, although care was taken to ensure that this did not inhibit the flow of conversation in the group.

Outputs and reporting

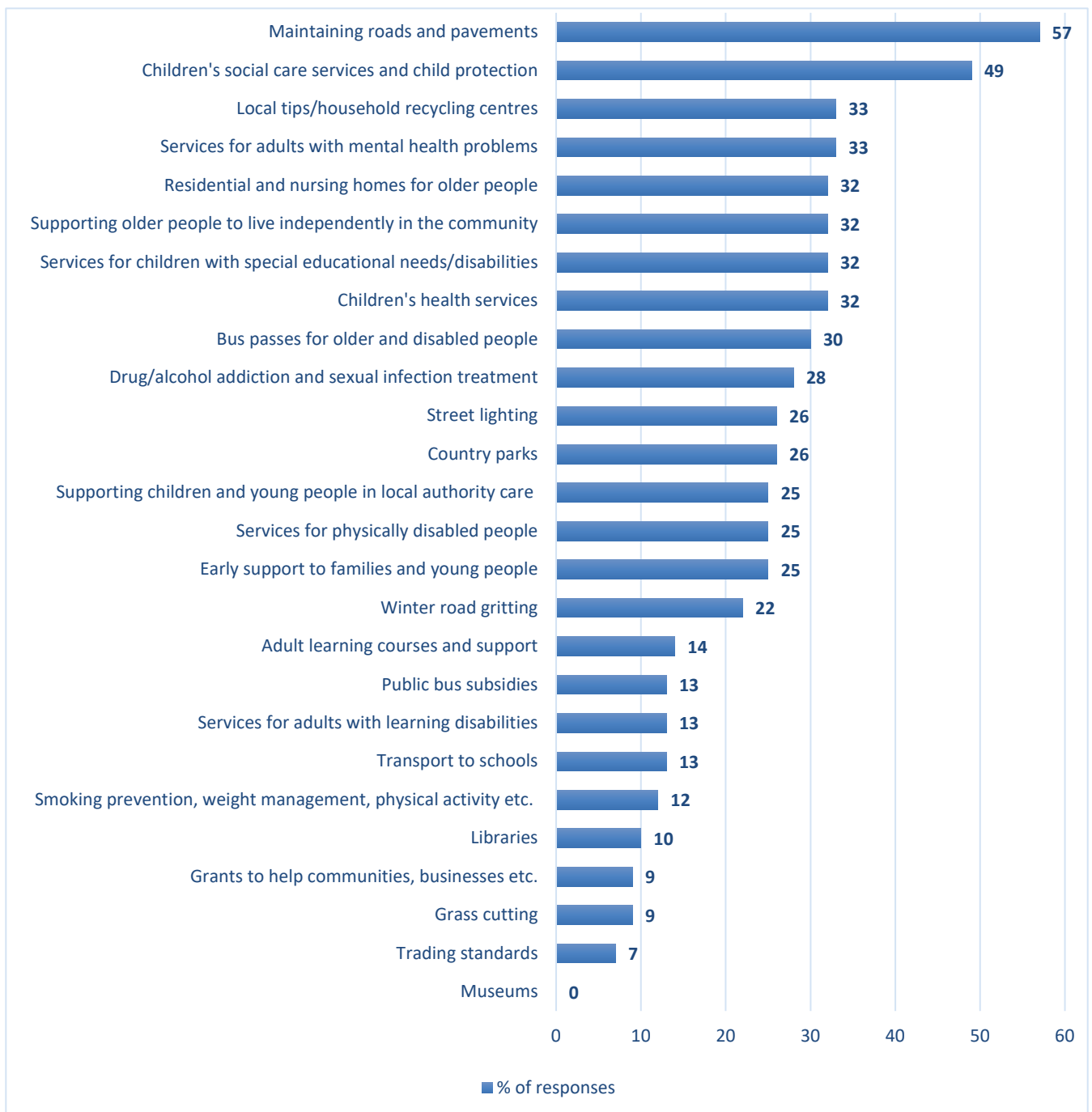
- 2.19 The group discussions were audio recorded and the worksheets and other outputs were collected at the end of the workshops for use in reporting.
- 2.20 This report reviews the opinions and judgements of the workshop participants before, during and after consideration of and discussion about important information regarding the future plans and priorities of Leicestershire County Council.
- 2.21 Some verbatim quotations are used, in indented italics, not because ORS agrees or disagrees with them, but for their vividness in capturing points of view. We do not endorse any specific opinions, seeking only to portray them accurately. While quotations are used, the report is not a verbatim transcript, but an interpretative summary of the issues raised by participants in free-ranging discussions and captured by pre- and post-workshop paper questionnaires.

3. Most important services initially

Initially, universal and targeted services were considered important

- 3.1 In their welcome questionnaires, residents were asked to choose the five or six LCC-provided services they considered most important from a pre-prepared list. The two that emerged as most important overall were 'maintaining roads and pavements' (57% of responses) and 'children's social care services and child protection' (49% of responses). The complete list can be seen in the chart below.

Figure 6: Looking at this list of some of the services provided by LCC, which five or six, if any, do you consider to be most important? (Welcome questionnaire) Base: 418 responses (multiple choice)



Following discussion, targeted services were generally considered most important to protect

- 3.2 Participants were again asked to prioritise services the council should continue to deliver in their workshop discussions following an LCC-delivered presentation outlining the council's financial and other challenges. Working in pairs or threes, they used one sticker for each service selected and reported back the reasons for their choices to the whole group. Each pair was asked to identify no more than five priority services. The table below presents the number of times each of the selected services was prioritised by pairs of participants by workshop group.

	Hinckley 18-34	Hinckley 35-54	Hinckley 55+	Loughborough 18-34	Loughborough 35-54	Loughborough 55+	Wigston 18-34	Wigston 35-54	Wigston 55+	Total
Children's social care services and child protection	3	3	2	3	3	2	4	4	3	27
Services for children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)	1	1	3		2	3	4	2	2	18
Residential and nursing homes for older people	1	1	3		1	5	1	2	3	17
Maintaining roads and pavements	1	2	3	3		3		1	2	15
Supporting older people to live independently in the community		2	2		3	3	1	1	3	15
Services for adults with mental health problems	1	1		1	3	2	3		1	12
Supporting children and young people in care (including fostering and adoption)						3	1	2	3	9
Children's health services (e.g. health visiting and school nursing)	2		2		1		1	1	2	9
Services for physically disabled people					1	1		2	4	8
Local tips/household recycling sites		1		3		1		2	1	8
Services for adults with learning disabilities	1		1	1		2		1	1	7
Drug, alcohol and sexual infection treatment	1			1		1	2		1	6
Grants to help communities, groups and businesses				1			3		1	5
Bus passes for older and disabled people	2		1			2				5
Transport to schools	1			1		1				3
Grass cutting				2		1				3
Street lighting		1	1			1				3
Early support to families and young people				1				1		2
Winter road gritting		2								2
Adult learning				1						1

	Hinckley 18-34	Hinckley 35-54	Hinckley 55+	Loughborough 18-34	Loughborough 35-54	Loughborough 55+	Wigston 18-34	Wigston 35-54	Wigston 55+	Total
Country parks					1					1
Libraries			1							1
Public bus service subsidies			1							1
Smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks						1				1
Museums										0
Trading Standards										0

- 3.3 With the exception of 'maintaining roads and pavements', the highest scores were allocated to targeted services for vulnerable people: children/young people, older people and adults with mental health problems. The reasons for participants' choices are reported under each service heading in the following chapters.

4. Services for which participants were most willing to contemplate budget reductions

- 4.1 The services workshop participants felt could be considered for reductions (from the post-discussion questionnaires - in order of the net difference between the percentage of people supporting spending increases less the proportion supporting spending reductions) were:

- *Smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks* (net -77)
- *Museums* (net -66)
- *Libraries* (net -60)
- *Adult learning courses and support* (net -59)
- *Drug/alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment* (net -58)
- *Grass cutting* (net -49)
- *Transport to schools* (net -45)
- *Public bus service subsidies* (net -39)
- *Country parks* (net -38)
- *Trading standards* (net -37)
- *Bus passes for older and disabled people* (net -35)
- *Street lighting* (net -24)
- *Grants to help communities, community groups and businesses* (net -23)
- *Winter road gritting* (net -16)

- 4.2 This is not to say that they were not valued - more that residents felt they could accept reduced levels of service for some (less frequent grass cutting and turning off street lighting in certain areas and/or at certain times say) - or that they could be provided in different ways (by other organisations or community volunteers for example). For instance, the public health agenda was largely supported, but not necessarily regarded as LCC's responsibility; and universal services such as libraries, museums and grass cutting could, it was felt, be offered differently. The possibility of raising more income through adult learning, transport to school and community/business grants was also raised. Essentially, in the interest of protecting more 'valuable' services, some of these services were considered 'nice to have' as opposed to essentials.

- 4.3 **Please note that in the charts that follow, the 'summary' figures may be affected by rounding.**

Smoking Prevention, Weight Management, Physical Activity and NHS Health Checks (£9m)

- 4.4 Those suggesting increases in this area in the workshop discussions felt that a focus on smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks will result in long-term health benefits – and that some people will need help in accessing services to help them make lifestyle changes.

"To help prevent obesity by educating people is a lot less money than actually giving them surgery. Let's do it at the beginning; put more money into that" (Wigston, 35-54)

"You do more physical activity, you get less mental health problems" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"You got to still remember that there are certain people who haven't got the ability to think like that... For all of us in the room we would be capable of doing that but there are a lot of people out there that need support, prompting" (Loughborough, 18-34)

- 4.5 However, the general consensus seemed to be that people should be encouraged to take personal responsibility for things like smoking cessation, weight loss/management and exercise; and that help in these areas should not be funded by LCC.

"You know, if you need to lose a stone, there's all the 'weight care' people out there that you can go and pay a fiver to if you're serious about it. And probably the same with smoking" (Loughborough, 55+)

"If you choose to smoke or overeat, it just seems to me a strange way to spend the money" (Wigston, 55+)

"People need to take more responsibility for their own health!" (Loughborough, 18-34)

- 4.6 It was also said that this service should be transferred entirely to other organisations including 'the government', the NHS or voluntary/community organisations.

"Smoking prevention again, the government could be dealing with that" (Wigston, 18-34)

"Smoking prevention, weight loss could be run by somebody else...differently" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"Smoking, obesity etc. could be transferred to the NHS, and NHS health checks - we have those already. It's very important to have those but not by the council. A lot of people pay for their own as well" (Loughborough, 55+)

"The healthy living budget...it's quite a high budget for that sort of thing. Could you get that money back from NHS?" (Wigston, 35-54)

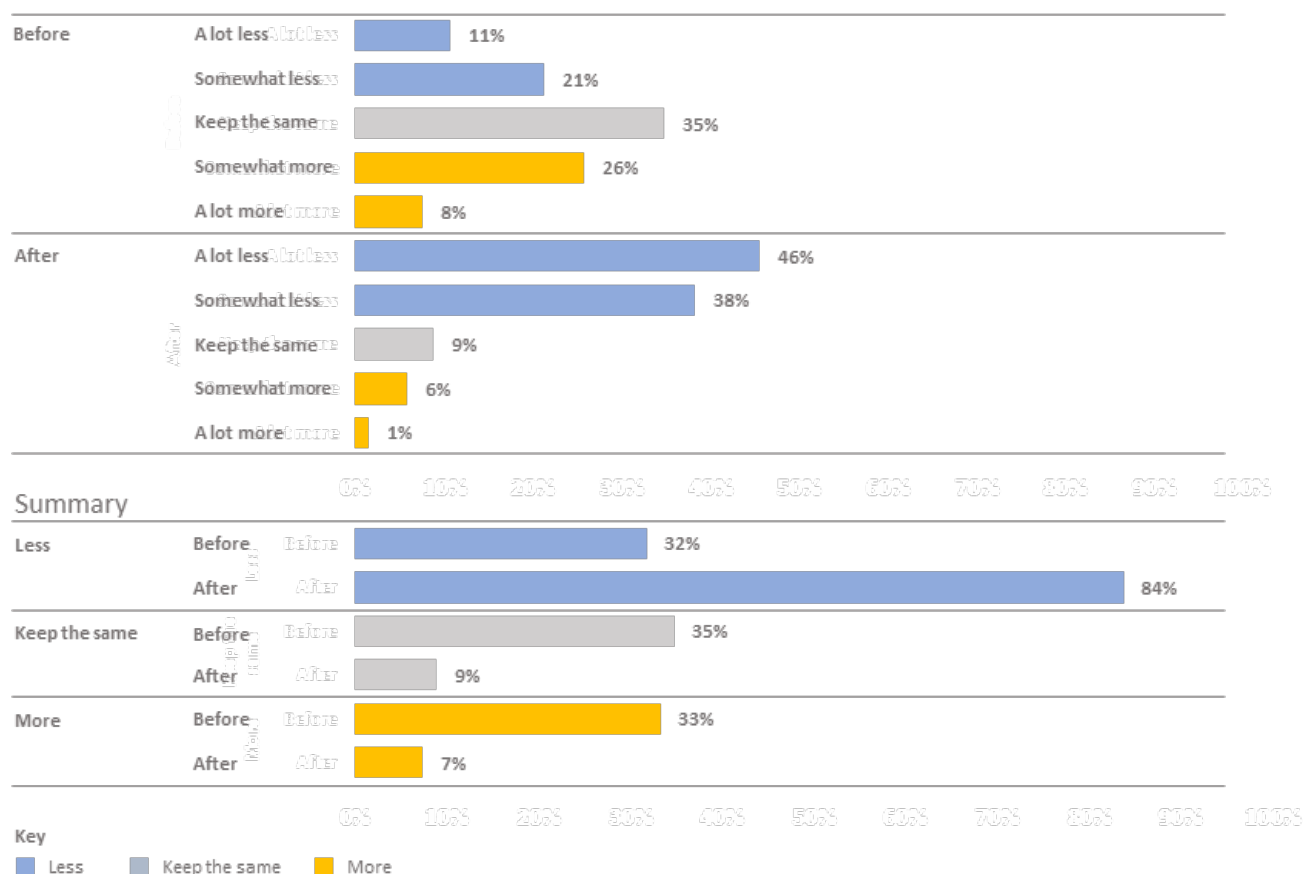
- 4.7 Finally, there was also a feeling that the money spent in this area might be better shifted to mental health services, as many of the specified addictions and behaviours are fuelled by poor mental health.

"I think we should take the money that's being funded towards this and actually put it into mental health organisations because we need to start realising that people are overweight, people are smoking, people are having alcohol addictions because there is an underlying problem... it all links back to mental health and how happy you are" (Loughborough, 18-34)

- 4.8 It is in the area of 'public health' that we see the starkest contrast between the views expressed in the questionnaires pre- and post-discussion. Initially, almost equal numbers of people supported increasing, maintaining and decreasing spend (34%, 35% and 32% respectively) on smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks.

Figure 7: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Smoking Prevention, Weight Management, Physical Activity and NHS Health Checks)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 66 responses; Exit questionnaire – 68 responses

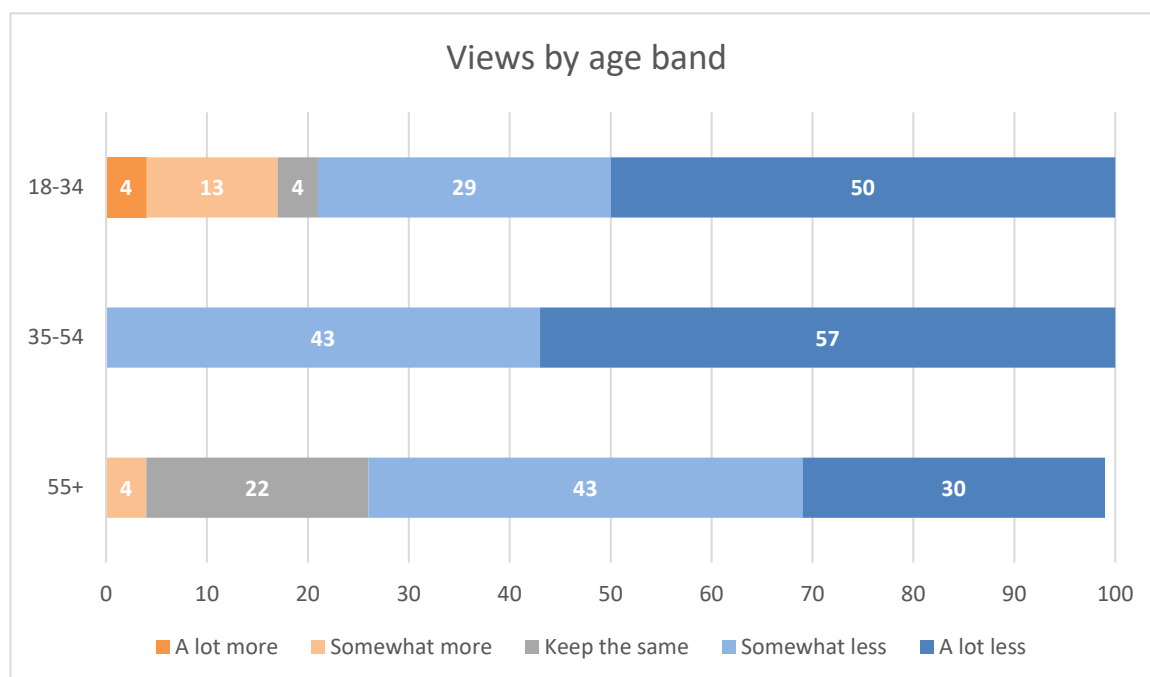


- 4.9 At the end of the workshops these figures had changed to 7%, 9% and 84% respectively. The 52-percentage point increase in the number of people supporting reductions is the largest change seen across all service areas - as is the change in the net difference between those supporting spending increases and reductions (+1 pre-discussion and -77 post-discussion).

- 4.10 Looking at the age splits, although the majority in all three brackets supported reductions in this area, younger participants were more likely to contemplate increases; and older participants were more likely to support maintaining spend and less likely to support large reductions. No-one in the 35-54 age bracket supported anything other than some or significant reductions.

Figure 8: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Smoking Prevention, Weight Management, Physical Activity and NHS Health Checks – Views by Age Band)

Base: 68 responses



Museums (£2m)

- 4.11 In the workshop discussions, while residents did not dispute the value of museums, they did feel they could be funded differently - perhaps through sponsorship, advertising, voluntary donations and chargeable exhibition space - and possibly run by community volunteers.

"I use museum services a lot in fairness... you have to preserve stuff like that for future generations. With a small budget anyways, these cuts are not going to have a massive effect... They do run a lot of free services in term time for kids as well" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"Sponsorship: I don't know how you can incentivise it but somehow get big business on board" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"Museums - why don't they charge companies? I work for [name]...they could put in an eco-house to try and get people to go in and buy their services and other companies could pay to use that exhibition site, for sensible things...and then it is still a free museum to the service users" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"Ask for voluntary donations at museums and country parks" (Post-discussion questionnaire response)

"Services such as museums, libraries are only used by some individuals within society therefore the council should reduce the spending of these services and the public should pay to use them" (Post-discussion questionnaire response)

“Charging for services...museums and the libraries” (Hinckley, 18-34)

“I think if the people from the museum can make the money from side products then the museum can be self-funding rather than reliant on the council” (Loughborough, 18-34)

“Museums... In terms of funding from local businesses...you could sponsor it, advertising. A lot of them are funded and are free of charge. They could be run in a different way” (Hinckley, 35-54)

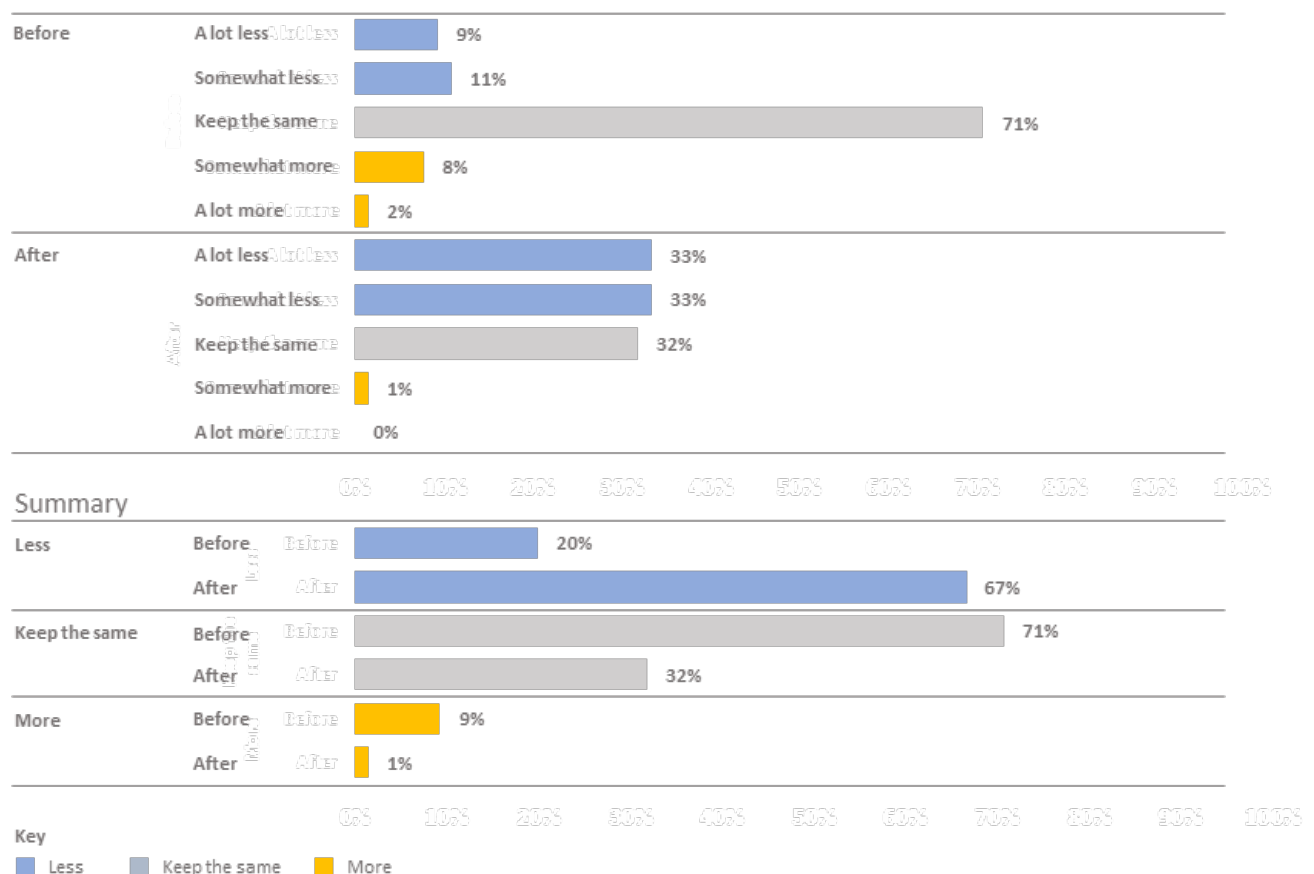
“I think volunteering...It serves a purpose if [people] want to volunteer to do things in libraries or museums” (Hinckley, 55+)

“Libraries and museums could be run by volunteer staff” (Loughborough, 55+)

- 4.12 In the pre-discussion questionnaires, just over seven in ten residents (71%) said they wanted to see spending on museums maintained. Only one in ten sought to see it increased and one in five advocated decreases.

Figure 9: Here’s a list of the council’s services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Museums)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 65 responses; Exit questionnaire – 69 responses

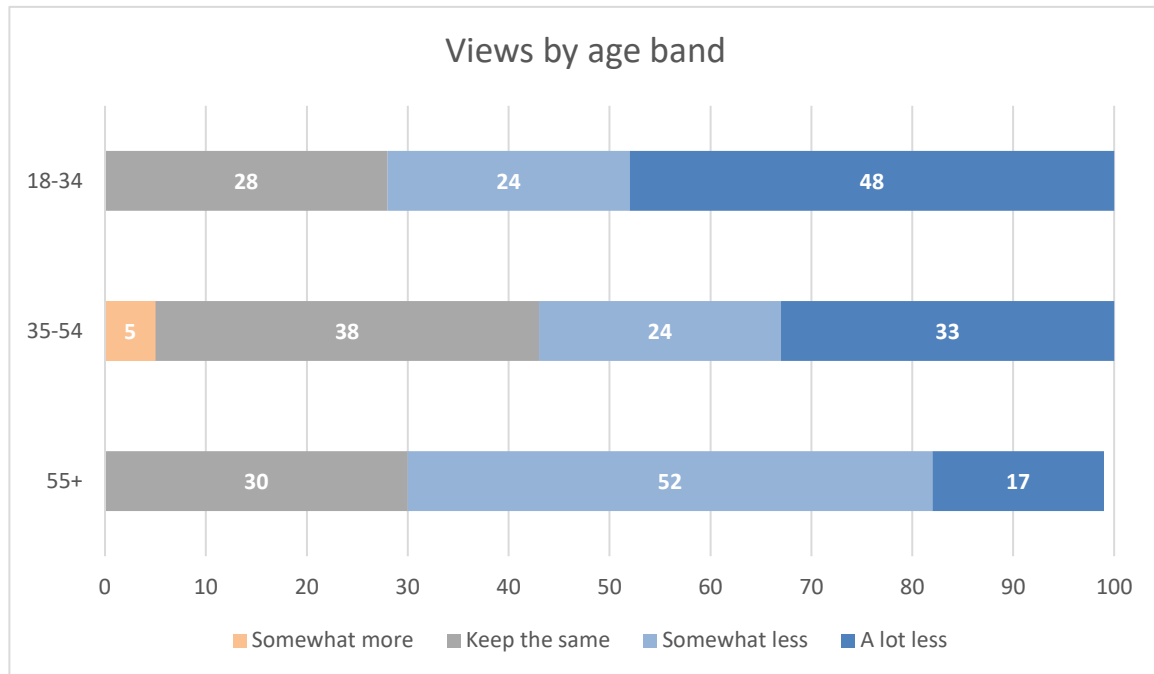


- 4.13 Post-discussion, people’s views had changed considerably: only 1% suggested increases in spend for museums; there was a 39-percentage point reduction in those seeking to see spending maintained (71% to 32%); and a 46-percentage point increase in those supporting a decrease (20% to 66%). The net difference between those supporting increases and reductions was also starkly different: from -11 pre-discussion to -66 post-discussion.

- 4.14 The majority in all three age brackets supported reductions in this area. Younger residents were more likely to support significant decreases in spend, whereas older people were more moderate in supporting less radical reductions.

Figure 10: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Museums – Views by Age Band)

Base: 69 responses



Libraries (£4m)

- 4.15 Although it was felt that libraries are not as well used now as in the past, the general feeling among workshop discussion participants was that libraries remain important in contributing to the cultural and social life of communities. This was not a universal view though: several residents advocated LCC divesting itself of its libraries completely.

"I think they are used but they are quite an outdated resource now. My mum uses them. She does not have a computer. She uses it from a social point of view..." (Hinckley, 35-54)

"I'd want to keep the libraries...I know it is all turning digital, but there's something about a library" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"I just think if you took the library and the museum out of Lutterworth, it would be a bit sad. And I think people would start moving out of Lutterworth then; they'd think 'oh, there's not much going on'...it's just a nice thing to see" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"We've got Libraries. Just close them down. Just move them online and make it a lot more accessible, and just have an app which is free, as you would a library card, and access the books and facilities through that" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"Privatise libraries and museums completely..." (Loughborough, 55+)

- 4.16 However, it was generally also thought libraries could and should be provided differently – by community volunteers for example¹. Several people also suggested that charges should be levied for using them, or that income generation be considered by means of co-located facilities such as cafés. This is discussed further in the ‘New Ways of Working’ chapter of this report.

“I think volunteering...It serves a purpose if [people] want to volunteer to do things in libraries or museums” (Hinckley, 55+)

“Libraries and museums could be run by volunteer staff” (Loughborough, 55+)

“Charging for services...museums and the libraries” (Hinckley, 18-34)

“Services such as museums, libraries are only used by some individuals within society therefore the council should reduce the spending of these services and the public should pay to use them” (Post-discussion questionnaire response)

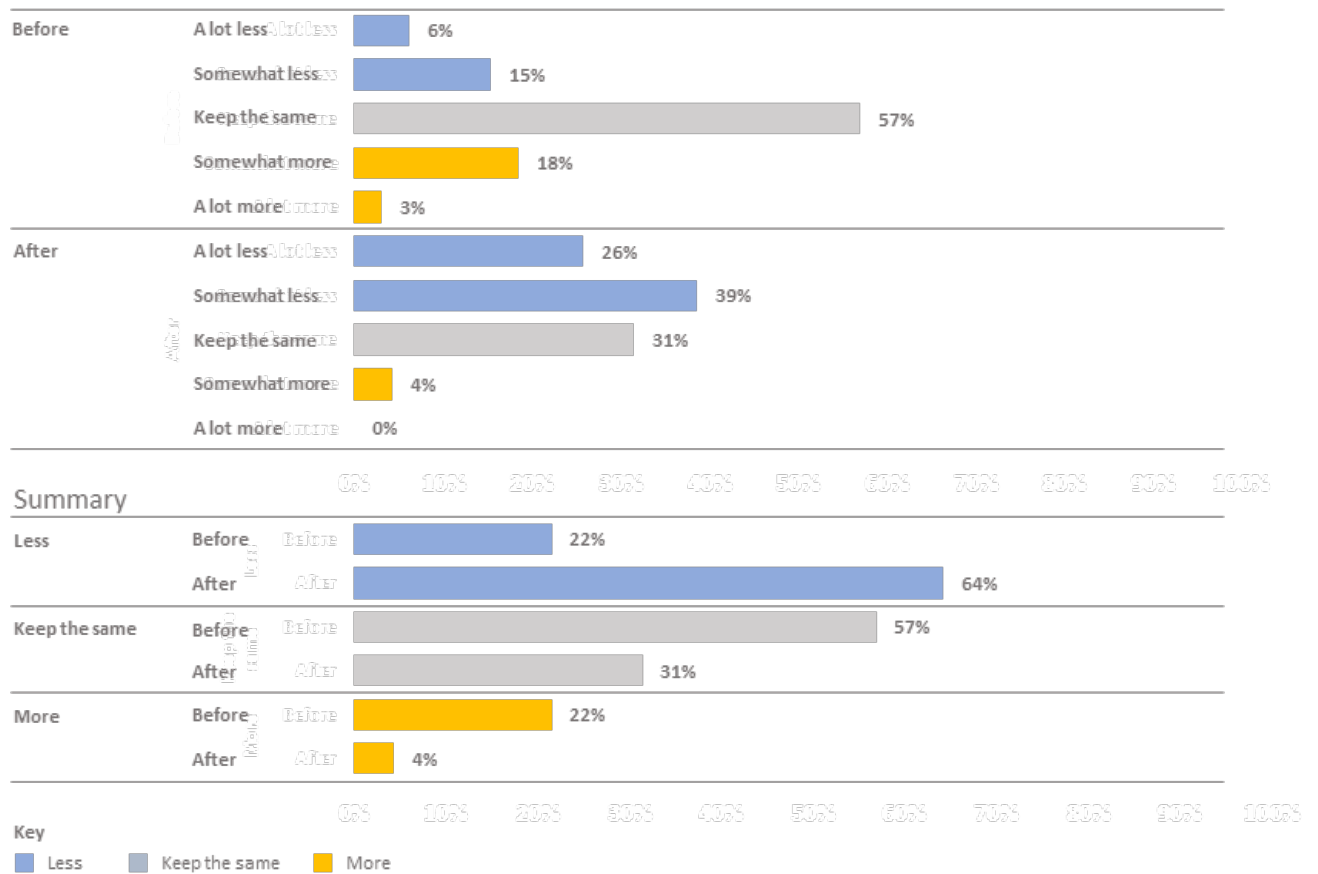
“Why don’t you have a Costa and a library together? You could get Costa to fund the running and the community library at the same time. Costa is constantly full. Even a council-run café to make some money” (Hinckley, 35-54)

- 4.17 Maintaining spending levels on libraries was the preferred option for a majority (57%) of residents responding to the pre-discussion questionnaires - with just over a fifth (21%) advocating both increases and reductions.

Figure 11: Here’s a list of the council’s services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Libraries)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 65 responses; Exit questionnaire – 70 responses

¹ It should be noted that there are already a number of community-run libraries across Leicestershire.

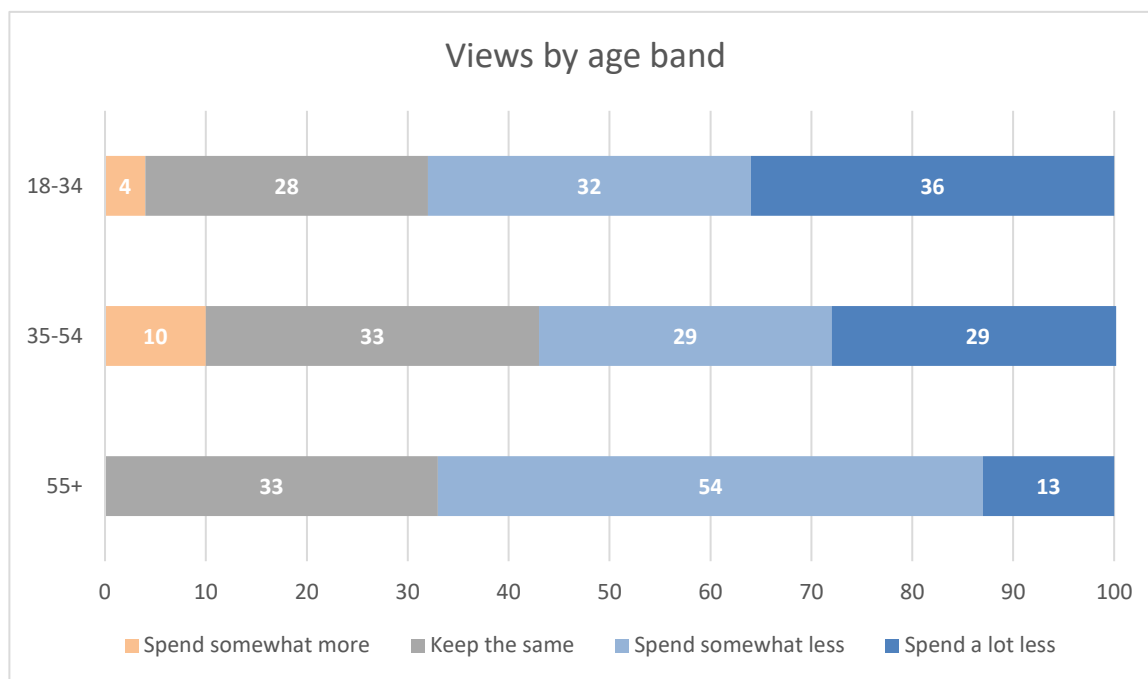


- 4.18 By the end of the workshop, only 4% wanted to see LCC spending more in this area, there was a 26-percentage point reduction (57% to 31%) in those wishing to see it maintained and a 43-percentage point increase (21% to 64%) in those advocating reductions. Again, there was a large shift in the net difference between those supporting increases and reductions: there was no difference pre-discussion, but the post-discussion figure was -60.

- 4.19 There was majority support for reductions in spend on libraries among residents in all three age brackets. Younger and middle-aged residents were more likely to support significant decreases, whereas older residents were more likely to support moderate ones.

Figure 12: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Libraries – Views by Age Band)

Base: 70 responses



Adult Learning Courses and Support (£5m)

- 4.20 In the workshop discussions, participants saw the potential for income generation in adult learning courses and support by asking for small contributions from those who can afford it.

"I think it's really important in terms of being not isolated and being with other people but actually a lot of us would pay for ourselves" (Loughborough, 55+)

"Ask people to contribute more towards it" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"I used to work in adult learning and there used to be huge subsidies...but we found that as the subsidies went down, the numbers of enrolments didn't go down so...as long as the prices don't get ridiculous, a lot of pensioners are reasonably well-off and looking for things to do. You might be giving them money that you don't need to, is my theory... The University of the Third Age does a lot of stuff that comes under the heading of adult learning. People go to it and they pay whatever it costs" (Hinckley, 55+)

"It is important, so we wouldn't get rid of it completely, but we would definitely cut it a bit" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"You get to a certain age and if you want to learn you need to fund that yourself" (Loughborough, 35-54)

- 4.21 It was also suggested that savings could be made in the area of adult learning courses and support by promoting more online courses; and income generated by providing loans rather than grant funding (to be repaid on finding employment following the completion of a course).

“We need to focus on adult learning after college and after schools because a lot of people are being failed by the education services... The great thing about online courses is they are a lot more in tune with society... You can go to college and it will be hard to get into something like in-depth marketing or in-depth graphics for a specific niche, whereas online there are hundreds of courses” (Loughborough, 18-34)

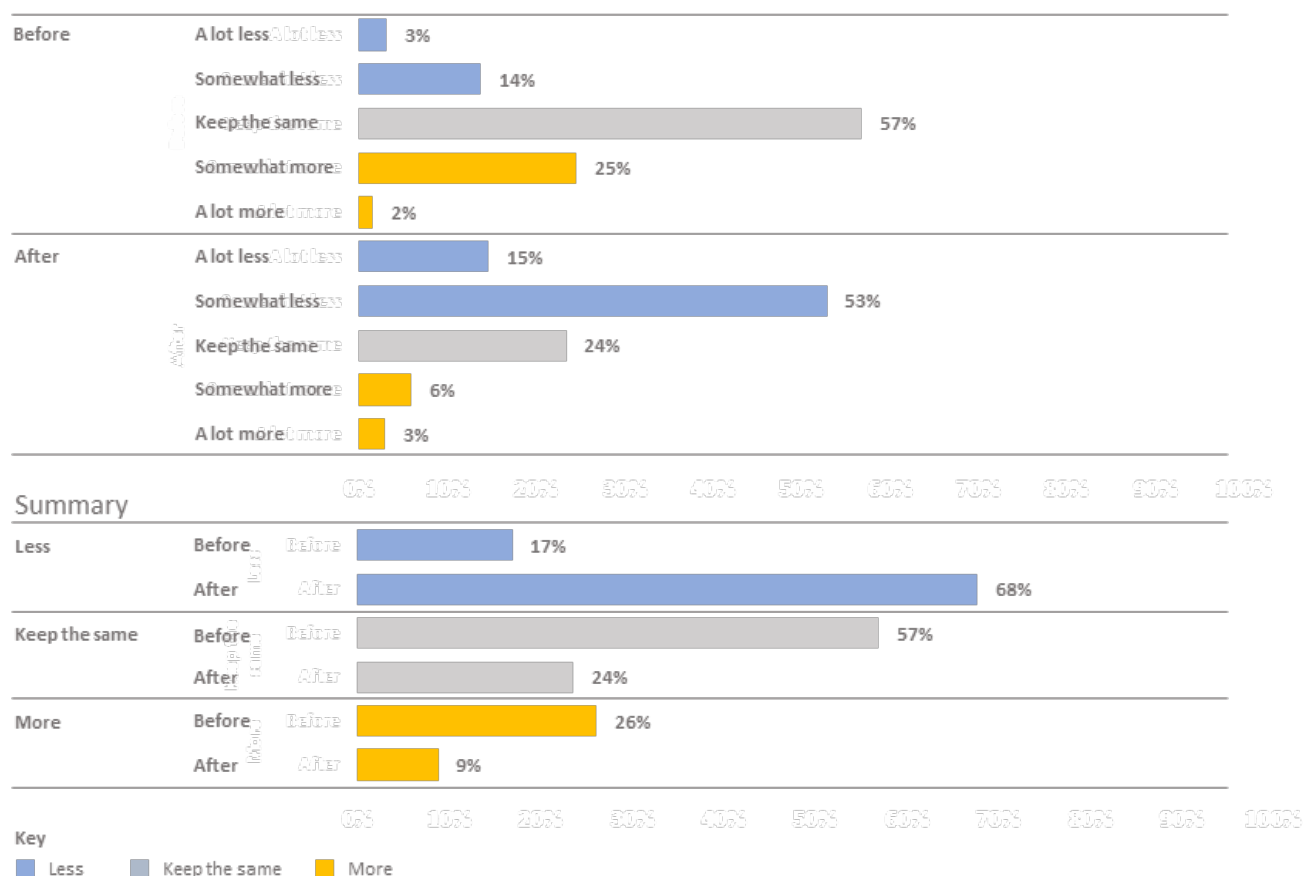
“Use a multi online open course approach for Adult Learning...” (Loughborough, 55+)

“I think the council should look at loans rather than grants. In training as well. If you get a degree you have to fund that yourself, whereas there are certain training programmes now that the council will pay for and fund. And if you’re successful and you get a job out of that then I think you should have to pay some of that funding back even if it is interest free” (Loughborough, 35-54)

- 4.22 In the questionnaires, initially over half (57%) of residents felt that spending on adult learning should remain the same; with a further 27% suggesting increased spend and just under a fifth (17%) suggesting a decrease.

Figure 13: Here’s a list of the council’s services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Adult Learning Courses and Support)

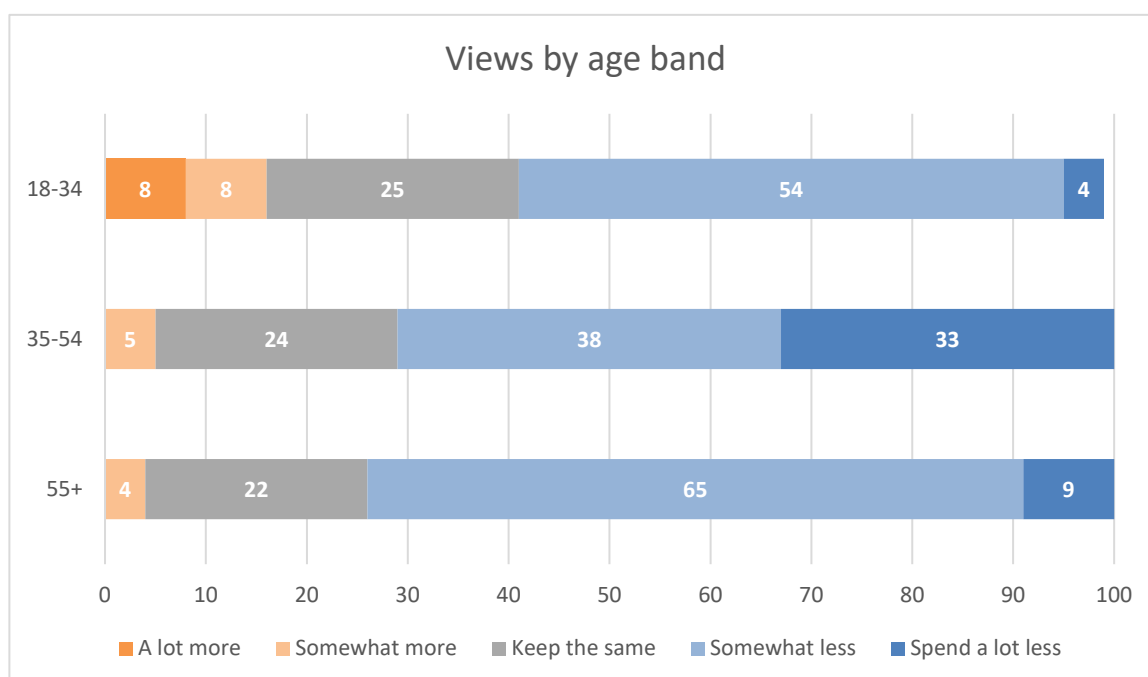
Base: Welcome questionnaire - 65 responses; Exit questionnaire – 68 responses



- 4.23 In their final assessments just over two-thirds (68%) agreed that spending could be reduced in this area, with only just under a quarter (24%) suggesting it remain the same and around a tenth (9%) advocating an increase. The shift in net difference between those supporting increases and reductions was also considerable at +9 pre-discussion and -59 post discussion.
- 4.24 The majorities in all three age brackets supported reductions in adult learning courses and support, although again younger participants were slightly more likely to contemplate increases. They were however a lot less likely to advocate significant reductions in spend – whereas those aged 35-54 were much more likely to suggest reductions.

Figure 14: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Adult Learning Courses and Support – Views by Age Band)

Base: 68 responses



Drug/Alcohol Addiction and Sexual Infection Treatment (£8m)

- 4.25 In the workshop discussions, those advocating increasing or maintaining funding in the area of drug/alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment felt that support for people experiencing addiction is essential, but currently lacking. The links between addiction and mental health were also acknowledged, and the feeling was that investing in this area may result in savings for others (adult mental health for example).

“Personally, there is a family member who has had mental health issues, and he went down the alcohol route and ended up in rehab, and he got very messy, spiralled out of control... One thing led to another and it just escalated, but there was no support network there ... definitely needed a professional. It couldn't have been done in the community, not at the level he was at” (Hinckley 18-34)

“Drug and alcohol addiction cause a lot of adult mental health, so they should be linked as well” (Wigston, 35-54)

- 4.26 Furthermore, the younger participants at Loughborough were of the view that better education around these issues in schools might go some way to decreasing their prevalence and the subsequent demand on services to address them.

"Are kids getting a proper education about the dangers of alcohol use, binge drinking, units, drug misuse, casual drugs, all that kind of stuff? Is that all being taught at school?"
(Loughborough, 18-34)

"I personally would welcome sex education, smoking, alcohol, drugs. I want my kids to get that. There would be a lot of kids in their class that don't get that, so I welcome intervention and any awareness raising about the nature of it" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"All the way from year 7 to year 11, I didn't get life skills, so I didn't know about the smoking, the alcohol, the drugs. The most you get is drugs are bad, don't do them and leave it at that"
(Loughborough, 18-34)

- 4.27 However, the prevalent view across all three workshops was that more partnership working with other public, voluntary and even private sector organisations was needed in relation to services for drug and alcohol addiction and sexual infection - as was encouraging people to take more individual responsibility for their actions and decisions. Participants frequently expressed concern that the council is paying more than its fair share for services that on the face of it seem to be the responsibility of, say, the NHS and/or the voluntary sector - suggesting that service reductions (at least those provided by LCC) may be acceptable to many in this area.

"So, there's something about a number of these themes where there's an interdependency and I think you're paying more than health are, and it's almost like a re-settlement within your forward plan" (Loughborough, 55+)

"It should be provided differently by someone else. Let them carry the cost. It's personal choice. Yes, you could say that mental health pushes you down the drug and alcohol and smoking road, but if you really want to do something, you'll find that force somewhere"
(Hinckley, 18-34)

"Drug, alcohol and sexual infection treatment... They are really, really, important but we feel it should be funded by the NHS. I know the NHS is stretched, but it shouldn't be down to the council" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"Drug, alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment could be replaced by people who are past abusers because they have first-hand experience of what are the best methods. These people who are doing it currently don't have the understanding of the scale and these people probably have a better understanding of how to go through withdrawal and stuff" (Wigston, 18-34)

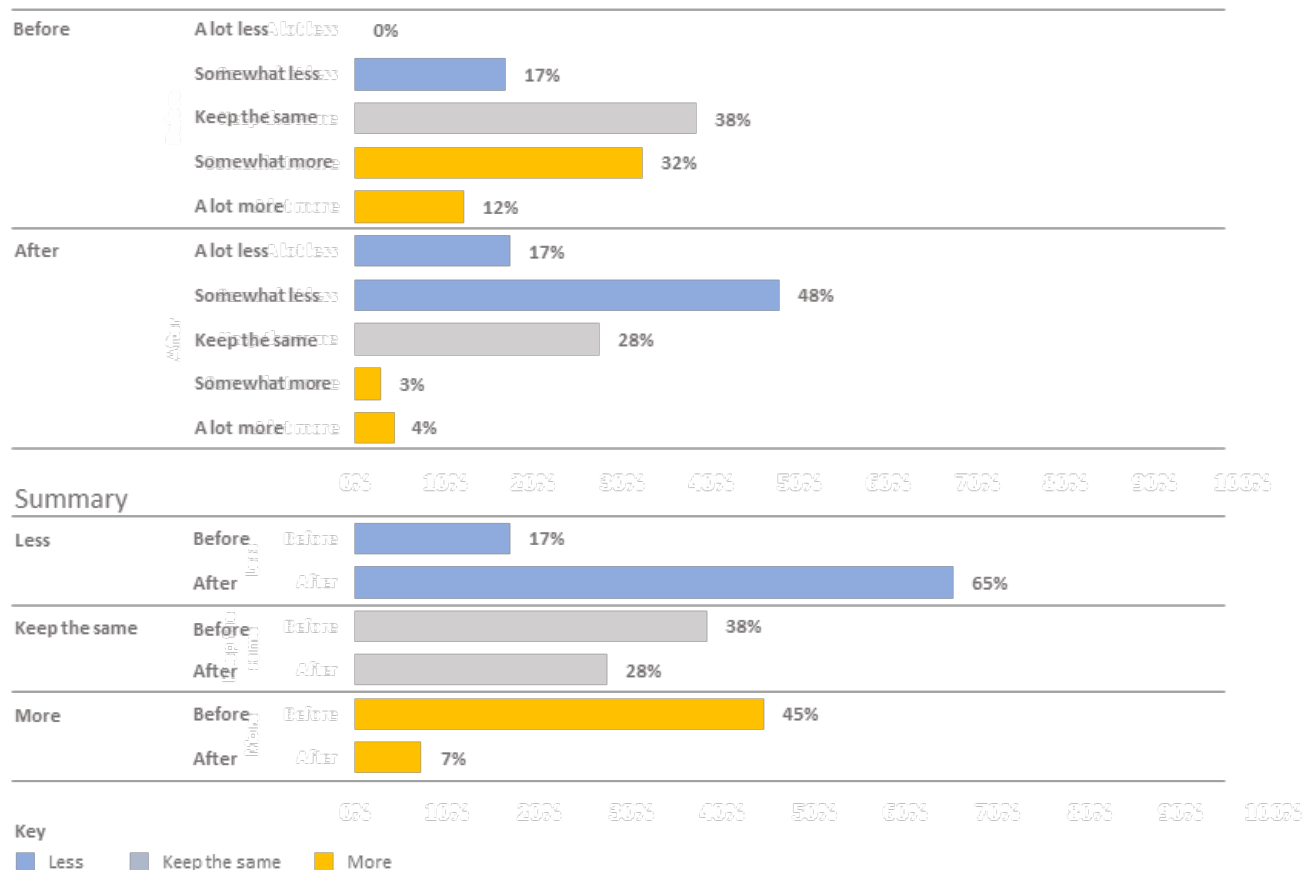
"Drug and alcohol addiction. Again, plenty of Alcoholics Anonymous out there" (Wigston, 18-34)

- 4.28 This was one of the services that saw the most marked change in views between the pre- and post-discussion questionnaires. Prior to discussion, over four in ten residents (44%) felt spending on

drug/alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment should be increased, just under four in ten (38%) thought it should stay the same - and less than two in ten (17%) felt it should be decreased.

Figure 15: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Drug/Alcohol Addiction and Sexual Infection Treatment)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 65 responses; Exit questionnaire – 69 responses

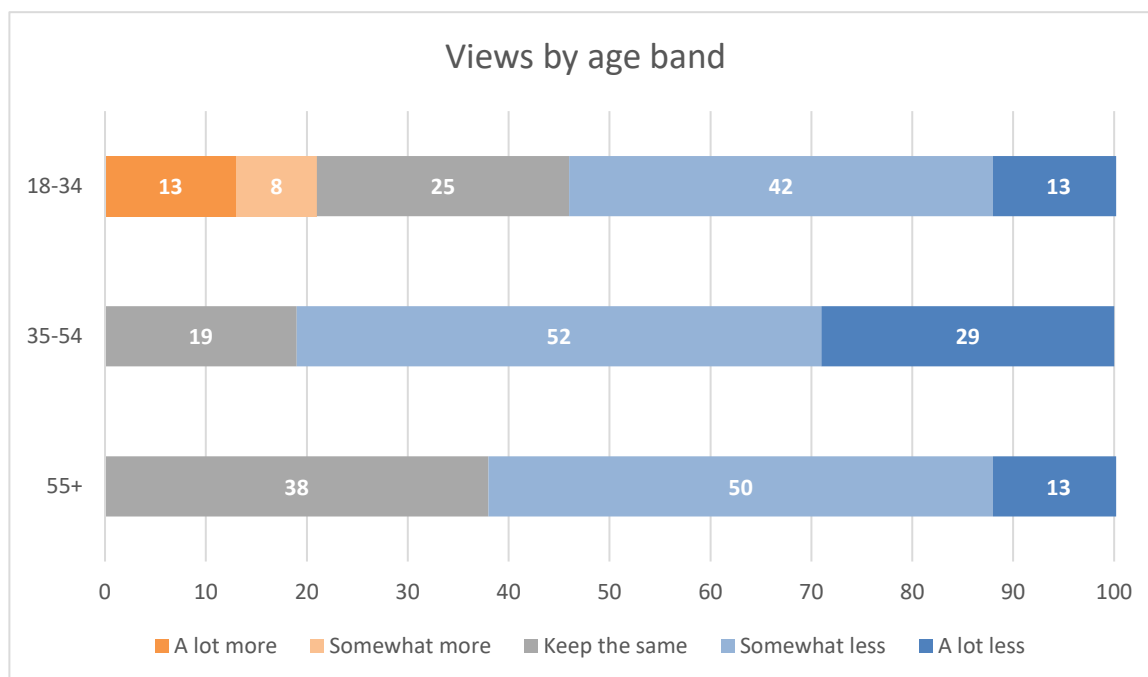


- 4.29 After discussion only 7% advocated increased spending, just over a quarter (28%) wanted it to stay the same and almost two-thirds (65%) supported reductions. The net difference between those supporting increases and reductions was +28 pre-discussion and -58 post-discussion.

- 4.30 The majority in all three age brackets supported reductions in the area of drug/alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment. Younger residents were more likely to support spending increases – whereas no-one in either the 35-54 or 55+ age brackets were prepared to do so.

Figure 16: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Drug/Alcohol Addiction and Sexual Infection Treatment – Views by Age Band)

Base: 69 responses



Grass Cutting (£3m)

- 4.31 Grass cutting was considered an important service in the workshop discussions, primarily for safety reasons but also in terms of aesthetics (which, it was suggested, could be addressed to some extent by activities such as wildflower and median planting).

"The hedge cutting and grass cutting is reduced to twice a year. It puts me at risk, I can't see down the road. They need to cut them right back" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"Replace grass verges with median planting to reduce costs of cutting..." (Post-discussion questionnaire response)

"At the minute, if you go around Leicestershire, it just looks absolutely disgusting the way the grounds are kept and stuff...I'm quite embarrassed when people come visiting my town and I can see such bad grass, so long and stuff" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"Some of the councils...they've planted a load of wild seeds along motorways and long straight roads. It is absolutely beautiful, and they've saved thousands!" (Loughborough, 35-54)

- 4.32 However, it was one service that was frequently mentioned in the context of not needing to be done as often or necessarily undertaken by the council, but perhaps by incentivised volunteers.

“Grass cutting...I don’t like seeing it growing really high but twice a year would be adequate” (Wigston, 55+)

“Grass cutting...some creative community work. If a few people volunteer, and the equipment is provided by yourselves...and then every so often when it needs doing, it gets done” (Hinckley, 18-34)

“Grass cutting could be done by local volunteers who take pride in their area...” (Wigston, 18-34)

“Grass cutting and winter gritting can be done in general by the community” (Post-discussion questionnaire response)

“Helping to look after your own community. Cutting grass, road gritting. Helping to look after and support your own family where possible” (Post-discussion questionnaire response)

“For example, if you cut your grass outside your house, we can reduce your council tax by £10 per month... It must be cheaper than paying someone” (Hinckley, 35-54)

- 4.33 Some (though by no means all) also suggested that those using weight management and mental health services - or even those undertaking community service or on Jobseekers Allowance - should be encouraged or utilised to ‘get involved’ in activities like grass cutting.

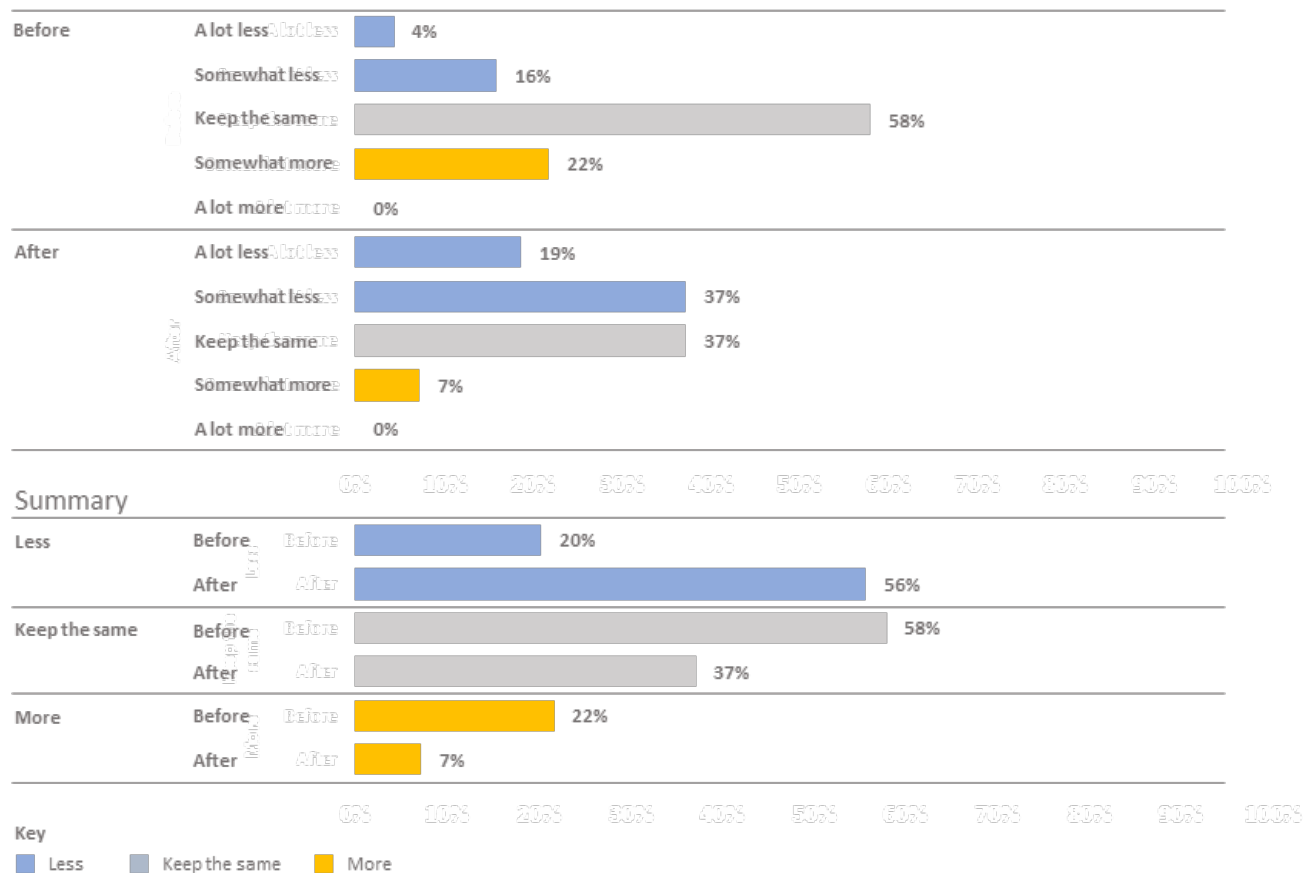
“Set up community volunteer groups to support country parks and grass cutting. Encourage those with mental health issues and weight management issues particularly. No more expensive gym memberships to pay” (Post-discussion questionnaire response)

“I was just thinking of these people who was took to court and have community service. What about getting them to go around litter picking? Cut the grass? They get unemployed people doing it in Spain and in Germany” (Hinckley, 55+)

- 4.34 In the pre-discussion questionnaires, majority opinion (58%) was that spending on grass-cutting should be maintained - with almost equal numbers of respondents suggesting an increase (22%) and a decrease (20%).

Figure 17: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Grass Cutting)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 69 responses; Exit questionnaire – 70 responses

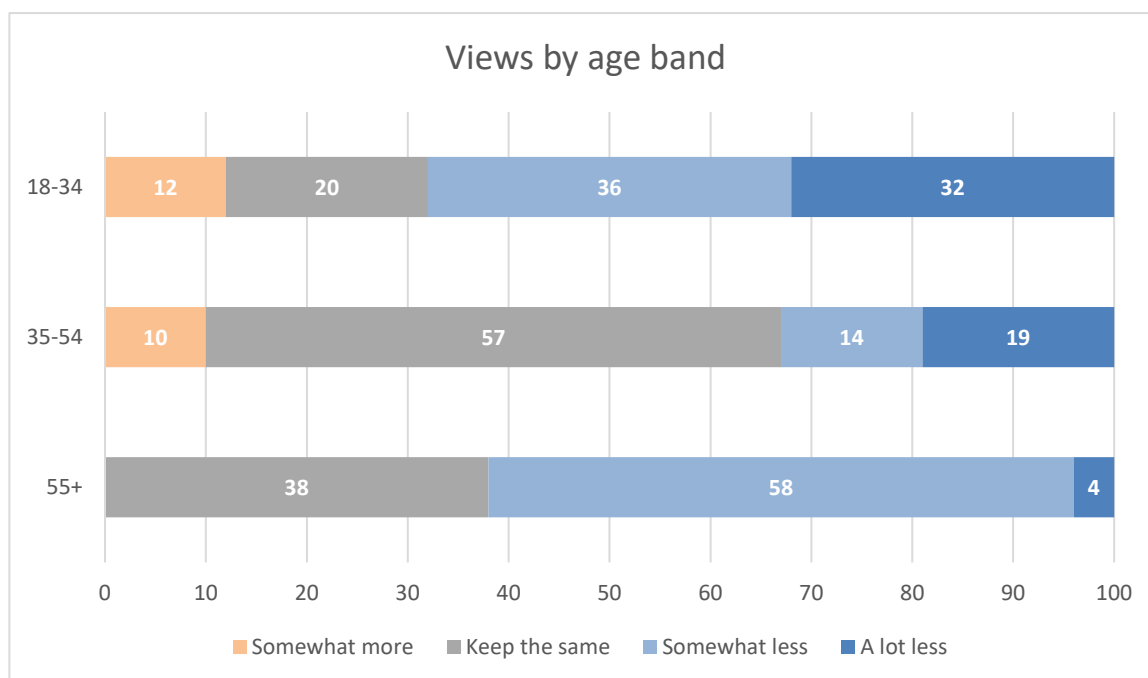


- 4.35 This split had changed markedly post-discussion, with only 7% advocating an increase, 37% suggesting maintained spend and a majority (56%) suggesting reductions. The net difference between those supporting increases and those supporting decreases had also changed considerably from +2 pre-discussion to -49 post-discussion.

- 4.36 There was majority support for reductions in spend on grass cutting among residents in the 18-34 and 55+ age groups - although more of the younger age group sought radical reductions compared to the older age group. Those in the middle age bracket were much more likely to want spending maintained in this area, and far less likely to support reductions.

Figure 18: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Grass Cutting – Views by Age Band)

Base: 70 responses



Transport to Schools (£4m)

- 4.37 In the workshop discussions, it was said that free transport to school was important for the socially and financially disadvantaged - but that it should not be a universally free provision regardless of parental income. It was also suggested that transport to school could be provided differently through: more joint working with other councils; volunteering (that is, utilising the skills of retired people to drive buses for example); and encouraging more individual responsibility (parents driving children to school within a car share arrangement or encouraging them to walk if within a reasonable distance). This is discussed further in the 'New Ways of Working' section of this report but there are some typical comments below.

"To make sure the kids get there, because it is expensive. When some people have to pay each term, it is a lot of money...to make sure that the poorer people in the community get educated, and they can get there" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"I think it should be self-funded; if you need to pay for transport to get your children to school, you need to pay for it" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"We said about car sharing, maybe, for the transport to schools" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"Just genuinely asking someone to do something for free... They would be quite happy to give up their time, like retired people" (Wigston, 18-34)

"Transport to schools for disabled children...my dad used to do it for the hospital once his wife died. It was the only social interaction he had. He did it for free" (Wigston, 18-34)

"I think some transport to schools is unnecessary. In my area, there is a school 20 minutes' walk from my house, and you see teenagers, 12, 13, catching the bus! They could walk that. I think it is just being taken advantage of" (Hinckley, 18-34)

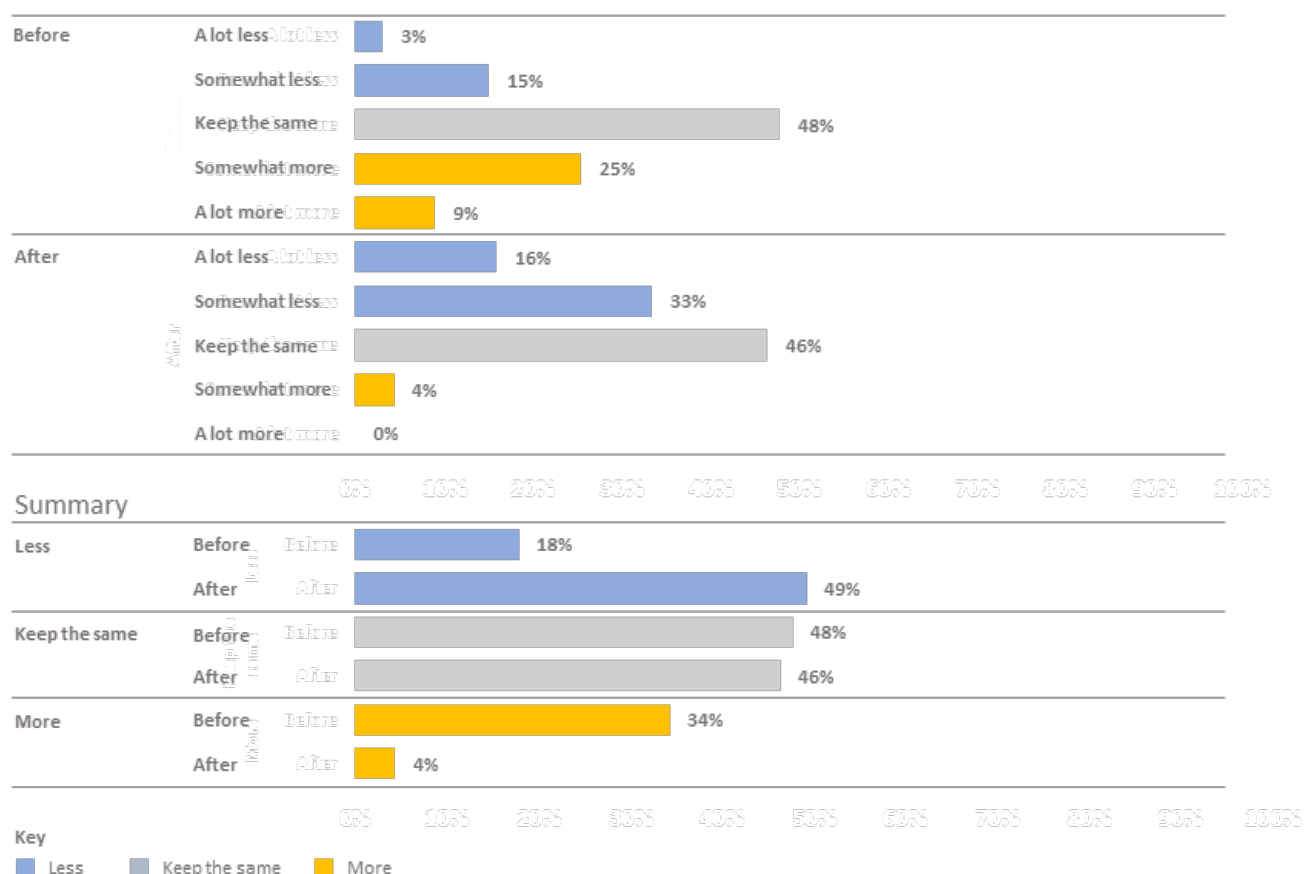
- 4.38 One participant described how school transport is being provided differently in their area already, at no cost to the council.

"My daughter starts secondary school in September...we live in Syston and she is going to Melton. There is no council school bus, but they have had an influx of applications from Syston so the school have organised a private minibus that is doing that school run. So, it is nothing to do with the council. The parents pay for it" (Loughborough, 35-54)

- 4.39 The questionnaire results show that just under half of residents (48%) initially favoured maintaining spend on transport to schools. Just over a third (34%) felt funding should be increased, and just under a fifth (18%) that it should be decreased.

Figure 19: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Transport to Schools)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 67 responses; Exit questionnaire – 69 responses



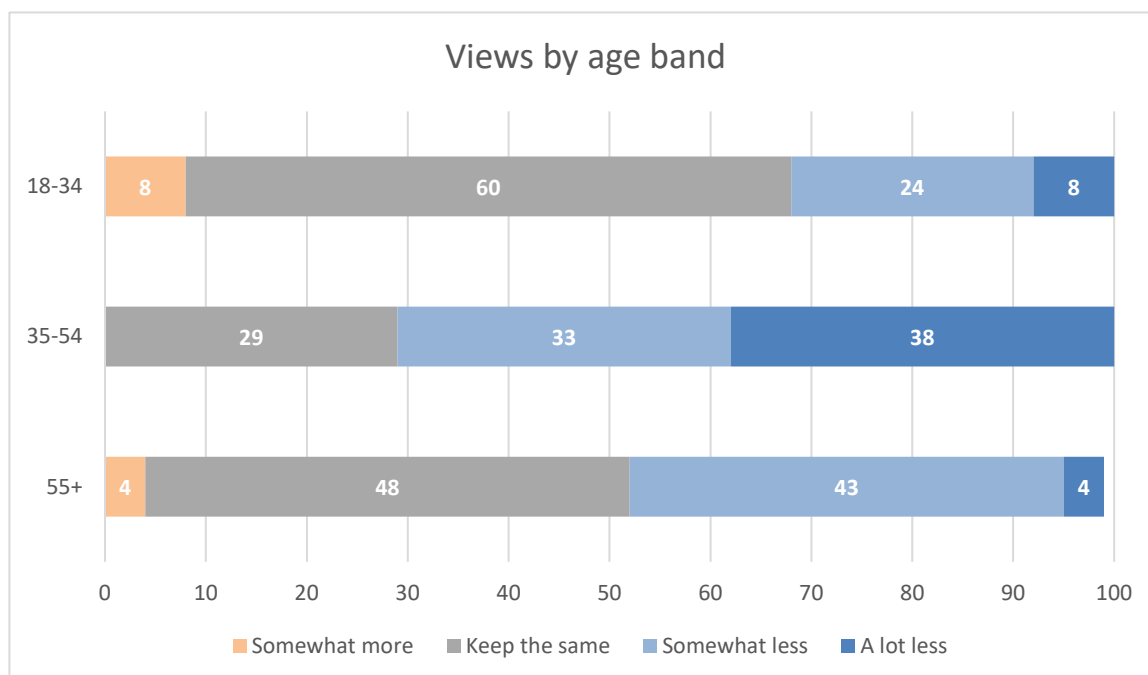
- 4.40 The balance of opinion had shifted somewhat post-discussion: whilst the figure for maintained spend on transport to schools remained similar at 46%, only 4% wished to see increases (a 25-percentage point decrease) whereas just under half (49%) advocated reductions - a 31-percentage point increase.

The net difference between those supporting increases and reductions had also changed considerably from +16 pre-discussion to -45 post-discussion.

- 4.41 In terms of the age split, the highest number of people in the younger and older groups wanted to see spending on school transport maintained (although an almost equal number within the older age group supported mostly moderate reductions). Those in the middle-age bracket were more likely to support reductions in this area.

Figure 20: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Transport to Schools – Views by Age Band)

Base: 69 responses



Public Bus Service Subsidies (£2m)

- 4.42 The questionnaire results below show that, initially, maintaining spend on public bus service subsidies was favoured by a majority of residents, most likely due to the rural nature of much of Leicestershire and the infrequency of public transport in isolated areas. The following comments were made in the initial workshop discussions around 'living in Leicestershire' to highlight the difficulties faced by people in such areas.

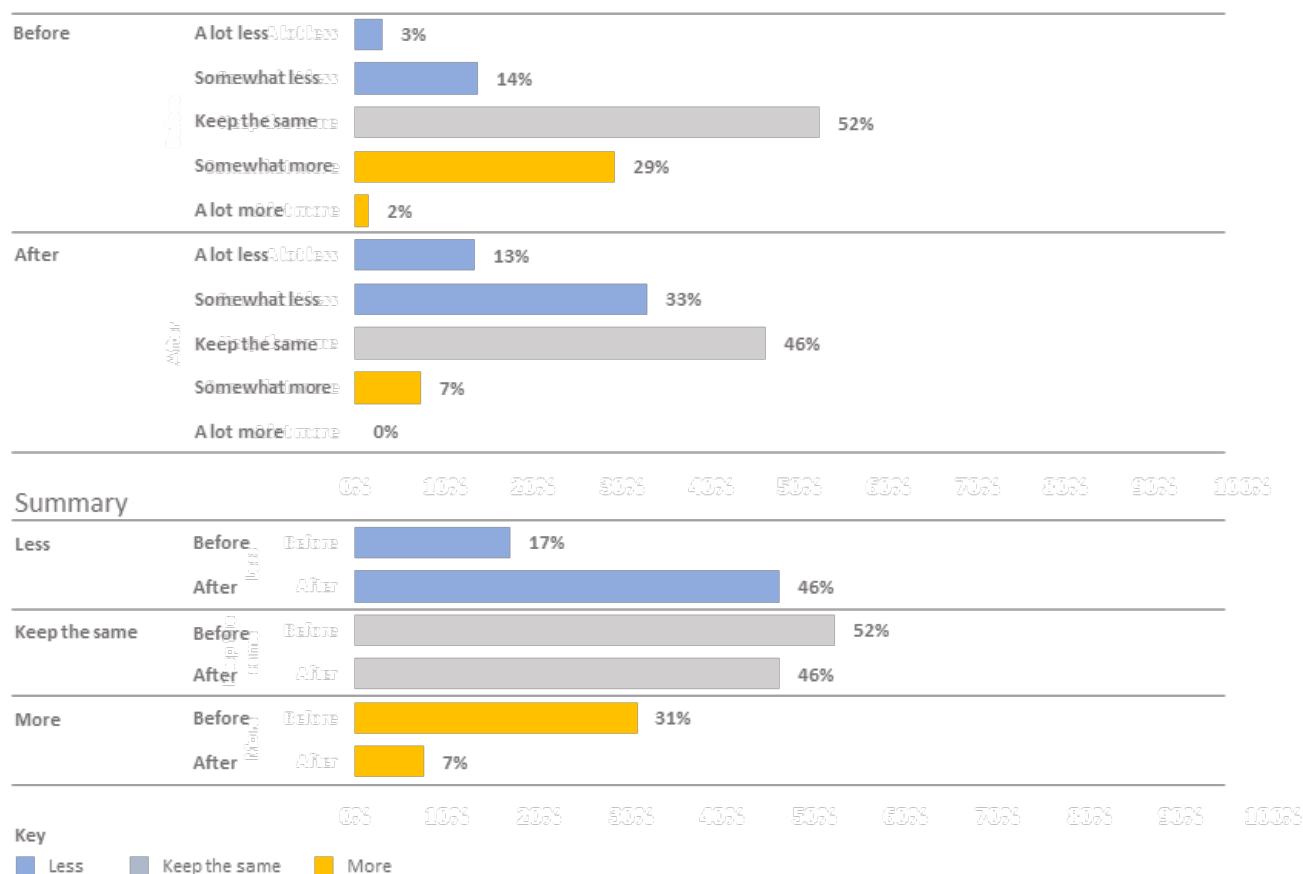
"The buses don't reach every district. I couldn't get to Groby from Anstey because there is no bus there. They are a 40-minute walk from each other, five-minute drive from each other and people can't get there" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"In my village the bus service is terrible - nothing after 6 o'clock. They've reduced it to every two hours now; nothing on a Sunday. If you can't drive, it's a problem. And the bus service only goes to Market Harborough. If you want to go to Leicester, you have to go to Fleckney and to get the bus there or to Kibworth...I think the more rural areas are suffering" (Wigston, 55+)

- 4.43 Looking at the questionnaire results in more detail: pre-discussion, the majority of residents responding to the questionnaire (52%) said they would like to see spending on public bus subsidies maintained. Almost a third (31%) wished to see it increase, whereas almost one in five (17%) wanted to see a decrease.

Figure 21: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Public Bus Service Subsidies)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 65 responses; Exit questionnaire – 67 responses

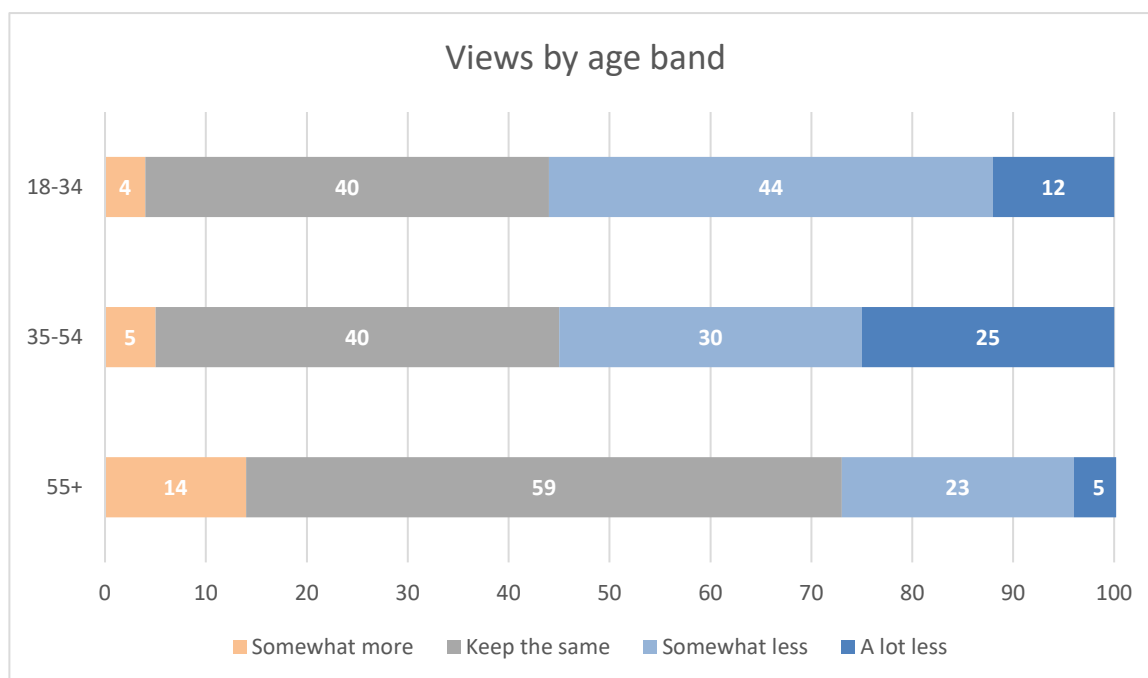


- 4.44 Post-discussion, equal numbers (46%) suggested decreased and maintained spend whereas only 7% sought increases. However, the net difference between those supporting increases and reductions shows a marked shift in opinion toward reductions: the figure was +14 pre-discussion and -39 post-discussion - suggesting that, at the end of the sessions, this was seen as one of the aforementioned 'nice to have' services.

- 4.45 Those aged 55+ were more likely to support increased or maintained spend on public bus service subsidies – and correspondingly less likely to support reductions. On the other hand, the majority of the 18-34 and 35-54 year olds advocated reductions, although 40% of both age groups supported maintaining spend.

Figure 22: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Public Bus Subsidies – Views by Age Band)

Base: 67 responses



Country Parks (£1m)

- 4.46 The council's country parks were not discussed extensively in the workshops, but country parks generally were typically considered important in enabling access to the outdoors - especially for vulnerable people.

"With the mental health and children with disabilities, ADHD, that kind of thing, if you're taking away the funding from country park then there's nowhere to go; there's nowhere nice to visit... You need them for children. You need outdoors. A lot of deprived children come from cities, they don't come from the woodland areas" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"It has beautiful countryside. All the area around Bradgate Park is good for walks. There is the bike ride, lots of local outdoor places to go... Foxton Locks, Burbage Common, Market Bosworth Water Park, Lutterworth Country Park" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"Watermead Park... It's fantastic" (Wigston, 35-54)

- 4.47 As noted in the 'New Ways of Working' chapter of this report, many residents felt the country parks service could be provided or funded differently - by volunteers, asking for donations or better utilising the outdoor space for events for example.

“Country Parks... It’s pretty easy to maintain, it’s a very low price to the council... Obviously, you get a load of OAPs and stuff there who are really passionate about that thing” (Wigston, 18-34)

“Ask for voluntary donations at museums and country parks” (Post-discussion questionnaire response)

“Use the Country Parks for outdoor events. Theatre in the wild... You can generate a lot of money. An outdoor company. We don’t do enough to attract people” (Hinckley, 35-54)

- 4.48 Some (though by no means all) also suggested that those using weight management and mental health services should be encouraged to ‘get involved’ in activities like country park management and support.

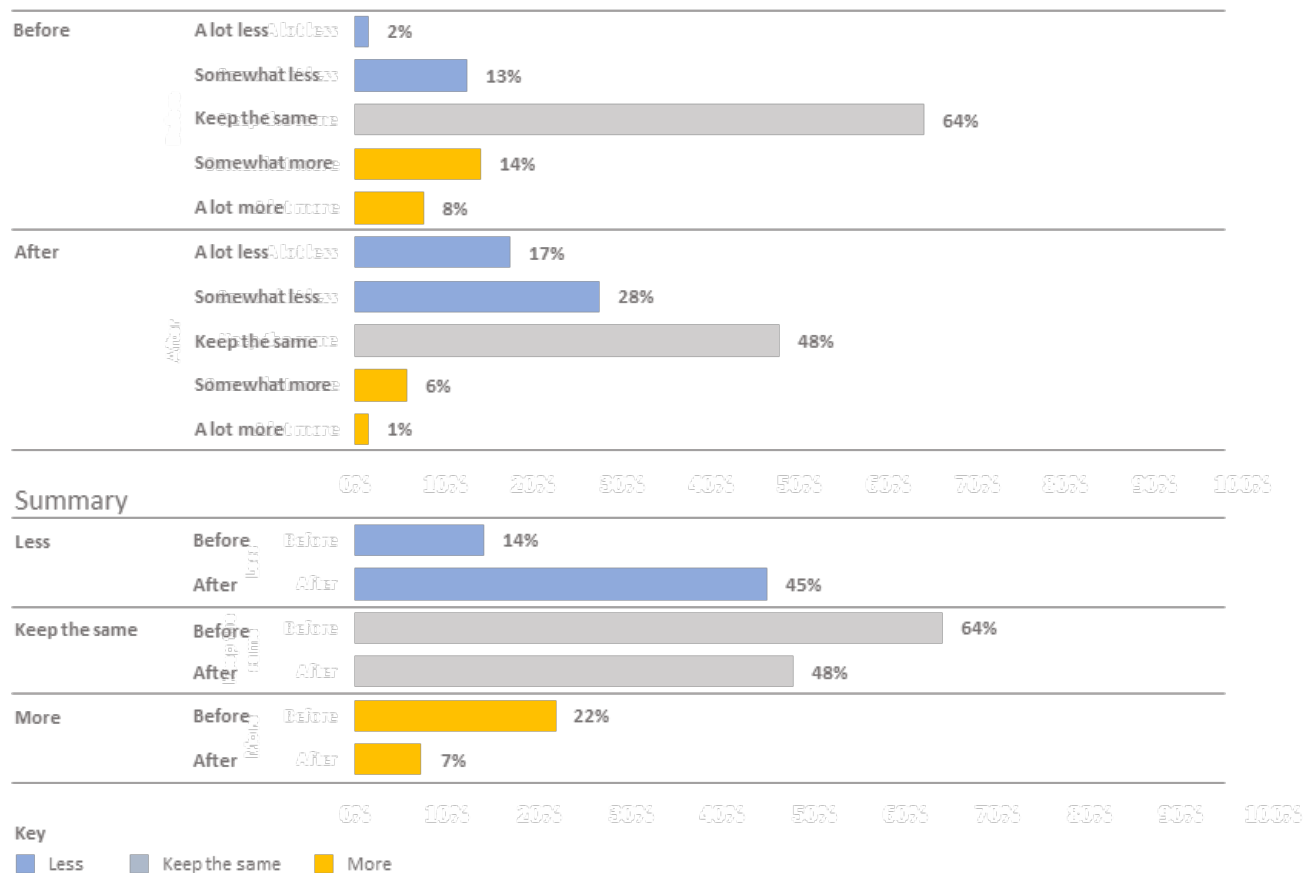
“Set up community volunteer groups to support country parks and grass cutting. Encourage those with mental health issues and weight management issues particularly. No more expensive gym memberships to pay” (Post-discussion questionnaire response)

“For health and weight control, maybe you could invite people to do some volunteer work in Country Parks...a walking group or people with mental health problems. Maybe they would like to get out and create community spirit around tidying up” (Wigston, 55+)

- 4.49 Questionnaire results show that, initially, almost two-thirds of participants (64%) were of the view that spending on country parks should remain the same, and almost a quarter (22%) felt it should be increased. Only 15% supported reductions.

Figure 23: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Country Parks)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 64 responses; Exit questionnaire – 69 responses

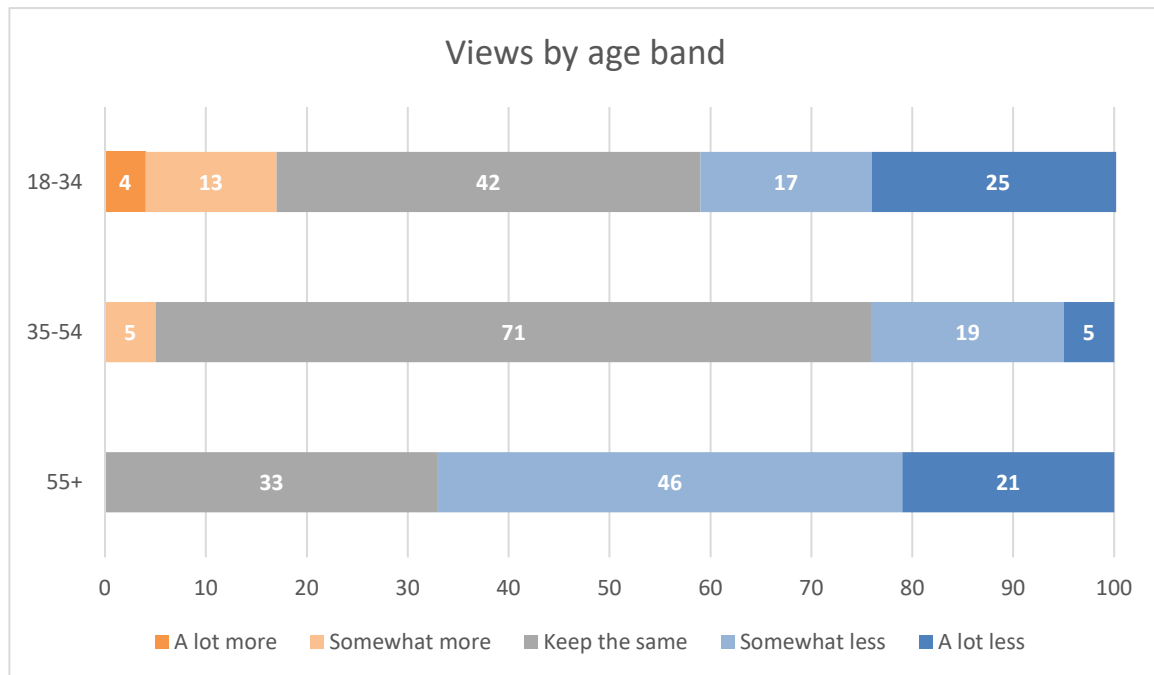


- 4.50 However, following discussion, although still the largest proportion, keeping the same level of spending had reduced to 48% and spending less had increased to 45%, with only 7% advocating spending rises. The net difference between those supporting increases and reductions does, though, show a shift toward the reductions: the figure was +8 pre-discussion and -38 post discussion.

- 4.51 Younger residents were slightly more prepared than those in either of the middle and older age brackets to support increased funding for country parks – whereas the 35-54 year olds were far more likely to opt for maintaining spend. Those aged 55+ were by far the most likely to advocate spending decreases in this area.

Figure 24: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Country Parks – Views by Age Band)

Base: 69 responses



Trading Standards (£1.5m)

- 4.52 There was no significant discussion around trading standards in the break-out sessions, although some suggested that it may be a less necessary service in today's digital age - and others did not really see it as a council responsibility.

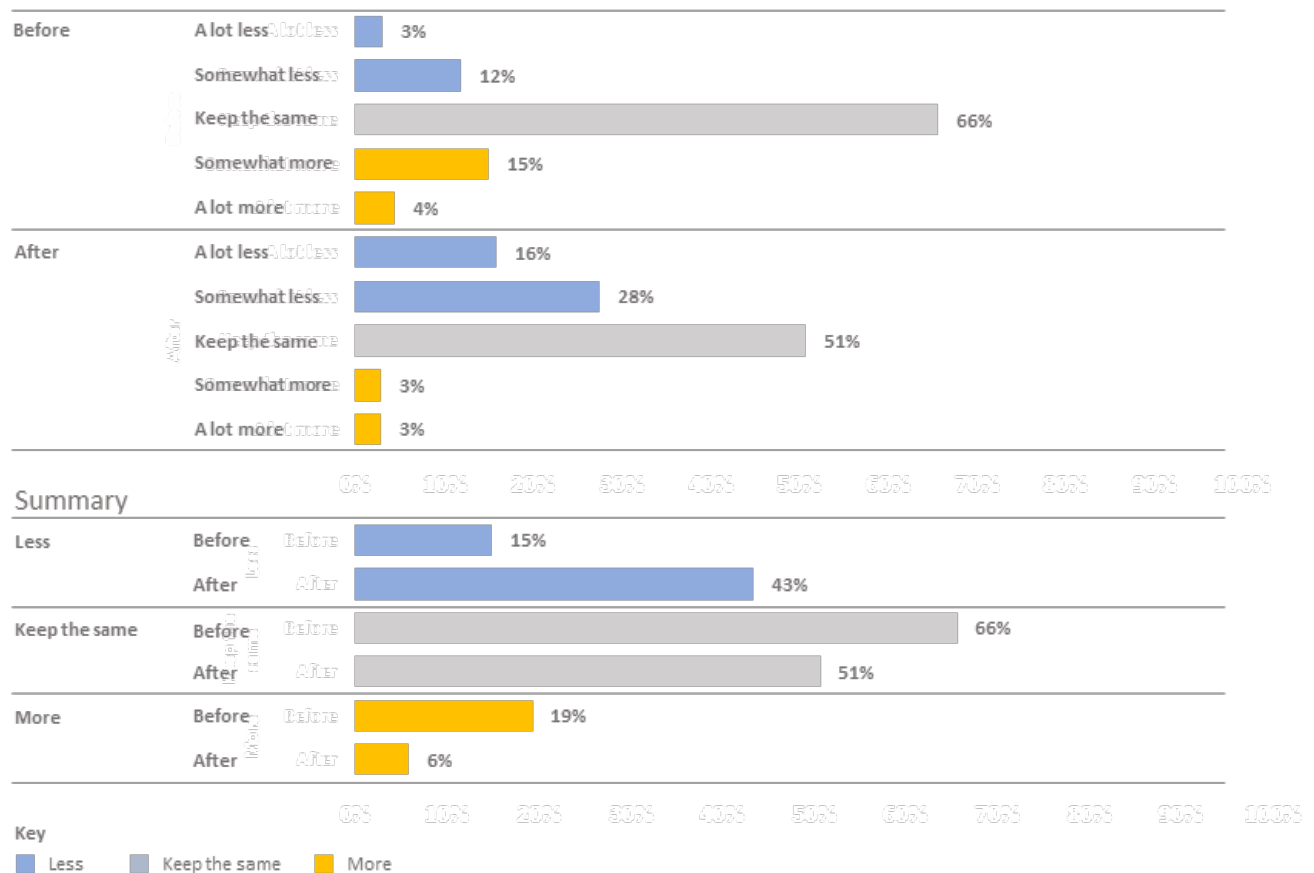
"We just thought that cutting back on trading standards - a lot of consumers nowadays are tech-savvy and can find that information on Facebook, or Citizen's advice, on the BBC; watching TV" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"If Asda sell fireworks and it burns a child, you take that up with Asda... I wouldn't have thought that you phoned the council if you bought something that was faulty" (Hinckley, 35-54)

- 4.53 Results from the pre-discussion questionnaire show that two-thirds of residents felt the funding allocated to trading standards should remain the same. Of the remaining third, just under one in five (19%) preferred an increase and just over one in eight (15%) preferred a decrease.

Figure 25: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Trading Standards)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 67 responses; Exit questionnaire – 69 responses

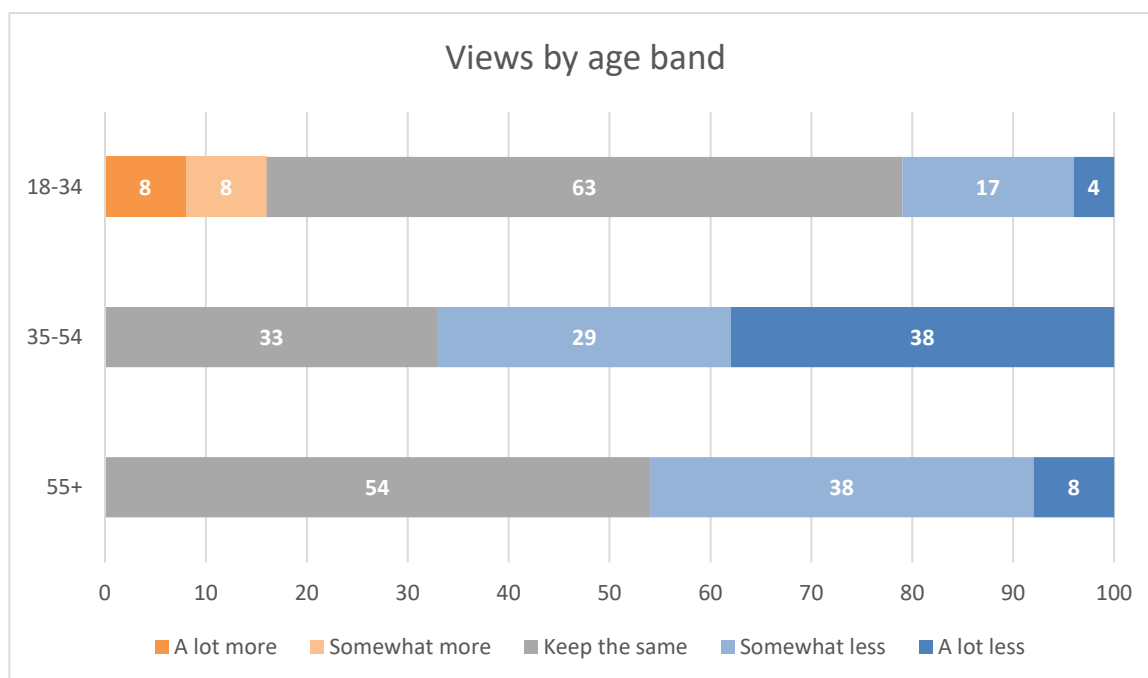


- 4.54 Post-discussion, although reduced (by 15-percentage points), majority opinion (51%) was again for maintaining spend - although the number of people favouring decreases had risen by 29-percentage points (from 15% to 44%), and the number of people favouring increases had fallen by 13-percentage points (from 19% to 6%). We should also note that the net difference between those supporting increases and reductions also shifted toward the reductions at +4 pre-discussion and -37 post-discussion.

- 4.55 While some younger residents were prepared to support increased funding for trading standards, the majority opted for maintaining spend. Maintaining spend was also the preference for the majority of 55+ year olds, although they were more prepared to consider decreases. The 35-54 year olds were far more likely to opt for reductions in this area.

Figure 26: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Trading Standards – Views by Age Band)

Base: 69 responses



Bus Passes for Older and Disabled People (£5m)

- 4.56 Being able to travel by bus was considered important in the workshop discussions for independence, active lifestyles and social contact. A bus pass was considered to be a lifeline for less financially advantaged older people.

"Keeps them mobile" (Loughborough, 55+)

"For some older people it is their only way of getting out and about. It is the only transport they have...part of it is respect for older people... I feel that there's probably a lot of people out there who have put a lot into the system throughout their whole life and maybe they deserve a bit of something back... Buses can be quite expensive and a lot of OAPs don't have much money..." (Hinckley 18-34)

- 4.57 Moreover, wider advantages discussed included encouraging sustainable transport and helping to maintain town centre shops.

"Cuts down on traffic for one thing" (Loughborough, 55+)

"You talk about town centre shops closing down but if you don't give the old people bus passes, they won't go to town so much to spend their money and it has that knock on effect" (Loughborough, 55+)

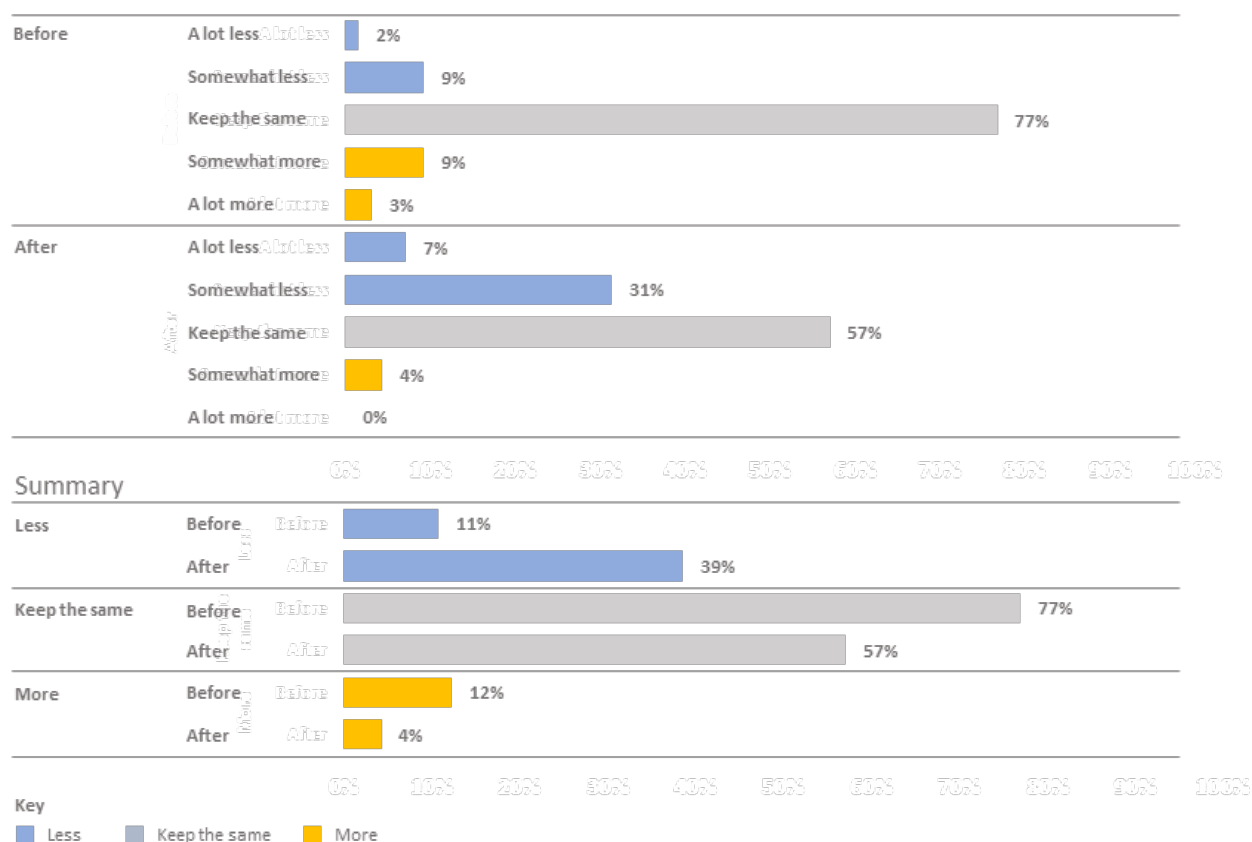
- 4.58 Nonetheless, many residents felt that service reductions could be contemplated in this area, primarily by levying a small charge for bus passes (this is discussed further in the 'New Ways of Working' chapter of this report).

"I suppose as well, in a budgeting way the elderly and disabled people, they've got bus passes, but say for example, you took £20 a year off each person, or a pound a month off each person....because most people receive state pensions, or private pensions; I'm sure they could spare a pound a month" (Hinckley, 18-34)

- 4.59 Majority opinion among questionnaire respondents (57%) was that spending on bus passes for older and disabled people should be maintained - albeit there was a 20-percentage point reduction in support for this post-discussion, and a corresponding increase in support for both spending somewhat less (31%) and spending a lot less (7%). The shift in the net difference between those supporting increases and those supporting reductions was toward reductions at +1 pre-discussion and -35 post-discussion.
- 4.60 Few wished to see spending increased in this area (12% and 4% pre-and post-discussion respectively).

Figure 27: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Bus Passes for Older and Disabled People)

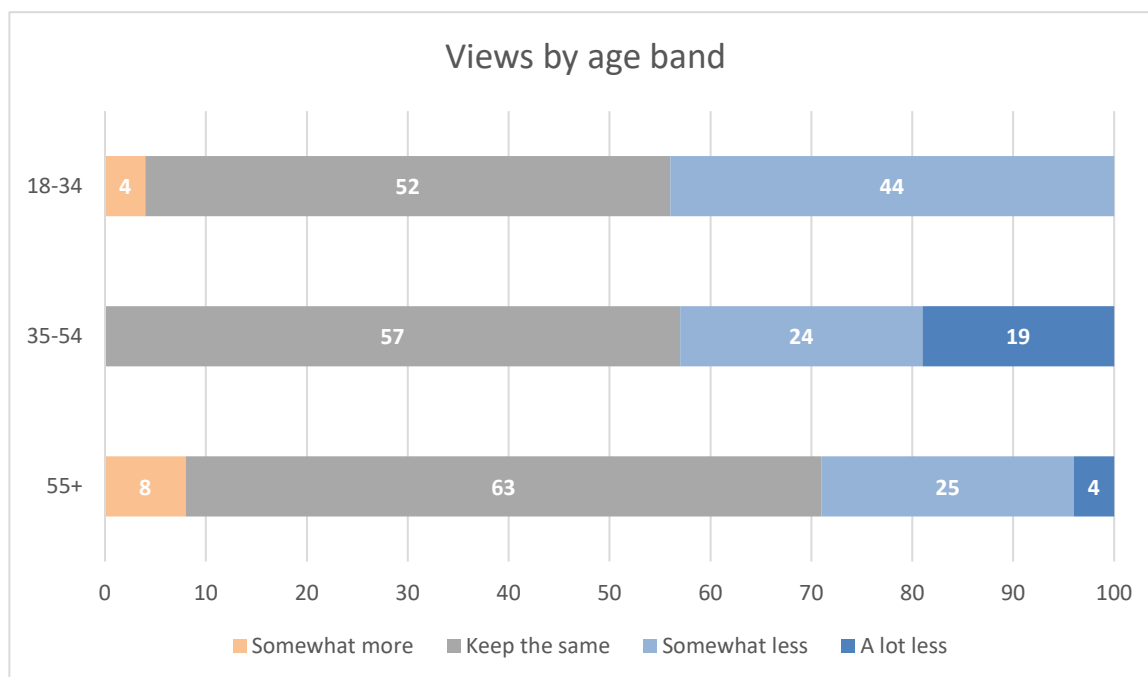
Base: Welcome questionnaire - 65 responses; Exit questionnaire – 70 responses



- 4.61 The results for bus passes for older and disabled people are fairly consistent by age – with the majority in all three age groups opting for maintaining spend. The younger age group was the least likely to endorse significant reductions.

Figure 28: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Bus Passes for Older and Disabled People – Views by Age Band)

Base: 70 responses



Street Lighting (£3m)

- 4.62 Adequate street lighting was described (in the workshop discussions) as essential in reducing both actual crime and the fear of it - although there was thought to be some scope for service reductions and savings through area prioritisation and earlier switch off, outsourcing maintenance to an expert private company if efficiencies can be identified and making greater use of innovations such as solar lighting.

"A lot of them get turned off at 12pm. Not being able to see late at night. If you are walking, it's not very safe. Also, for crime. A neighbour's car window got smashed and random tyres have been slashed. Street lighting has an effect on that" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"Street lighting is necessary in the winter, but could be cut in the summer with the light nights" (Loughborough, 55+)

"Ask people how they feel about the lighting and prioritise high-risk crime areas or high risk in terms of road accidents... I've seen the lights on when they don't need to be; turn them off a bit earlier... Switch it off even for half an hour all over the county would generate some saving" (Hinckley, 55+)

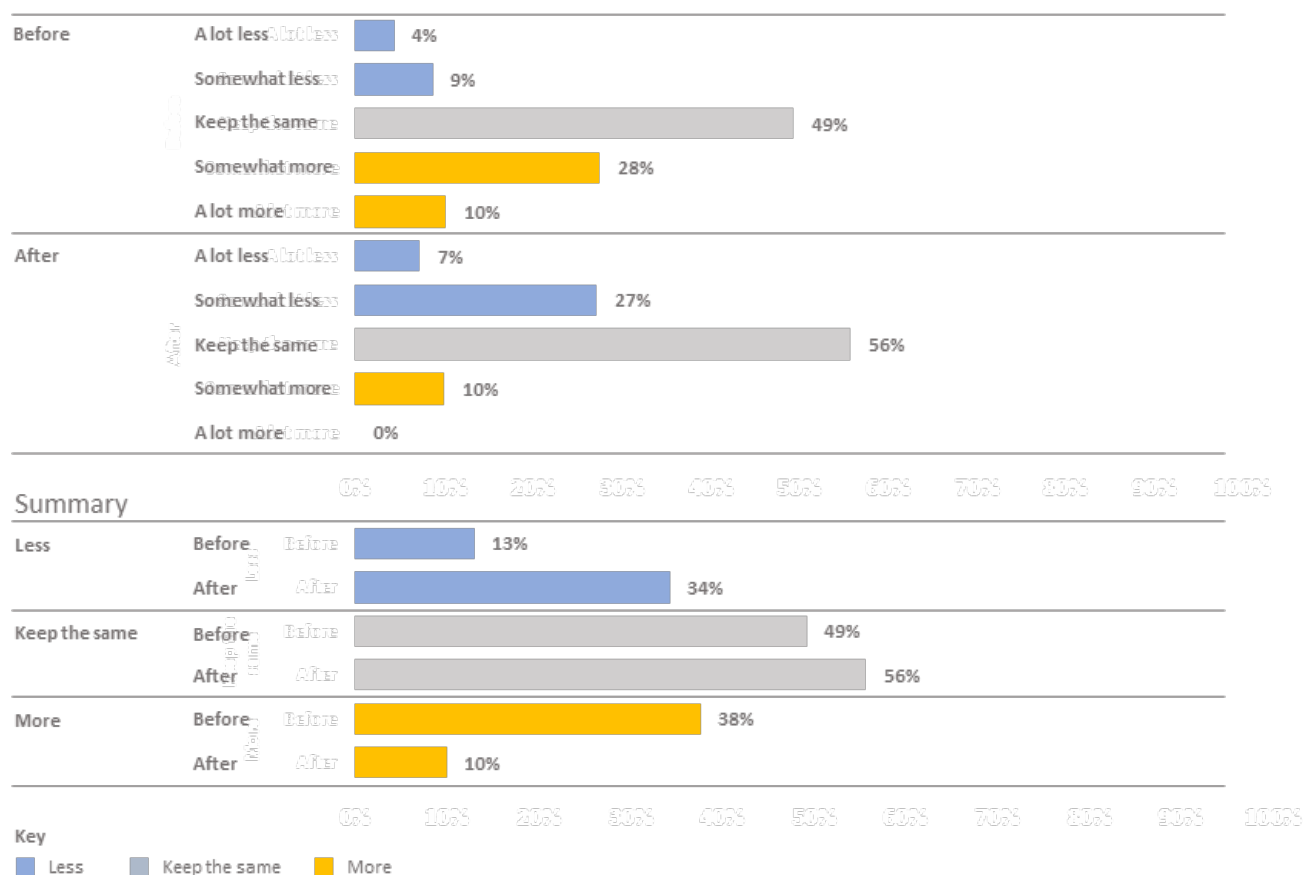
"Outsource...street lighting maintenance... If you've got somebody out there with the skills to provide the services, you're also providing jobs" (Loughborough, 55+)

“Solar lighting, all this reusable energy...heat source from the ground, so you can have something re-generated for your street lighting...” (Loughborough, 35-54)

- 4.63 Pre-discussion, just under half (49%) of questionnaire respondents said they would prefer LCC to maintain spend on street lighting. Just under four in ten (38%) wanted to see increases, whereas only just over one in eight (13%) advocated reductions.

Figure 29: Here’s a list of the council’s services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Street Lighting)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 69 responses; Exit questionnaire – 70 responses

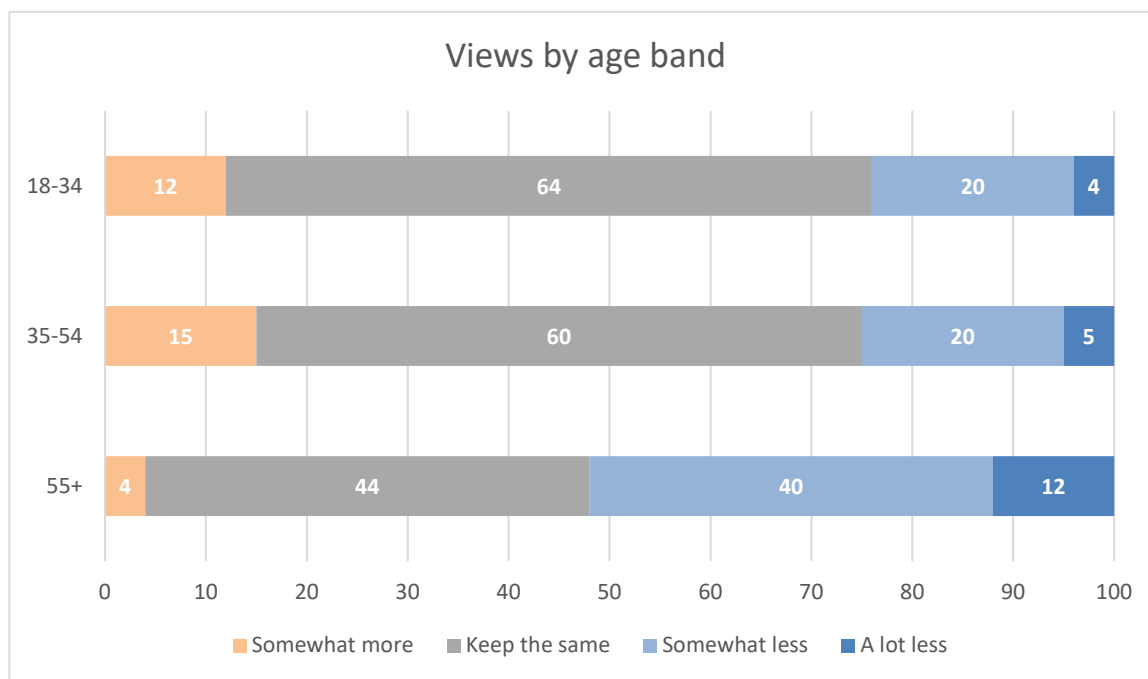


- 4.64 Post-discussion, the majority (56%) suggested maintaining spending levels in this area, only one in ten suggested increases (a 28-percentage point reduction from 38% to 10%) and just over a third (34%) suggested reductions. Reductions represented a 21-percentage point increase.

- 4.65 The main difference in the results by age were that older residents were more likely than younger ones to support reductions in spending on street lighting – whereas younger ones were most likely to opt for maintaining spend.

Figure 30: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Street Lighting – Views by Age Band)

Base: 70 responses



Grants to Help Communities, Community Groups, Businesses and Support to Economic Growth (£3m)

- 4.66 This service was not discussed extensively in the workshops, although it was said that it could be offered to businesses as a loan-based as opposed to grant-based service. Moreover, one participant thought that the responsibility for apprenticeships should shift more towards businesses, thus reducing costs for the council.

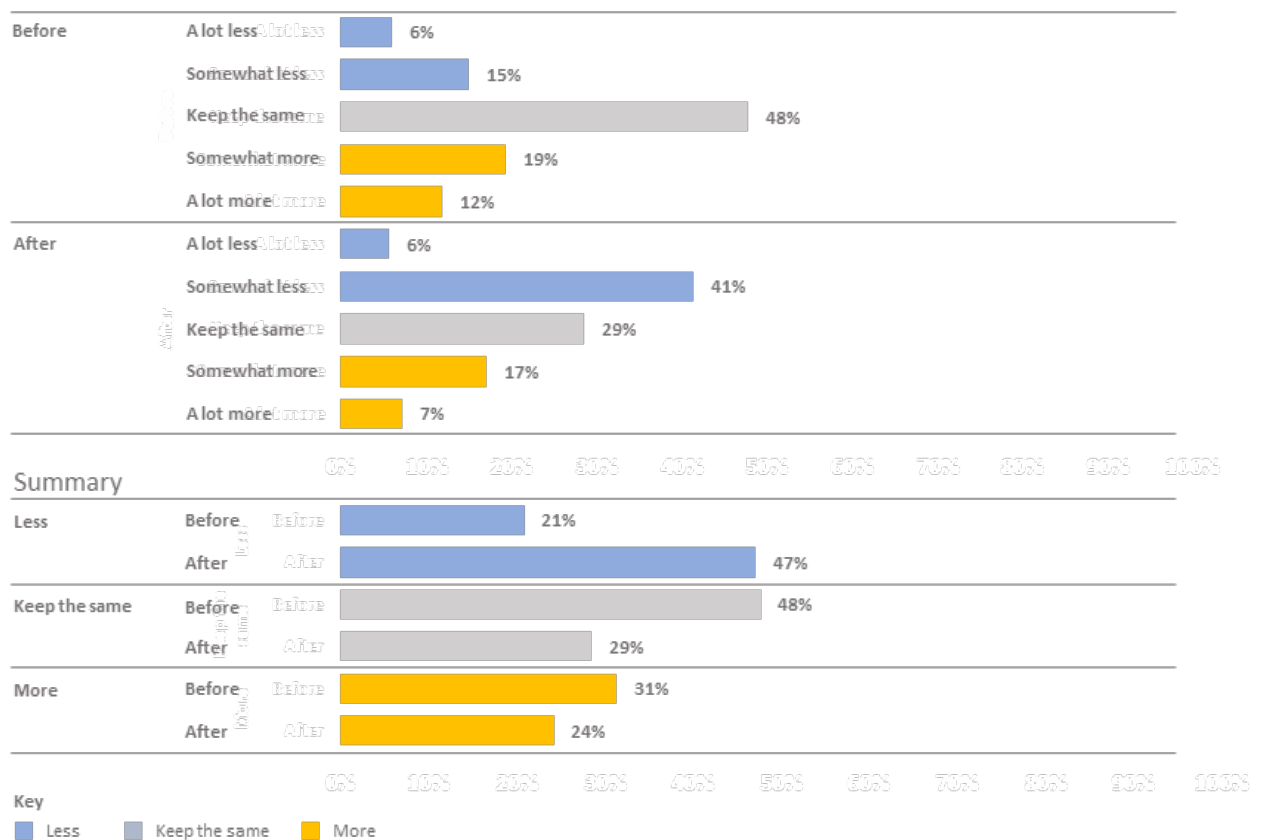
"Grants for groups are ok, but if you're getting a grant for a business, if it is a viable and successful business, then surely they should pay that grant back or it should be a loan"
(Loughborough, 35-54)

"Criteria for planning would be that you would have to provide 100 apprenticeships ... We have apprenticeships within that rather than the council providing that support" (Hinckley, 35-54)

- 4.67 Almost half of those filling in the pre-discussion questionnaire (48%) felt that spending should be maintained in the area of grants to help communities, community groups, businesses and support to economic growth, around a third (31%) said it should be increased and just over a fifth (21%) that it should be decreased.

Figure 31: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Grants to Help Communities, Community Groups, Businesses and Support to Economic Growth)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 67 responses; Exit questionnaire – 70 responses

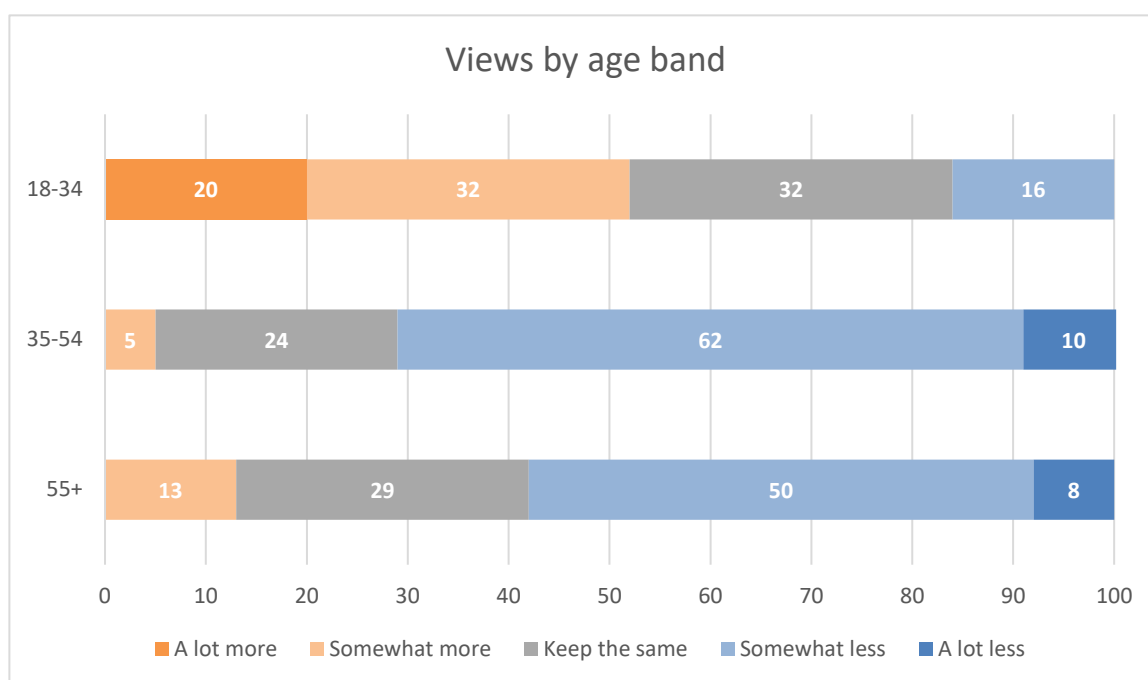


- 4.68 In the post-discussion questionnaire, whilst there was a 7-percentage point rise in the number of those wishing to see spending increased, the rise was far larger among those wishing to see it decreased at 26-percentage points. Moreover, the net difference between those supporting spending increases and those supporting reductions was +10 initially and -23 post-discussion.

- 4.69 There was a stark contrast in views by age on the provision of grants to help communities, community groups, businesses and support for economic growth. Those in the 18-34 age band were much more likely to support increased or maintained spend in this area, whereas those in the other two age bands (35-54 and 55+) were far more inclined towards reductions.

Figure 32: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Grants to Help Communities, Community Groups, Businesses and Support to Economic Growth – Views by Age Band)

Base: 70 responses



Winter Road Gritting (£2m)

- 4.70 Winter road gritting was considered important in the workshop discussions, particularly in terms of keeping the county moving in poor weather and ensuring the safety of those travelling. However, there was some suggestion that: private companies (bus companies for example) could contribute to the cost of providing this service; that residents could take care of doing so in their local areas; and that the service could be outsourced to an expert private company if efficiencies can be identified.

"We rely on the roads at that time of the year. If there are more accidents, it causes problems. Everywhere comes to a standstill. It's a rural county. We go through villages. It's a similar rationale to maintaining roads and pavements" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"We thought with winter road gritting, maybe the public transport operators, like bus companies, might want to contribute to the fund" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"Just 15 minutes, half an hour or something, down your part of the street... Get local people to help out, youngsters, just to help out and do it" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"In my cul-de-sac we have a lot of elderly residents and throughout Hinckley and places like that they have a lot of the yellow boxes full of grit, so we could kind of pull together and reduce it" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"Grass cutting and winter gritting can be done in general by the community" (Post-discussion questionnaire response)

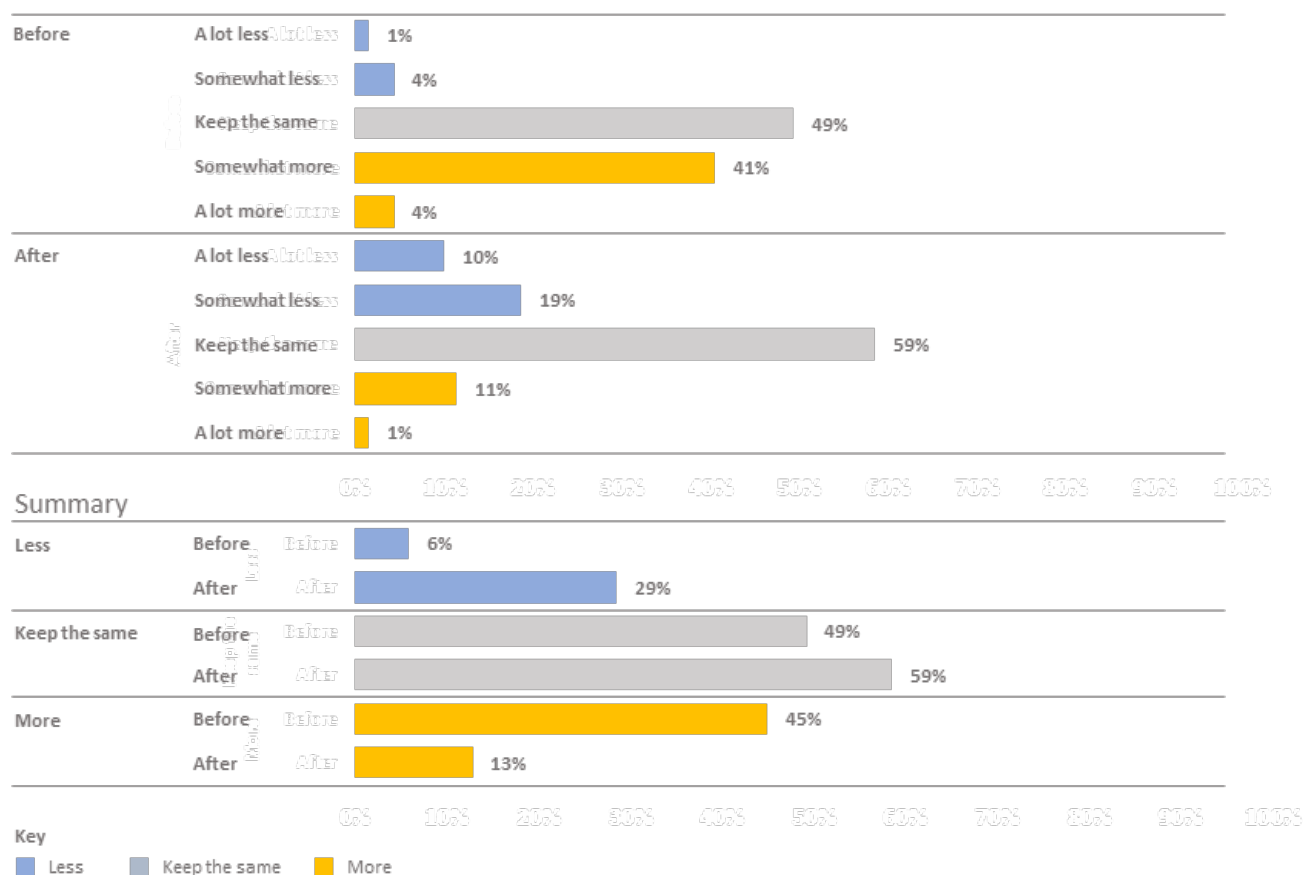
“Helping to look after your own community. Cutting grass, road gritting. Helping to look after and support your own family where possible” (Post-discussion questionnaire response)

“Outsource...winter gritting to a contractor who's got the equipment... If you've got somebody out there with the skills to provide the services, you're also providing jobs” (Loughborough, 55+)

- 4.71 Just under half (49%) of pre-questionnaire respondents initially supported maintaining current levels of spend on winter gritting. A further 45% were in favour of increased funding in this area, whereas only 5% supported reductions.

Figure 33: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same? (Winter Road Gritting)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 69 responses; Exit questionnaire – 70 responses

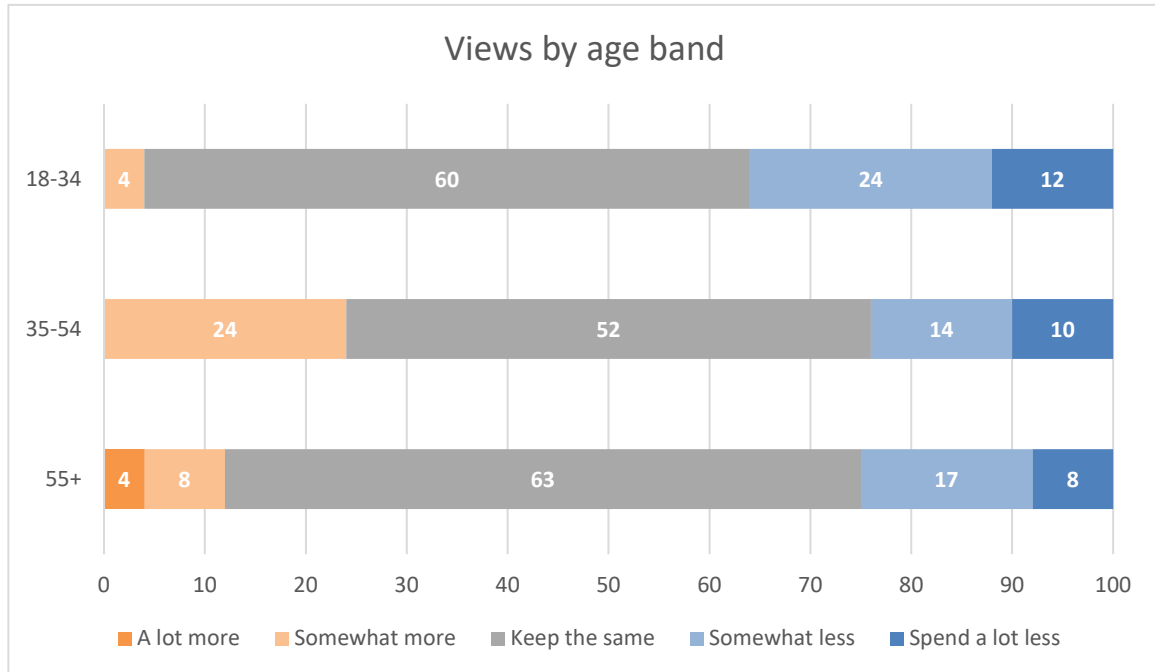


- 4.72 Following the workshop discussions: the proportion of people saying LCC should 'keep spending the same' had risen by 10-percentage points to 59%; only just under one in eight (13%) supported funding increases (a 32-percentage point fall); and just under one in three (29%) supported funding reductions (a 23-percentage-point rise). The net difference between those supporting increases and those supporting reductions had shifted from +39 pre-discussion to -16 post-discussion.

- 4.73 The results for winter road gritting were fairly consistent by age – although the 35-54 year olds were more inclined toward increasing spend than the other two groups, and the 18-34 year olds were more likely to support decreasing spend.

Figure 34: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Winter Road Gritting – Views by Age Band)

Base: 70 responses



5. Services for which participants were least willing to contemplate budget reductions

- 5.1 With the notable exception of maintaining roads and pavements, the eight services for which participants were least willing to contemplate budget reductions (in order of the net difference between the percentage of people responding to the post-discussion questionnaires supporting spending increases and spending reductions) were all targeted services for vulnerable people:

- *Supporting older people to live independently in the community* (net +43)
- *Residential and nursing homes for older people* (net +36)
- *Children's social care services and child protection* (net +33)
- *Services for adults with mental health problems* (net +27)
- *Early support to families and young people* (net +25)
- *Maintaining roads and pavements* (net +23)
- *Services for physically disabled people* (net +19)
- *Services for children with special educational needs and disabilities* (net +14)

- 5.2 This suggests that while residents were happy to discuss ways in which these could be provided differently, they ultimately could not sanction disadvantaging those most in need.
- 5.3 It should be noted that the net figures reported above had all reduced post-discussion - sometimes markedly (maintaining roads and pavements had reduced from +72 to +23 and services for adults with mental health problems from +64 to +27 for example). This suggests that many participants understood that the required £74m saving could only be achieved through reducing the high spend areas, in spite of their general support for protecting the vulnerable and highways.
- 5.4 ***Please note that in the charts that follow, the 'summary' figures may be affected by rounding.***

Supporting Older People to Live Independently in the Community (£25m)

- 5.5 This service was supported in the workshop discussions in particular for the community benefit of keeping older people active and socially connected - and for saving the council money in terms of keeping people out of more expensive nursing and care home provision.

"If we support people to live in the community then they're going to be happier because they're going to be in their own homes and it's not going to be adding to the burden and

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"It's cost effective as well probably" (Hinckley, 55+)

"If you invest money there, you will spend less money. The longer they can live in a home vs the cost of a residential home, which is astronomical" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"It will stop people being handed off to nursing homes. That will be a section that you can save from and it comes down to responsibilities" (Wigston, 18-34)

"Elderly people are more active, mobile, healthy, socially engaged - which is a huge benefit to the community" (Loughborough, 55+)

"Residential nursing homes for older people: It comes back under the other bit of supporting older people to live independently in the community. If we did better at the root cause of that, then we could shave the cost of it" (Hinckley, 35-54)

- 5.6 There were, however, concerns over how support for independent living would be paid for: specifically, whether it should be funded by the council or the NHS.

"I totally agree with you, but where is this person coming from? Where is the person that's going to visit in their own homes? Are they coming from the NHS? Or are they coming from the council? Or are they coming from both? We're talking about who's going to fund it?" (Hinckley, 55+)

- 5.7 Supported living accommodation was considered an effective solution by some – although it was also said that families should take some responsibility for their older relatives if they could.

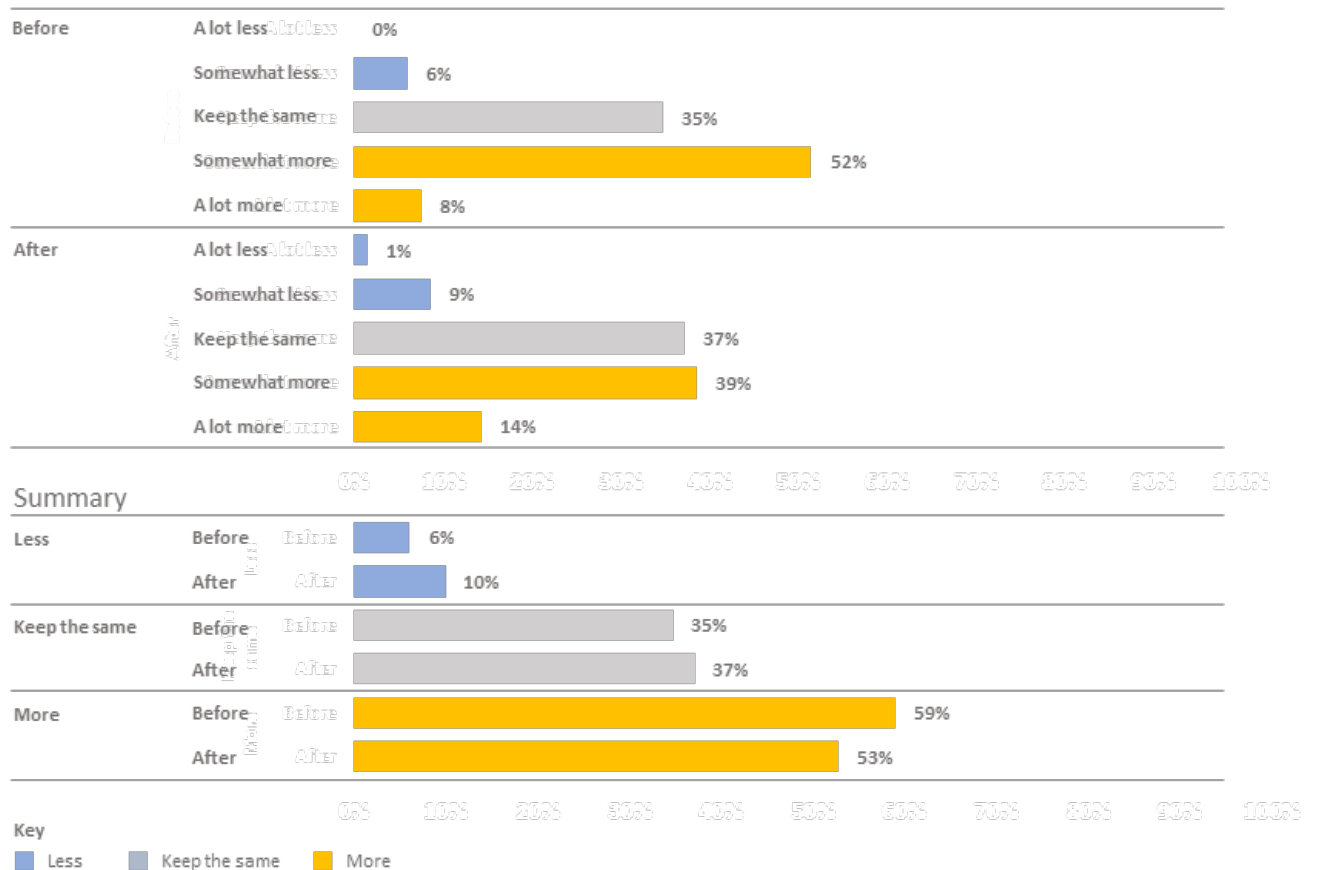
"Where they build warden-controlled flats, that gives people their independence but there is somebody on site...but also, it's that sense of community isn't it? You need that communication. They talk about old people not seeing people for weeks on end but in somewhere like that you've got independence, but you've also got the social side" (Loughborough, 55+)

"Not everyone is fortunate to have a family, but it does come down to having family to look after your elders. Too much nowadays I think people are handed things" (Wigston, 18-34)

- 5.8 In the questionnaires, six in ten residents initially felt LCC should increase the amount it spends on supporting older people to live in the community. Of the remaining 40%, most (35%) chose to 'keep spending the same'.

Figure 35: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Supporting Older People to Live Independently in the Community)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 66 responses; Exit questionnaire – 70 responses

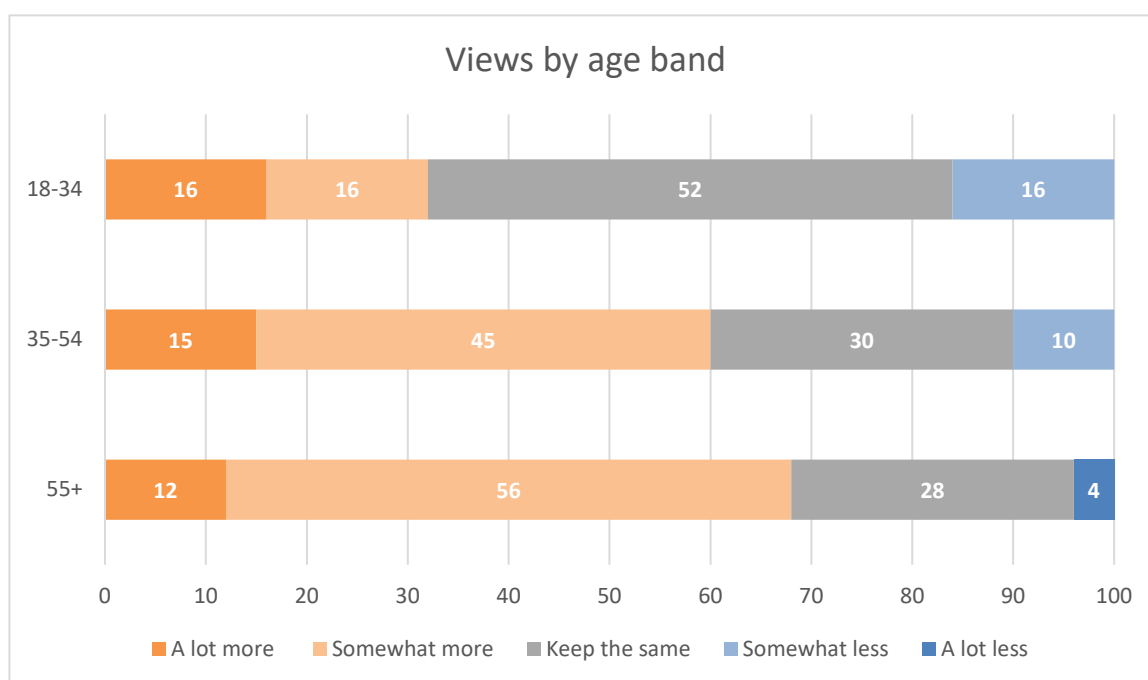


- 5.9 Post-discussion, the majority opinion (53%) was again for increasing spend, with just under four in ten (37%) advocating maintaining it and one in ten supporting a decrease.

- 5.10 Perhaps unsurprisingly, the 18-34 year olds were much less likely to support increased spend on supporting older people to live independently in the community than those in the 35-54 and 55+ age groups – and more likely to suggest spend should be maintained. Support for reductions was low across the board, although slightly higher among younger people.

Figure 36: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Supporting Older People to Live Independently in the Community – Views by Age Band)

Base: 70 responses



Residential and Nursing Homes for Older People (£36m)

- 5.11 In the workshop discussions it was said that the cost of residential and care homes is concerning for older residents, particularly in relation to their financial legacy to their families.

"We don't want our children to pay to go into a home like we paid for them. That might come down in the future, although it is a big issue at the moment" (Hinckley, 55+)

"We've saved and we've saved it all for our children; it might all get used up" (Hinckley, 55+)

"There are people out there paying for private care homes with huge sums of money. So, it's between three and four thousand pound a month. A month!" (Hinckley, 55+)

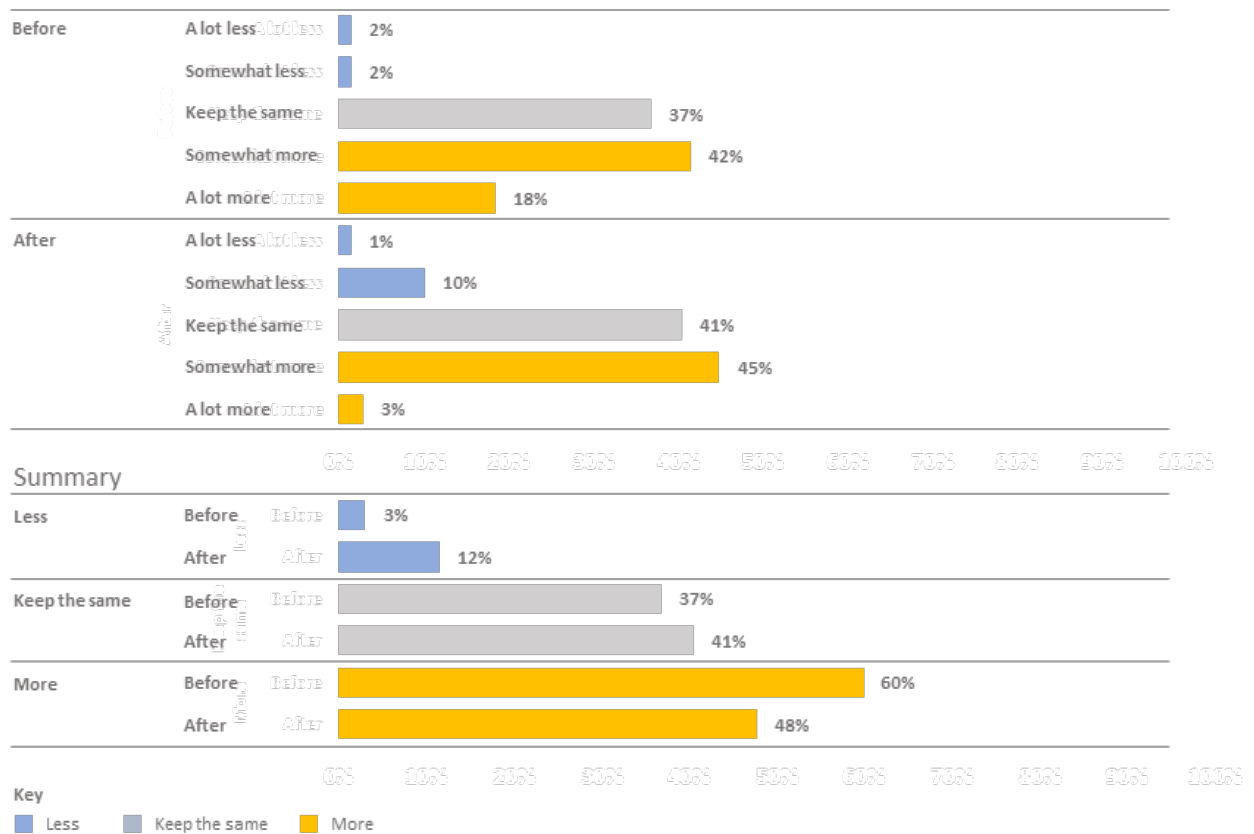
- 5.12 As such, some felt that in-house council nursing and care provision is essential for those who cannot afford private provision.

"If older people who are being means tested haven't got the means to look after themselves in their old age, then they need to be supported" (Loughborough 35-54)

- 5.13 Furthermore, six in ten respondents to the pre-discussion questionnaire felt LCC should spend more on residential and nursing homes for older people.

Figure 37: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Residential and Nursing Homes for Older People)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 65 responses; Exit questionnaire – 69 responses

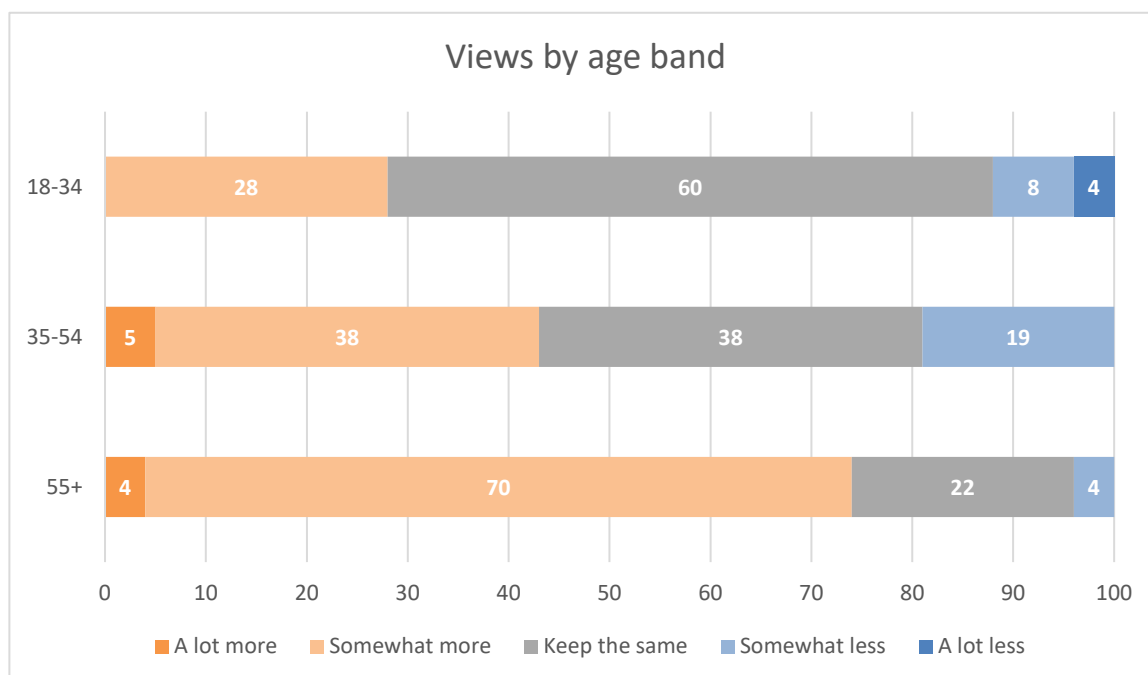


- 5.14 Whilst this figure dropped to just under half (48%) post-discussion it remained higher than for those wishing to see spending remain the same (37% pre and 41% post) and reduced (4% pre and 11% post).

- 5.15 Few supported decreased spend on residential and nursing homes for older people (although the figure was slightly higher among the middle-age bracket). The starkest contrast can be seen when looking at increased spend: those aged 55+ were much more likely to support a rise than those in the younger groups. It should also be noted that while opinion was equally split in terms of increasing and maintaining spend among the 35-54 year olds, the 18-34 year olds were more likely to support maintaining rather than increasing spending levels.

Figure 38: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Residential and Nursing Homes for Older People – Views by Age Band)

Base: 69 responses



Children's Social Care Services and Child Protection (£23m)

- 5.16 In the workshop discussions, those arguing for spending increases for children's social care services and child protection did so primarily on the basis that this is an essential service to ensure the protection of future generations that appears to be under-funded and under-resourced currently.

"If that child is vulnerable, they're not being overlooked... Even though it's not as good as it used to be, we still need to keep it in place" (Hinckley, 55+)

"There's nobody else to protect them... It's not fair on that child to be abused. If there is support there, hopefully the adoption numbers won't be as high - keeping families together essentially" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"It protects kids from abusive parents... It protects young people who can't defend themselves so the fact that it hasn't got money is not defensible for me as they are not able to advocate for themselves against people who are abusing them" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"It's so high now; so many children are affected... I suppose years ago there weren't as many, but it's really high" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"I can speak about that from personal experience, having worked in the criminal justice system. The service is full of agency staff... It's so underfunded, so highly stressed, so accountable, that they can't keep permanent members of staff... Young kids (and I'm not blaming the authorities for this as it's limited funds), they don't get the care they deserve; it's horrendous" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"I work daily with social workers... We have very vulnerable children that are supposed to have a social worker and the contact or the continuity of social workers. I had one child who had four different social workers in the space of six weeks and the case was just passed, nobody really knew what was going on... I get that everything really comes back to cuts, costs, budgeting and funding but it's a massive issue and...we don't ever seem to be learning. That's certainly something that I think is extremely poor in the county" (Wigston, 35-54)

- 5.17 There was also a sense that properly investing in young people's care at an early age will prevent the escalation of issues in later life - and potentially save the council money and resources down the line.

"Obviously you got to nip it in the bud, haven't you? Society is the way it is because we are letting things escalate but if you help people from the bottom... Cutting child services is short term and means that you are going to be dealing with the problems for the next 70 years" (Loughborough, 18-34)

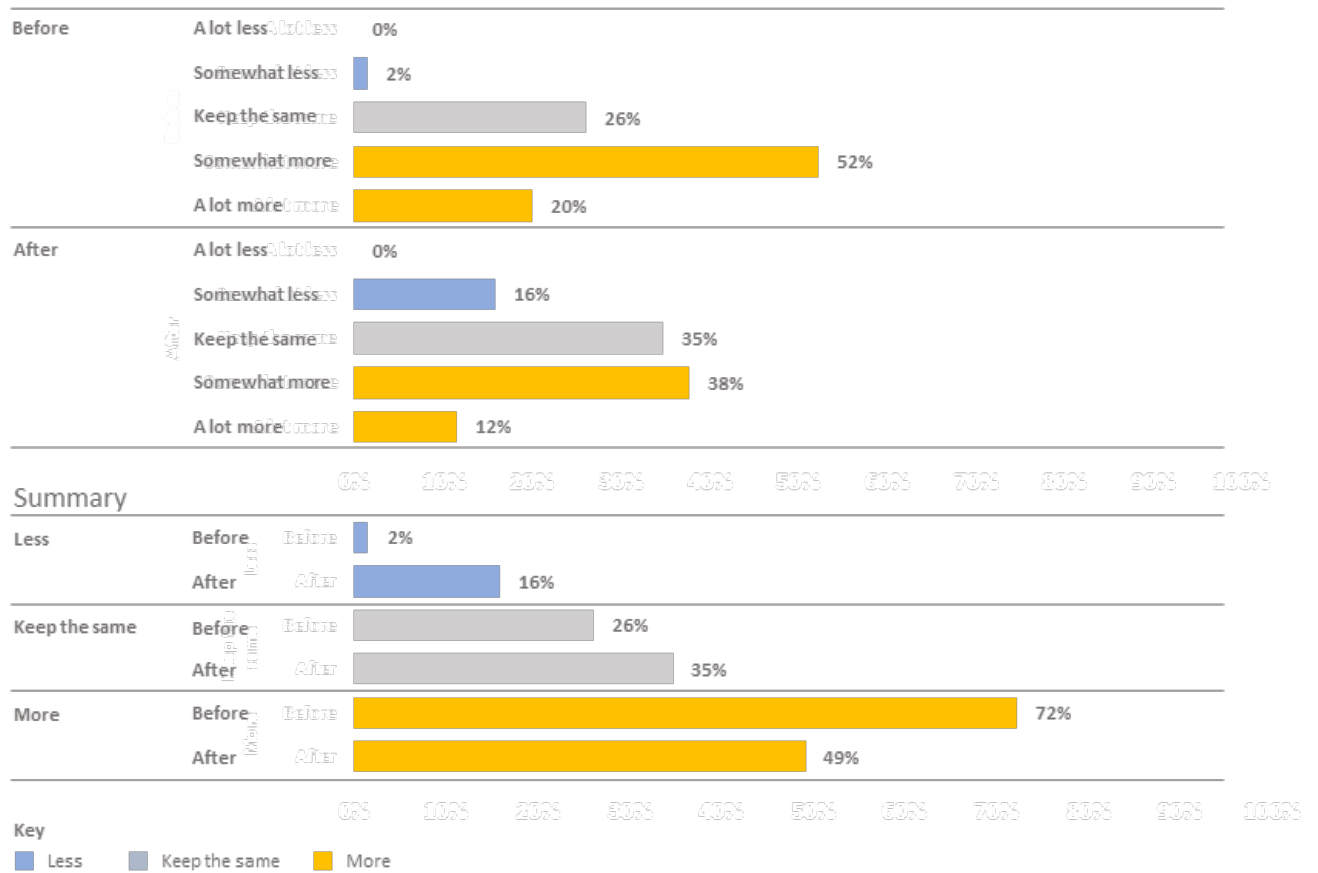
"If cuts are made there, it is just going to have a knock-on effect down the line" (Loughborough 35-54)

"Children are what's going to look after you in your old age you hope" (Wigston, 35-54)

"If you don't help with certain problems it could become a drug and alcohol problem" (Wigston, 18-34)

- 5.18 In the questionnaires, support for increasing spend on children's social care services and child protection was lower post-discussion than it had been pre-discussion (50% and 72% respectively). Moreover, the net difference between those supporting increases and decreases had dropped from +70 pre-discussion to +33 post-discussion. This suggests that while the service was a priority for participants, many recognised that the council's required savings cannot be achieved without looking for savings within children's social care services and child protection (and indeed other areas of high spend).
- 5.19 Nonetheless, this remained one of the services considered most in need of extra funding. Of the remaining 50% completing the post-discussion questionnaire, just over a third (35%) suggested spending should remain as it is, and just under a fifth (16%) wanted to see it reduced.

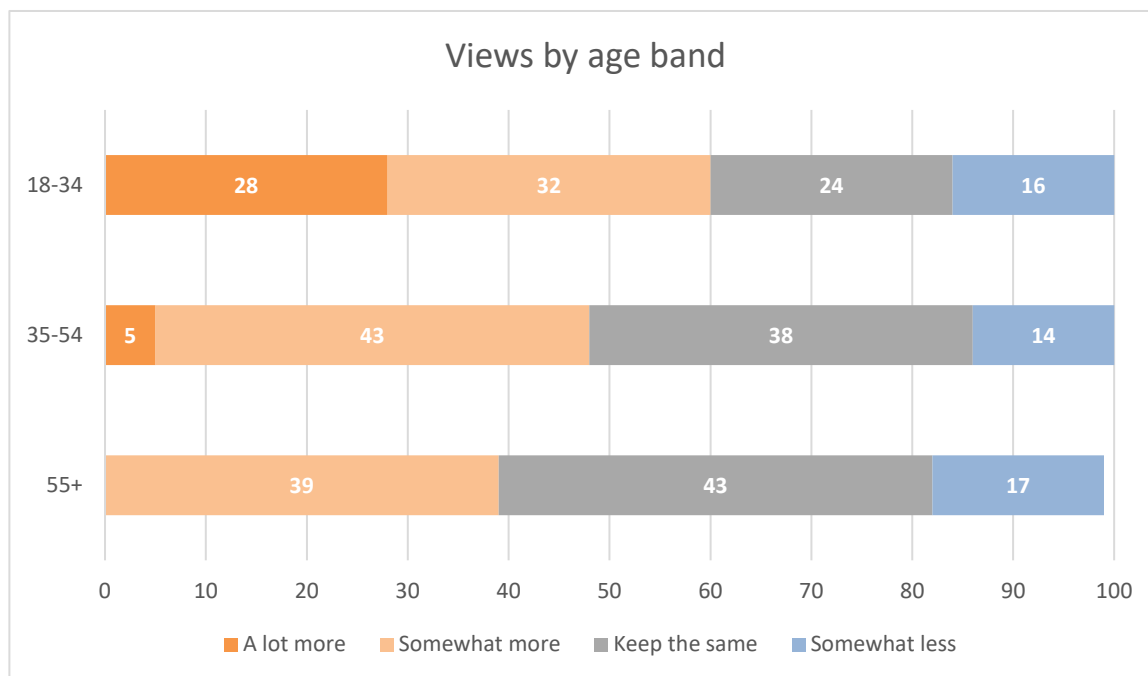
Figure 39: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Children's Social Care Services and Child Protection)
 Base: Welcome questionnaire - 65 responses; Exit questionnaire – 69 responses



- 5.20 The main difference in results by age was that younger residents were more likely to support significant increases in spending on children's social care services and child protection.

Figure 40: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Children's Social Services and Child Protection – Views by Age Band)

Base: 69 responses



Services for Adults with Mental Health Problems (£9m)

- 5.21 In the workshop discussions, mental health services were thought to be underfunded, yet desperately needed in light of the increased prevalence of mental health issues within the population - and the increased likelihood of people seeking help in dealing with them.

"Mental health is really important in my opinion, and definitely needs support, and maybe more of it, actually..." (Hinckley, 18-34)

"Mental health will never go away and it's actually getting worse" (Wigston, 18-34)

"It is such a vulnerable part of society, where it is going to have a knock-on effect" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"There's a return for investment on it" (Loughborough, 35-54)

- 5.22 Those who felt LCC could consider reductions in this area did not consider the service to be unimportant, but they felt it could be delivered in a more joined-up way with other public services. There was also a sense that properly investing in children's and early intervention services could reduce the need for adult mental health services down the line.

"Services for adults with mental health problems ... joint working, with maybe the police, ambulance service, because that's something that is becoming more and more common in society. So, have a joined-up approach as we do, almost with the NHS, just make it more available to everybody, so we're all singing from the same hymn sheets" (Hinckley, 18-34)

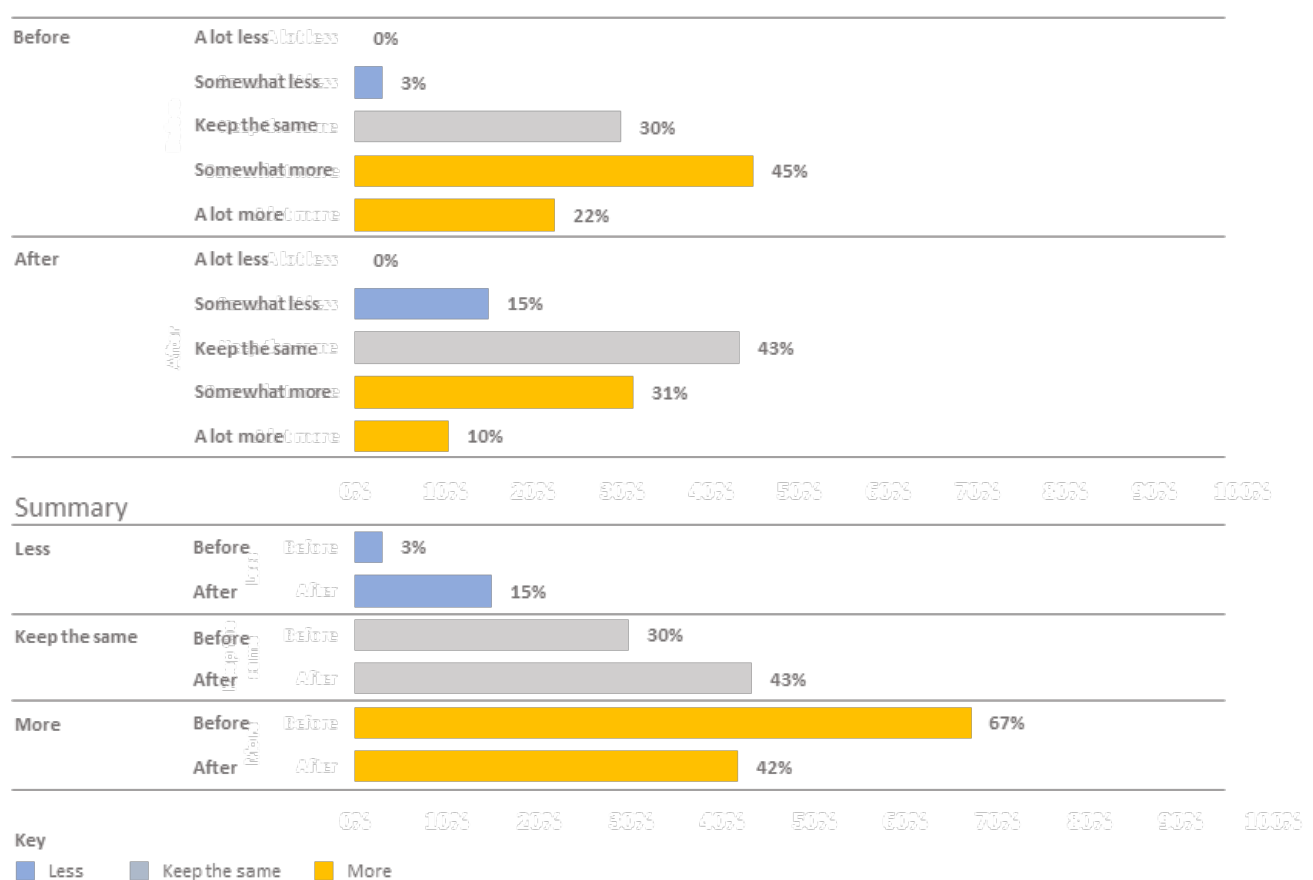
"If you solve a problem in childhood, it can take the strain off adult problems. If you don't fix it, it'll only move the problem, or they'll have to deal with it later" (Wigston, 18-34)

"Maybe not so many services needed for adult mental health problems in the future because they are supported when they are children" (Wigston, 35-54)

- 5.23 Initially, 67% of questionnaire respondents wanted to see increased spend on services for adults with mental health problems. A further three in ten felt it should be maintained and only 3% that it should be decreased.

Figure 41: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Services for Adults with Mental Health Problems)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 67 responses; Exit questionnaire – 67 responses



- 5.24 The post-discussion questionnaire results show a 26-percentage point decrease in the numbers of people supporting increased spend (from 67% to 41%), a 13-percentage point increase in those supporting the same levels (from 30% to 43%) and a 12-percentage point increase in those supporting reductions (from 3% to 15%). The net difference in the number of people supporting increases and reductions had dropped from +64 to +27. Again, this suggests a recognition that high spend services cannot be entirely protected from savings if LCC is to meet its budgetary requirements.
- 5.25 There were no notable differences by age band in relation to services for adults with mental health.

Early Support to Families and Young People (£11m)

- 5.26 In the workshops, the general feeling was that early intervention is essential in preventing the escalation of problematic issues such as adult mental health identified above- although some could see prospects for savings through more joint working with other departments within the council.

"We wondered if we put money into that one, would that prevent other issues happening... Because some people slip through the net" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"If we don't intervene earlier, mental and social health need will be one of the big growth areas" (Loughborough, 55+)

"Nowadays the agencies are only interested in youngsters if they have done something really bad and there are not really any preventative measures" (Wigston, 35-54)

"Make [early support to families and young people and children's social care services and child protection] a joint service for supporting children in care" (Loughborough, 55+)

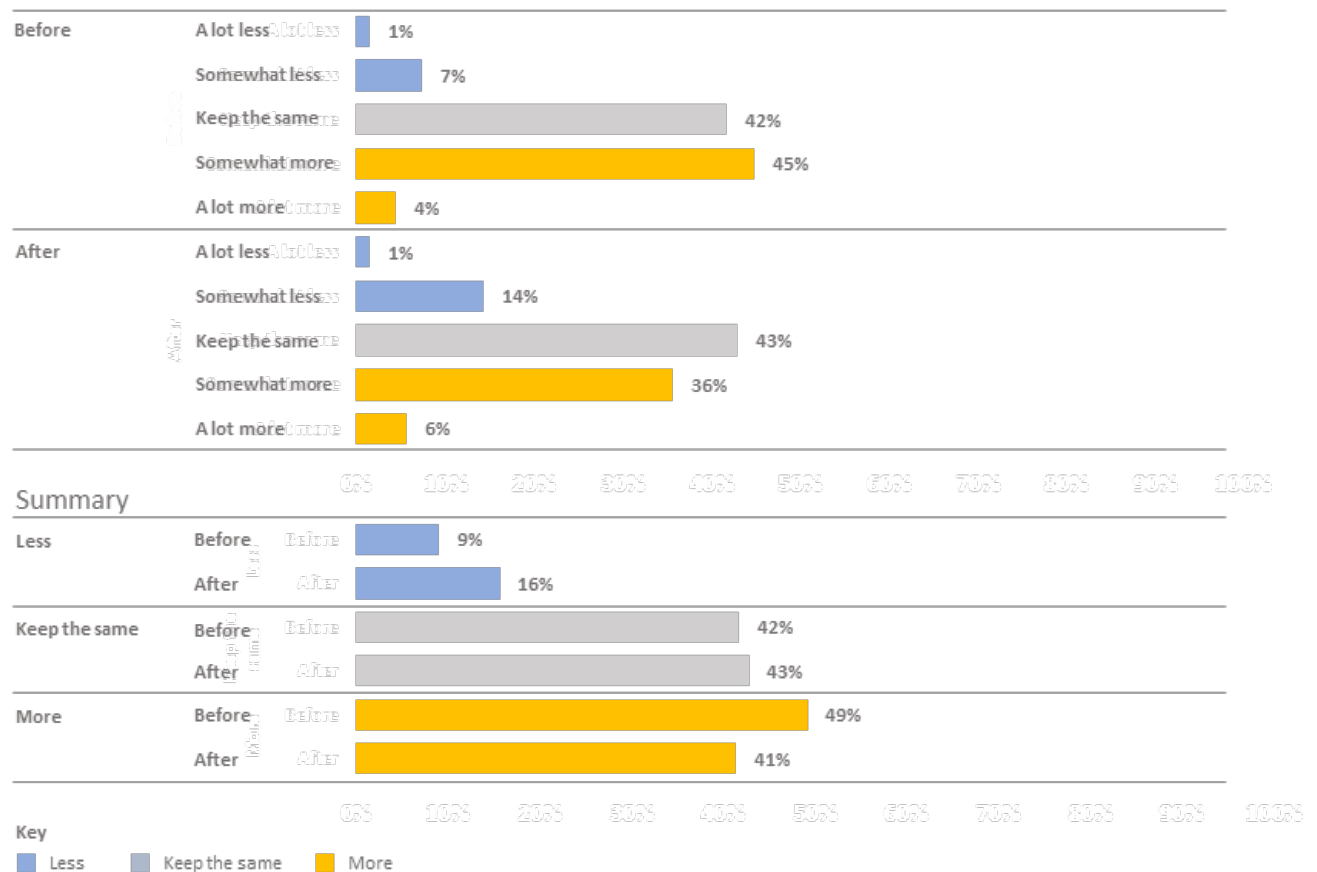
- 5.27 It was also said that there is a need to improve incentives to facilitate the recruitment of social workers.

"It needs to be a more attractive career as a social worker so pay, conditions" (Loughborough, 18-34)

- 5.28 Initially, almost half of participants (49%) felt that more should be spent on providing support to families and young people - and a further just over four in ten (42%) said funding should be maintained. Only 8% advocated reductions.

Figure 42: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Early Support to Families and Young People)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 67 responses; Exit questionnaire – 70 responses

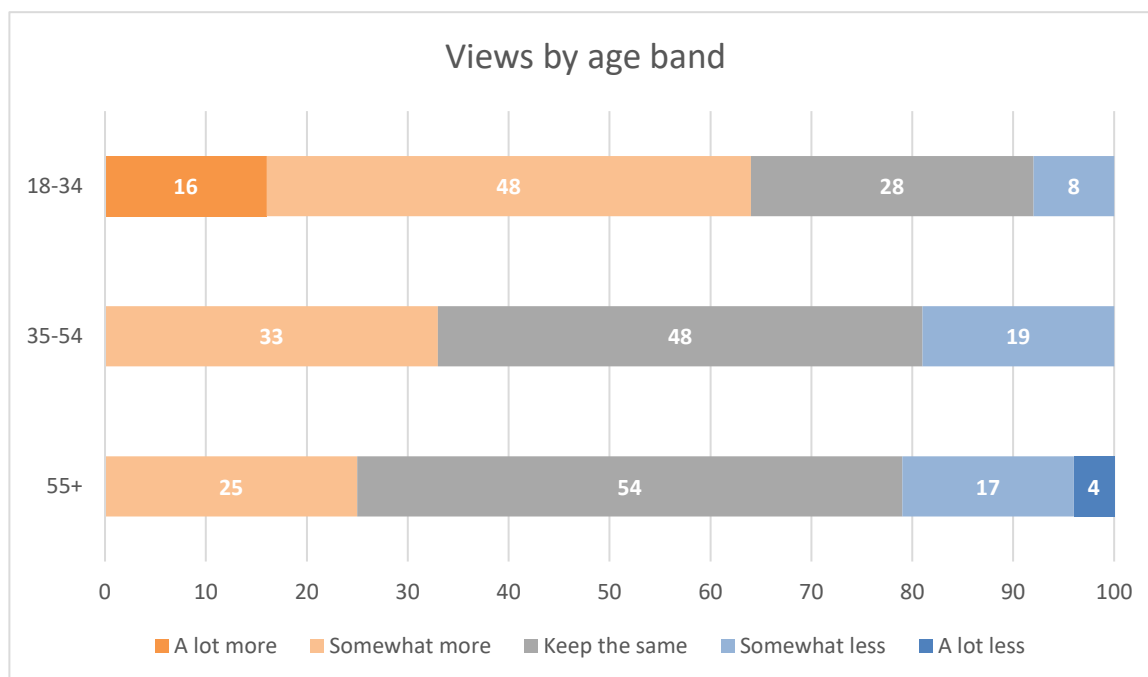


- 5.29 The 'final' figures weren't dissimilar at 42%, 43% and 15% respectively, although this represents a 7-percentage point increase in reductions post discussion.

- 5.30 Younger participants were more inclined to support increases to budgets for early support to families and young people. The majority or almost the majority in the other two age groups leaned toward maintaining spend.

Figure 43: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Early Support to Families and Young People – Views by Age Band)

Base: 70 responses



Maintaining Roads and Pavements (£15m)

- 5.31 This was the 'universal' service that received most support in the workshop discussions, with participants reasoning that proper maintenance of roads and pavements is essential in ensuring safe driving conditions for travellers and preventing larger, more expensive problems down the line.

"If you don't maintain infrastructure in the short term, you are making a big bill for the future" (Hinckley, 55+)

"I drive a lot and that's pretty much it. You don't want a dodgy road, do you? Because it could lead to an accident. Loads of potholes, and that sort of thing" (Hinckley, 18-34)

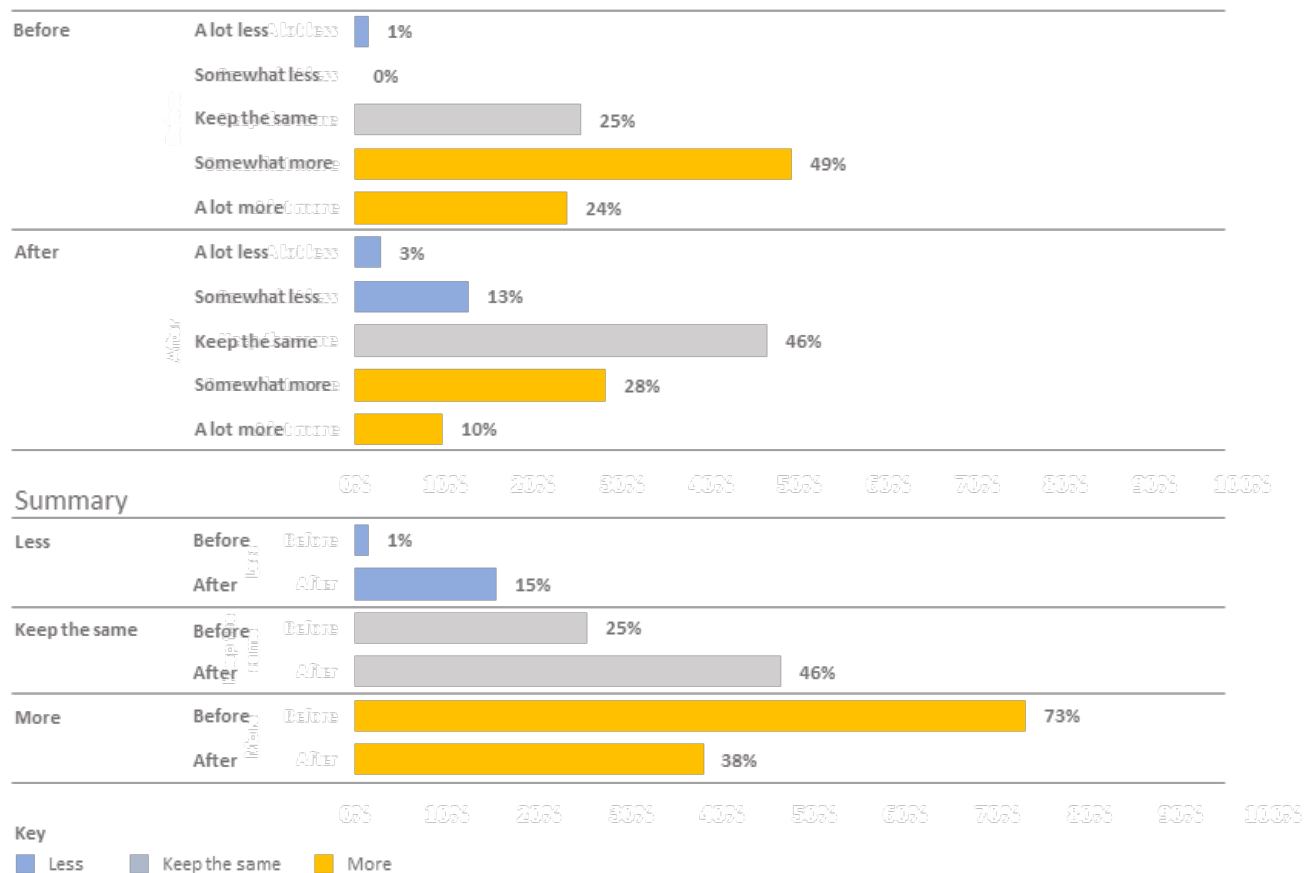
"It's basic; the roads need to be safe. We all use them; buses, ambulances. They have to be right otherwise there will be more accidents and deaths" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"Maintaining roads and pavements: it is important, but...if they did it properly in the first place, then it wouldn't need re-doing as often" (Hinckley, 18-34)

- 5.32 This is supported by the fact that prior to discussion, almost three-quarters (73%) of residents said they would like to see increased funding for the maintenance of roads and pavements. A further quarter felt spend should be maintained and only 1% felt it should be reduced.

Figure 44: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Maintaining Roads and Pavements)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 67 responses; Exit questionnaire – 71 responses

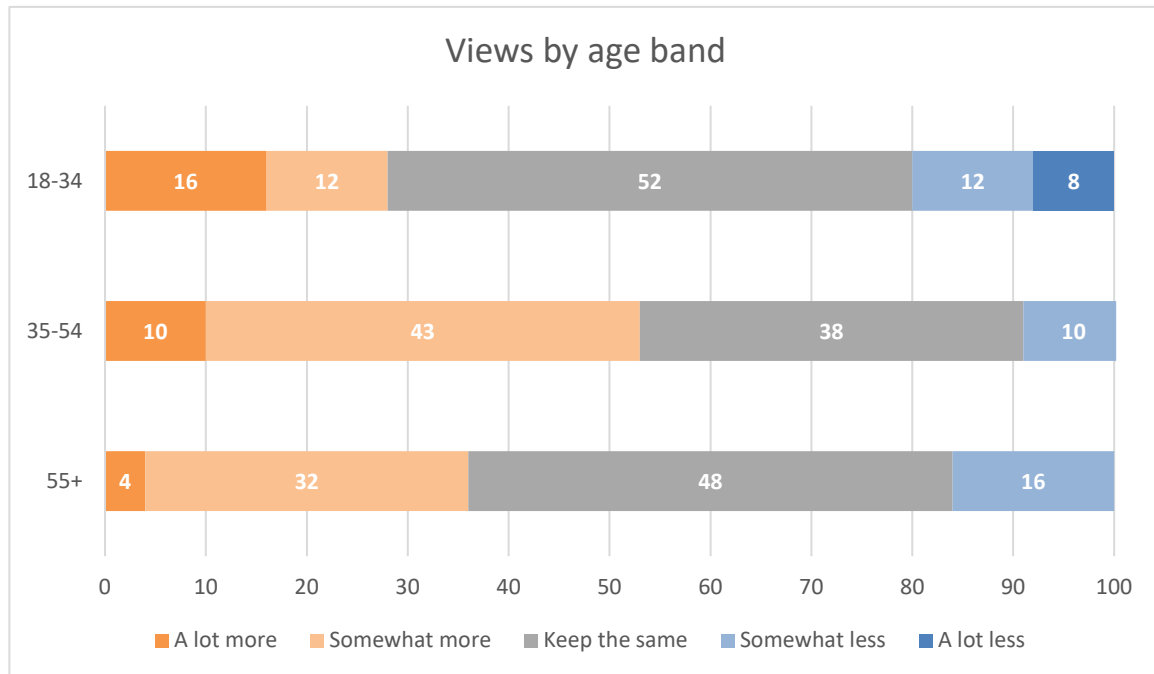


- 5.33 However, support for increased funding had dropped by 35-percentage points to 38% by the end of the workshop - while support for maintaining spend had increased by 21-percentage points (from 25% to 46%) and for decreasing spend by 15% (from 1% to 16%). Furthermore, the net difference in the percentage of people supporting spending rises and reductions had dropped from +72 pre-discussion to +23 post-discussion, suggesting an increased understanding of the challenges the council faces in protecting the more visible universal services people value highly, and the more 'hidden' targeted services for vulnerable people.

- 5.34 The chart below shows that the 35-54 year old age group was most likely to support increases to spending on maintaining roads and pavements - and the 18-34 year olds least likely to do so. The younger age group were also slightly more inclined to advocate decreases in this area.

Figure 45: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Maintaining Roads and Pavements – Views by Age Band)

Base: 71 responses



Services for Physically Disabled People (£14m)

- 5.35 In the workshop discussions, those supporting increased or maintained spend in this area did so because services for disabled people were needed – and because they felt it was ‘the right thing to do’.

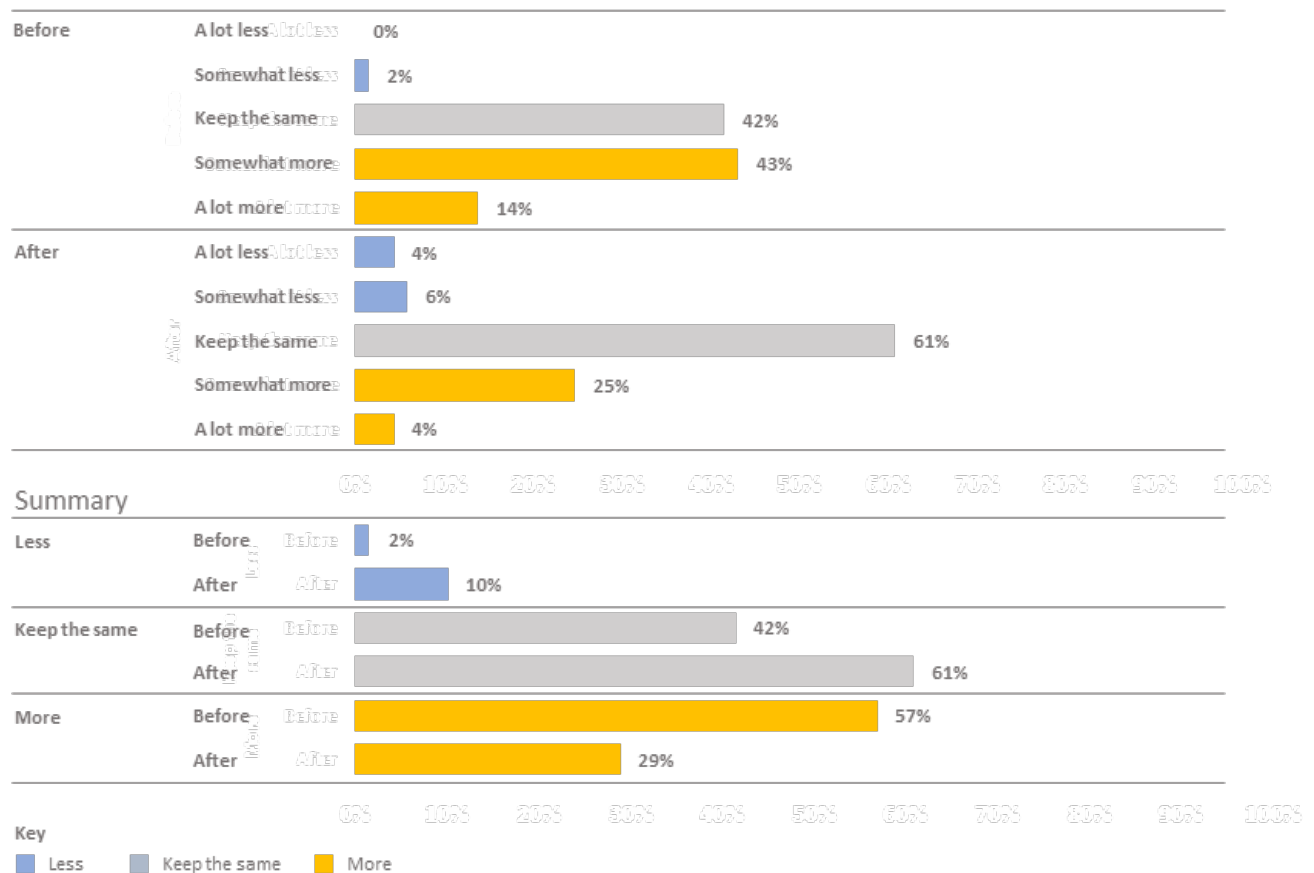
“Disabled people really need it, they really do, so I think it is really important to keep that”
(Hinckley, 18-34)

“I think it is just the social thing you should do” (Loughborough, 35-54)

- 5.36 Initially, the majority of residents responding to the pre-discussion questionnaire (57%) felt LCC should increase the amount it spends on services for physically disabled people. Of the remaining 43%, most (42%) chose to 'keep spending the same'.

Figure 46: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Services for Physically Disabled People)

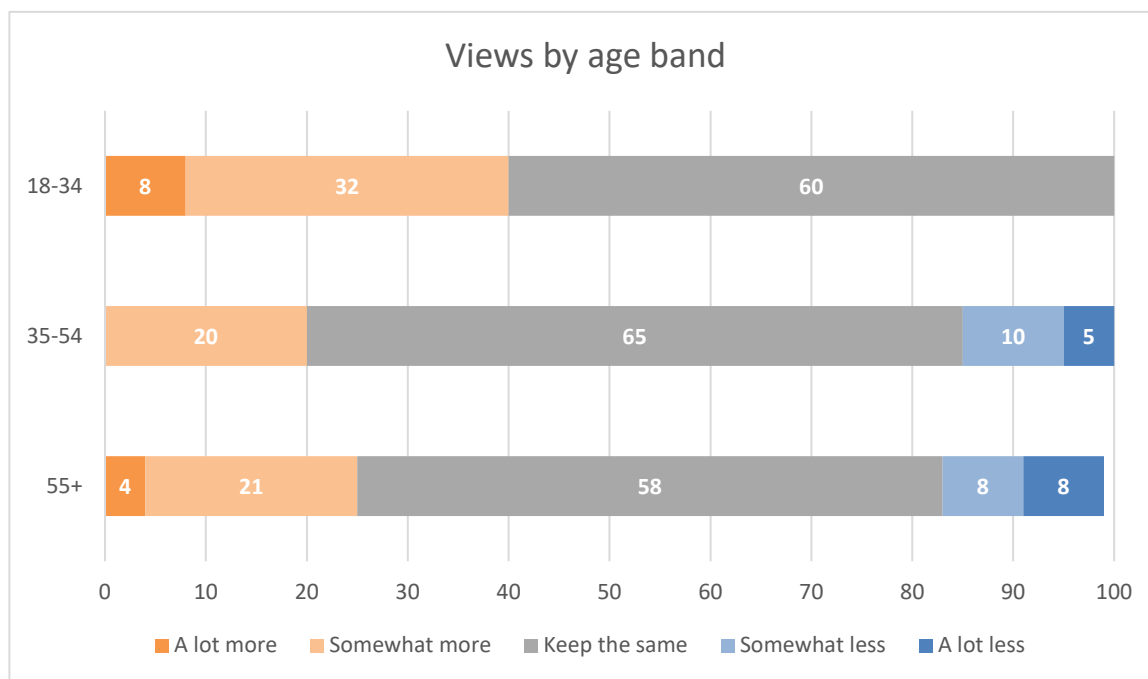
Base: Welcome questionnaire - 65 responses; Exit questionnaire – 69 responses



- 5.37 Post-discussion, majority opinion (61%) was for maintaining spend, with just under a third (29%) advocating increases and only one in ten supporting a decrease. However, the net difference between those supporting increased spend and decreased spend was in favour of the former at +19 (although this has reduced from +55 pre-discussion).

- 5.38 The results by age show that of the three groups, younger participants were more inclined to support increases and less inclined to support reductions to budgets for services for physically disabled people. The majority in all age groups supported maintaining spend.

Figure 47: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Services for Physically Disabled People – Views by Age Band)
Base: 69 responses



Services for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) (£75m)

- 5.39 In the workshop discussions, SEND services were considered crucially important for individual and family wellbeing. Indeed, some gave first-hand accounts of the 'tremendous' support their family had received in this respect - as well as others to demonstrate the detrimental impact on children when the right support is not given.

"Children with special educational needs and disabilities need the best possible upbringing and opportunities when they are at a young age. I personally felt it wasn't best to cut that" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"There's people who haven't got very much, and they do rely massively on the council for that kind of service. And it just hasn't been there, so as a result, families suffer. It has a knock-on effect to the whole family" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"My son was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome when he was six and he had tremendous support all the way through... he has his own painting and decorating business now and yet when he started school at four, he could barely speak" (Loughborough, 55+)

"I work in a school, and there's a lot of children that can't get into specialist schools because the funding just isn't there. And these children are just left to their own devices really. There's one child, he's been waiting, in mainstream school, for his place, and it is not suitable for him. He's in a room on his own, because he can't cope in the classroom, but there's just no funding for it. It is really sad" (Hinckley, 18-34)

- 5.40 Some residents criticised the criteria change that has apparently meant more individuals being included in the SEND category, and thereby eligible for funding support. They argued that SEND categorisation is too heavily dependent on academic achievement, and that more appropriate alternative educational opportunities such as apprenticeships may mean people need not be placed in this group.

"This isn't people not able to read and write, it is about not being able to pass O-levels and A-levels. Whereas that is not necessarily the education they need" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"Yes, they need help; yes they need support, but if they keep going the way they're going in a hundred years' time you'll have 10% of the class that are hitting what they need to, and 90% will be performing below...you need apprenticeships" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"There could be some children who are borderline; they are not special needs and may need a different type of teaching... They shouldn't be in that group" (Wigston, 35-54)

- 5.41 There was some suggestion that the service be better (and constantly) means tested to ensure it is being offered to those truly in need.

"There could be some type of income assessed process for that. There would be some contribution from the users of it in some families. I know a family who have a disabled child. They are both high income earners. They have had their whole house redone. Their child gets a lot of support and they don't contribute at all. They could contribute, even if it's £200-£300 per month. They are saving on nursery fees. He is being cared for by the council" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"SEND... services that are extras should be means tested so the people who can afford it do contribute" (Wigston, 35-54)

"It is about assessing the person correctly, and asking 'do they really require that?'" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"I think we should have regular checks on those that are using the educational needs services to see if they still need it. Let's say someone needs special equipment because they've got poor eyesight and then their eyesight improves and then they are still getting this money... There are children with special needs and their needs do eventually go but they will remain with the money" (Loughborough, 18-34)

- 5.42 It was also said that savings could be generated through: more personalised care packages; more joint working between SEND services and the second highest spend area (services for adults with learning disabilities); and more efficient use of school transport.

“Services for children with special educational needs and disabilities... We just think that there must be ways that it can be streamlined. It must be more individualised and focused on what a child needs to enable them to become a functional member of society later on...”

(Loughborough, 35-54)

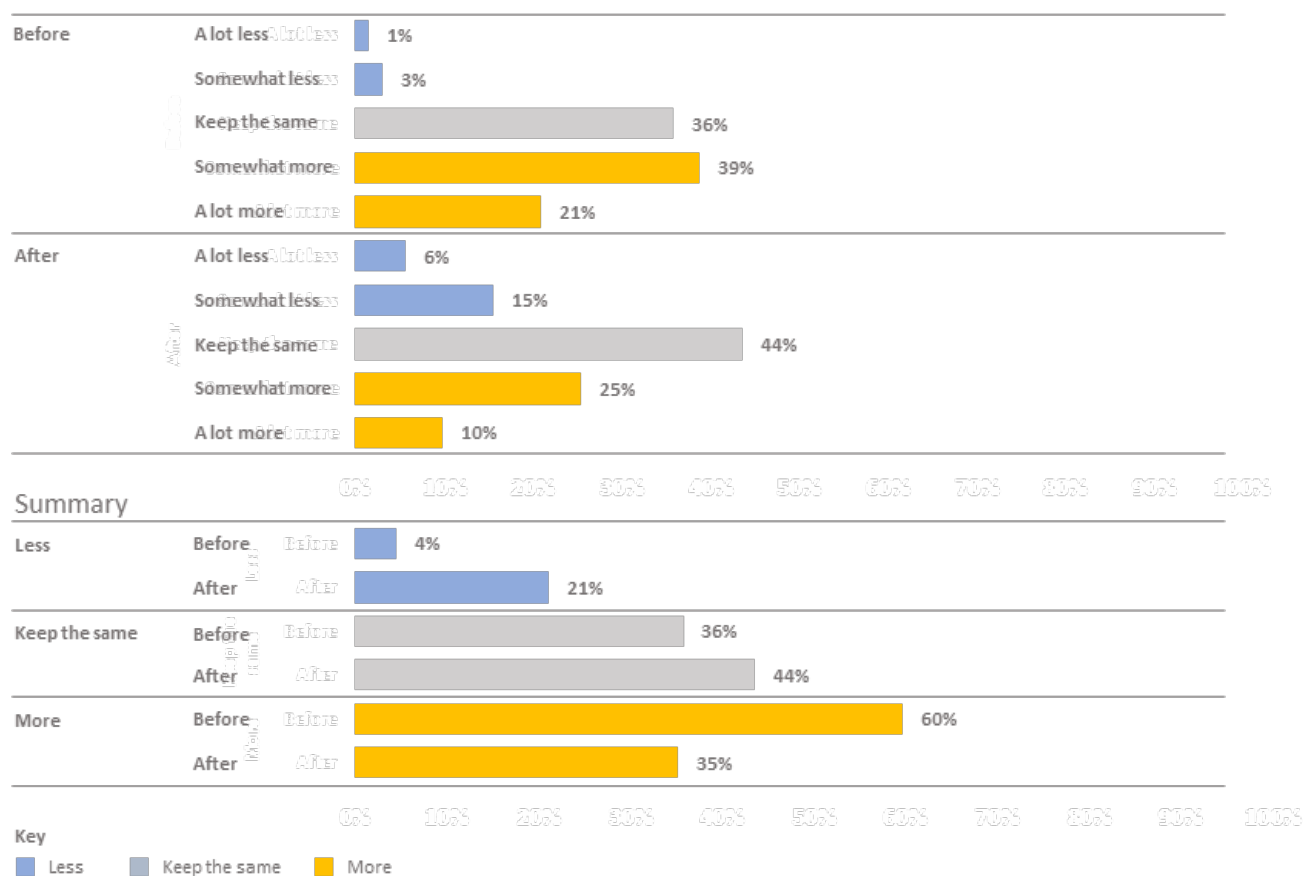
“Considering you are spending £75 million on one and £52 million on the other, it’s a hell of a lot of money...and I would have thought it’s got to be looked at in some way” (Hinckley, 55+)

“Isn’t a lot of the cost for a special needs child, say, who has to go to a special school ten miles away... I think they could use those taxis more efficiently. Because I know, full well, that cars have turned up with one student in them. Well, why not just send a car and get it full, that would be cheaper than four separate cars... four separate employees as well” (Wigston, 18-34)

- 5.43 In the questionnaire, the majority opinion among residents responding pre-discussion was that LCC should increase spending on services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND): six in ten chose this option. Just over a third (36%) felt spend should be maintained and only 4% felt it should be reduced.

Figure 48: Here’s a list of the council’s services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Services for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND))

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 67 responses; Exit questionnaire – 71 responses



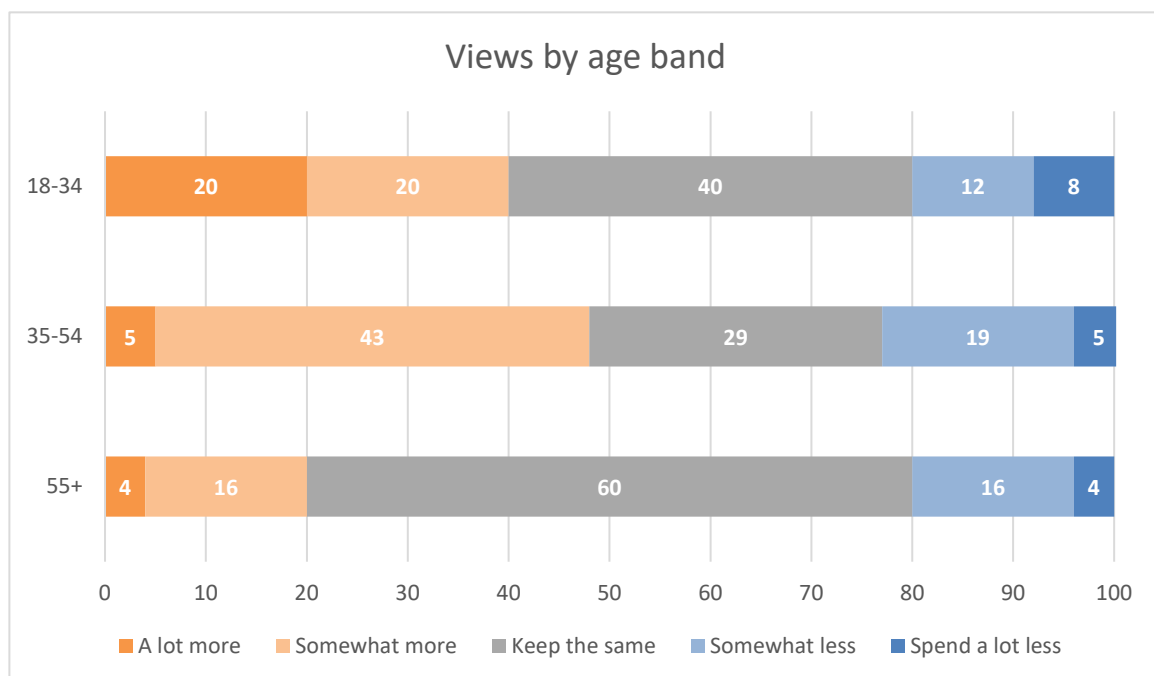
- 5.44 Post-discussion, the number of those advocating increases had fallen by 25-percentage points, whereas there was an eight-percentage point increase in those choosing the ‘keep the same’ option.

There had also been an increase of 17-percentage points in those advocating reductions in the area of SEND. Moreover, while the net difference between those supporting funding increases and decreases was positive at +19, this figure had reduced from +56 pre-discussion. This corroborates the workshop discussion findings that while essential, SEND services (as the largest spend area overall) must be examined for reductions or new ways of working if the council is to meet its required £74m savings target.

- 5.45 The 35-54 year old age group was most likely to support increases to spending on SEND services - and the 55+ year olds were least likely to do so. The older age group were more inclined to advocate maintaining spend in this area.

Figure 49: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Services for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) – Views by Age Band)

Base: 71 responses



6. Services where opinion on whether or not there should be budget reductions was most balanced

- 6.1 Services for which participants views were more split (in terms of increase vs decrease, but also by age) were mostly more targeted services with the exception of local tips/household recycling sites.

- *Children and young people in local authority care* (net +10)
- *Children's health services* (net +6)
- *Services for adults with learning disabilities* (net +3)
- *Local tips/household recycling sites* (net -14)

- 6.2 In terms of the more targeted services, while few advocated decreases, there was some feeling that spending in some areas (children and young people in local authority care for example) is already very high and so does not need to be increased - and that more means testing might be possible for others (adults with learning disabilities for example) to ensure they are being offered to those truly in need.

- 6.3 It was also again acknowledged that if the required savings are to be made, some of these larger spend areas would need to be considered. This is again demonstrated by the large shifts in net differences between those supporting funding increases and those supporting funding decreases for these services:

- Children and young people in local authority care dropped from +56 to +10;
- Children's health services dropped from +55 to +6;
- Services for adults with learning disabilities dropped from +56 to +3; and
- Local tips and household recycling sites dropped from +29 to -14.

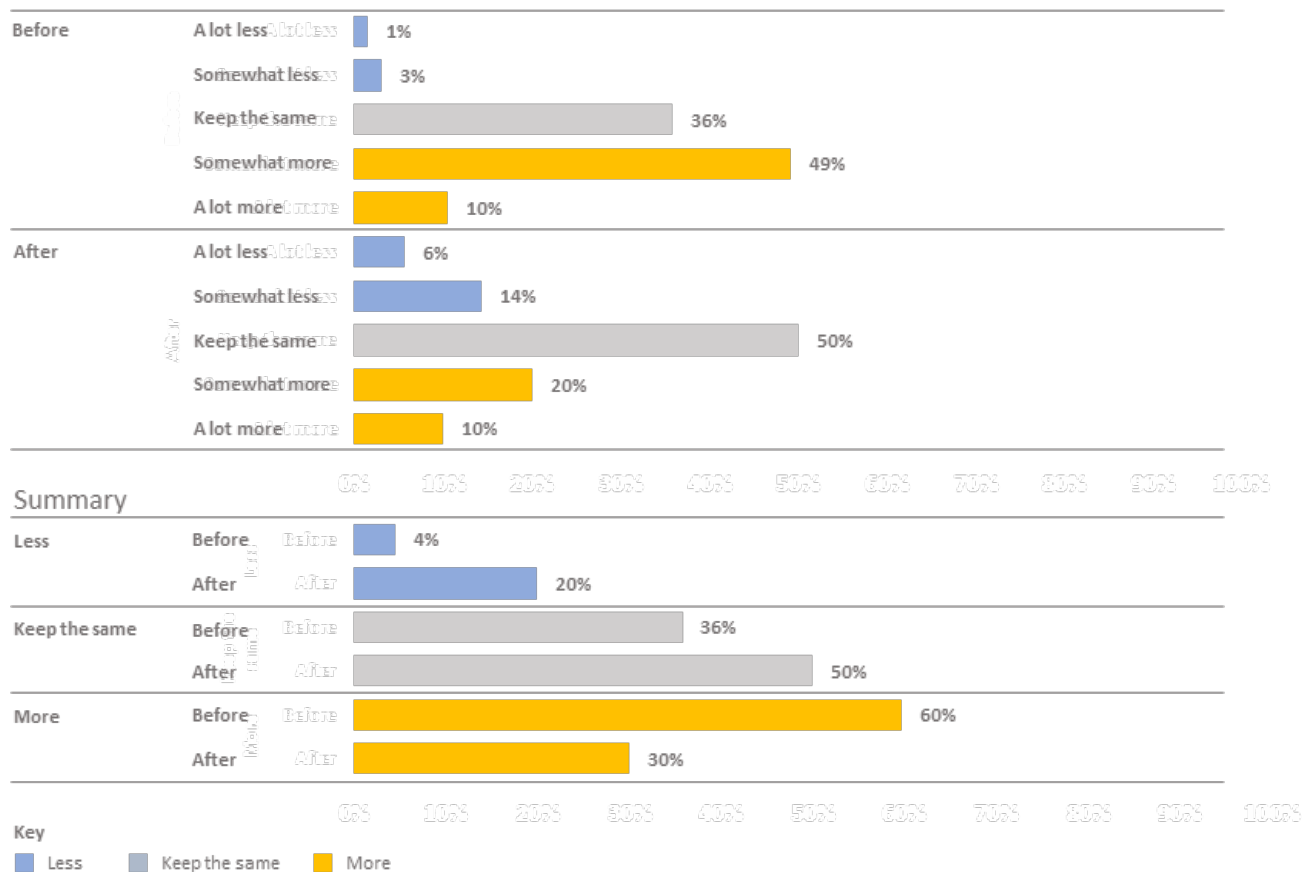
- 6.4 ***Please note that in the charts that follow, the 'summary' figures may be affected by rounding.***

Children and Young People in Local Authority Care (£39m)

- 6.5 Initially, the majority of residents (59%) felt LCC should increase the amount it spends on children and young people in its care. Of the remaining 41%, most (36%) chose to 'keep spending the same'.

Figure 50: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Children and Young People in Local Authority Care)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 67 responses; Exit questionnaire – 70 responses

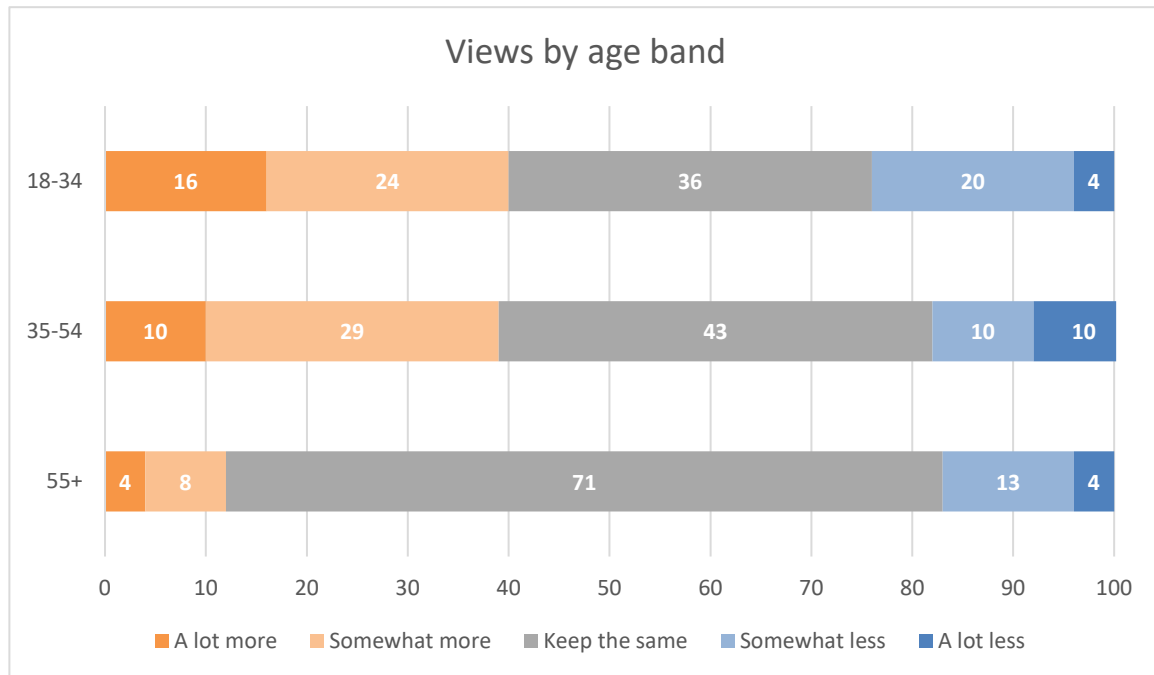


- 6.6 Post-discussion exactly half supported maintaining spend, with three in ten advocating increases (a 29-percentage point decrease) and one in five supporting a decrease (a 16-percentage point increase).

- 6.7 The 55+ age group was much more likely than the other two age groups to support maintaining spend on children and young people in local authority care – and correspondingly less likely to support increased funding in this area.

Figure 51: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Children and Young People in Local Authority Care – Views by Age Band)

Base: 70 responses



Children's Health Services (e.g. Health Visiting and School Nursing) (£9m)

- 6.8 In the workshops, those in support of maintaining or increasing spend said that children's health services are by no means as thorough and comprehensive as they were in the past - and that the importance of investing in them should not be underestimated in terms of better outcomes in later life.

"I've got five-year old grandchildren and, compared to the services I had for my children forty-odd years ago, they're not getting it now. They get checks between ten and two and a half. All they do is a tick-box, take the form along to whoever they're seeing. They don't come to the house, which they used to do... The person goes through the tick-box... so really they're not checking if these children have problems; they're relying on a parent who...doesn't always know if the children have eye or hearing problems. I think that's really bad" (Hinckley, 55+)

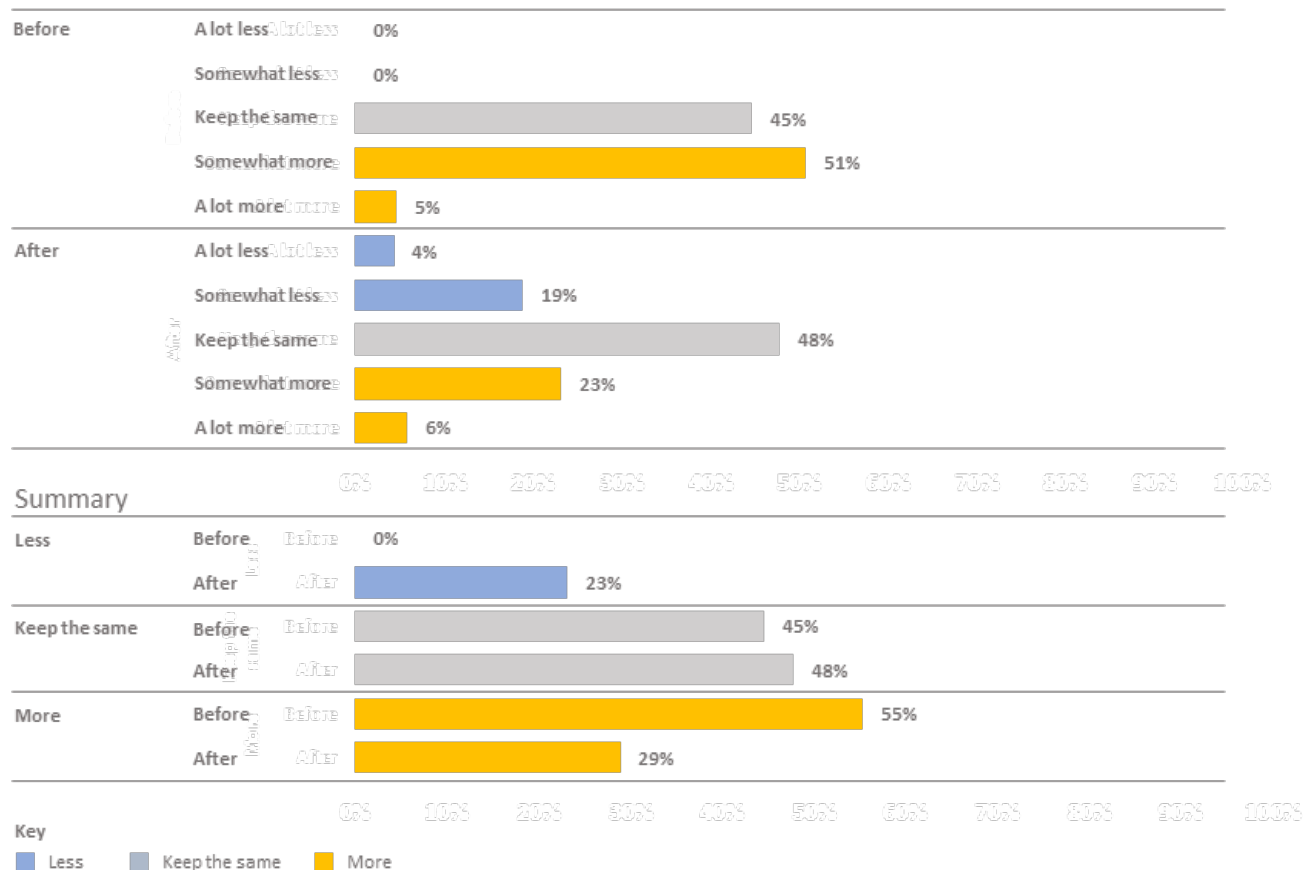
"If they've got better health from an early age, it is more likely to lead on to better health later on" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"If you solve a problem in childhood, it can take the strain off adult problems. If you don't fix it, it'll only move the problem, or they'll have to deal with it later" (Wigston, 18-34)

- 6.9 Over half (56%) of residents responding to the pre-discussion questionnaire supported funding increases for children's health services - and the remaining 45% favoured maintaining spend.

Figure 52: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Children's Health Services)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 65 responses; Exit questionnaire – 69 responses

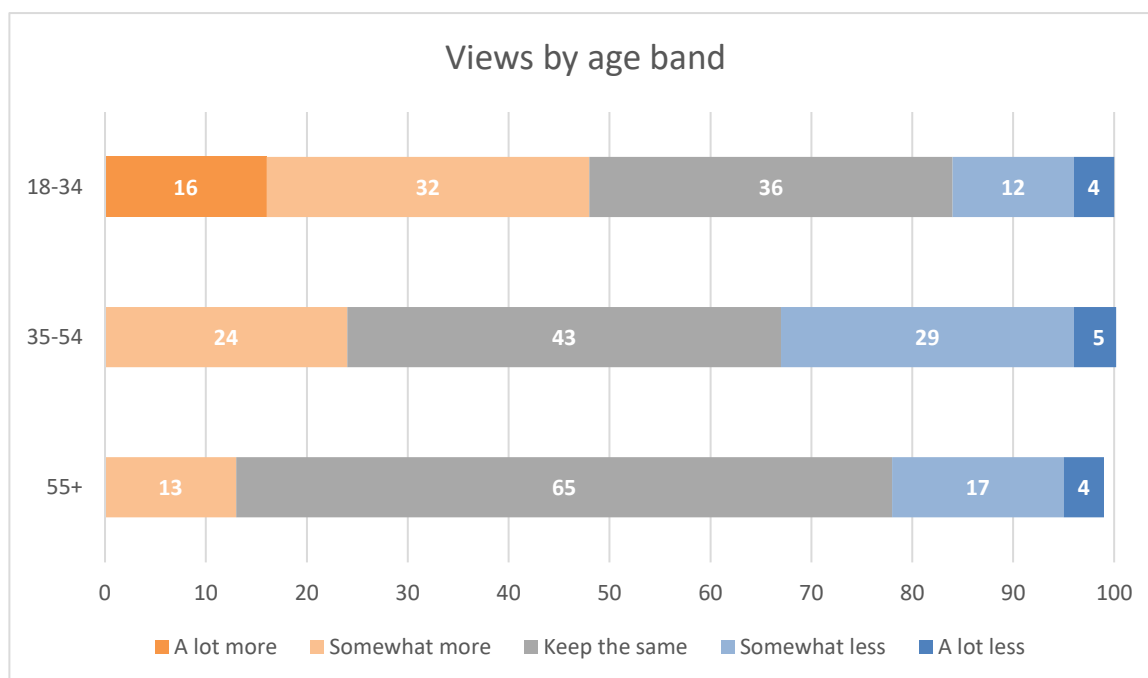


- 6.10 At the end of the session, opinion was more split, with just under half (48%) wanting LCC to 'keep spending the same', just under three in ten (29%) supporting increases (a 26-percentage point decrease) and just under a quarter (23%) supporting reductions (a 23-percentage point increase).

- 6.11 Younger residents were more prepared than those in either of the middle and older age brackets to support increased funding for children's health services. Those aged 55+ were least likely to advocate a rise, favouring maintained spend instead - whereas the 35-54 year olds were most likely to support decreases in this area.

Figure 53: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Children's Health Services – Views by Age Band)

Base: 69 responses



Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities (£52m)

- 6.12 While not disputing the need to maintain a service for adults with learning disabilities for those in need of it, there was some sense in the workshop discussions that it is being offered to those who may not need it and that the system is being taken advantage of. More stringent criteria were thought to be needed.

"If you are an adult with learning disabilities... I think that's quite important as they are vulnerable, just as children are really but people don't see them that way as they are fully grown adults..." (Loughborough, 18-34)

"I'm at uni now and I'm allowed to apply for a disabled students' allowance even though I would not class myself as needing any money from this kind of thing. But it's there and I can apply for it. Dyslexia...my partner got a free laptop...all these random things that they are putting in place, they are not really necessary... I know many people who are scamming that system" (Loughborough, 18-34)

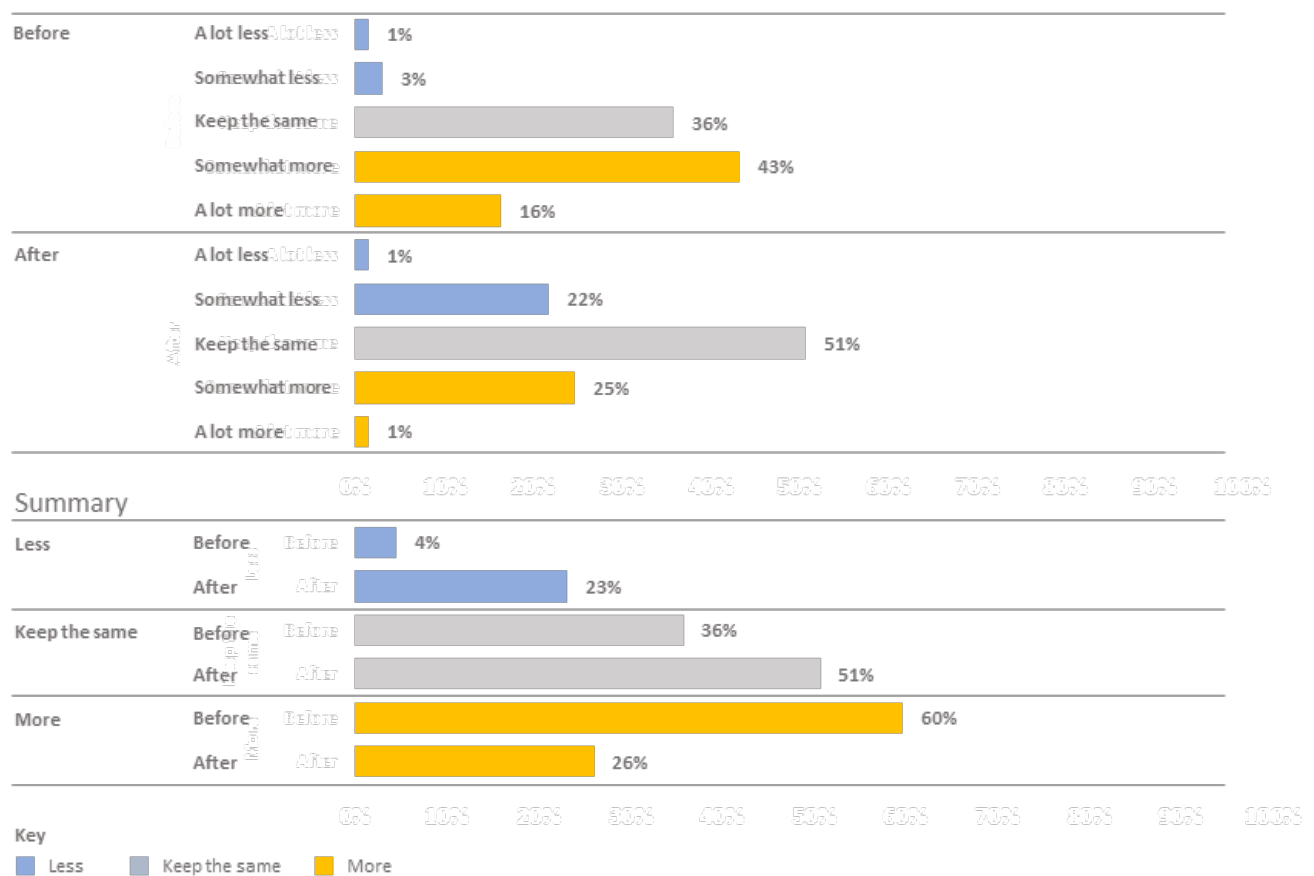
- 6.13 It was also said that savings could be generated through more joint working between services for adults with learning disabilities and the highest spend area - SEND services.

“Considering you are spending £75 million on one and £52 million on the other, it’s a hell of a lot of money...and I would have thought it’s got to be looked at in some way” (Hinckley, 55+)

- 6.14 In the pre-discussion questionnaires, majority opinion (59%) was that LCC should increase spending on services for adults with learning disabilities. Just over a third (36%) felt spend should be maintained, and only 4% felt it should be decreased.

Figure 54: Here’s a list of the council’s services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities)

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 67 responses; Exit questionnaire – 69 responses

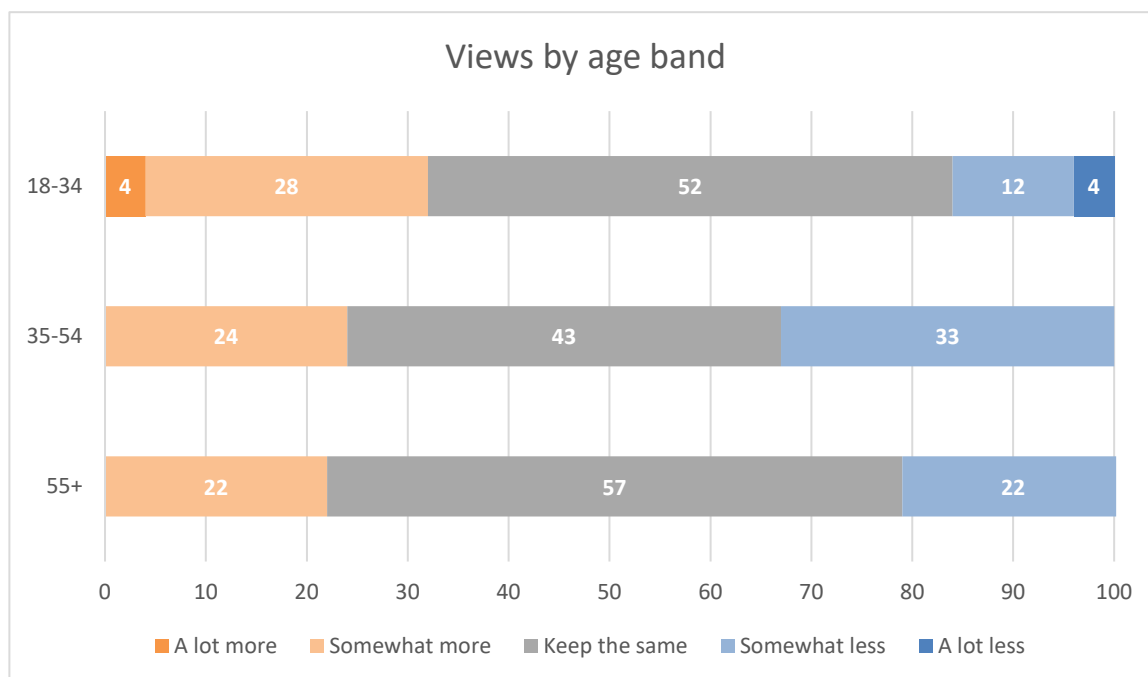


- 6.15 Post-discussion, majority opinion (51%) had switched to maintaining spend, with just over a quarter (26%) advocating increases and just under a quarter (23%) suggesting reductions.

- 6.16 The main difference in relation to the different age groups was that the 35-54 year olds were slightly more likely than the other two groups to support reductions in spend on services for adults with learning disabilities.

Figure 55: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities – Views by Age Band)

Base: 69 responses



Local Tips/Household Recycling Sites (£3m)

- 6.17 In the workshop discussions, investment in local tips and household recycling sites was thought to be important in preventing fly tipping - which in itself is expensive for councils to clear up². It was said that the council should ensure it is in line with national strategy in terms of waste management.

"If we don't protect that, the local gateways, fields, parks, Burbage Common, fly tipping happens. If there's an increase in fly tipping, it's going to increase the money for the council to clear it up. It makes our countryside look an eyesore. Knock-on effect on other services"
(Hinckley, 35-54)

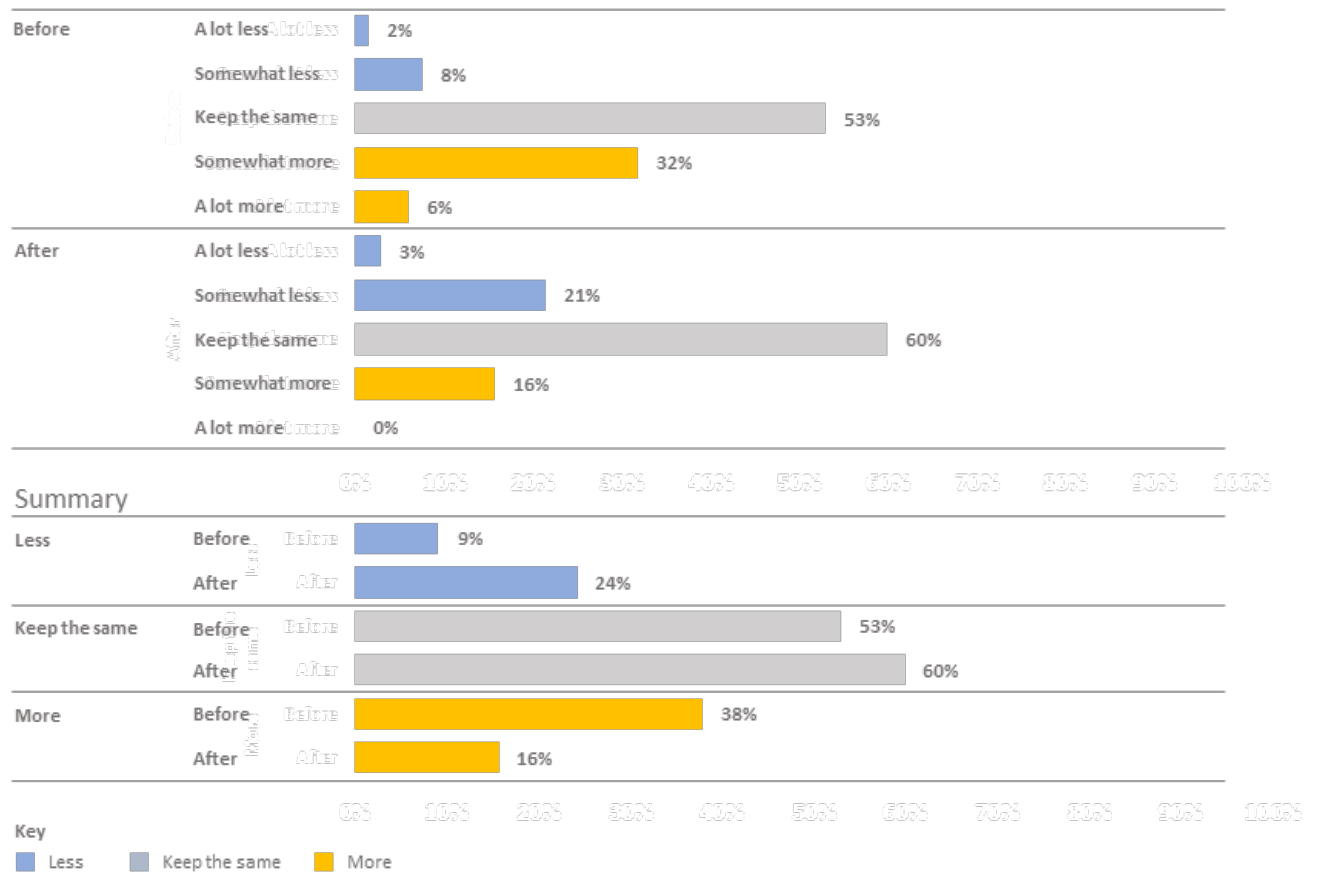
"If you cut down on that, you are going to get people fly tipping, just leaving it on the streets or going to different parts of the country. People are doing that, and you can see the state of it as it is..." (Loughborough, 18-34)

"Britain is one of the only countries right now that is changing its laws to help recycling more and things like that, so it means as a country, overall, we are thinking that this is an important issue. We are part of that really so we should be putting more money into it..."
(Loughborough, 18-34)

² Residents didn't always understand that fly tipping was dealt with by district council's

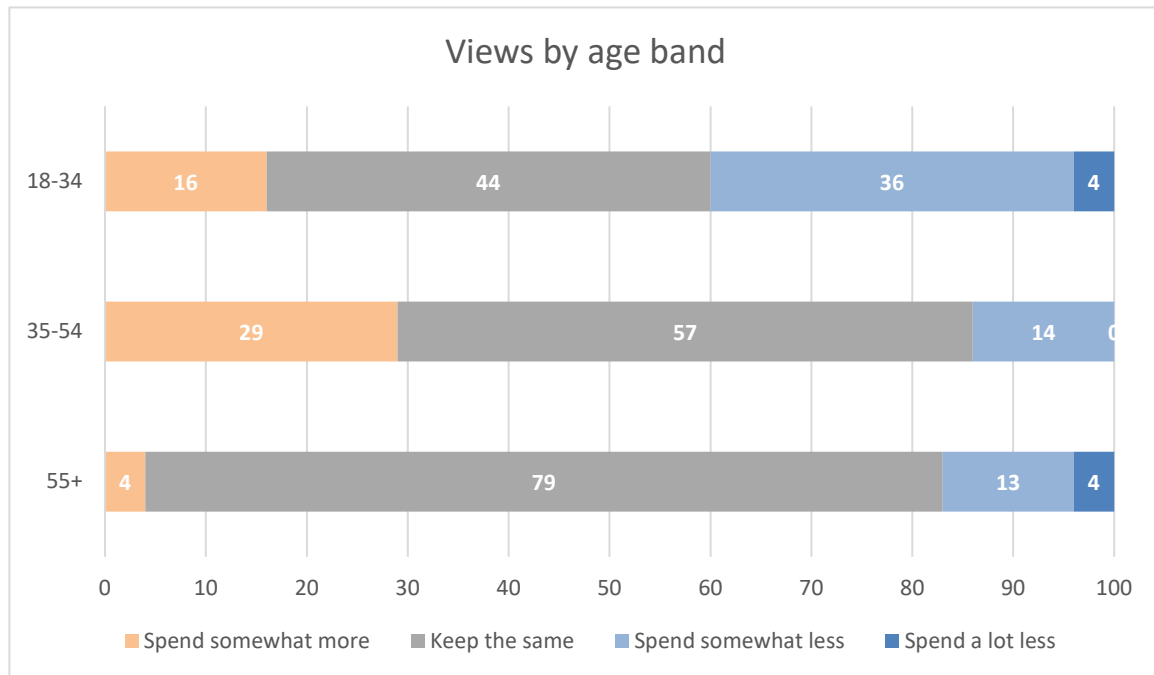
- 6.18 Majority opinion in both the pre- and post-discussion questionnaires (53% and 60% respectively) was that LCC should maintain its spending on local tips and household recycling sites. There was a reduction in the number of people suggesting increased spend (38% pre and 16% post) and a corresponding increase in those seeking reductions (10% pre and 24% post).

Figure 56: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Local Tips/Household Recycling Sites)
Base: Welcome questionnaire - 66 responses; Exit questionnaire – 70 responses



- 6.19 The largest number of respondents within all three age groups wanted to see maintained spend on local tips/household recycling sites, but the results do show some differences by age: the 35-54 year olds were more likely to support increased spend on local tips and recycling sites, whereas those in the older age group were less likely to; older residents were more inclined toward maintaining spend than younger ones; and the 18-34 year olds were the most likely group to advocate spending reductions in this area.

Figure 57: Here's a list of the council's services...which do you think the council should spend more money on, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount? (Local Tips/Household Recycling Sites – Views by Age Band)
Base: 70 responses



7. New ways of working

- 7.1 Residents were asked (in their exit questionnaires and discussion groups) to outline the services that stood out to them as perhaps being suitable for being provided in different ways. Their responses are outlined below.

More working in partnership with other councils and public services

- 7.2 In the post-discussion questionnaire, the most common suggestions made in terms of more partnership working with other councils and public services were as follows, largely reflecting what was said in the workshop discussions (as reported under the specific service area headings earlier in this report):

	Number of survey responses
Smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks	4
<i>"Smoking prevention and sexual health services need to be combined with NHS funding and responsibility to fall on individuals"</i>	
Services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	4
<i>"SEND; scrutinise which children can go to mainstream schools rather than private specialist schools"</i>	
<i>"Pooling teams for example a regional education psychology pool, schools could be allocated an amount for statutory assessment and locate an EP from a central pool held across the region"</i>	
Drug, alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment	3
See quotation above	
Transport to schools	3
Early support to families and young people	3
Children's social care services and child protection	3

- 7.3 Some of the comments and more specific suggestions were around combining and sharing services with neighbouring local authorities more generally:

"Combine HR and IT to reduce costs"

"Join services with local authorities i.e. Nottingham/Derbyshire/Lincolnshire"

"Counties grouping together and sharing funding with decisions being made by elected governments"

"Sharing good practice, sharing the services, combining buying to get cheaper bulk prices..."

More community involvement

- 7.4 The most common suggestions made by questionnaire respondents in terms of more community involvement in service provision were:

	Number of survey responses
Libraries	22
Grass cutting	16
<i>"Set up community volunteer groups to support country parks and grass cutting. Encourage those with mental health issues and weight management issues particularly. No more expensive gym memberships to pay"</i> <i>"Grass cutting and winter gritting can be done in general by the community"</i>	
Country parks	12
See quotation above	
Museums	11
Winter road gritting	6
See quotation above	

- 7.5 Providing more community-based services for older people and those with mental health issues was also suggested by a couple of respondents:

"Services for the elderly and mental health. Providing services for free via the community. Nurses holding support groups etc."

"Supporting elderly living in the community could be encouraged to the community to help themselves more rather than leaving it to councils"

- 7.6 Several comments were also made around the need to encourage more people to volunteer, possibly by offering benefits and incentives to do so:

"Use a central volunteer hub if people are interested in helping with various services"

"Have a volunteers' agency and give benefits for participating"

"A likely huge pool of potential volunteers, incentives with bus passes/references"

"Volunteer support for libraries, museums etc. Then given incentives for example reduction in gym membership, leisure centre fees etc. Re-look at the 'timebank' notion. Consider DoE and Duke of York idea, awards to promote young people and volunteering"

- 7.7 There was further discussion of volunteering in the break-out sessions (and especially among the older Loughborough residents), with some participants suggesting that LCC establish a volunteer workforce and stimulate involvement via incentives. Indeed, the social and health advantages of volunteering for individuals were frequently highlighted.

"Could you not spend a million on recruiting volunteers from the public? There are little pockets of volunteers that are doing their own thing but if it was more organised. Something similar to this kind of forum that got people motivated and interested because a lot of people don't know how to do it" (Loughborough, 55+)

"We are talking about supporting independence and keeping people motivated and people who are retired, they've had a life in business; there's a lot of skills out there. These people can give a lot" (Loughborough, 55+)

"If you get involved in community action can you have a reduction in your gym membership or your bus pass if it became means tested?" (Loughborough, 55+)

"Counselling and things like that are great but it's a massive cost to the council I'm guessing. So get people involved in charity work" (Wigston, 35-54)

- 7.8 It was also said that the council could provide free accommodation to volunteer groups - and consider using technology to develop something of a 'volunteering community' whereby a list of opportunities would be posted on an app for those interested in fulfilling them to express interest.

"The council do own buildings that they could give out, free of charge to volunteers willing to help people. They could say 'you can have this building, free of charge for two hours'. People could come along and all that would cost is a tiny bit of electric" (Wigston, 18-34)

"You could create an app...you could have DBS checks and everything and they have all your details. You post a job or something you need doing and someone who is nearby, they click it and say 'I'm available'. You can even incentivise it for people like when you have nectar cards/points at Sainsbury's, you could do the same thing but through the app" (Loughborough, 18-34)

- 7.9 In terms of which services could be provided by a volunteer workforce, the discussion findings generally concurred with the results from the final questionnaire: libraries, museums, grass cutting, winter road gritting, country parks and supporting older people to live independently were all mentioned. Comments in relation to specific services have been reported earlier in this report (under the individual service areas), but the following were also made around country parks, weight management and supporting older people to live independently:

"Country Parks... It's pretty easy to maintain, it's a very low price to the council... Obviously, you get a load of OAPs and stuff there who are really passionate about that thing" (Wigston, 18-34)

"For health and weight control, maybe you could invite people to do some volunteer work in Country Parks...a walking group or people with mental health problems. Maybe they would like to get out and create community spirit around tidying up" (Wigston, 55+)

"Supporting older people to live independently - my friend uses her time to run a support group for carers of elderly people. She doesn't charge, it is her time that she gives...to give information which then doesn't need to be taken from another service" (Loughborough, 35-54)

- 7.10 Volunteering was suggested as a possibility for: transport to schools; services for adults with mental health problems and learning disabilities; and early intervention for families and young people.

“Transport to schools. You could have something where you have a minibus, rather than solo transport” (Hinckley, 18-34)

“Just genuinely asking someone to do something for free (transport to schools). They would be quite happy to give up their time, like retired people” (Wigston, 18-34)

“Transport to schools for disabled children...my dad used to do it for the hospital once his wife died. It was the only social interaction he had. He did it for free” (Wigston, 18-34)

“Services for adults with mental health problems. Use people that want to volunteer with people with mental health in their own time” (Hinckley, 18-34)

“Early support to families and young people. You used to have things like Home Start... I volunteered for them when I was younger. I got loads out of it and I’d like to think the two ladies that I supported got something out of it...so you could cut back in that way” (Wigston, 35-54)

“We thought for Services for adults with learning disabilities that we could make savings by utilising a pool of volunteers like older people who might have retired who are looking to be a bit more active or postgrads who are looking for a bit of work experience...incentivising them...it could be a reference or other ways” (Loughborough, 18-34)

- 7.11 Despite the general positivity expressed around volunteering, some concern was expressed over the reliability of services that depend too heavily on volunteer support.

“The trouble is with volunteering is it’s not guaranteeing a service is it?” (Hinckley, 55)

More individual responsibility

- 7.12 Again, echoing the views expressed in the workshop discussions as reported above, the most common suggestions made in terms of encouraging more individual responsibility in service provision were:

	Number of survey responses
Smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks	18
<i>“Let individuals manage cutting down on smoking and calories. We should not pay council tax for gym memberships”</i>	
Drug, alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment	11
<i>“Drug and alcohol problems can be addressed individually”</i>	
Transport to schools	3

Grass cutting	3
<i>"Helping to look after your own community. Cutting grass, road gritting. Helping to look after and support your own family where possible"</i>	

7.13 A couple of more specific suggestions were:

"Looking after children and elderly in families where possible"

"Self-service models already evident on LCC website. Could use more personal budgets for children's and adults LD services for individuals and responsibility..."

More charging for services

7.14 The most common suggestions made in terms of charging for services were:

Number of survey responses	
Museums	15
<i>"Ask for voluntary donations at museums and country parks"</i>	
<i>"Services such as museums, libraries are only used by some individuals within society therefore the council should reduce the spending of these services and the public should pay to use them"</i>	
Transport to schools	7
<i>"Difficult to say without much more detailed info as there are already charges in place. Perhaps charge for transport for children to school, even a nominal amount"</i>	
Country parks	7
See quotation above	
Libraries	6
See quotation above	
Bus passes for older and disabled people	4
<i>"Bus passes for the elderly (£2 a month)"</i>	

7.15 Participants echoed the above in their workshop discussions, suggesting that libraries and museums offer chargeable admissions/services – and that a nominal fee be levied for bus pass provision.

"Charging for services...museums and the libraries" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"I think if the people from the museum can make the money from side products then the museum can be self-funding rather than reliant on the council" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"I suppose as well, in a budgeting way the elderly and disabled people, they've got bus passes, but say for example, you took £20 a year off each person, or a pound a month off each person....because most people receive state pensions, or private pensions; I'm sure they could spare a pound a month (Hinckley 18-34)

Other ways to reduce spending or raise income

- 7.16 When asked about possible other ways to reduce spending or raise income, residents suggested the following in their questionnaires:

Property investment
<i>"Build residential housing, high end and charge, offset those who can't pay"</i> <i>"Involving property development and leasing"</i> <i>"Buying/building land/office space to let"</i> <i>"Capital investment in projects to get income for example, build own residential homes"</i> <i>"Raise more money by becoming more commercialised i.e. building and running care homes for the elderly"</i>
Addressing benefit fraud
<i>"Assess people better, make sure they need the help they require and not just faking it"</i> <i>"Have regular checks on those claiming disability allowance as things may have changed since they've gained funding. For example, those with depression gain money and this illness can be short lived"</i>
Making better use of LCC assets
<i>"Make better use of buildings. Why not make use of school buildings during holidays"</i> <i>"Make use of abandoned/unused grounds, charge for use"</i>
Focusing on green energy and other environmental initiatives
<i>"Investment in R&D for recycling. More green energy for power generation for council projects and buildings"</i> <i>"Replace grass verges with median planting to reduce costs of cutting. Review value for money from current providers of service. Utilise county natural resources for example, forest. Get companies to pay for the offset of CO2 emissions and land used to solar panels or even wind farms"</i>
Making better use of technology and identifying further efficiencies
<i>"Use technology to manage bus services for example, book a bus to stop, using WhatsApp and link buses to transport to schools"</i> <i>"Using technology to reduce staff numbers, combine together departments"</i> <i>"Be more efficient with how they allocate resources, such that they are more productive, such that less spending could have the same output"</i> <i>"Educate, efficiency, time. Think niche! How could the money be utilised in a more efficient way"</i>

- 7.17 Other, more specific suggestions were:

"Community investment bonds to raise cashflow"
"Non-working families not having free child care. Non-working families paying a percentage of council tax"
"Sponsorship, parking levy charge at office, use of hub offices"

- 7.18 In their workshop discussions, participants agreed that the council should invest in land and property for the purposes of income generation. They suggested: purchasing and running nursing and residential homes; investing in shared ownership housing schemes; and building office blocks and restoring old properties for rent.

General investment in land
<i>"You have £10m in reserve. I assume that's invested in a very high security risk ... Would it be wise to spend more of that reserve on a good secure asset like land which will never go down in value?" (Wigston, 55+)</i>
Purchasing and running nursing and residential homes
<i>"They said the council was going to invest in property so if that property happened to be an old people's home? Property that generates income... So you could go back into the nursing home business then? And could you borrow for something like that?" (Hinckley, 55+)</i> <i>"Residential and nursing homes - build one" (Loughborough, 35-54)</i>
Investing in shared ownership housing schemes
<i>"I've heard there is a scheme where people can't afford to buy a house or have enough deposit... where you could half mortgage and half rent off... could you buy land and build houses on it for that?" (Loughborough, 35-54)</i>
Building office blocks and restoring old properties for rent
<i>"Building office blocks and renting out to the private sector would generate income and there is a need. I'm self-employed now and I do a lot of training so, venues for training" (Loughborough, 55+)</i> <i>"Rent out unused property... I don't think the council should be running businesses themselves because they have a poor track record of making profit, but certainly they should be using the land; the reserves they've got to build on that land and then leasing it out to someone from the public who has a really good idea and wants to do something with it with a very good business plan" (Wigston, 55+)</i> <i>"What about doing up some of the old buildings as luxury flats to rent out? There are so many old houses you could use... knock it down and build two or three houses on it. You've got the facilities within the council, the old council houses where you do them up, so you could do that" (Hinckley, 35-54)</i>

- 7.19 It was also again suggested that LCC could: do more to eliminate waste and make better use of its assets; sell its services (in the areas of maintenance, legal services, IT and HR for example) to other organisations; and look at opportunities for income generation (by introducing cafés in libraries and museums for example).

Elimination of waste
<i>"I could give you a very silly example. They painted white lines on the road in Barwell and then the next day sprayed it and put gravel over it..." (Hinckley, 55+)</i> <i>"There was a pavement that needed fixing and there were six people working in one small area. One leaning on a brush and one sitting in the truck. They were there all day" (Hinckley, 35-54)</i>
Making better use of assets
<i>"Schools outside of term time, instead of having adult learning in different buildings, why not put them in schools during the holidays?" (Loughborough, 55+)</i> <i>"Adult learning...the facility is already there. Why aren't we using them more? The college is open anyway. The caretakers are there anyway" (Hinckley, 35-54)</i>

"Are all the offices in County Hall occupied? Could you rent out ones you aren't using?" (Wigston 55+)

Looking at opportunities for income generation

"Why don't you have a Costa and a library together? You could get Costa to fund the running and the community library at the same time. Costa is constantly full. Even a council-run café to make some money" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"If the council had their own grass cutting facility, they could sell their services to the private sector. There could be some money to be made" (Hinckley, 55+)

"My big idea is to actually generate money, not just save money. There are a lot of skill sets around within the council, there must be ways you could earn money with that... I'm sure there are a lot of legal skills within the council. How about a will-writing service for example or just legal advice generally" (Hinckley, 55+)

"Are there any management skills that can be farmed out to businesses? I'm thinking IT and HR?" (Wigston, 55+)

- 7.20 There was some discussion over in-house versus outsourced service provision. Whilst some participants considered the latter to be an appropriate means of making savings, others thought that bringing services back under LCC control would be more likely to lead to economies. Services discussed in this context were: grass cutting; local tips and household recycling sites; maintenance of roads and pavements; winter gritting; street lighting; and museums. In principle, participants urged that the most cost-effective means of providing quality services should always be secured and then monitored.

"Outsource maintenance of road and pavements and winter gritting to a contractor who's got the equipment - street lighting maintenance similarly... If you've got somebody out there with the skills to provide the services, you're also providing jobs" (Loughborough, 55+)

"What I'd like to know is where we're getting the best value for private contracts. Are they being tendered out in the area? For example, getting a private company to do grass cutting. Have you just got a price from one company, or ten companies? Housing purchases being tendered out, are you getting the best value?" (Wigston, 18-34)

"I work in the criminal justice system and a lot of that has been farmed out to private companies and it is costing a fortune... we have people coming 150 miles to fix a minor problem and then they come and they haven't got the right parts so they have to come back... bringing things back in-house, I think, is cheaper" (Wigston, 55+)

- 7.21 Participants also offered the following more specific suggestions as to how the council could reduce spending, raise income or work in new ways.

Maximising income from recycling

There's a lot around the investment of things that will pay back in the future. Things like black plastic that isn't recycled currently. If you could recycle black plastic, then that would help. That will go up, as a generation people will recycle more as a trend. How we deal with that? Where does it go? There is a value in it (Hinckley, 35-54)

"What happens after it has been to the tip and it is sent off to the recycling? Where does it go then? Who makes the money from it? Surely a proportion of the money should come back to the council" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"We recycle, what do you do with that waste? Do you sell it to a third party? Currently, plastic is more in the news, around recycling, reuse. It's becoming like gold dust" (Hinckley, 55+)

"The only thing I can come up with ... is the recycling of the most prevalent pest on our planet which is plastic and the plastics that people don't want to recycle. R&D should go into finding a way to make use of it" (Wigston, 35-54)

More means testing of relevant services (providing the administration does not cost more than the savings achieved)

"If there was an efficient way of means testing people. What I wouldn't want to do is to save the Government a million pounds by making higher contributions - everybody paying more for the bus passes etc. - only to find that in order to run that, it costs two million" (Wigston, 55+)

Deploy individuals on community service or jobseekers allowance to pick litter and cut grass verges

"I was just thinking of these people who was took to court and have community service. What about getting them to go around litter picking? Cut the grass? They get unemployed people doing it in Spain and in Germany" (Hinckley, 55+)

"What about people that are on jobseekers allowance... Can't they be used more as volunteers for these kind of support services? Or for litter-picking, even" (Loughborough, 35-54)

Investment in leisure and tourism

"Invest in tourism and trying to get more people to come into Leicestershire. It's rural. We go to Kilworth House, the theatre. Use the Country Parks for outdoor events. Theatre in the wild... You can generate a lot of money. An outdoor company. We don't do enough to attract people" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"Surely leisure is something you should be looking at because there's going to be a lot more elderly people who want things to spend their money on" (Wigston, 55+)

Innovative approaches to environmental management

"Some of the councils...they've planted a load of wild seeds along motorways and long straight roads. It is absolutely beautiful, and they've saved thousands!" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"Sponsoring of hedgerows...I tell you what, you could even do it for your carbon offsetting! Planting trees" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"Electrical vehicles could potentially be a saving. Is there methane being captured from these waste dumps and landfill sites? If we, as council taxpayers knew that the council was doing something like that, we'd be much happier to pay our council taxes" (Wigston, 55+)

"Solar lighting, all this reusable energy...heat source from the ground, so you can have something re-generated for your street lighting..." (Loughborough, 35-54)

Privatisation of services

"Privatise libraries and museums completely..." (Loughborough, 55+)

Innovative financial investments

"Social bonds...tie it up for three years, and then you have all of this money now available. And each year it is just going to keep going up" (Hinckley, 18-34)

A unitary authority?

- 7.22 As part of the briefing given to the residents prior to their deliberations, it was highlighted that a business case for a single unitary authority for Leicestershire was being developed and the preliminary assessment was that this could save £30m per year. While this was not a focus for detailed discussion, there were many positive comments from participants that a single unitary authority (replacing the county and districts), supported by stronger parish and town councils, was desirable. This, it was felt, would offer a substantial saving and reduce confusion around which authority provides which services.

“It makes a lot of sense. You save on all sorts of stuff. You don’t need two HR teams, two financial chief operating officers ... The number of districts as well. It’s an eye opener. You wouldn’t get a business running in that way” (Hinckley, 35-54)

“People don’t know these things; they are in the dark. The majority of people don’t know how it all works” (Hinckley, 35-54)

“The hard thing is you’ve made so many savings already and been so efficient that we feel we’re just looking at chicken feed really ... All the things we don’t think we can cut are actually statutory so the authority has got a duty legally to offer them ... If you could cut out all the boroughs, you’d save an awful lot of money” (Loughborough, 55+)

- 7.23 The possibility of a unitary authority was also raised by some exit questionnaire respondents.

“Alter the authorities, merge into one”

“Definitely consider the elimination of the two-tier system. Closing the local district council structure”

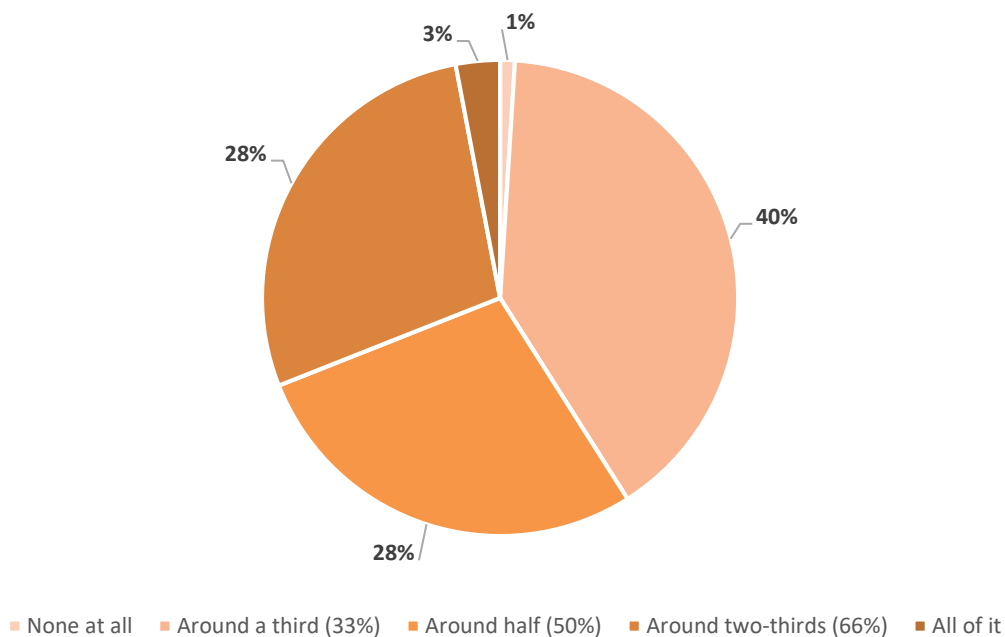
“Leicestershire should become one central agency and remove local authorities...”

8. Council tax

Residents' knowledge of spending and council tax levels is patchy

- 8.1 Although some admitted to having “*no idea*”, many residents attempted to answer the question ‘roughly how much do you think that Leicestershire County Council spends on services for local people each year?’ Estimates ranged from £1,000 up to £3 billion – although the more common estimates were: £500,000 (3 responses); £1 million (5 responses); £2-2.5 million (6 responses); £5-6 million (3 responses); £100 million (6 responses); and £400-500 million (3 responses). The correct figure is £809 million (gross budget).
- 8.2 Four in ten residents estimated that around a third of the money LCC spends is raised through council tax; just under a third (28%) each felt the figure was either around half or around two-thirds; only 3% said ‘all of it’ and only 1% ‘none at all’. In reality, council tax pays for 37% of the cost of local services.

Figure 58: Roughly how much of this amount do you think is raised through council tax? (Welcome questionnaire)
Base: 68 respondents

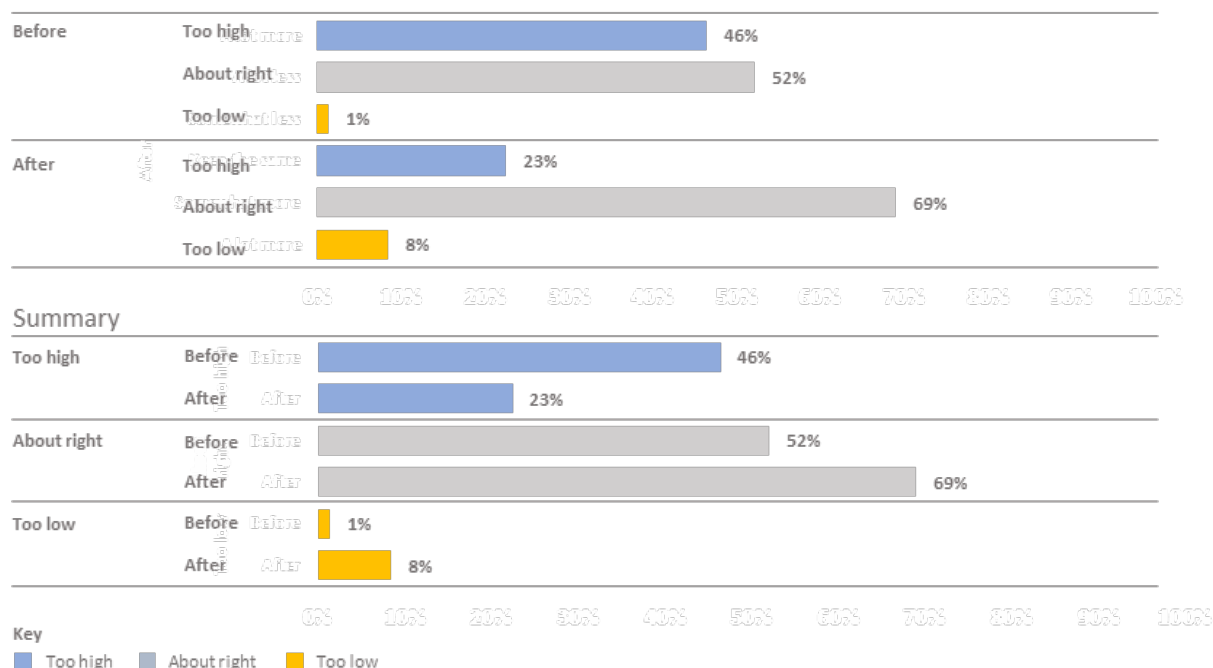


Residents feel the amount of council tax they pay is ‘about right’

- 8.3 Initially, just over half (52%) of residents considered the amount of council tax they pay to be ‘about right’, whereas most (46%) of the others thought it was ‘too high’.

Figure 59: Currently, would you say that the amount of council tax you or your household pays to LCC is too high, about right, or too low?

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 71 respondents; Exit questionnaire – 71 respondents



- 8.4 After receiving background information and taking part in discussions, the number of those considering their LCC council tax charge to be ‘too high’ had fallen by 23-percentage points to 23%. Just under one in ten (8% - a 7-percentage point increase) thought it was ‘too low’, but just under seven in ten (69%) described it as ‘about right’.

There are mixed views on the level of future council tax rises

- 8.5 In their welcome and exit questionnaires, residents were asked the following question:

Which of these statements comes closest to your own view? Council Tax should be...

- » ...increased significantly above the rate of inflation to improve services (4% - an extra £48 next year)
- » ...increased slightly above the rate of inflation to maintain services (3% - an extra £36 next year) ...
- » ...increased in line with inflation even if it means some service cuts (2% - an extra £24 next year) ...
- » ...increased below inflation even if it means significant cuts to some services (1% - an extra £12 next year) ...
- » ...frozen even if it means significant cuts to many services (0% - £0)
- » ...reduced even if it means severe cuts to many services

- 8.6 Initially, just under four in ten (39%) felt council tax should be increased in line with inflation even if it means some service cuts; and just over a quarter (26%) felt it should be increased slightly above the rate of inflation to maintain services. Overall, the majority favoured increases in line with inflation or above.

Figure 60: Views on future council tax rises

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 62 respondents; Exit questionnaire – 70 respondents



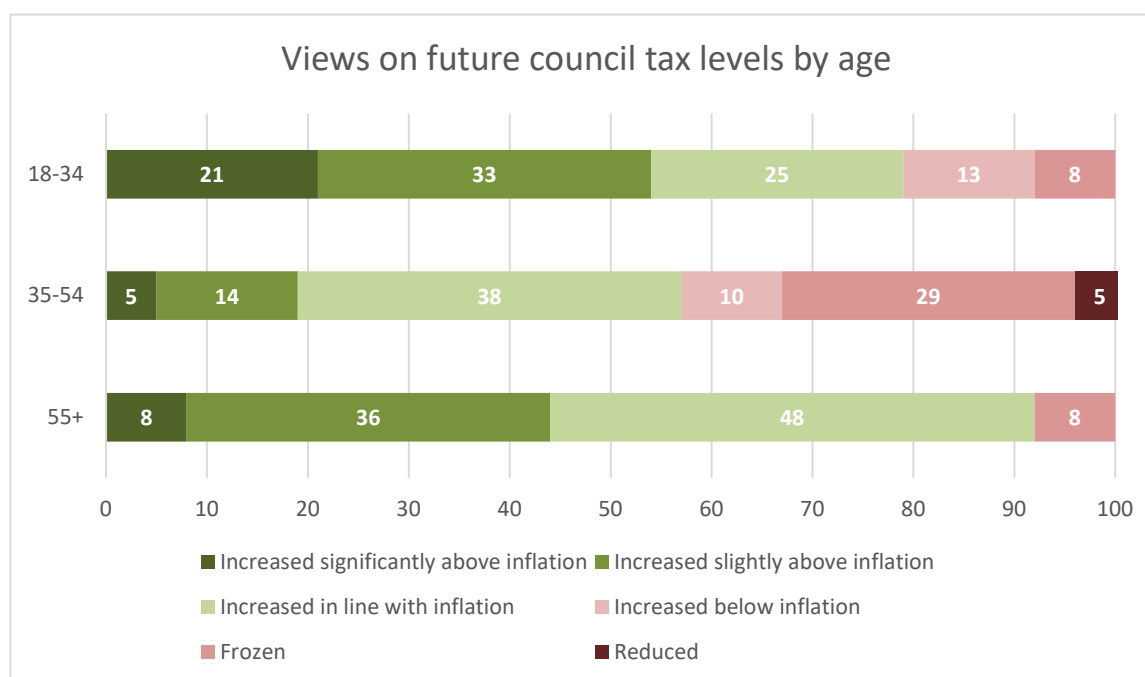
- 8.7 Of the remaining 36%: 13% said it should be increased significantly above the rate of inflation to improve services; 10% that it should be frozen even if it means significant cuts to many services; and 6% each that it should be increased below inflation or that it should be frozen even if it means significant to severe cuts to some services.
- 8.8 The results to this question were not too dissimilar post-discussion, with just under four in ten (37%) again feeling that council tax should be increased in line with inflation and a further just under three in ten (29%) feeling it should be increased slightly above the rate of inflation. Overall, the majority (77%) favoured increases in line with inflation or above. Despite hearing about LCC's challenging financial position, the number of those advocating a rise significantly above the rise of inflation

dropped by 2-percentage points (from 13% to 11%), whereas the number suggesting a freeze rose by 4-percentage points (from 10% to 14%).

- 8.9 Those in the youngest age group (18-34) were much more likely to sanction significantly above inflation rises - whereas those in the 'middle' age group were more likely to advocate a council tax freeze and less likely to support rate increases.

Figure 61: Views on future council tax rises by age (Exit questionnaire)

Base: 70 respondents



- 8.10 Residents were asked to share their views on raising council tax in their workshop discussions. Many were opposed for reasons of hardship and ever-rising costs, but the consensus was that increases are inevitable and probably necessary (and that those in real financial difficulty would receive assistance in paying council tax anyway).

"1% to some people would be a lot of money...that's £12 a year on this and how much on your electric bills, gas bills, other bills? Some people like myself, we are on a limited budget; we haven't got big pensions, but everything goes up. Our state pension went up about £3.50 a week" (Hinckley, 55+)

"I'd be against it, but I think that most people just expect that it's going to go up in line with inflation... (Wigston 55+)

"It's inevitable... council cuts are so hard-hitting now... (Loughborough, 55+)

"It's probably better to put it on the council tax as the more needy, the less well-off wouldn't pay it anyway because they get support" (Hinckley, 55+)

- 8.11 While for many, rises would only be acceptable if in line with inflation, others noted that they would need to be higher to meet the growing demand for council services, especially from an ageing population.

"For me, it's inflation rate, fine. But when you get a big increase, it hurts" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"A small amount, that could be acceptable" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"If the government is cutting funds, you've got to get funds from somewhere and if we fund the council in line with inflation, it will still give a shortfall. In order to balance the books, we would have to have a 5% increase, because there's 2% inflation and I would be against that. That is just bad business. There's got to be another way of doing it" (Wigston, 55+)

"It's inevitable... council cuts are so hard-hitting now. This council has done everything it can so if we're not prepared to borrow more, we're going to have to pay more, so I think that's either through council tax or income tax... I think we're going to have to bite the bullet and, again when you look at your diagram, it's that middle band of working age adults. We've got to support both ends of the spectrum because how else do we do it without significant income generation?" (Loughborough, 55+)

- 8.12 One participant made the point that while they do not mind paying for some services that they do not receive 'for the greater good', they were hard pressed to identify any services provided to them by the council. They were, therefore, aggrieved at the prospect of increased council taxes.

"The bags of rubbish and the recycling all goes into the same van together - it's questionable whether my recycling gets recycled. We can't have garden waste; we have to do that ourselves. I have no streetlights. So I'm paying for facilities that I'm not getting. It goes up each time. I don't mind paying council tax for certain things that I don't use now, but things like grass cutting, we have to cut our own lane. There's no policing...I don't get a reduction because I don't have those facilities. It goes up each year" (Hinckley, 35-54)

- 8.13 Knowing more about how council tax is spent and the financial pressures faced by the council would, it was felt, help placate the public in the event of increases. Also, it was said that seeing evidence of council tax income being spent wisely within local communities would engender support and aid understanding.

"Honesty about where the money is going. When you are increasing the council tax, just explain, 'this is where your money is going, and this is why it is going there'" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"People need to be more well informed about where it's being spent. Because I didn't have a clue before this where it was going. Now I know where it's being spent and cutting it would be harder and would have more of a knock-on effect than an increase in council tax – it would make you feel a lot better for paying it" (Wigston, 18-34)

"I think the information in the newsletter has been leading us in terms of the 2020 deadline that you've got. I think that's been helpful because although I don't like the idea of...paying more council tax, we're between a rock and a hard place aren't we?" (Loughborough, 55+)

"You need to see something for your money in your community" (Loughborough, 35-54)

“You could do a big one, for one year. If you paid £100 more, and Leicestershire could put in its own solar powered stations or something... It’s about making the community feel that we’ve actually got what we’ve paid into” (Loughborough, 35-54)

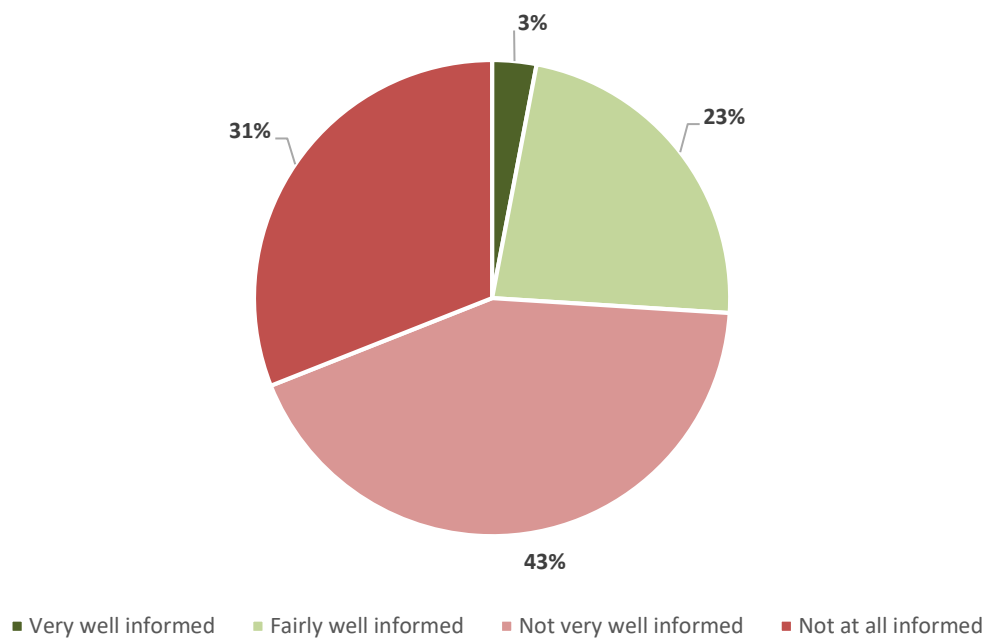
“You want to see some good come of it if it's going to go up” (Wigston, 55+)

9. Residents' opinions of LCC

Residents did not feel very informed about local government funding

- 9.1 In their welcome questionnaires, just under three-quarters (74%) of residents said they felt either not very well informed (43%) or not at all informed (31%) about local government funding. The remainder either felt 'fairly' (23%) or 'very' (3%) well informed.

Figure 62: How well informed, if at all, do you feel about local authority funding? (Welcome questionnaire)
Base: 65 respondents

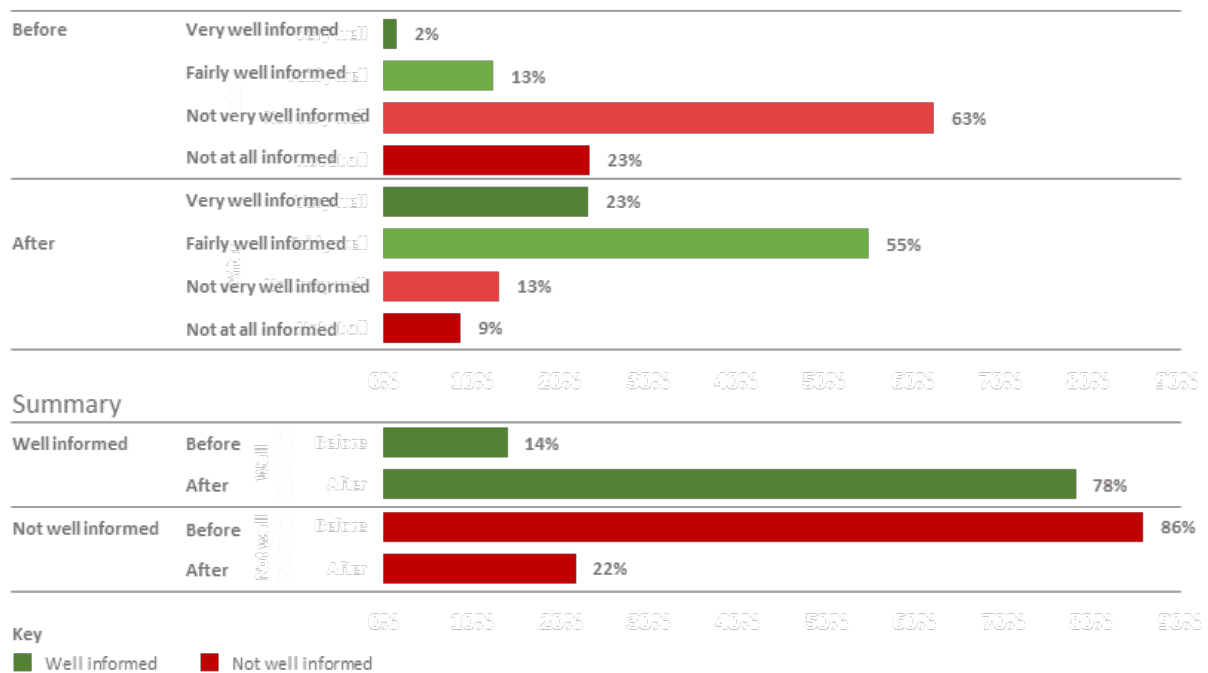


Residents felt more informed about how the council makes its decisions on spending at the end of the workshops

- 9.2 Initially, the majority of residents (86%) said they did not feel well informed about how the council makes its decisions on spending: just under a quarter (23%) said they were 'not at all informed'. Only around one in six residents (15%) said they felt fairly well informed.

Figure 63: How well informed, if at all, do you feel about how the council makes its decisions on spending?

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 64 respondents; Exit questionnaire – 69 respondents

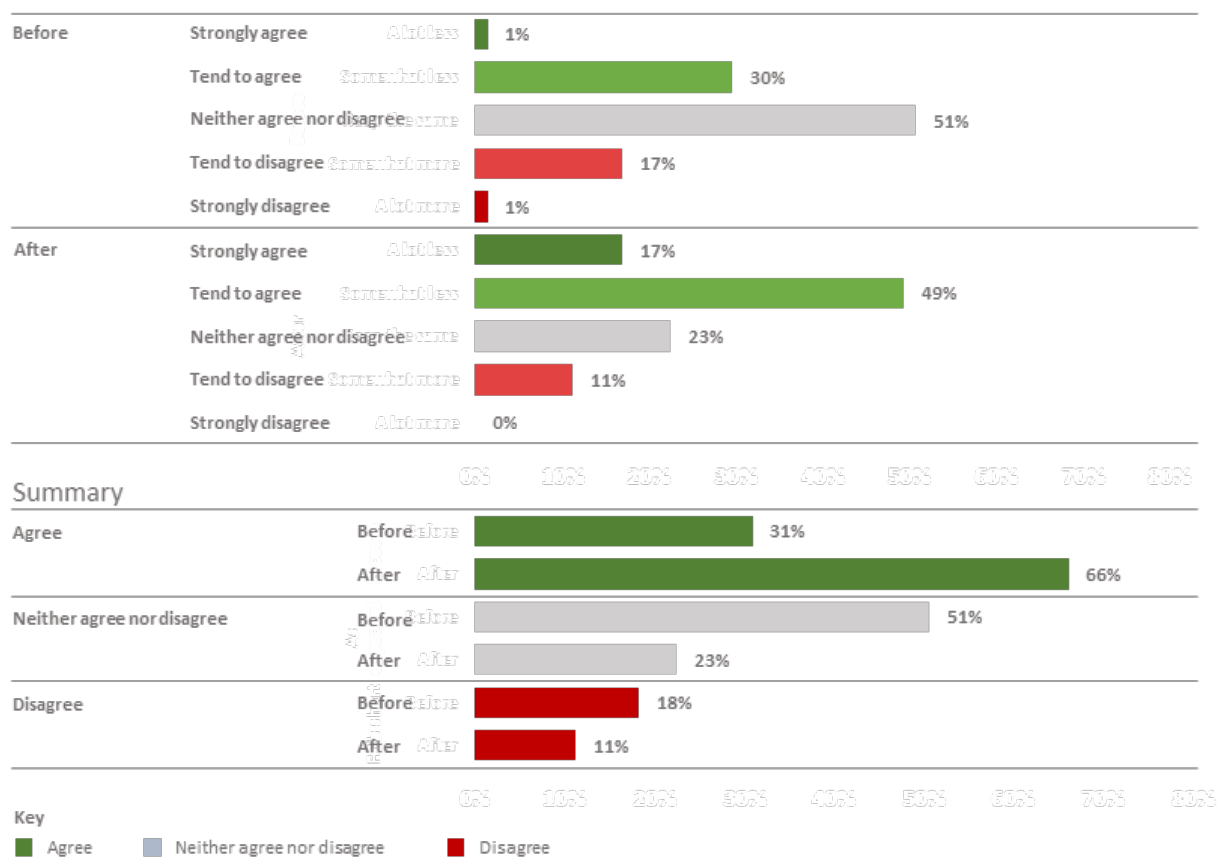


- 9.3 After the workshop, the number of those feeling well informed had risen by 63-percentage points to 78% - although just over one in five residents (22%) still felt uninformed even after the presentations and discussions.

Many residents agree that LCC provides value for money

- 9.4 In their welcome questionnaires, just under a third (31%) of residents agreed that LCC provides value for money and just under one in five (18%) disagreed. A majority of just over half (51%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 64: To what extent do you agree or disagree that LCC provides value for money?
Base: Welcome questionnaire - 71 respondents; Exit questionnaire – 71 respondents

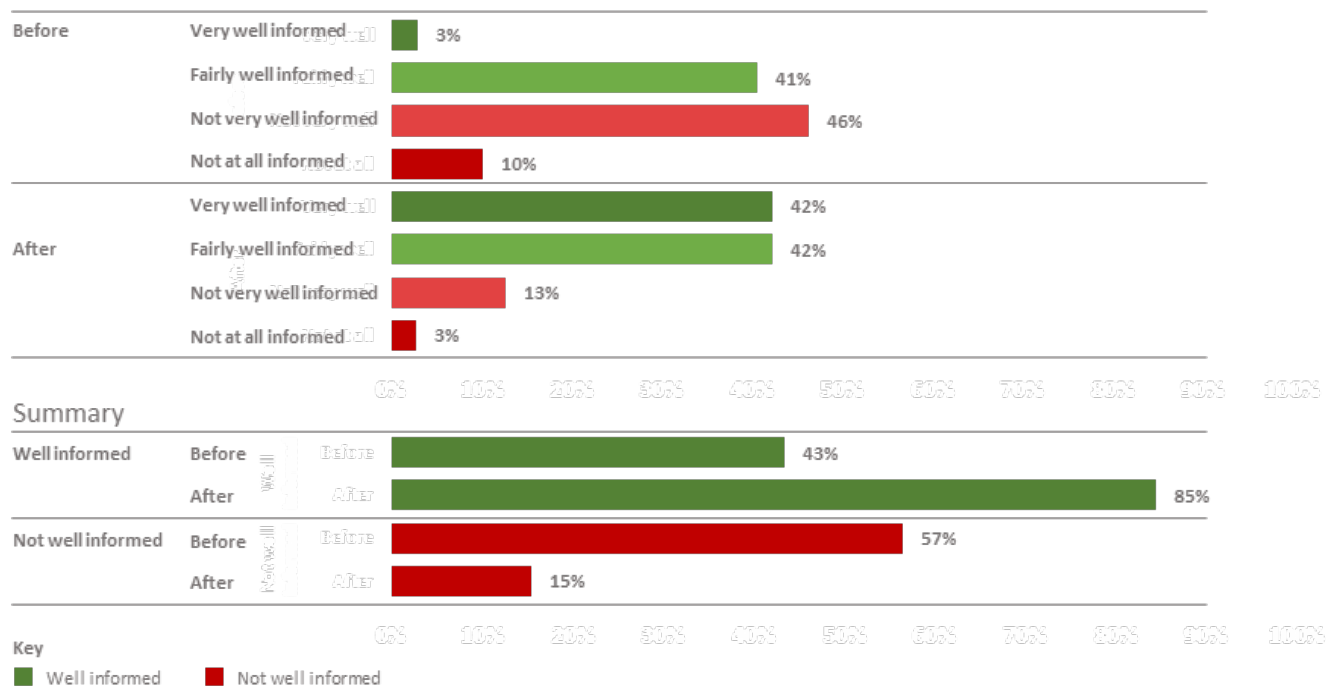


- 9.5 At the end of the workshops, the percentage of those who agreed that LCC provides value for money had risen to two-thirds (66%) - whereas the percentage of those who disagreed had fallen to 11%. Just under a quarter (23%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Residents felt far more informed about the services provided by LCC after the workshops

- 9.6 When asked in their welcome questionnaire about the extent to which they felt informed about the services provided by LCC, 44% of residents said they felt well informed whereas the remaining 56% said they did not.

Figure 65: How well informed, if at all, do you feel about the services provided by LCC?
Base: Welcome questionnaire - 69 respondents; Exit questionnaire – 71 respondents



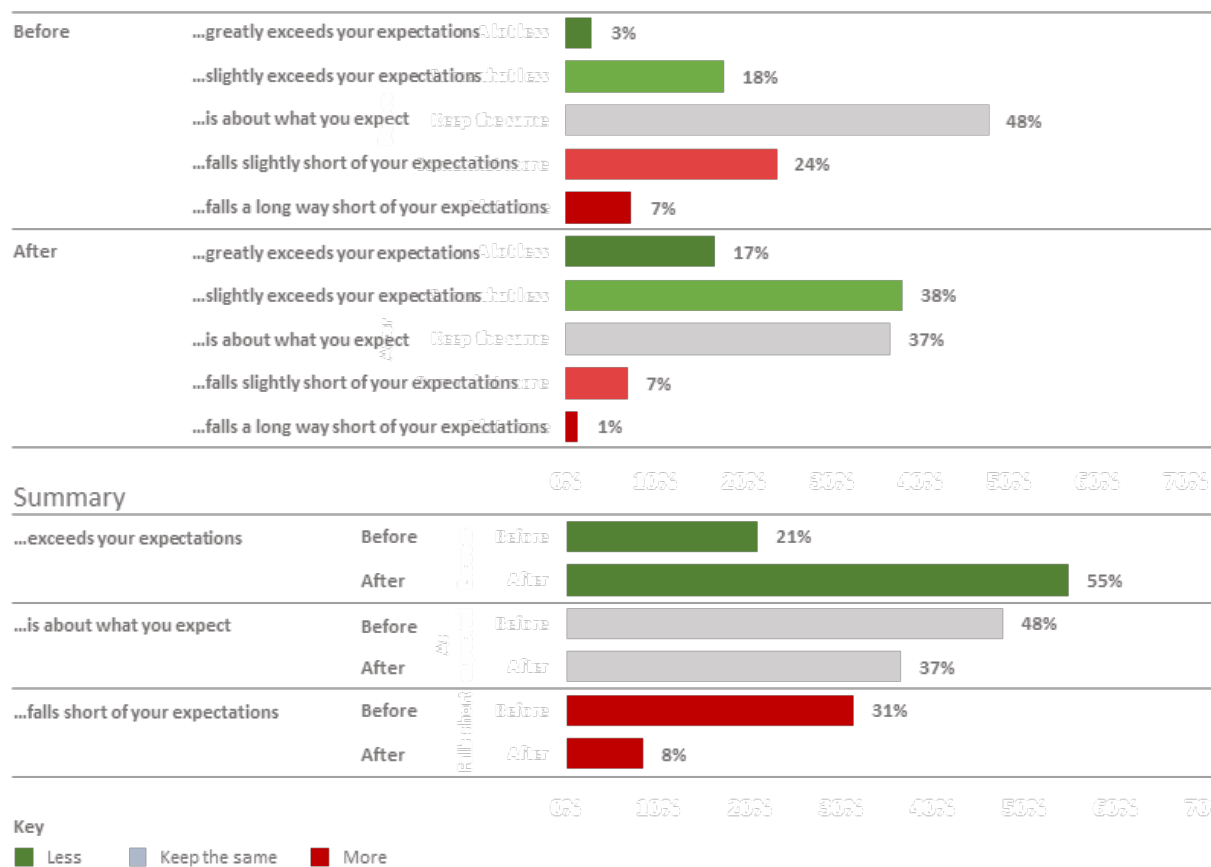
- 9.7 At the end of the workshop, over eight in ten residents (85%) said they felt well informed about the services provided by LCC - with equal proportions feeling very and fairly well informed. Just over one in eight (13%) remained not very well informed, and a small number (3%) said they felt not at all informed still.

LCC either meets or exceeds expectations in working toward making the area a good place to live

- 9.8 Initially, just over a fifth (22%) of residents felt that LCC exceeded their expectations in terms of working toward making the area as a good place to live. Just under half (48%) felt it met those expectations, just under a quarter (24%) felt it fell slightly short and under one in ten (7%) that it felt a long way short.

Figure 66: Thinking generally about what you expect of Leicestershire County Council, in working toward making the area a good place to live, would you say that it...?

Base: Welcome questionnaire - 67 respondents; Exit questionnaire – 71 respondents

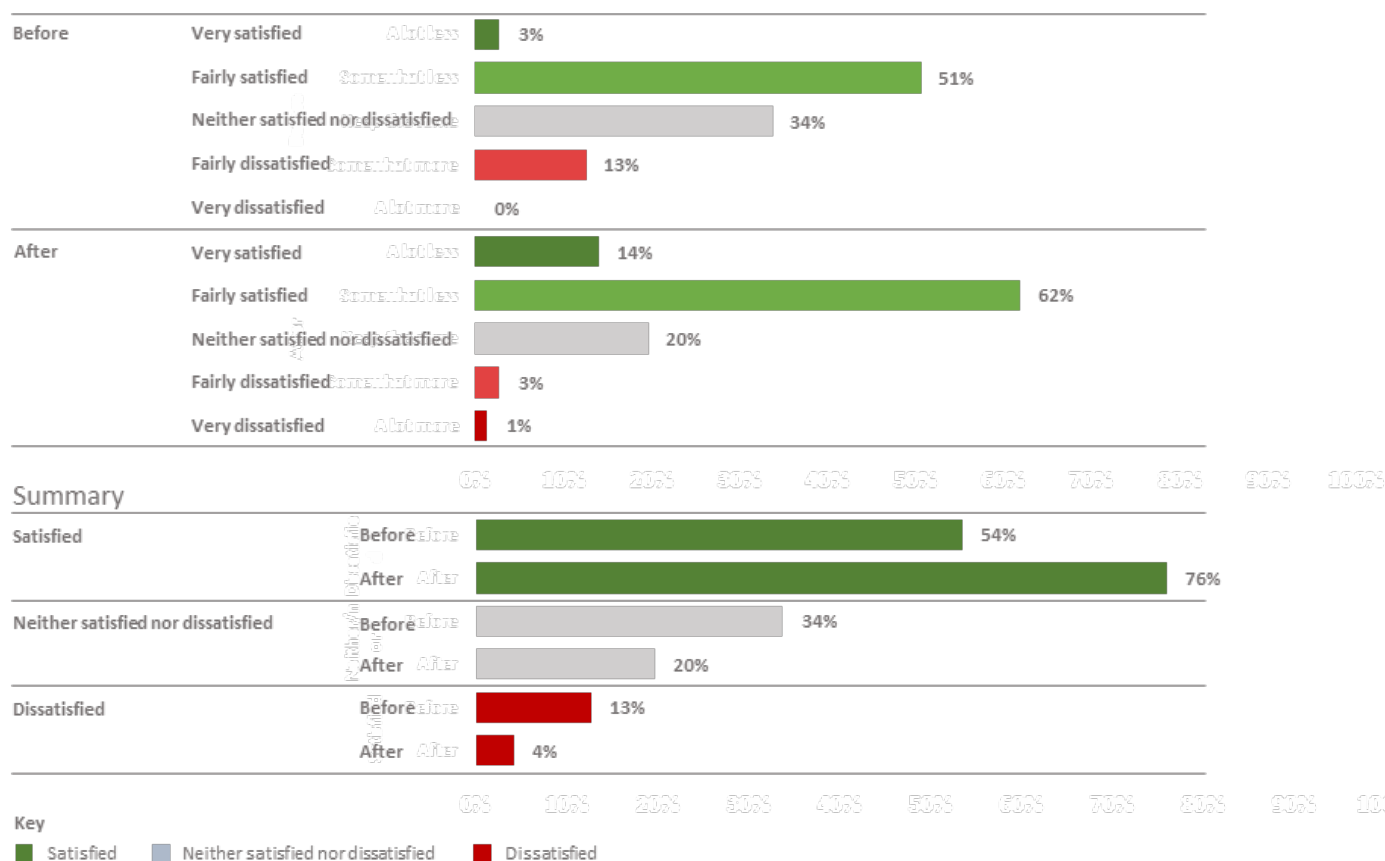


- 9.9 Results from the exit questionnaire show that, following the workshop presentations and discussions, the majority of residents (55%) felt LCC exceeds their expectations in working toward making the area a good place to live (17% greatly). This represents a 33-percentage point increase.

Most residents are satisfied with the way LCC runs the area

- 9.10 Residents were asked about their levels of satisfaction with the way LCC runs the area in both the welcome and exit questionnaires. Initially, just over half (54%) were satisfied, just over a third (34%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and only just over one in ten (13%) were dissatisfied.

Figure 67: Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way LCC runs the area?
Base: Welcome questionnaire - 71 respondents; Exit questionnaire – 71 respondents



- 9.11 Following the workshop presentations and discussions, satisfaction had risen by 22-percentage points to 76%. Only 4% said they were dissatisfied, with exactly one in five being neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.
- 9.12 It is clear then that feeling more informed about LCC and its service provision has a positive impact on people's satisfaction with the council - and helps manage people's expectations about what it can achieve within current financial and other constraints.

10. Key messages for LCC

^{10.1} At the end of the workshops (in the exit questionnaire), residents were asked to outline the two or three key messages they wanted taking back to LCC. Many messages reiterated points made earlier in terms of spend on particular services and new ways of working, but some of the more common messages were:

- The need for more public information around, for example, where money is being spent and why council tax rises are necessary

"I am now a lot more aware of where our money goes and the importance of it. Maybe educate/explain to people where their money goes"

"Make people more aware where the council money is spent"

"Make people more aware of where the money is being spent so that an increase in council tax will not be a big shock"

"Communication from the council to residents about where funds are spent. People would be more willing to pay council tax increases if they could see a direct benefit in their community"

- The need for fairer funding for councils such as LCC

"Keep at it, push government for a higher budget"

"Leicestershire needs more money per capita"

"You are a highly efficient council. Some of us are aware that we need to accept a rise in council taxes. Please press central government for a new settlement for Leicestershire"

"Ask central government to increase Leicestershire's budget. Why are we the lowest funded? Protect services for children, elderly and vulnerable in society"

"Campaign to make funding fairer across the country. Why is Leicester funded so much less than other authorities?"

"Be honest with how and why increases in council tax are happening. Newsletter letting people know spending/cuts"

^{10.2} In relation to the first point, several comments were made (in the questionnaire and the workshop discussions) in appreciation of how much factual information had been given at the workshops, leading to greater understanding of the challenges faced by LCC and the difficulties involved in making decisions around budgets and service provision.

"I didn't realise what a difficult job you had"

"It is harder than I thought and I am far less likely to begrudge the monthly council tax payment"

"The hard thing is you've made so many savings already and been so efficient that we feel we're just looking at chicken-feed really... All the things we don't think we can cut are actually statutory so the authority has got a duty legally to offer them" (Loughborough, 55+)

- 10.3 As such, residents suggested a need for more opportunities to get involved with and become better educated about their local authority.

"Very informative as to how much is spend on the community, would love to be involved more"

- 10.4 More specifically, residents offered the following messages.

*"Please continue to **invest in mental health provision**, this is crucial to both family as well as community - cutting down on this service will only mean more trouble in the long run"*

*"There needs to be **more auditing done in terms of funding and where money is going** to avoid corruption. The **education system is way behind in terms of new technology, online opportunity, niche markets etc.** Kids need to be thinking about becoming financially self-sufficient by starting their own businesses"*

*"Consider **joining up services, rationalising links with other providers, don't neglect infrastructure maintenance** as it will give a big bill in the future"*

*"**Keep an open mind on reducing costs, reducing number of debts** so more services are paid out of the same pot..."*

*"You are doing a good job. **Keep looking at commercial opportunities, making investment i.e. streamlining services/taking on service delivery within your area of expertise** to keep down cost and expenditure"*

Appendix I: Residents' opinions of their local areas

- ^{10.5} As a warm-up exercise in their break-out discussions, participants were asked for their views on what is it like to be a Leicestershire resident, both in terms of what they like about living in the county and what they felt could be improved.

Residents worry about a range of issues but feel that, overall, the quality of life in their local area is good

Residents' most important issues

- ^{10.6} When asked to outline the three most important issues in their local area, residents noted the following in their questionnaires:

	Number of Survey Responses
<i>Crime/anti-social behaviour (ASB) prevention and reduction (including Police Officer/PCSO numbers)</i>	27
<i>Transport infrastructure (e.g. roadworks/potholes)</i>	24
<i>Traffic issues (e.g. speeding, congestion, pollution, noise)</i>	16
<i>Access to schools/education</i>	15
<i>Waste management (e.g. recycling, collection frequency)</i>	14
<i>Cleanliness (e.g. litter, dog mess, fly tipping)</i>	12
<i>Protecting the vulnerable in society (e.g. disabled, young and elderly people, people with mental health issues)</i>	11
<i>Parking (e.g. spaces, cost, antisocial/dangerous parking)</i>	10
<i>Access to health and social care services</i>	10
<i>Environmental protection (e.g. greenfield sites being used for housing and development, protecting communal spaces; upkeep of local parks)</i>	9
<i>Facilities (e.g. youth centres/services, gyms and other local activity centres, declining town centres, lack of shops)</i>	7
<i>Planning (e.g. affordable housing for young people, development with no supporting infrastructure)</i>	7

- 10.7 Questionnaire respondents also expressed some concern about: street lighting; the availability of public transport; population growth; homelessness; and local employment levels.
- 10.8 Many of these concerns were also raised by participants in the nine workshop breakout groups, whose comments are summarised as follows.

Planning, Infrastructure and Housing

- 10.9 Serious concerns were expressed (especially by those in the 35-54 and 55+ age brackets) over the number of large executive housing developments in rural villages; insufficient affordable homes within these developments; a lack of additional infrastructure, causing pressure on existing roads, GPs and schools; and the loss of green land and amenity.

"The thing that worries me a little bit where I live is that there is a lot of green field and a lot of brown field sites that are being used, and the village is filling and filling... We're just getting houses, so we're not getting any infrastructure" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"The population of Kegworth is just growing and growing and growing, and...I don't think the school can cope" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"We had a petition because there was a plan for 5,000 houses to link Barkby, Syston, Queniborough, Thurmaston...and all that green land was just going to be houses. And then you've obviously got more families, more children, no more schools, and more places having to be allocated to each school" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"They are managing to get around it by allocating so many houses to different building companies. Therefore, not one company is building anything big enough that they need to put in for a school. So you find there's lots of mini-developments within one big development" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"It used to be lovely countryside between Enderby which is near Littlethorpe and Narborough until you got to Leicester Forest East and now it's just one big housing estate and there is just too many of them" (Wigston, 35-54)

"There are another 3,100 houses going in between Shepshed and Loughborough. It's bad enough moving around in the area now because of the congestion in rush hour. If 3,000 houses go in there won't be 3,000 cars, there will be more. They're not putting enough small houses - they're all bigger houses so first-time buyers aren't getting much chance to get on the ladder" (Loughborough, 55+)

"In my area there are a lot of executive homes going up. It's putting much more pressure on the roads around us. I'm not sure what infrastructure's being put in to support that in terms of the schools and everything else you need" (Wigston 55+)

"There's a lot of development in Fleckney and Kibworth and I used to be able to get a doctor's appointment within two weeks. Now it's four weeks - five weeks sometimes - it's absolutely flooded all the local services" (Wigston 55+)

"They're all being built in the wrong place. All of the transport problems. If they were built in the city of Leicester where the majority of housing needs are...the transport system is already in the city" (Wigston 55+)

"I can tell you that hardly any developments have gone up in the last ten years with 20% social housing because the developers say, 'oh, we don't want to build it there...we don't want people coming in with £100,000 houses and lowering the value'...so what they end up doing is going back to the planners and doing a deal: 'I tell you what, we'll chuck a quarter of a million into your library; we'll build a new road' and the planning authority roll over a bit and say, 'yeah, ok then'" (Wigston 55+)

Declining town centres

- ^{10.10} While acknowledging that this is a problem nationwide, participants were, nevertheless, concerned about the decreasing quality and range of town centre amenities - which in their view had been caused by out-of-town shopping centres, online shopping and high commercial rates. This was a particular issue among some of the Loughborough workshop attendees.

"There are no toy shops at all in Loughborough. There are no basic shops at all. It's run down..." (Loughborough, 18-34)

"The town centre is now getting quite run down. It seems to be coffee shops or charity shops in Melton. If I hadn't got a family here, I'd probably move away" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"For Loughborough Town, in the morning there is plenty of things you can do but in the night-time, apart from pubs and restaurants there is nothing else you can do" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"They were going to revamp the centre of Kegworth, where the church is, and make it block-paved...but that's been swept to one side" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"The little places are not surviving. That is the changes of online: Amazon; eBay ..." (Wigston, 35-54)

"Everything seems to be moving to the outskirts of town. You walk through the centre of Loughborough and probably one in three shops is empty" (Loughborough, 55+)

"We had a lovely market in Coalville, and it declined and declined and there's nothing there" (Loughborough, 55+)

"Business rates for shops - they're being charged, so we're told, these horrendous rates" (Loughborough, 55+)

A lack of youth and leisure facilities

- ^{10.11} An apparent lack of youth and leisure facilities (such as youth clubs, skate parks, green spaces and gyms) were noted by residents in all workshops.

"Things like youth clubs, skate parks, nice parks. There aren't many around. They are all by busy roads as well. They feel intimidated in some of the parks as there are older groups of teenagers. You couldn't leave a 12-year-old on their own" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"In Lutterworth, the gym membership has changed, it's the same price for an adult as for a teenager. It's cheaper to have a student membership than a 15 and 12-year-old. It makes no sense" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"There doesn't seem to be much going on in terms of things like youth projects" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"I live in Loughborough now and it's the worst place I've moved too. I can't stand Loughborough at all...there is nothing to do at all, nothing" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"There is a lack of youth facilities around in Leicestershire, as opposed to the amount of stuff that's on offer in the city... When I was growing up; when I used to go down to the youth club it was a massive part of my life and slowly I think it's started to fade and that was due to certain people couldn't put in the time anymore because there were a lot of volunteers... you see a lot of places close down or lose the facilities that they did have" (Wigston, 18-34)

"Where I live, we've got a leisure centre and that's about it. We used to have a cinema years and years ago but we had a wonderful place called Snibston Discovery Park...and that closed. There were lots of protests - a big fight to keep it" (Loughborough, 55+)

Access to public services such as schools and healthcare

- ^{10.12} Access to education and healthcare was considered problematic, particularly in relation to admissions, large class sizes, educational standards, and GP availability. This was thought to relate back to the amount of new housing being built with no associated infrastructure improvements.

"The schools in Burbage are oversubscribed. There are classes of 35. It's huge. The school's Ofsted rating has gone down in the last five years due to the amount of building that's been going on in Burbage. There are no new schools but hundreds of new houses..." (Hinckley, 35-54)

"The standards of schools are dropping a lot...obviously the funding is a bit thin... I went to a college as well and they are saying we used to be a good college in Leicester but now we are not as good as we used to be due to funding" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"School admission - full everywhere" (Wigston, 18-34)

"It is like you have to justify it before you get an appointment (for the GP), because the receptionist is like 'well why do you need an appointment?' And if it is not an urgent thing then it's like 'well you need to ring back tomorrow'" (Loughborough, 35-54)

Policing levels

- ^{10.13} Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour and low policing numbers were issues across the board – and especially among young people.

"It's the last few years since we've had the lack of the police in the area (Lutterworth)" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"Anti-social behaviour. Especially with people just slightly younger than me. I don't know whether there's not much to do..." (Hinckley, 18-34)

"My husband is part time firefighter...and only a month ago there was an accident in Lutterworth, on a Friday night, and there was two police cars and two police officers, a man and a woman, and they were covering south Leicestershire - just two!" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"I've been robbed twice from my house in Wigston. It just makes you feel uneasy doesn't it? Especially in your own home, you feel violated. Just feel a bit on-edge" (Wigston, 18-34)

"More people are coming here. Crime is everywhere now - burglary, car smashing - and it's not to one area because these people are moving around. So, it's happening everywhere, I think" (Wigston, 18-34)

"Where I lived for four years, everyday there were fights. I told the council support officer; rang the Community Support Police for four years. In my flats too many teenagers doing drugs, starting fights" (Wigston, 18-34)

Public transport services

- ^{10.14} Public transport services in certain rural areas of the county were described as infrequent and expensive, potentially isolating young people and older residents.

"The buses don't reach every district. I couldn't get to Groby from Anstey because there is no bus there. They are a 40-minute walk from each other, five-minute drive from each other and people can't get there" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"In my village the bus service is terrible - nothing after 6 o'clock. They've reduced it to every two hours now; nothing on a Sunday. If you can't drive, it's a problem. And the bus service only goes to Market Harborough. If you want to go to Leicester, you have to go to Fleckney and to get the bus there or to Kibworth...I think the more rural areas are suffering" (Wigston, 55+)

"When you think of all the buses between Leicester and Loughborough per hour every day - it must be astronomical. And we've got no bus...for the elderly and the youngsters, there's no chance of going anywhere" (Wigston 55+)

"Also, if it was less expensive to go on the bus, more people would use it. It's cheaper for me to drive into Leicester and pay for parking than it is to pay for a bus and that's crazy" (Wigston, 55+)

Transport infrastructure

- ^{10.15} Roadworks, congestion, potholes, unmarked roads, speed cameras and cycle tracks were all raised in a negative context in the initial discussion on living in Leicestershire.

“Roadworks do my head in at the minute...going through Lutterworth is a bit of a drag at the minute; potholes and unmarked roads as well... My best friend was biking on very unclear, unmarked roads...he was killed unfortunately. Unmarked roads were a big part of it” (Hinckley, 18-34)

“It just seems that every road that is dual carriageway past somebody else’s house, you’ll put speed cameras up” (Loughborough, 35-54)

“The mayor...why has he spent all the money on cycle tracks? Have you ever seen people using them? I’m sure the money could have been spent better” (Wigston, 35-54)

“Creating more jobs is fantastic, but they forget that there’s two main routes in and out of Hinckley. They shut off a part of Burbage because of Severn Trent, it’s backlogged everywhere” (Hinckley, 35-54)

Street lighting

^{10.16} A lack of street lighting was raised in both the 18-34 and 35-54 year olds’ workshop discussions in Loughborough.

“When the weather gets dark, for the main road when the light is broken then they will repair straight away but if it’s the side road...it can be two years and no-one cares” (Loughborough, 18-34)

“In the winter some of the lighting...because we’re living in a village...the roads are that dark. I just think crime as well, especially vandals...they’re getting done because of it being pitch black in the winter” (Loughborough, 35-54)

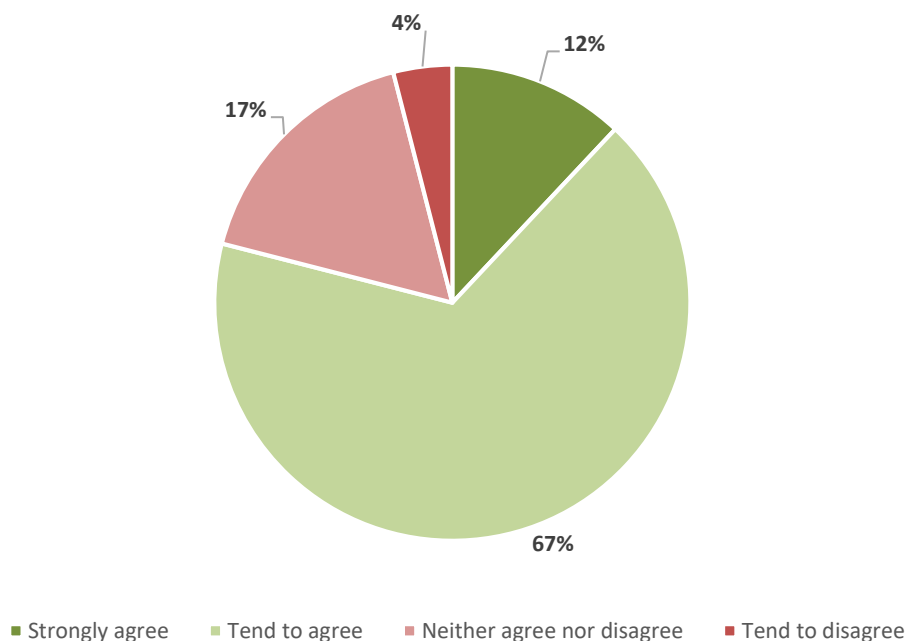
Residents’ main areas for improvement

^{10.17} When asked to identify areas for improvement, workshop discussion participants mentioned: better traffic management to reduce congestion; more public events; more police officers and PCSOs on the beat; better street lighting in some rural areas; improvements to mental health services; improved bus services for rural areas; and better access to affordable housing options both in the public and private sectors.

Residents agree that, generally, quality of life in their local areas is good

^{10.18} Despite the above, although, a majority of residents (79%) agreed in their pre-discussion questionnaires that the quality of life in their local areas is good, with most of these (67%) tending to agree. Only 4% tended to disagree, with just under one in five (17%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Figure 68: To what extent do you agree with the following statement: quality of life in my area is good overall?
Base: 72 Respondents



^{10.19} When asked why they said this, questionnaire respondents who agreed that the quality of life in their area is good either made general comments about their area being a 'nice place to live' and/or specifically noted the following:

<i>Good community facilities, activities and amenities</i>
<i>Good community spirit/good neighbours</i>
<i>Low crime/Anti-Social Behaviour</i>
<i>Good schools and learning facilities</i>
<i>A nice/clean environment and good access to countryside and open spaces</i>
<i>Good transport links</i>

^{10.20} Some of the more positive comments made in the workshop break-out discussions were around:

Countryside access, the quality of the environment and natural amenities

"It has beautiful countryside. All the area around Bradgate park is good for walks. There is the bike ride, lots of local outdoor places to go... Foxton Locks, Burbage Common, Market Bosworth Water Park, Lutterworth Country Park" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"It's a nice place to live. It's small but not too small" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"Some of the best mountain bike trails around" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"I like the back roads...I like the nature. There are a lot of places to go and see" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"I like that it's peaceful... Bradgate Park is quite near me, I like being able to walk there and the open green spaces. Leicestershire is good for that" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"What I like about my area is it's just near Rutland Water and there is loads of stuff to do; you can go for walks, bike rides" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"I live in Mountsorrell which is rural and there are plenty of places to take my kids" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"We're lucky we're right in the country; we're right in the middle of the National Forest, so we can just walk - bluebell walks and lovely lakes all around us" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"I quite love the town (Loughborough)...there are so many greens that the people can enjoy walking and, also, probably a mile away from outside the town there is a lot of green which is good for you. After your meal, you walk out, and you just enjoy the place. There are plenty of water features and the pond which does the town good" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"It doesn't take long to get away from main areas and out into the countryside..." (Loughborough, 55+)

"It's a very scenic county. I think people come here from all over the country as tourists. It's very green, very rural" (Loughborough, 55+)

"Thornton Reservoir. When we have friends come to stay with us, Bosworth Battlefield" (Wigston, 55+)

"Watermead Park... It's fantastic" (Wigston, 35-54)

Leicestershire's strategic location and wider transport links

"The fact that you can be in London in an hour. It's quick to get to big cities, go the theatre" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"Where I live, I can go 20 minutes either way and I can get to Nottingham, Derby, Leicester... a really good location... And I'm close to the airport as well" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"The M1 is on our doorstep and gives us really good links to get to wherever we want to in the country...for business or pleasure... The Lake District is about two and a half hours away...we're so lucky" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"It's got good transport links. I was able to go down by train this last weekend to London. It's easy to get to places like Nottingham and Leicester where there's good theatre life and culture close by" (Loughborough, 55+)

"I like where it is in the country - it's not too far from anywhere" (Wigston, 55+)

Leicestershire's good infrastructure

"There's some good public transport links. So, before I could drive, I could take my daughter to lots of places: museums and parks...so I do think we've got some good areas to visit" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"It has good infrastructure, transport. Leicester has developed a lot" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"It's got good facilities, schools, etc." (Hinckley, 35-54)

"The new bypass just outside Kegworth - That's a good thing. It's brilliant, it has stopped all the big lorries coming through Kegworth centre" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"There are some great schools and a great university... I think there's an attraction for incomers like me because there are things for our families" (Loughborough, 55+)

Community spirit and social cohesion

"You can see that the community are proud of where they are. They are doing things together and it's for a good cause" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"It's like where we are, the local guy who runs one of the chip shops is often out there picking up litter. It's taking pride, rather than slating it" (Hinckley, 35-54)

"Melton is quite good for young kids. You can go out to a community centre...got lots on at churches and things like that" (Loughborough, 18-34)

"I like Syston...I like that you've still got a village environment, so we know our neighbours on the street still and you don't feel like a stranger walking around" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"Friendliness and that sense of community which is really positive about living up here" (Loughborough, 35-54)

"People are really nice...I enjoy gardening with the community" (Loughborough, 55+)

"It's a really diverse community and the communities integrate really well, and people really work to make sure that happens...I think it's a very supportive area" (Loughborough, 55+)

"We welcome the new people coming in. We go out of our way to make them feel at home" (Loughborough, 55+)

"It's very good. All the communities living well together" (Wigston, 55+)

The mix of city/town and country – and the facilities and amenities available

"We've got a fantastic mix; I can do all the partying and then escape back to the countryside and take the dog a walk as well" (Hinckley, 18-34)

"Multicultural, city but also countryside as in Bradgate Park" (Wigston 35-54)

"Everything I need is in reach so the shops and that" (Loughborough 18-34)

"More and more things are opening. In some towns and villages things are closing but Costa recently opened, supermarkets are getting opened so a lot going on in Syston" (Loughborough 18-34)

"What I like about Loughborough is a nice mix. It feels more peaceful than where I'm from" (Loughborough 18-34)

"The leisure centre here is quite good - there's quite a range of activities" (Loughborough, 55+)

"Facilities are good (in Kirby Muxloe)" (Wigston 55+)

"Fosse Park's better than anywhere else...it does bring a lot of visitors and hopefully income in so that should help Leicestershire" (Wigston 55+)

Appendix II: Questionnaires

Pre-workshop questionnaire

Leicestershire Discussion Evening - July 2019

Welcome questionnaire

Name:

Group:

Date:

Welcome to this Leicestershire Discussion Evening. We hope you have an enjoyable evening. Before we begin, we would like you to answer a few questions on some local issues. Please do not spend too long thinking about your answers, as we are interested in your first instincts. This is NOT a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Your answers will be reported anonymously and won't be attributed to you. Please let a member of staff know if you have any questions or would like help completing this.

Q1 In your opinion, what are the three most important issues in your local area?

Q2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

The quality of life in my local area is good overall

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q3 Why do you say that?

Your personal details will be treated confidentially and processed by ORS in accordance with the UK Data Protection Act and EU GDPR. Any participant feedback from this questionnaire will be reported anonymously. Please visit <http://www.ors.org.uk/privacy> or <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/about-the-council/data-protection-and-privacy> for more information.

Q4 How well informed, if at all, do you feel about the services provided by Leicestershire County Council?

Very well
informed

☐

Fairly well
informed

☐

Not very well
informed

☐

Not at all
informed

☐

Don't know

☐

Q5 How well informed, if at all, do you feel about how the Council makes its decisions on spending?

Very well
informed

☐

Fairly well
informed

☐

Not very well
informed

☐

Not at all
informed

☐

Don't know

☐

Q6 How well informed, if at all, do you feel about local government funding?

Very well
informed

☐

Fairly well
informed

☐

Not very well
informed

☐

Not at all
informed

☐

Don't know

☐

Q7 Thinking generally about what you expect of Leicestershire County Council, in it's role helping to make the area a good place to live, would you say that it ...?

☐ ...greatly exceeds your expectations

☐ ...slightly exceeds your expectations

☐ ...is about what you expect

☐ ...falls slightly short of your expectations

☐ ...falls a long way short of your expectations

☐ Don't know

Q8 Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Leicestershire County Council runs the area?

Very satisfied

☐

Fairly satisfied

☐

Neither satisfied
not dissatisfied

☐

Fairly
dissatisfied

☐

Very dissatisfied

☐

Q9 And overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree that Leicestershire County Council provides value for money?

Strongly agree

☐

Tend to agree

☐

Neither agree
nor disagree

☐

Tend to
disagree

☐

Strongly
disagree

☐

Q10 Roughly how much do you think that Leicestershire County Council spends on services for local people each year? DO NOT WORRY IF YOU ARE NOT SURE – JUST GIVE IT YOUR BEST GUESS!

£

Q11 Roughly how much of this amount do you think is raised from the council tax? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX. AGAIN, GIVE IT YOUR BEST GUESS IF YOU ARE NOT SURE.

- ☐ None at all
- ☐ Around a third (33%)
- ☐ Around half (50%)
- ☐ Around two thirds (66%)
- ☐ All of it

Q12 Currently would you say that the amount of council tax you or your household pays to Leicestershire County Council for the public services it provides is too high, about right, or too low?

- ☐ Too high
- ☐ About right
- ☐ Too low

Q13 People have different views about Council Tax levels. Which of these statements comes closest to your own view?

The figures in brackets show what this increase would be next year for a household in a band D property.

Council Tax should be...

- ☐ ...increased significantly above the rate of inflation to improve services (4% - an extra £48 next year)
- ☐ ...increased slightly above the rate of inflation to maintain services (3% - an extra £36 next year)
- ☐ ...increased in line with inflation even if it means some service cuts (2% - an extra £24 next year)
- ☐ ...increased below inflation even if it means significant cuts to some services (1% - an extra £12 next year)
- ☐ ...frozen even if it means significant cuts to many services (0% - £0)
- ☐ ...reduced even if it means severe cuts to many services
- ☐ Don't know

Q14 Looking at this list of some of the services provided by Leicestershire County Council, which five or six, if any, do you consider to be most important?

Most important (Please tick up to six boxes)

- ☐ Adult learning courses and support
- ☐ Bus passes for older and disabled people
- ☐ Children's social care services and child protection
- ☐ Children's health services (e.g. health visiting and school nursing)
- ☐ Country parks
- ☐ Drug/alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment
- ☐ Early support to families and young people, including youth services and community safety
- ☐ Grants to help communities, community groups, businesses and support to economic growth
- ☐ Grass cutting
- ☐ Libraries
- ☐ Local tips/household recycling sites
- ☐ Maintaining roads and pavements
- ☐ Museums
- ☐ Public bus service subsidies
- ☐ Residential and nursing homes for older people
- ☐ Services for adults with learning disabilities
- ☐ Services for adults with mental health problems
- ☐ Services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- ☐ Services for physically disabled people
- ☐ Smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks
- ☐ Street lighting
- ☐ Supporting children and young people in care (including fostering and adoption)
- ☐ Supporting older people to live independently in the community
- ☐ Trading standards
- ☐ Transport to schools
- ☐ Winter road gritting

Q15 Of these services, which do you think the Council should spend more money, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount on? TICK ONE BOX PER ROW

	Spend much more	Spend somewhat more	Keep the same	Spend somewhat less	Spend a lot less
Adult learning courses and support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus passes for older and disabled people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's social care services and child protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's health services (e.g. health visiting and school nursing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Country parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug/alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early support to families and young people, including youth services and community safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grants to help communities, community groups, businesses and support to economic growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grass cutting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local tips/household recycling sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining roads and pavements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Museums	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public bus service subsidies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Residential and nursing homes for older people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Services for adults with learning disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Services for adults with mental health problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Services for physically disabled people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Street lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting children and young people in care (including fostering and adoption)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting older people to live independently in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trading standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport to schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Winter road gritting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.
PLEASE HAND IN YOUR COMPLETED FORM.

Post-workshop questionnaire

Leicestershire Discussion Evening - July 2019

Final questionnaire

Name:

Group:

Date:

Thank you very much for your contribution to this research. Please complete this important final questionnaire as completely as you can. As with everything to do with this research, your answers will remain completely anonymous.

Q1 How well informed, if at all, do you feel about the services provided by Leicestershire County Council?

Very well
informed

☐

Fairly well
informed

☐

Not very well
informed

☐

Not at all
informed

☐

Don't know

☐

Q2 Thinking generally about what you expect of Leicestershire County Council, in it's role helping to make the area a good place to live, would you say that it ...?

- ☐ ...greatly exceeds your expectations
- ☐ ...slightly exceeds your expectations
- ☐ ...is about what you expect
- ☐ ...falls slightly short of your expectations
- ☐ ...falls a long way short of your expectations
- ☐ Don't know

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Q3 Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Leicestershire County Council runs the area?

Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither satisfied not dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4 Currently would you say that the amount of council tax you or your household pays to Leicestershire County Council for the public services it provides is too high, about right, or too low?

- ☐ Too high
- ☐ About right
- ☐ Too low

Q5 When Leicestershire County Council sets the level of council tax next year, which of the following would you prefer it to aim for?

The figures in brackets show what this increase would be next year for a household in a band D property.

Council Tax should be...

- ☐ ...increased significantly above the rate of inflation to improve services (4% - an extra £48 next year)
- ☐ ...increased slightly above the rate of inflation to maintain services (3% - an extra £36 next year)
- ☐ ...increased in line with inflation even if it means some service cuts (2% - an extra £24 next year)
- ☐ ...increased below inflation even if it means significant cuts to some services (1% - an extra £12 next year)
- ☐ ...frozen even if it means significant cuts to many services (0% - £0)
- ☐ ...reduced even if it means severe cuts to many services
- ☐ Don't know

Q6 How well informed, if at all, do you feel about how the Council makes its decisions on spending?

Very well informed	Fairly well informed	Not very well informed	Not at all informed	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q7 To what extent do you agree or disagree that Leicestershire County Council provides value for money?

Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q8 Here is a list of the Council's services which we have discussed this evening. Of these services, which do you think the Council should spend more money, spend less money on, or keep spending the same amount on? TICK ONE BOX PER ROW

	Spend much more	Spend somewhat more	Keep the same	Spend somewhat less	Spend a lot less
Adult learning courses and support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus passes for older and disabled people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's social care services and child protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's health services (e.g. health visiting and school nursing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Country parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug/alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early support to families and young people, including youth services and community safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grants to help communities, community groups, businesses and support to economic growth	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grass cutting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local tips/household recycling sites	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining roads and pavements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Museums	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public bus service subsidies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Residential and nursing homes for older people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Services for adults with learning disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Services for adults with mental health problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Services for physically disabled people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Street lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting children and young people in care (including fostering and adoption)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supporting older people to live independently in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trading standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transport to schools	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Winter road gritting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q9 Looking again at the list of services, which ones, if any, stand out for you as perhaps being suitable for being provided in different ways. All your ideas will be very helpful to us so do write as fully as you can please.

(i) More working in partnership with other councils and public services?

(ii) With more community involvement?

(iii) With more individual responsibility?

(iv) With more charging for services

Q10 Have you any more thoughts on how the council could reduce spending or raise more money for services?

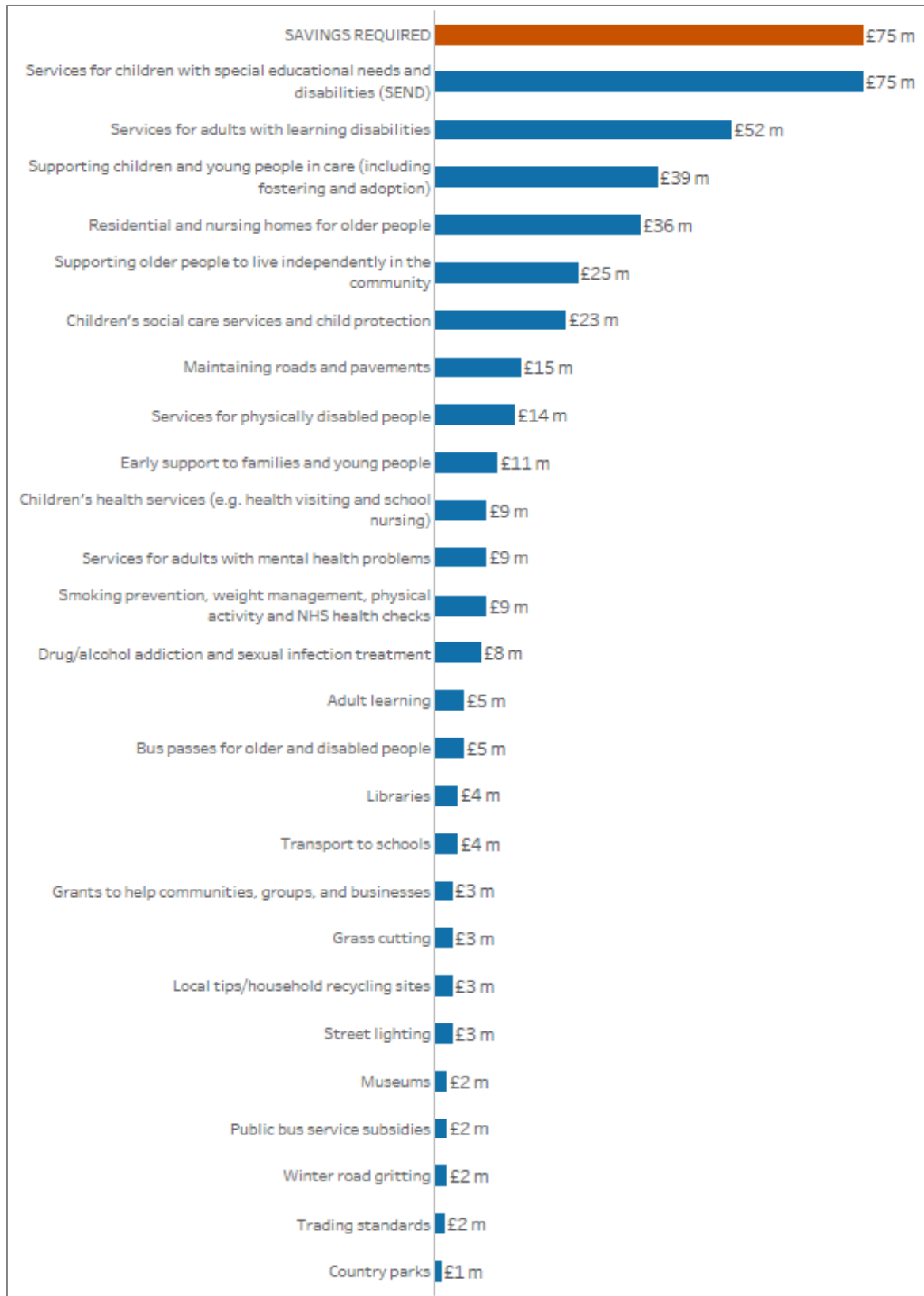
Q11 What two or three key messages would you like us to send back to Leicestershire County Council following today's discussions?

Q12 We're very interested in your opinion of today's Discussion Evening. Please write in below whether you found it useful or not useful; enjoyable or not enjoyable. Please write in any other comments about today.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE AND FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THIS RESEARCH.

Appendix III: Workshop materials

Poster of council services by spend



Council services example worksheet

Leicestershire County Council Services	
Adult learning	● ● ● ●
Bus passes for older and disabled people	
Children's health services (e.g. health visiting and school nursing)	
Children's social care services and child protection	● ● ●
Country parks	
Drug/alcohol addiction and sexual infection treatment	● ● ●
Early support to families and young people	
Grants to help communities, groups, and businesses	
Grass cutting	●
Libraries	● ● ● ●
Local tips/household recycling sites	●
Maintaining roads and pavements	● ●
Museums	●
Public bus service subsidies	●
Residential and nursing homes for older people	● ●
Services for adults with learning disabilities	● ●
Services for adults with mental health problems	●
Services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	● ●
Services for physically disabled people	●
Smoking prevention, weight management, physical activity and NHS health checks	● ● ● ● ●
Street lighting	●
Supporting children and young people in care (including fostering and adoption)	
Supporting older people to live independently in the community	● ● ● ●
Trading standards	● ● ● ●
Transport to schools	● ●
Winter road gritting	● ●

Appendix IV: participants' feedback on their workshop experience

(Taken verbatim from their post-discussion questionnaires)

Melton/Harborough/Oadby & Wigston

18-34 group

"This is my first discussion evening. I found this very beneficial in terms of education – I also really enjoyed it more than I thought!"

"Useful – thanks!"

"I found the session very enjoyable because I was informed on what the money is spent on as well as being able to put forward opinions"

"Very useful; very enjoyable"

"Yes, it was very useful"

"Useful, enjoyable, good fun!"

"Great experience and knowledge. Met different people. Learnt different opinions and experiences of people"

"Enjoyed as has enhanced my knowledge on where our tax is spent on"

"Enjoyable, good for better understanding"

"It was very useful as I didn't know where the money is being spent as it was very informative. I learnt a lot of new thing[s] today"

35-54 group

"Very useful and surprisingly enjoyable"

"Very informative as to how much is spent on the community. Would love to be involved more"

"Didn't realise how well LCC manage their budget"

"Enjoyable, insightful."

"Fantastic, educational and a nice chance to find out more information which should be more available"

"Good opportunity for discussing about council and funding"

"Yes, it was very useful and enjoyable"

55+ group

"Very useful insight into the issues facing councils"

"Helpful and enjoyable – thank you!"

"Very useful and enjoyable and learning more about the council and giving feedback to people"

"Very interesting"

"Most enjoyable – found other people's views interesting!"

"Useful and enjoyable. Very good facilities – very tactful and well managed. I just didn't agree with the parameters of the discussion"

"I did find it interesting and am more informed about council matters. I think you have a pretty impossible task, pleasing all of the people just isn't possible. Good luck!"

"Very useful"

Charnwood/North West Leicestershire

18-34 group

"Very good, lots of opinions from different people"

"I found it very enjoyable meeting new people and seeing what other people's opinions were"

"Today was very useful, hearing different points of views has been an eye opener"

"Was a very interesting discussion, the team were very friendly, and we created some good ideas"

"Interesting, learnt more and saw more in a prospective way"

"It was more interesting than I thought. I love how I have gained knowledge of the council, as before this I wasn't even aware of what council tax was"

"Not enjoyable listening to some vile opinions"

"This survey night was enjoyable, and I have learnt a lot"

"I enjoyed today, it was well ran. I hope that the feedback is utilised. Facilitator did a cracking job"

35-54 group

"I found it much more enjoyable than I initially thought it would be. I hope some of our suggestions are listened to and acted upon to help county thrive"

"Useful and enjoyable. I didn't realise just how in depth the councils have to work in order to maintain and improve areas"

"It was enjoyable to hear the view of my fellow participants. However as to the ideas that were presented, I'm doubting any will be taken on board due to central government still in charge with coffers"

"Found this meeting very useful and informative, opened my eyes to how difficult it is"

"Enjoyable and interesting discussion. Good facilitator and information provision"

"Great evening, fully enjoyed it. A fantastic learning curve"

55+

"I have found this evening very useful to understand what is required by the council and the expectations of residents"

"Very useful and enjoyable. Food for thought"

"Very useful. This will take a while to digest, but I expect it will change my thinking on "cuts" moving forward"

"Information provided was very helpful in learning the percentages paid for each of its services. Surprised to see such high percentages for SEND etc. and low for highways and pavements. Very enjoyable evening"

"Very interesting and enjoyable. Learnt many facts"

"It was enjoyable and I would definitely do it again"

"I found this evening very interesting and the information useful. Very enjoyable"

"Enjoyable, interesting, stimulating, informative and well facilitated"

Hinckley & Bosworth/Blaby

18-34

"Useful and enjoyable"

"Very useful and enjoyed mixing with other people to find out their views and opinions"

"I personally found today actually quite enjoyable. I honestly didn't feel I would get much from today however I have found that I have. Very well-run by professional staff. Opened my eyes to what the council have to provide in the community. A very well-run event"

"I found it very useful and certainly made me realise where my money goes and now would be more willing to contribute more. Also offer any voluntary work that I can to help reduce costs"

"It was useful and a good insight into council's budgets"

"Enjoyed and learnt a lot from this session, thank you"

35-54

"Extremely useful and interesting"

"Very useful, great networking"

"Very surprising figures and interesting. Enjoyable"

"It was very useful"

"Found very useful and well presented"

"Useful and enjoyable"

55+

"Very useful"

"Was very interesting and gave a greater understanding of how the council fund services. I enjoyed it"

"Very well run and facilitated. Informative and enjoyable. Nice group of people"

"Very useful. A well-informed group with good ideas. Enjoyable. Do it more often"

"Very enjoyable and interesting to hear how the council works and how other people feel about and what other others see as important"

"Very interesting night, eye opener, enjoyable"

"Very interesting in hindsight"