

AREA FORUM COMMENTS REGARDING THE BUDGET PROCESS

Broadheath, Ditton, Hale and Hough Green

- There was a need to involve young people representatives in this consultation in order to gain their views, for example via Connexions or the Borough Youth Forum.
- Cleaner streets was considered to be an important issue.

Appleton, Kingsway and Riverside

- There was a concern that there were too many high paid managers.
- There should be more money spent on education.
- Road safety was considered to be an important issue.
- There should be an investment in the condition of roads – repairing rather than “patching up”.
- There was also support for an increase in fines in respect of drivers parking on double yellow lines and on pavements.
- The Council tax rise should be kept well below 4% at the rate of inflation.

Farnworth, Halton View and Birchfield

- An individual commented he was happy to pay more Council tax as long as it was spent on services and not on providing additional staff.
- Clarification was also sought on how the Local Authority reviewed its services. It was noted that Halton Borough Council was reviewed on an annual basis by the Audit Commission, which examined the Council on cost and quality of service. However, outside of this annual review, the Authority was continually reviewing its services and trying to find savings.

Mersey, Heath, Grange and Halton Brook

- One lady queried whether the Council Tax money went to older people services. The Lead Officer gave a response on the breakdown of care provided and promised to send her a detailed document.
- Surprise was expressed that the outcome said that people wanted to spend less on car parking ie traffic issues.

Castlefields, Norton North, Norton South and Windmill Hill

- The presentation talks about the Council's crime prevention and there is also the police precept - does that mean we are being charged twice for crime prevention?
- There is a need for more bins and street lighting
- Older people think that less should be spent on young people, but there are a lack of facilities for young people.

- Have management structures been looked at, savings from here could be spent on frontline services.
- Council seems to get rid of frontline staff, not management.
- What precepts were expected from the Police and Fire Service?

Beechwood and Halton Lea

Clarification was sought on Car Park Charges and other parking enforcement arrangements (these were not put forward as a suggested scheme). In response the Forum was advised that the Council did not own sufficient car parks where fees were charged. With regard to parking enforcement arrangements, although the authority could employ parking enforcement officers, this would need to be self-financing. In neighbouring Sefton Borough Council where parking enforcement officers were employed, the initial set up costs were approx £1m. Parking enforcement officers were something that could be considered with a neighbouring authority but not for Halton on its own.

(NB Daresbury Area Forum has yet to meet.)