

Your membership number is:



in Lancashire

1. Please read the instructions carefully.
2. Please use blue or black pen to fill in the questionnaire.
3. Please check you have answered all the appropriate questions.
4. Return your completed questionnaire in the reply-paid envelope provided.

Lancashire County Council Budget and Priorities

We want to ask you some questions on what you think about the county council's service priorities, and the Council Tax we charge. First, here is some brief background information about the budget and Council Tax.

Spending priorities

In the current financial year April 2006 to March 2007 the county council will spend £1,611 million. £1,009 million of that spending is funded from government grants for specific services and from fees and charges that we make for certain services. The largest item within this total is £607 million of grant from the government to fund schools. This leaves a net spend of £602 million. The table on the next page shows how this will be spent.

Spending	£ million	%
Children and young people	143	24
Adult social services	253	42
Highway maintenance	58	10
Community services (including recreation, tourism and libraries)	25	4
Waste disposal	37	6
Financing of borrowing costs for capital schemes (for example long-term road and building projects)	36	6
Public transport	10	2
Public protection (including emergency planning, trading standards, county analyst and registrars)	9	1
Planning and countryside services	5	1
Supporting economic development in Lancashire	2	-
Other services	24	4
Total	602	100

Council Tax

The county council's spending is funded from three sources. Business rates and Revenue Support Grant are fixed sums of money from the government. The county council sets Council Tax according to how much more it needs to pay for total spending. Funding for 2006/07 is:

	£ million	% of total
Business rates	187	31
Revenue Support Grant	36	6
Council Tax	379	63
Total	602	100

The county council set a spending budget of £602 million for 2006/07. We received £223 million from the government, leaving a balance of £379 million to be raised from Council Tax.

For a household in band D this meant a Council Tax charge of £996.85 for the year, equivalent to £19.17 a week. This was an increase of 4.9% on the previous year.

In a shire county like Lancashire, the Council Tax bill also includes charges from borough and district councils, the police authority, the fire authority and sometimes the local parish council.

Next year

When the county council set the Council Tax last February for the current year, it also agreed that it would try to limit the increase for 2007/08 to no more than 5%.

The forecast for next year shows county council spending increasing by 6.9% (based on current levels of spending): inflation at 4% and service growth at 2.9%. This includes increased numbers of child and adult social care clients and additional borrowing costs from previous years' capital programmes. We expect a general grant increase from the government of 4.6%. This forecast would lead to:

- a Council Tax increase of just over 8% to continue at current spending levels; or
- spending reductions of around £12.5 million to give a 5% Council Tax increase.

To limit the Council Tax increase to no more than 5% and bridge the gap in our budget, the cabinet and service directors have put forward a package of efficiency savings of £10 million and service reductions of £2.5 million. The efficiency savings are part of an ongoing programme, and come from back office operations so that front line services are affected as little as possible. These proposals will be debated over the next couple of months. The final proposals will be approved in February 2007 by the full county council when it sets the budget and Council Tax for 2007/08.

In light of these proposals, we'd like to hear your views on:

- what our spending priorities should be over the next year; and
- the level of Council Tax increase that we should aim for next year.

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a) Which three or four of the following services should be the highest priorities for spending next year? PLEASE TICK UP TO FOUR BOXES

b) And which three or four of these services should be the lowest priorities for spending next year? PLEASE TICK UP TO FOUR BOXES

	a) Highest spending priorities	b) Lowest spending priorities
Nursery education	14%	21%
Primary and secondary education	50%	5%
Pupils who are socially disadvantaged and children with special educational needs	21%	4%
Children's social care (protecting vulnerable children)	28%	2%
Libraries	11%	22%
Museums and galleries	3%	47%
Adult education	6%	27%
Services for adults with disabilities	18%	4%
Services for older people (including care in their own homes and in residential homes)	54%	2%
Maintaining roads and bridges (emergencies and fixing potholes)	30%	5%
Traffic management (making road travel safer)	21%	18%
Keeping local bus services running	25%	10%
Waste management (household waste disposal and recycling)	35%	7%
Country parks, open spaces and picnic sites	11%	27%
Support for businesses and attracting investment to Lancashire	16%	27%
Crime prevention (working with partner organisations to help prevent crime and disorder and reduce the fear of crime)	53%	3%
Trading standards	5%	25%
Welfare rights (helping people get the support they are entitled to)	11%	28%
Youth and community services (activities and support for young people)	21%	14%
None of these	0%	6%
Don't know	1%	8%

12**Which of the following most closely matches your opinion on what the council should do about increasing Council Tax next year?**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- No increase in Council Tax over this year, which would mean a significant reduction in county council services 30% → **END**
-
- An increase in Council Tax of less than 5%, which would mean more reductions in services than the council proposes 24% → **GO TO Q13**
-
- An increase in Council Tax of around 5% (in line with the council's proposals), which would mean some reductions in services 34% → **GO TO Q13**
-
- An increase in Council Tax of over 5%, which would reduce or eliminate the need for reductions in services 12% → **GO TO Q13**

13**And what level of increase do you feel you could support?**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

(Note: figures are shown for band D and for the lowest and highest bands, A and H, to illustrate the full range. The effects for the other bands would fall within the ranges shown.)

	Band A	Band D	Band H	
Current 2006/07 Council Tax a week	£12.78	£19.17	£38.34	
With a 3% increase	£13.16	£19.75	£39.49	23%
With a 4% increase	£13.29	£19.94	£39.87	14%
With a 5% increase	£13.42	£20.13	£40.26	45%
With a 6% increase	£13.55	£20.32	£40.64	9%
With a 7% increase	£13.67	£20.51	£41.02	3%
With a 8% increase	£13.80	£20.70	£41.41	5%

Please return the questionnaire in the reply-paid envelope.

Thank you for being part of Life in Lancashire.

Life in Lancashire, Lancashire County Council,
Freepost PR864, PRESTON, PR1 8BR

