



Living in Lancashire Survey

Budget consultation 2012

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1. Executive summary

This wave of the Living in Lancashire panel dealt with priorities for the county council's budget. The survey was sent by email or by post to all 3,136 members of the panel on 14 November and the fieldwork ended on 7 December 2012. In total 1,496 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 48%.

Highest priority services for spending in the coming years

- **Services for older people, primary and secondary education and crime prevention** are seen as the highest spending priorities for the coming years (53%, 45% and 44% respectively).

Lowest spending priorities in the coming years

- As in the 2011 and 2010 surveys, **museums** are seen as the service that should be the lowest priority for spending in the coming years (40%).
- **Adult education, country parks, open spaces and picnic sites and welfare rights** are seen as the next lowest priorities (30%, 28% and 27%).

Budget decisions

- Four fifths of respondents agree that they can appreciate that in the current climate there are difficult budget decisions that the county council needs to make (82%).

2. Introduction

Lancashire County Council has used Living in Lancashire regularly since August 2001 (formerly known as Life in Lancashire). A panel of willing participants is recruited and is approached on a regular basis to seek their views on a range of topics and themes. Panel members are voluntary participants in the research they complete and no incentives are given for completion.

The panel has been designed to be a representative cross-section of the county's population. The results for each survey are weighted in order to reflect the demographic profile of the county's population.

The panel provides access to a sufficiently large sample of the population so that reliable results can be reported at a county wide level. It also provides data at a number of sub-area and sub-group levels.

Each wave of Living in Lancashire is themed. Firstly, it enables sufficient coverage on a particular topic to be able to provide insight into that topic. And secondly, it comes across better to the residents completing the questionnaires if there is a clear theme (or 2-3 clear themes) within each survey.

The panel is refreshed periodically. New members are recruited to the panel and some current members are retired on a random basis. This means that the panel remains fresh and is not subject to conditioning ie the views of panel members become too informed with county council services to be representative of the population as a whole.

3. Research objectives

The objective of this consultation is to obtain an indication of the service areas that residents believe should be budget priorities for the coming years.

This work follows on from previous yearly budget consultations that have taken place since 2003.

4. Methodology

This wave of Living in Lancashire research was sent to 3,136 members of the panel on 14 November with a final closing date of 7 December 2012.

The survey was conducted through a postal questionnaire, and an online version of the same questionnaire being emailed to members who had previously requested to take part online. The postal questionnaire was sent to 2,211 members and the online questionnaire was sent to 925 members.

In total 1,496 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 48%.

All data are weighted by age, ethnicity and district to reflect the Lancashire overall population, and figures are based on all respondents unless otherwise stated. The weighted responses have been scaled to match the effective response of 957, which is the equivalent size of the data if it had not been weighted and was a perfect random sample.

4.1 Limitations

The table below shows the sample tolerances that apply to the results in this survey. Sampling tolerances vary with the size of the sample as well as the percentage results.

Number of respondents	50/50 + / -	30/70 + / -	10/90 + / -
50	14%	13%	8%
100	10%	9%	6%
200	7%	6%	4%
500	4%	4%	3%
1,000	3%	3%	2%
2,000	2%	2%	1%

On a question where 50% of the people in a sample of 1,000 respond with a particular answer, the chances are 95 out of 100 that the answer would be between 47% and 53% (ie +/- 3%), versus a complete coverage of the entire Lancashire population using the same procedure.

The following table shows what the percentage differences between two samples on a statistic must be greater than, to be statistically significant.

Size of sample A	Size of sample B	50/50	70/30	90/10
100	100	14%	13%	8%
100	200	12%	11%	7%
500	1,000	5%	5%	3%
2,000	2,000	3%	3%	2%

(Confidence interval at 95% certainty for a comparison of two samples)

For example, where the size of sample A and sample B is 2,000 responses in each and the percentage result in each group you are comparing is around 50% in each category, the difference in the results needs to be more than 3% to be statistically significant. This is to say that the difference in the results of the two groups of people is not due to chance alone and is a statistically valid difference (eg of opinion, service usage).

For each question in the survey, comparisons have been made between different sub-groups of respondents (eg age, gender, disability, ethnicity, geographic area) to look for statistically significant differences in opinion. Statistically valid differences between sub-groups are described in the main body of the report.

In charts or tables where responses do not add up to 100%, this is due to multiple responses or computer rounding.

5. Main research findings

5.1 Priorities for service development

The budget consultation questionnaire gave the proportion of spending and the actual expenditure on a wide range of services Lancashire County Council provides. It gave details on council expenditure in 2012/13 and the sources of council finances. It also informed panel members of the county council plans for the following years.

Panel members were then given a list of county council services and asked which three or four should be the highest spending priorities for the coming years. These priorities are shown on chart 1.

Services for older people (including care in their own homes and in residential homes), **primary and secondary education** and **crime prevention** (working with partner organisations to help prevent crime and disorder and reduce fear of crime) are the highest priorities (53%, 45% and 44% respectively).

Repairing roads and bridges (including emergencies and fixing potholes) and **keeping local bus services running** are the next highest priorities (39% and 29% respectively).

The same options were given on the budget questionnaires in 2011 and 2010, enabling the priorities to be compared over time. The current results, including demographic breakdowns, are broadly similar to those in the last two years, showing the public's spending priorities are remaining fairly consistent over time.

5.1.1 Individual services - high priority for spending

Services for older people

Perhaps as might be expected, services for older people are a higher priority for those aged 60 years and over (61%), and are also more important among those aged 45 to 59 (60%), when compared to younger respondents.

Primary and secondary education

Primary and secondary education is the highest priority for those aged 25 to 44 years (56%), as it was in 2011 and 2010. While still a priority, it is less important for those aged 45-59 years (44%) or 60 years or over (37%). Also, where respondents have children in the household it is a higher priority (59%) compared to households without children (39%).

Crime prevention

Crime prevention is an important priority for all respondents and has replaced repairing roads and bridges as the third highest priority overall this year.

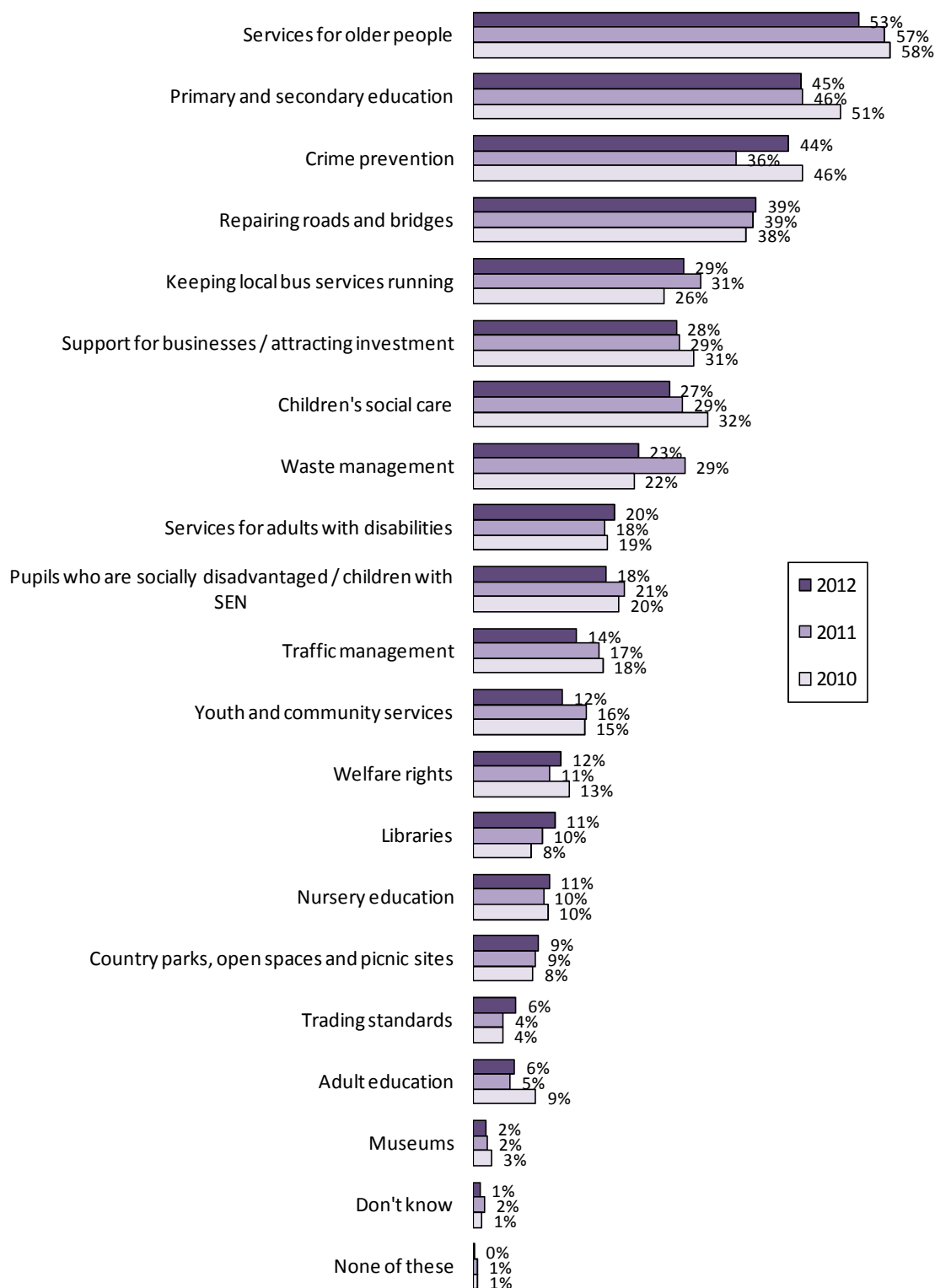
There is a significant difference between BME respondents and white respondents, with BME respondents more likely to choose crime prevention as a priority (BME 69%, white 41%). The difference between the two groups was not significant in 2011 (BME 39%, white 36%).

Other services

Keeping local bus services running is more of a priority to respondents aged 60 and over (42%) and disabled respondents (38%). BME respondents are more likely to think services for adults with disabilities are a priority (31%).

Welfare rights are more likely to be a high priority for respondents from the lower socio-economic groups (C2 19% and DE 20%).

Chart 1 - Which three or four of the following services should be the highest priorities for spending in the coming years?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,475, weighted 987)

From the same list of county council services, respondents were then asked to name the services that should be the lowest priorities for spending. The lowest priorities are shown on chart two.

As in the 2011 and 2010 surveys, **museums** are seen as the service that should be the lowest priority for spending in the coming years (40%). **Adult education** (30%) is the next lowest priority. **Country parks, open spaces and picnic sites** (28%), **welfare rights** (27%), **trading standards** (24%), and **traffic management** (20%) are also seen as relatively low priorities.

5.1.2 Individual services - low priority for spending

Museums

Museums are consistently mentioned by all the different demographic groups as a low priority for spending. Respondents in socio-economic group DE are more likely to rate museums as a low priority (55%).

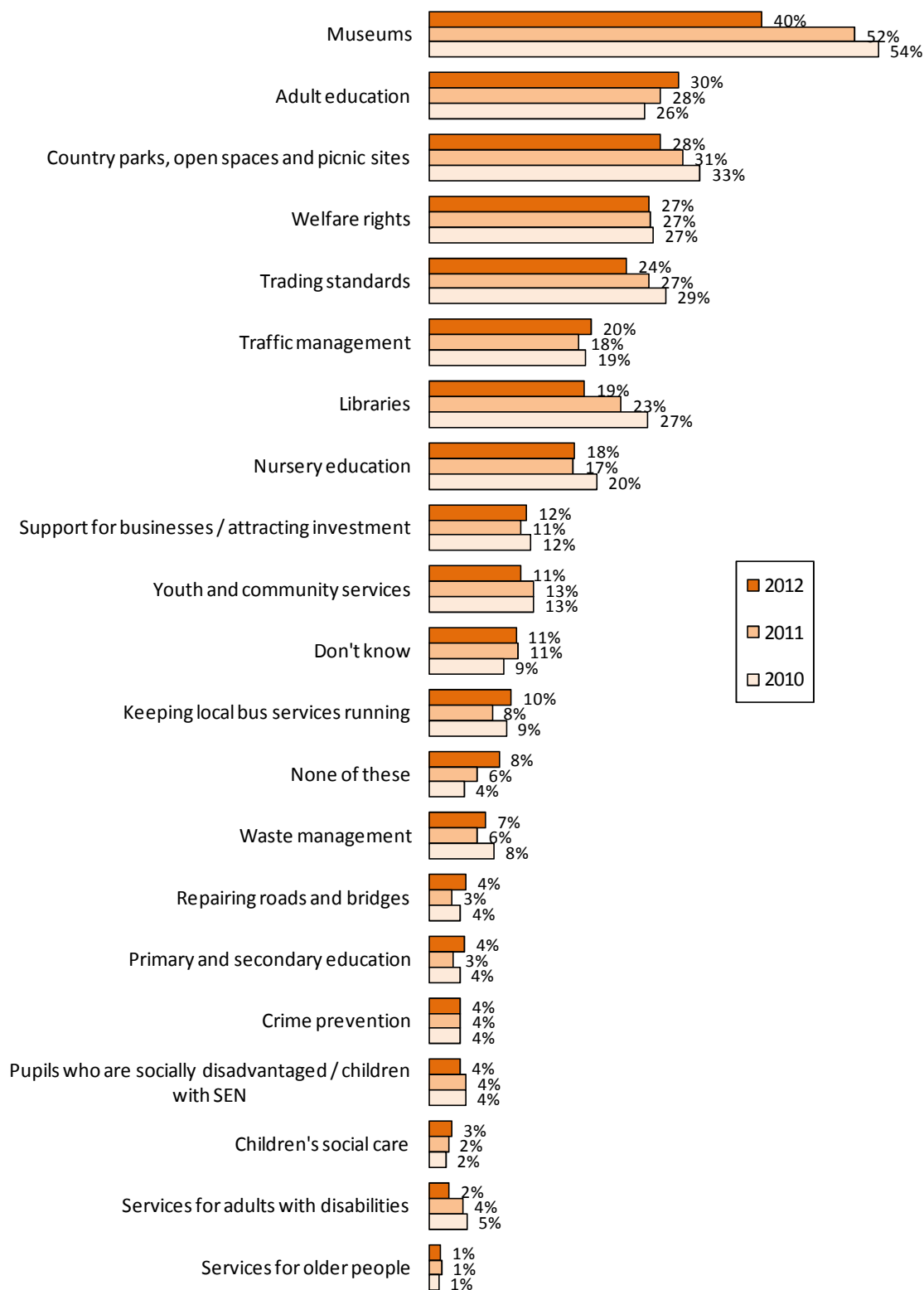
Country parks, open spaces and picnic sites

Country parks, open spaces and picnic sites are seen by all the different demographic groups as a low priority for spending. However, respondents from a BME background (38%), disabled respondents (35%) and respondents aged 60 and over (37%) are more likely to rate them as a low priority.

Welfare rights

The respondents who put welfare rights as a low priority are in the highest socio-economic group AB (31%) and respondents in full time employment (31%). Disabled respondents are less likely to choose welfare rights as a low priority (18%).

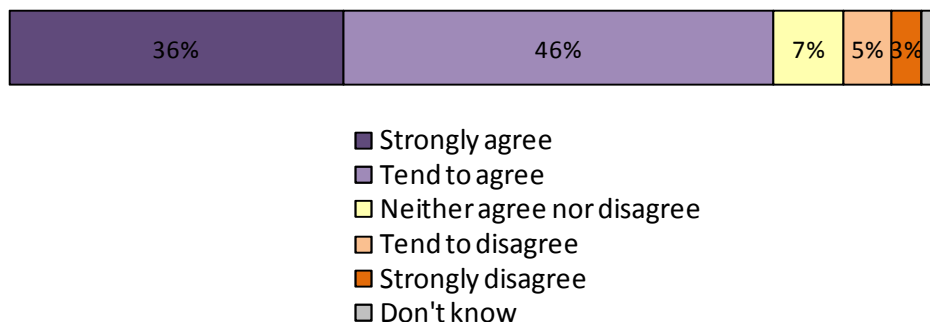
Chart 2 - And which three or four of these services should be the lowest priorities for spending in the coming years?



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,357, weighted 923)

Panel members were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement 'I appreciate that in the current climate there are difficult budget decisions that the county council needs to make'. Four fifths of respondents agree with the statement (82%).

Chart 3 - How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I appreciate that in the current climate there are difficult budget decisions that the county council needs to make.



Base: All respondents (unweighted 1,422, weighted 951)

Respondents in socio-economic group AB are more likely to agree with the statement (89%).

Appendix 1: Socio-Economic-Group Definitions

These groups are based on Market Research Society definitions and on the respondent. They are graded as A, B, C1, C2, D and E.

Group A

- Professional people, very senior managers in business or commerce or top-level civil servants
- Retired people, previously grade A, and their widows

Group B

- Middle management executives in large organisations, with appropriate qualifications
- Principle officers in local government and civil service
- Top management or owners of small business concerns, educational and service establishments
- Retired people, previously grade B, and their widows

Group C1

- Junior management, owners of small establishments, and all others in non-manual positions
- Jobs in this group have very varied responsibilities and educational requirements
- Retired people, previously grade C1, and their widows

Group C2

- All skilled manual workers, and those manual workers with responsibility for other people
- Retired people, previously grade C2, with pensions from their job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

Group D

- All semi skilled and unskilled manual workers, and apprentices and trainees to skilled workers
- Retired people, previously grade D, with pensions from their late job
- Widows, if receiving pensions from their late partner's job

Group E

- All those entirely dependent on the state long term, through sickness, unemployment, old age or other reasons
- Those unemployed for a period exceeding six months (otherwise classified on previous occupation)
- Casual workers and those without a regular income

Appendix 2: marked up questionnaire

Which three or four of the following should be the highest/lowest spending priorities for spending in the coming years?		
	Highest priorities	Lowest priorities
Services for older people (including care in their own homes and in residential homes)	53%	1%
Primary and secondary education	45%	4%
Crime prevention (working with partner organisations to help prevent crime and disorder and reduce the fear of crime)	44%	4%
Repairing roads and bridges (including emergencies and fixing potholes)	39%	4%
Keeping local bus services running	29%	10%
Support for businesses and attracting investment to Lancashire	28%	12%
Children's social care (protecting vulnerable children)	27%	3%
Waste management (household waste disposal and recycling)	23%	7%
Services for adults with disabilities	20%	2%
Pupils who are socially disadvantaged and children with special educational needs	18%	4%
Traffic management (making road travel safer and reducing congestion)	14%	20%
Youth and community services (activities and support for young people)	12%	11%
Welfare rights (helping people get the financial support they are entitled to)	12%	27%
Libraries	11%	19%
Nursery education	11%	18%
Country parks, open spaces and picnic sites	9%	28%
Trading standards (consumer protection)	6%	24%
Adult education	6%	30%
Museums	2%	40%
Don't know	1%	11%
None of these	0%	8%
Unweighted base	1,475	1,357
Weighted base	987	923

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I appreciate that in the current climate there are difficult budget decisions that the county council needs to make.	
Strongly agree	36%
Tend to agree	46%
Neither agree nor disagree	7%
Tend to disagree	5%
Strongly disagree	3%
Don't know	2%
Unweighted base	1,422
Weighted base	951