

Making Clackmannanshire Better



**Clackmannanshire
Council**

www.clacksweb.org.uk

Budget 2014/15

Better Services

Better Opportunities

Better Communities

Foreword



The Council's ambitious, wide-ranging programme of transformation is stepping up a gear and we are entering a period of significant change for public service delivery in Clackmannanshire.

Our key focus over the next few years will be on 'Making Clackmannanshire Better': our customers' needs are changing, and we are focusing on how we can better meet these changing needs, whilst also improving our customers' experience in accessing the services we provide. In the process, we will be aiming to improve our performance, reduce our costs and achieve the best possible outcomes for the people of Clackmannanshire.

In common with all public sector organisations we continue to face challenging financial targets. We need to find just over £7 million of savings for 2014/15 to be able to set a balanced budget, so business as usual is not an option.

We want the people who use the hundreds of services we provide every day to be aware of the difficult choices ahead during these challenging times. This booklet aims to help our communities and partners understand the scale of the financial challenges facing the Council.

One thing is certain; we cannot continue to deliver services in the way we do - we must reduce costs, better meet our customers' changing needs and operate in a more integrated way with our public service partners, so that we can collectively achieve better outcomes for our communities.

Your feedback will help us to decide on the relative priority of the services we deliver and those which are most important to the communities we serve. In addition, your views will be used to help us identify those services we should aim to prioritise for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Womersley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Gary Womersley
Council Leader

Our Commitments

There are some services we are committed to deliver by law and there are also a number of other priorities we have committed to as a Council. We firmly believe that these commitments are the right things to do, however, meeting them will require tough choices combined with radical thinking.

Better Services

Excellent services and a great environment are vital in improving the quality of life for people in Clackmannanshire. The Council recognises that innovation in partnership working will be vitally important, so that:

- we provide leadership in delivering truly integrated and efficient public services responsive to local circumstances and need
- we ensure an holistic approach so that all council and partner resources are viewed collectively, to achieve positive outcomes for Clackmannanshire
- we are transparent and accountable, ensuring that the public's experience of services in Clackmannanshire is positive
- we actively seek opportunities to better plan and work jointly with partners with a particular focus on efficiency and preventative spend
- pursue initiatives that create integrated public services within Clackmannanshire whilst always recognising the need for a strong, independent Clackmannanshire Council

Better Opportunities

Clackmannanshire offers great potential for individuals, families, businesses and employers. The Council wants to help improve life chances for individuals and families, as well as create a more positive environment for local businesses and employers. We want to invest to create the right environment for everyone in Clackmannanshire to succeed to reach their full potential, so that:

- Clackmannanshire is known for its business opportunities
- our transport and business links are further developed

- local people have support to take up employment locally and elsewhere
- all children in Clackmannanshire have the best possible start in life, focusing on ages 0 to 3, with a particular emphasis on the importance of good parenting
- our school children are successful learners
- people and families are supported to live independently
- vulnerable adults are supported to maintain their health and overall well-being
- social circumstances for those in most need are improved

Better Communities

Our towns and villages are the heart of our county and the public face of Clackmannanshire. We want to keep Clackmannanshire at the forefront of green, recycling and sustainability initiatives. The Council wants to work with residents, traders, property owners, local groups and all stakeholders to enhance our towns and villages in a sustainable way, so that:

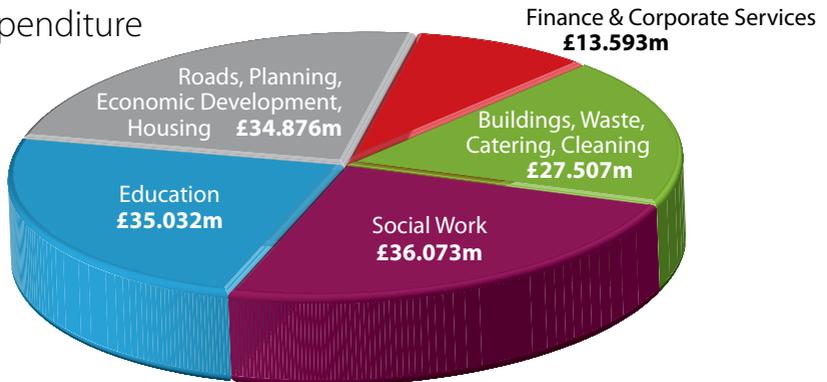
- people feel part of the community in which they live, finding it easy to participate and influence decisions that affect them in the design of services they receive
- communities have the capacity to work together to tackle local issues that affect them and achieve community aspirations
- people feel safe in their homes and in their communities
- people have a high quality of life, free from the burden of anti-social behaviour
- our use of land is sensitive to its social impact, and our open spaces are sensitively managed with the best interests of the community in mind/at heart
- we effectively tackle the causes and effects of climate change
- visitors and residents benefit from the area's attractions
- we make the best use of our attractive environment and value our natural and built heritage.

Our Challenges

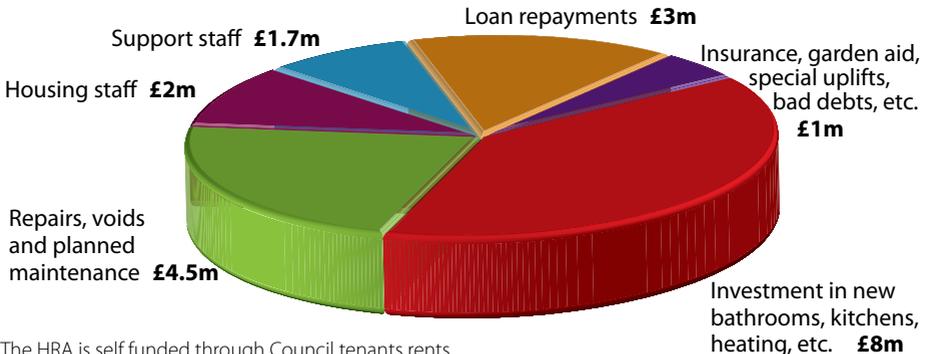
We are facing significant pressures to reduce our costs due to decreased funding from central government, at a time when there is also increasing demand for Council services from our communities.

The Council's annual revenue budget is over £115million. Most of our budget is spent on providing education and social services. We've already saved £14million over the past three years and we need to save £25million over the next five years. Council services have been supported by £13million of reserves over the last four years. However this is not sustainable in the long term, and savings must be realised to bridge the gap between funding and future costs.

Total expenditure

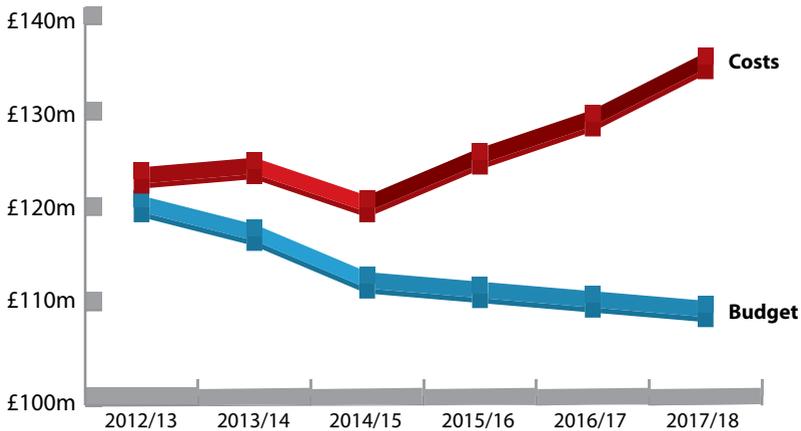


Income and expenditure in relation to Council housing is ring fenced and recorded within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA⁺). The HRA's budget for 2013/14 is £16.5million, with the additional investment covered by house sales and borrowing. This chart shows how it is being spent and invested:



⁺The HRA is self funded through Council tenants rents.

Over the next few years, the gap between what we spend and the funding we receive is set to increase significantly.



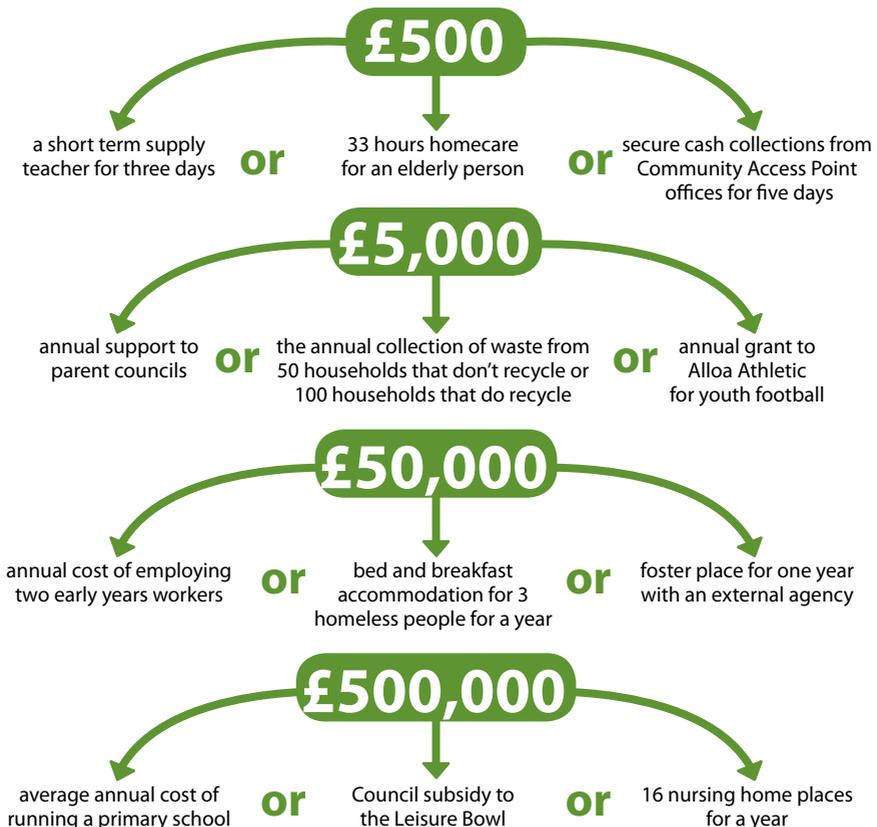
This means that the Council needs to carry out a fundamental review of what it does to make sure that it is providing the right services to those people most in need of them, in the best ways possible.

Did you know?

- We have an ageing population. The number of people aged from 65-74 is expected to increase by almost 60%, and over 75s are expected to increase by 120% by 2035
- We have over 2,000 surplus places in our schools. Six of our primary schools are less than 60% full
- The number of children being looked after by the Council has increased from 125 in 2003/04 to 214 in 2012/13
- Child protection referrals have risen from 90 in 2005/06 to 225 in 2012/13
- The placement of a child in care can cost the Council up to £265,000 per child per year
- We pay £900,000 per year for school transport
- We have 82 Council owned buildings which cost £14.8million per year to run

- The cost of recycling and waste collection per year is £3.57m
- We have the highest proportion in Scotland of 16-24 year olds claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for over 12 months. There are 1,723 working age Jobseeker's Allowance claimants in Clackmannanshire, with 22 claimants competing for each post
- Clackmannanshire has around 5,000 workless households. Welfare reform will bring an estimated average income loss to working-age Clackmannanshire families of £550 per year, and remove £18million from the local economy
- We give £1.972million per year to local voluntary organisations
- We plan to install 1,200 new bathrooms in our Council houses in 2014/15 at a cost of £3.5m

What we get for our £ just now



Our Choices

Faced with considerable challenges over the next five years, the Council has a combination of four main choices available to achieve the level of savings required.

We can choose to:

- Stop** stop some or all services that are not mandatory by law
- Reduce** reduce service delivery to the national average standard; prioritise services for those most in need
- Charge** introduce charges or decrease subsidies to help pay for some services. This may be needs assessed or applied universally
- Change** look at radically different service models which will see the way the service is delivered change significantly

All of these have advantages and disadvantages; there is no ideal solution. It is likely however, that a combination of the above will be necessary to enable the levels of savings required.

In order to shape our decision-making, we would like to know your your views on some of the potential choices that the Council faces. We have given some illustrations within the following section which we would like you to rate as red, amber or green on our online survey. , to let us know your feelings.

Key



I don't like this option / I think the Council should consider something else before considering this option further



I have no firm view one way or the other on this option



I like this option / I think this option is worthy of further consideration

Officers have been reviewing what we do, and here are some examples of what could be considered:

Stop

- funding to voluntary organisations who cannot demonstrate alignment with local priorities or the impact of their contribution
- services that we are not obliged by law to deliver e.g. stand-alone Community Access Points (CAPs), advice services, financial support for homeowners, public toilets, school crossing patrols
- funding CCTV

Reduce

- respite support to carers to minimum level required by law
- funding on community safety
- open space maintenance, e.g. grass cutting
- frequency of bin collections
- gritting of roads and footpaths in line with other councils
- opening hours of council facilities and offices
- school meal provision to statutory minimum, e.g. packed lunch

Charge

- prioritise free access to services through the use of means testing, and charge those who have the means to pay
- increase charges for school meals to align with national average
- charge for car parking in Alloa Town Centre to cover cost of public car park maintenance
- introduce a higher rent increase (5.2% rather than the agreed 4.2% in the approved business plan for 2014/15) to help cover some of the shortfall caused by the increase in rent arrears
- increase all existing charges by minimum of Retail Prices Index inflation (approx 3.2%)
- increase social work charges to national average/in line with COSLA charging strategy
- increase charges for hire of Council facilities to at least cover costs

Change

- more efficient and wide-spread use of Council buildings, including schools, e.g. multiple public services within the community being delivered from one building
- make it easier to access Council services
- set higher rents for tenants living in new build homes
- spend funds to prevent problems occurring, rather than addressing problems that have occurred, e.g. reduce need for long-term support packages
- merge school and community facilities e.g. libraries, where possible
- outsource appropriate services for other providers to supply
- move more services into shared services arrangements with other authorities

How you can play your part in Making Clackmannanshire Better

This booklet gives you access to the information and ‘thinking’ that will help councillors shape the next Council budget, and start to meet the challenges ahead.

Please take a look at the types of changes and savings ideas that may be considered in the ‘Our Choices’ section, and then:

- go online to ClacksWeb where you can have your say about the topics that matter to you, or make alternative suggestions to help us to focus resources on the highest priority areas
- attend a public event on 18th November at Alloa Town Hall where we will also be gathering the views of our communities
- you can also get involved by sharing your views with your local councillor

We want to hear what you think we should:

Stop

Reduce

Charge for, or

Change

The views gathered during November 2013 will help inform the Council’s 2014/15 budget and the approach to be taken over the next few years.

Thank you for playing your part in Making Clackmannanshire Better.



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