

Let's Talk Budget

Summary of Consultation

February 2021

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Introduction

The Let's Talk Budget public consultation launched on 9 November 2020 and received a total of 752 complete responses, with more than 862 people participating during the 12-week consultation period. This report provides an overview of the findings of the consultation.

Almost 33,000 residents were engaged with via social media, text message, email and the Oldham Council website in relation to the consultation, while more than 4,000 businesses were also reached via LinkedIn and 5,000 received the Oldham Council business newsletter. These figures only represent those people engaged on our own channels; and do not include those who would have been informed of the consultation via the media, through social media posts from organisations other than the council, or through other means such as via providers.

The survey was hosted on the Oldham Council website, in English, with translated surveys available online in Bengali, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian and Urdu. To encourage take-up among all communities across the borough, 500 hard copies of the survey were also distributed, by post, to a random sample of addresses in communities with lower digital connectivity. Six of these hard copies were received back.

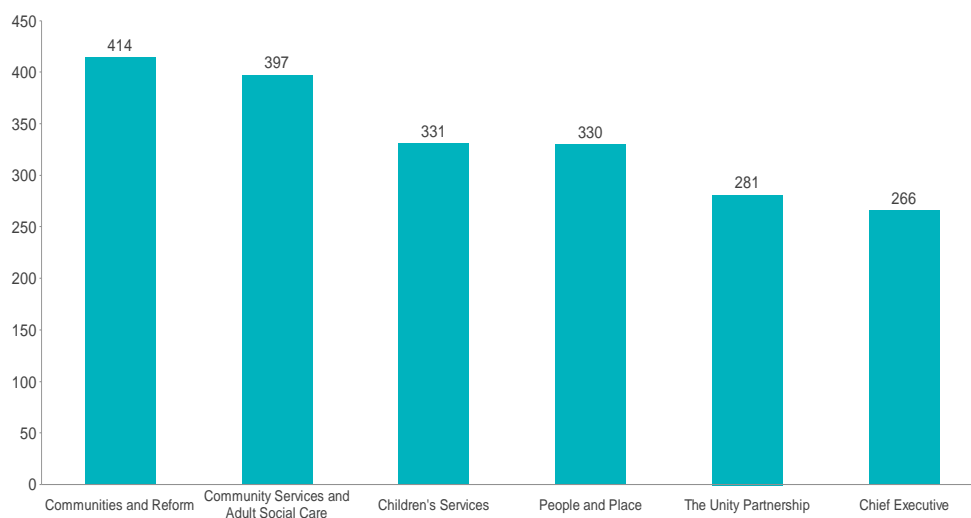


Figure 1: Count of respondents by service area. Source LTB 2020-21 Q3

Figure one illustrates the number of responses by service area, as respondents to the consultation did not have to give feedback on all of the proposals. Most responses (414) were received for Communities and Reform proposals, while the fewest (266) were for Chief Executive's proposals.

Figure two illustrates the number of responses for each week of the consultation. More than half of the responses were received in the first week the consultation was open, with another, smaller, spike in responses at the end of the consultation period.

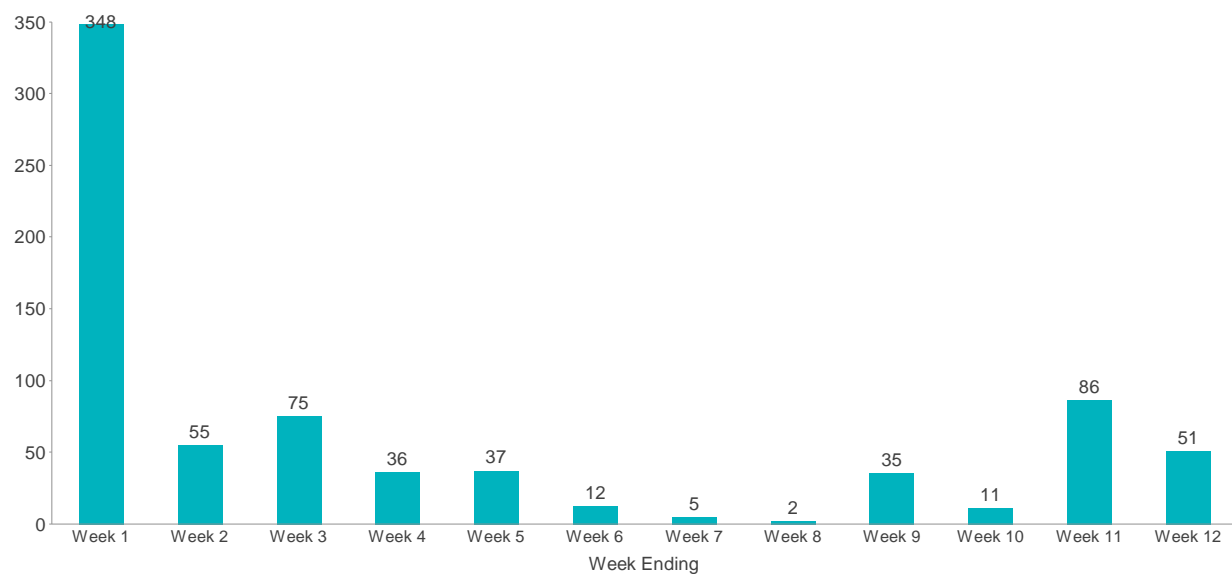


Figure 2: Response count week 1-12. Source LTB 2020-21

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Executive Summary

In total, 752 complete responses to the survey were received.

- Most responses are from those aged 35-64
- 60% of respondents are female
- BAME communities are well represented, with 25% of respondents being from a BAME background
- Around a quarter of respondents stated that they have a physical or mental health condition, or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more. Of these, around 30% state this health condition limits their lives a lot. ¹
- One in five respondents have a caring responsibility
- Most commonly, respondents were residents.
- 23% of respondents were Oldham Council staff
- A total of 48 businesses/service providers responded.
- Only 1 in 10 respondents identified as being a service user.

Specific service user and provider consultation also took place on individual proposals. For budget proposals across Community Health and Adult Social Care (CHASC), where proposals could lead to changes in individual service provision, conversations will be had with individual service users at the time of assessment/review. This approach is in line with the Care Act 2014.

Meanwhile, external representations were gathered from organisations including Age UK Oldham, Oldham Personal Advocacy Limited (OPAL), The GM Disabled Persons Partnership and The Carers Partnership board, who each undertook direct consultation with service users.

Most respondents became aware of the consultation via the council website. Social media posts pointing to the online consultation resulted in spikes in responses, as did uses of SMS, newsletters, and e-mail alerts. Around a quarter of those who visited the Let's Talk Budget webpage went on to complete the survey.

Proposals for Communities and Reform prompted the biggest number of responses from both residents and staff, while proposals regarding the Chief Executive prompted the fewest responses.

Just eight of the 24 budget proposals resulted in predominantly negative consultation responses. These were the proposals relating to Keyring; the Grassroots Day Care Service;

Sheltered Housing Support; Age UK Men in Sheds Project; Carers Personal Budgets; Adult Social Care Prevention and Early Intervention Service; Service Review of SEND QEST Team and the proposed Mahdlo funding reduction.

Respondents were also asked to make alternative suggestions for saving money. The common themes that emerged were changing current working practices; reducing the number of Councillors; rationalising the workforce - particularly those most highly paid – and reducing spend of floral displays.

Respondent Profile

The following is a summary of the demographic makeup of responses. Totals are taken from all known demographics (i.e. those who responded “prefer not to say” are excluded).

Age Group	Count of responses	% Responses
13-17	9	1.4
18-24	15	2.4
25-34	69	11.0
35-44	138	22.0
45-54	150	24.0
55-64	140	22.4
65-74	71	11.3
75 and over	34	5.4
Total	626	100
Gender	Count of responses	% Responses
Male	232	39
Female	357	60
Transgender (male)	-	-
Transgender (female)	-	-
Non-binary	-	-
Total	594	100
Health and Wellbeing <small>(Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?)</small>	Count of responses	% Responses
Yes	153	27
No	416	73
Health and Wellbeing <small>(Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day to day activities?)</small>	Count of responses	% Responses
Yes, a lot	45	30
Yes, a little	68	45
Not at all	39	26
Caring Responsibility	Count of responses	% Responses
No	481	75
Yes >=9hrs	61	9
Yes 10-19 hrs	28	4
Yes 20-34 hrs	14	2

Yes 35-49 hrs	22	3
Yes 50 hrs or more	37	6
Total	643	100
Ethnicity Summary	Count of responses	% Responses
BAME	170	25
Non BAME	520	75
Total	690	100

Table 1: Respondent Summary

Respondent Type	Count	% Total
An Oldham resident	598	80
A service user/Client	65	9
Oldham Council staff	157	21
A business owner/provider	48	6
An Elected Member	*	0.1%
Other (Please specify below)	50	7

Table 2: Respondent Type

Of those stating “Other” most commonly respondents stated that they are employed in Oldham (n12) or a health professional Health Professional (n6)/ Others included young person, Charity/Third Sector worker, youth worker, commercial property worker, consultant, family live in Oldham, former resident amongst others.²

² Figures suppressed if <=5

Positively received Proposals

	Responses	Agree	Disagree	Net Agreement
Transformation of the Contact Centre (PPL-BR1-421)	254	78%	11%	67%
Registrars Service Restructure (CEX-BR1-447)	235	71%	10%	61%
Reducing the cost of SEND placements (CHS-BR1-441)	313	71%	17%	55%
External Placements for Children – reducing costs (CHS-BR1-443)	313	71%	19%	52%
Reduction in member budgets (REF-BR1-418)	376	67%	17%	50%
Districts Realignment (REF-BR1-416)	372	62%	12%	49%
Gallery Oldham opening times (REF-BR1-413)	384	61%	24%	37%
Sports Development (REF-BR1-422)	369	54%	22%	32%
Reshaping the Early Help Service (CHS-BR1-442)	320	60%	28%	31%
Restructure of Neighbourhood Enforcement Team (PPL-BR1-409)	295	50%	24%	25%
School Swimming (REF-BR1-428)	368	50%	27%	23%
Adult Social Care Brokerage (CSA-BR1-427)	339	46%	30%	15%
Supported living and learning disabilities (CSA-BR1-430)	337	44%	32%	12%

Table 3: Positively Received Proposals

Table three shows the 13 positively received budget savings proposals. This is significantly greater than the 8 received less favourably. Of these, proposals 421 (Transformation of the Contact Centre), 447 (Registrars Service Restructure) and 441 (Reducing the cost of SEND placements) received the highest levels of agreement.

Proposals with neutral agreement

	Net Agree
Youth Service Kerching (REF-BR1-417)	5%
Adult Services -Providing support in different ways (CSA-BR1-423)	2%
Reduction in Traineeship Programme (CHS-BR1-437)	-1%

Table 4: Proposals with neutral agreement

Table four shows the three proposals that received a net neutral agreement (i.e. where the level of disagreement and agreement was not significantly strong).

Negatively received Proposals

	Count	Agree	Disagree	Net Agreement
Reduction in Traineeship Programme (CHS-BR1-437)	313	37%	40%	-3%
Adult Social Care Prevention and Early Intervention Service (CSA-BR1-434)	340	31%	43%	-12%
Closure of Grassroots Day Care Service - Failsworth (CSA-BR1-431)	351	33%	46%	-13%
Cease funding for Age UK Men in Sheds Project (CSA-BR1-436)	346	31%	50%	-19%
Mahdlo Funding Reduction (REF-BR1-415)	391	35%	54%	-20%
Carers Personal Budgets (CSA-BR1-426)	339	27%	53%	-26%
Sheltered Housing Support (CSA-BR1-433)	357	25%	54%	-28%
Service Review of SEND QEST Team (CHS- BR1-440)	312	23%	57%	-34%
Keyring (CSA-BR1-429)	363	12%	73%	-60%

Table 5: Negatively Received Proposals

Table five highlights the eight proposals where a greater number of respondents said they were against the proposal, compared to those in favour. Of these, proposal 429 (Keyring) received by far the highest net level of disagreement, with 73% of respondents disagreeing with the proposal.

	An Oldham resident	A service user/Client	Oldham Council staff	A business owner/provider
Service review of SEND QEST Team	59%	76%	44%	59%
Reduction in traineeship programme	38%	47%	33%	41%
Mahdlo Funding Reduction	37%	50%	28%	39%
Keyring	72%	79%	74%	65%
Sheltered Housing Support	55%	58%	44%	69%
Cease funding for Age UK Men in Sheds Project	51%	53%	39%	75%
Adult Social Care Prevention and Early Intervention Service	42%	42%	33%	53%
Carers Personal Budgets	55%	47%	42%	50%
Sheltered Housing Support	55%	58%	44%	69%

Table 6: Negative response by respondent type

Table six illustrates the details of those stating a level of disagreement with each of the eight proposals. As can be seen for proposal 429 (Keyring), 79% of service users/clients disagreed with the proposal, with nearly three-quarters of Oldham residents and Oldham Council staff also disagreeing.

Proposal (Ref)	Net Agreement	Key Themes	Suggestion Specifics
Keyring (CSA-BR1-429)	-60%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact on vulnerable people/carers/children (54%) 2. Impact on other services (27%) 3. Financial impact (19%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyring and Targeted Adults support need to be looked at together • Bring the service in house
Service Review of SEND QEST Team (CHS- BR1-440)	-34%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact on vulnerable people/carers/children (45%) 2. Impact on other services (43%) 3. Financial impact (12%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the service with a charge attached • Focus on the core offer to increase efficiency
Sheltered Housing Support (CSA-BR1-433)	-28%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact on vulnerable people/carers/children (87%) 2. Impact on other services (9%) 3. Financial impact (4%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could be included in housing benefit allowance • Link with other services, e.g. housing young people as wardens
Carers Personal Budgets (CSA-BR1-426)	-26%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact on vulnerable people/carers/children (66%) 2. Financial impact (24%) 3. Impact on other services (10%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at means testing instead • Providing a support network and being listened to by the social care system
Mahdlo Funding Reduction (REF-BR1-415)	-20%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact on vulnerable people/carers/children (74%) 2. Impact on other services (21%) 3. Financial impact (5%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents should pay some towards the cost • Outsource, especially on school days
Cease funding for Age UK Men in Sheds Project (CSA-BR1-436)	-19%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact on vulnerable people/carers/children (81%) 2. Impact on other services (17%) 3. Financial impact (2%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merge Men in Sheds and Grassroots • Reduce funding by 1/2
Closure of Grassroots Day Care Service - Failsworth (CSA-BR1-431)	-13%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact on vulnerable people/carers/children (84%) 2. Impact on other services (8%) 3. Financial impact (8%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce opening hours • Keep open through community action, grant applications, fundraising
Adult Social Care Prevention and Early Intervention Service (CSA-BR1-434)	-12%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact on vulnerable people/carers/children (49%) 2. Impact on other services (35%) 3. Financial impact (16%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closer with other agencies • Bring back in-house support workers

Table 7: Negative Agreement Themes and suggestions

Table seven summarises some of the key themes emerging from the consultation around the negatively received proposals. As can be seen, the main theme that emerged from each of the proposals was that respondents feared the implementation of the proposal would have a negative impact on vulnerable people, carers and/or children.

Resident Feedback

The following is a summary of feedback received from respondents around the eight most contested budget saving proposals. All figures are taken from respondent base. Where percentage totals exceed 100% participants multiple option responses have been permitted.

Keyring

	Count of Impact on vulnerable people	Count of Impact on other services	Count of Financial impact
Oldham Resident (n146)	66%	26%	22%
Service User (n23)	61%	13%	17%
Oldham Council Staff (n34)	59%	50%	35%
Business Owner/Provider (n6)	67%	33%	17%
Other Please specify (n19)	74%	58%	32%

Table 8: Keyring feedback summary

Table eight shows that there was a concern among various types of respondent about the impact that this proposal would have on vulnerable people. Additionally, there was also a concern about the impact that this would have on other services across Oldham. Table nine shows that for most respondents the impact on vulnerable people was their primary concern. A virtual meeting held with members of Greater Manchester Disabled People Partnership (GMDPP) had a strong focus on this proposal. Details of this meeting can be found in the appendices.

External Representations

Oldham Personal Advocates Limited (OPAL) response to Keyring Proposal

Three sessions took place in December, via Zoom. Members were offered the opportunity to have 1:1 discussion if they didn't feel comfortable speaking within a group setting or they could use the Chat facility on the platform. Some members also relayed comments after the events. A total of 29 individuals contributed

Summary

All members consulted felt Keyring service is of great benefit to individuals and the wider community. Feedback from current users of the service was overwhelmingly positive. Members like the fact that they are also connected to each other through the social hub and this gives opportunities to develop friendships/relationships and networks of support. Members also referred positively to the relationships they have developed with Keyring staff and feel they are "trustworthy" and "reliable".

One point that was repeatedly brought up by many service users was that without Keyring they wouldn't know where to turn. Any help and referrals that have been made to other services have been through Keyring.

All members thought a cut in this service would cause problems, with potentially serious repercussions, particularly for people's mental health. Some members commented they may access other local authority or health services, therefore the potential impact of a cut in funding may lead to higher demand for these services. Other members commented that they would experience issues such as debt, health deterioration, abuse, family breakdown/isolation and homelessness if they did not receive this support.

Emerging themes:

- issues of loneliness and isolation- including joining in hub activities to make friends and leave the house, enrolling in learning
- financial problems- including debt and benefits
- support with health matters, including mental health including reading letters, making appointments, collecting prescriptions, accessing healthy minds
- Keyring provides support in these areas reduces the need for crisis intervention later.
- Members commented that their issues would have worsened without the Keyring service.

Greater Manchester Disabled People Partnership

Method

A virtual meeting held on zoom was held on Thursday 28 January 2021 by Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel (GMDPP). The session, chaired by the Outreach and Development Lead, was attended by 22 including representatives of Keyring and several service users. A [transcript](#) of the meeting can be found in the appendices

Attendees spoke to the impact of the support offered by keyring and the impact that the reduction in funding would have:

My wife and I constantly need them. I was in hospital for four and a half months roughly. I had been in a coma and my wife was vulnerable. Keyring checked in on her every day. I would not be here today without Debbie and Keyring. They are lovely, lovely people. We need them here; I cannot praise them enough. We would have been totally lost without them. They have helped me with me everyday bills because we are literally cluelessly when it comes to bills. We would not be here without them. **Keyring Service User**

Service Review of SEND QEST Team (CHS- BR1-440)

	Impact on schools	Financial impact	Impact on families/children
Oldham Resident (n123)	49%	12%	50%
Service User (n22)	45%	18%	64%
Oldham Council Staff (n26)	35%	15%	42%
Business Owner/Provider (n8)	13%	25%	13%
Other Please specify (n7)	57%	29%	14%

Table 9: Service Review of SEND QEST Team Feedback Summary

Table nine shows there was considerable concern among the respondents that this proposal would have an impact on schools – nearly a half of Oldham residents who responded left comments to this effect. There was also widespread concern among Oldham residents and service users that this would have an impact on families and children. A selection of the comments received can be found below.

'I have used the services of QUEST team, which already seems understaffed. They offer a valuable service to parents like me, when schools can't offer any assistance or advise. When I feel like I can't get the school to support my child, the QUEST team have been able to offer guidance that has been useful. **Without the QUEST team, schools will reduce further, individual help and support for SEN children.** It will **impact negatively on SEN children's education** in the long term'

'**Schools** are **unlikely** to have the **ability to pay for a different provider** likely to be of higher cost. This will mean that additional services will not be delivered'

'Overall, the **cost to the public purse could be higher** if schools need to find other providers for the service'

'You would **need to be more transparent** about **how** they would **buy in** the **other services** as my child's primary school said there was no money for this anyway so still don't know what their learning disability is so if they can't afford this how would they afford something else'

Sheltered Housing Support

	People	Other services	Financial impact
Oldham Resident (n100)	67%	7%	2%
Service User (n15)	47%	7%	7%
Oldham Council Staff (n21)	48%	14%	10%
Business Owner/Provider (n4)	75%	0%	0%
Other Please specify (n12)	58%	8%	8%

Table 90: Sheltered Housing Support Feedback Summary

As can be seen in the table ten, there was concern among respondents that this proposal would have an impact on people, with two-thirds of Oldham residents responding that this would be the case. A selection of their comments can be found below.

'For elderly people who have no family this **may be** the **only support** or help they **receive**'

'Independent living is essential cutting this would lead to an **increase in people** being **put into care homes**'

'Sheltered housing helps to support independence of older people and is a **far less costly alternative than care home/nursing home** and hospital options'

'This 'work with' sounds vague. I **can't support this without more information** on what that is and that the tenants won't be adversely affected'

Carers Personal Budgets

	Carers	Financial impact	Other services
Oldham Resident (n89)	54%	20%	9%
Service User (n14)	29%	29%	0%
Oldham Council Staff (n15)	60%	27%	7%
Business Owner/Provider (n3)	33%	0%	33%
Other Please specify (n14)	64%	43%	14%

Table 101: Carers Personal Budgets Feedback Summary

Table eleven shows that there was significant worry among respondents that this proposal would have a negative impact on carers - over half of Oldham Council staff and over half of Oldham residents who responded believed that this would be the case. A selection of their comments can be found below.

'As someone who was a carer for a family member this **would have made life unbearable**. **Carers do not have time to apply for extra resources or funding** it is often exhausting to be able to keep in contact about circumstances with the council or healthcare provider let alone dealing with anything else'

'All this will do is mean less family can afford to care so **more demand** will be **placed on adult social care**. Adult social care is already greatly stretched'

‘Without carers, the **cost to adult social care** would be **a lot more than £100,000**. People need money not training’

‘Reservations on this, **without any knowledge of how this allowance is calculated**, it seems **inappropriate to restrict funding** for the role of unpaid carers in this way, as they provide such an essential service’

Carers Partnership Board

Method:

The proposal was shared by the independent chair of the [Carers Partnership board](#) to members of the board not employed by the Council or CCG (n11) a total of 3 responses received.

The response states the board:

“**‘AGREE’** with the proposal, subject to account being taken of the following comments and actions which may help to mitigate any potential impact on informal carers of the proposed budget reduction and more generally.”

The board suggest several mitigating actions advice for carers around welfare rights and benefits advice is strengthened within the carers assessment/support planning process and offered systematically to all carers.

Mahdlo

This proposal has raised considerable public interest including press coverage, representations from the rotary club and a petition signed by over 800 people.

	People	other services	Financial
Oldham Resident (n173)	65%	19%	4%
Service User (n24)	67%	13%	4%
Oldham Council Staff (n36)	56%	3%	6%
Business Owner/Provider (n17)	71%	35%	0%
Other Please specify (n15)	60%	13%	0%

Table 112:Mahdlo feedback Summary

Table twelve shows that there was significant concern that this proposal would have a negative impact on people – high levels of concern among residents, service users, Council staff, business owners and others. A selection of their comments can be found below.

“Mahdlo is not the only youth provision in Oldham and is currently looking at the figures they released recently shows **it isn't running efficiently**. However, this **should not be cut fully** as they **benefit many young people across Oldham** however, they can be dramatically cut funding wise as they could run more efficiently”

‘Madhlo is a **lifeline** to **many children, young people** and **families**’

‘Cutting funding would massively effect capacity and **less activities for children** to attend. Therefore, more young people are out on the street engaging in negative behaviours. Consequently, putting **pressure on services** that are already stretched such as **mental health** and the **police**’

‘The **Covid 19 pandemic** has had such a **massive impact on children and young people** which will take years to re-build, so by **cutting the budget now** would have a long and more damaging effect on the young people of Oldham and **cost far more in the long run**’

‘this could potentially leave **young people with nothing to do, nowhere to go** leading to a **bigger cost in crime prevention** and a rise in ASB’

Impact on Services

The following is a summary of the projected impact on services on reduced funding. Source Equality Impact Assessment completed by Mahdlo (Supported by Oldham Council)

	Delivery Impacts	Other delivery impacts:
Year 1 – 21/22	<p>The reduction in funding in year one will result in reduction in staffing, including deleting vacant roles.</p> <p>The main impact on delivery schedule will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceasing the Duke of Edinburgh open access scheme. • Ceasing 5 twilight sessions per week. • Reduction of number of staff in some sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in some activities available such as get outdoors, trampolining, archery and arts currently provided by free-lance professionals • Reduction in capacity to seek external funding opportunities for activity and projects. • Reduction in staffing levels in some sessions. • Increase in responsibilities and tasks for some staff to pick up some of the tasks from redundant posts
Year 2- 22/23	<p>Reduction in 100k funding in year 2</p> <p>Main impact of delivery schedule would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceasing the delivery of a district offer • Ceasing the pickup service (transportation service for young people in district to access the Mahdlo centre for sessions in the evening) • Ceasing delivery of employability programme • Reduction in mental health and wellbeing post and targeted offer. 	<p>These are currently externally funded, and further external funding would be required to enable the work to continue. Mahdlo have stated they would look to fund these from their core budget, but this would not be possible with a 100k reduction in council funding.</p> <p>Mahdlo have also shared they have acted this year to reduce their revenue costs by £300,000 reducing management, back office roles and reducing open hours on a Sunday.</p>

External Representations

Rotary Club

Representations have been made from four local Rotary clubs regarding proposal 415. The letter from Oldham Metro, Saddleworth, Chadderton and Failsworth, and Crompton and Royton Rotary clubs – asks I Oldham councillors, the council's executive management team and MP's Jim McMahon and Debbie Abrahams to abandon the proposal. A response by Angela Rayner MP can be found in the appendices

Mahdlo Petition

"Mahdlo, Oldham's young people's charity is appealing to Oldham Council to reconsider proposed budget cuts to the vital youth work services it provides."
<https://www.change.org/p/the-community-of-oldham-no-funding-cuts-for-mahdlo?redirect=false>

A [petition](#)³ organised via Change.org by Mahdlo has at the time of reporting received 836 signatures. At this moment, this petition has yet to be submitted for consideration.

*My children use Mahdlo in "normal times" and love going. Like the rest of the children who use this service it's a safe environment for them to meet up with friends , improve social skills , meet new people and take part in activities they may not usually have access to. Mahdlo is a support staple for many families within the local area and for any funding to be cut could/would be devastating for the families of Oldham who rely on the support of Mahdlo .***Parent of Service user**

Of the 836 signatories, 21 supplemented their response with a reason for their responses. All responses are of a positive nature. The following themes emerged.

	Total	%
Direct Appeal	10	48%
Invest in future	3	14%
Much needed support during lockdown	3	14%
Support for families	2	10%
Safe Environment	1	5%
Specialist support	1	5%
Impact on Mental Health	1	5%

Table 123: Mahdlo petition summary (n21)

Supporting documentation including youth consultation, testimonies and business reports shared by Mahdlo on Friday 12 February 2021 can be found in the appendices⁴

³ Petition started 21 February 2021

⁴ Shared 16 Feb 2021

Men in Sheds

	Other services	People	Financial
Oldham Resident (n1117)	9%	47%	2%
Service User (n20)	10%	30%	0%
Oldham Council Staff (n29)	7%	38%	3%
Business Owner/Provider (n6)	33%	33%	0%
Other Please specify (n13)	15%	69%	0%

Table 14: Men in Sheds Feedback Summary

Table fourteen shows that there was concern among many different types of respondent that this proposal would have a negative impact on people. Nearly half of Oldham residents who responded believed that this would be the case. A selection of their comments can be found below.

‘Suicide rates in men are on the increase and this allows men of a certain age to continue to socialise with people and **reduce the risk of isolation and deterioration in mental health**’

‘Could result in **more demand elsewhere** especially in Mental Health’

‘isolation and **deterioration in mental health** causing **higher cost** to the LA’

‘It **doesn't mention how many men** are being **supported** through this funding which makes it **difficult to base a decision on**’

A formal response from [Age UK Oldham](#) demonstrates the value that the Men in Sheds programme offers across its two sites in Greenfield and Oldham.

- Take more control, improve their life chances, reduce risks to health and live well and adopt healthy lifestyles;
- Access care and support at an earlier stage;
- Manage their own conditions and live independently.

Referrals to other agencies including mental health, social services, job centre, stroke unit with providers recognising the effectiveness of our service in supporting men with long term health conditions; improving physical and mental health / emotional wellbeing; and improving access to services / activities and benefits.

Positive impacts around social isolation, wellbeing, confidence and self-worth

Discussions around the proposal facilitated by the GMDPP further highlighted the impact of the Men in Sheds offer

“We have roughly about 53, maybe 54 members based at both sheds. We have a shed in Greenfield which is open two days a week and we also have a shed in Failsworth which is open two days a week. Across those two sites across those four days, we have about 5,353 members who attend. Some of them have got varying levels of mental health problems. We have a few that come just because they are lonely and social isolation seems to play the biggest part in that. They're able to come and make friends. If you've got skills, you can share the skills and a lot of them just like to get out for the company. But, as I was saying, we have lots of community support. It's a really, really good service”. Men in Sheds Representative

“ I have been visiting Men in Sheds for the last 18 months to two years. It's been a very valuable thing to me, because at the time, my wife was suffering from dementia, and I needed somewhere to go, you know, just to give me a break from caring. And it was just an outlet for me. And the outlet was that I was able to meet men of similar age to me, and chat to them do things and learn things from them. And it was just the community thing, and I think it's so special that you can get together to talk about things and do things together. If the funding is going to be taken away it might be better to share the money around to give everybody a bit each to try and carry on”. Men in Sheds Service User

“ We [Holroyd Family Foundation] recently supported Men in Sheds Greenfield with a £10,000 donation to expand their services. This proposal obviously then came as a bit of a shock. It really struck a chord because I visited the site and saw the people they help. I just couldn't see another place that these people would go to. They combat so many different things, you can't highlight everything, but loneliness, you know, mental health, all sorts. It's an incredible facility in Greenfield so that's why we had put proposals together to expand the site, so the proposal just seems counterintuitive to us”. Holroyd Family Foundation representative

Grassroots Daycare

	People	Financial	Other services
Oldham Resident (n114)	50%	5%	2%
Service User (n22)	45%	5%	5%
Oldham Council Staff (n24)	46%	0%	0%
Business Owner/Provider (n6)	17%	0%	0%
Other Please specify (n13)	46%	8%	23%

Table 135: Grassroots Daycare Response Summary

Table fifteen shows, there was significant concern that this proposal would have a negative impact on people. Half of Oldham residents who responded, and nearly half of service users and council staff shared the concern about this proposal. A selection of their comments can be found below.

‘**Other facilities** offering these opportunities are **too far away** for people to access’

‘The **impact** this has on users of the site will **end up costing you more**’

‘I am **not sure** if the "**similar day care activities**" are **the same** so would like **more information**’

Adult Social Care Prevention and Early Intervention Service

	Other services	People	Financial
Oldham Resident (n84)	24%	35%	11%
Service User (n15)	13%	40%	7%
Oldham Council Staff (n16)	25%	19%	19%
Business Owner/Provider (n4)	25%	75%	0%
Other Please specify (n13)	23%	31%	15%

Table 146: Adult Social Care Prevention and Early Intervention Service Response Summary

Table sixteen shows there was concern among respondents that this would have an impact on people. Three quarters of business owner/providers believed that this would be the case, and 40% of service users also shared this concern.

‘this is a **vital service** that has **prevented** many **vulnerable people** from **becoming homeless**’

‘Why remove funding from one service to then have **increased demand on other services**. I can't see that this would in fact deliver any savings’

'This would be a **short-sighted cost saving**: costs would **increase further down the line** when the adults hit crises point'

Suggestions

Participants were asked for suggestions for savings. Those contributing mostly contributed suggestions for other savings other than those proposed. Table seventeen summarises alternative savings proposals offered by respondents. All but two relate to savings in the CHASC directorate (Table 17)

Age UK proposal (Cease funding for Age UK Men in Sheds Project (CSA-BR1-436)

In response to the proposed withdrawal of the funding, we have looked for alternative ways to fund the service and of course kept our service users and staff informed that the service may need to close. Having seen the positive impact that the Shed makes to the men's lives and concerned that the service may end the Holroyd Family Foundation have made an offer to contribute £10k annually over 2 years and our Board have also agreed to supplement this by £15,640k per year to enable continuation of the service. We would like the council to consider this match funding proposal which would reduce the Council's current expenditure by £25640 – a relatively small amount for such a valuable preventative service.

Proposal (Ref)	Suggestion Specifics	Service Response
Keyring (CSA-BR1-429)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyring and Targeted Adults support need to be looked at together • Bring the service in house 	Keyring and Targeted Adults Prevention are being looked at together already. This won't mitigate the need for savings but may provide opportunities for more reach. Bringing the service in house would cost more so this wouldn't be a viable alternative
Sheltered Housing Support (CSA-BR1-433)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could be included in housing benefit allowance • Link with other services, e.g. housing young people as wardens 	<p>It is for the housing providers to determine whether they wish to continue to provide the support and how.</p> <p>Funding through Housing Benefit is an option that they will be exploring</p>
Carers Personal Budgets (CSA-BR1-426)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at means testing instead • Providing a support network and being listened to by the social care system 	<p>In relation to means testing, I think the wider spectrum of carers would not welcome this approach as it would mean for the budgets we provide, most would get either no financial support or an amount that would not enable them to do the things they wish to do.</p> <p>We can explore providing support networks for carers and already fund a number of these – they provide both formal and informal support into the social care system – our role would likely be to promote these further – we will capture in the EIA.</p> <p>We are also developing a co-production panel and carers will be a key cohort within this engagement approach so they can link in through this model too.</p>
Cease funding for Age UK Men in Sheds Project (CSA-BR1-436)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merge Men in Sheds and Grassroots • Reduce funding by ½ • Funding match (see below) 	The services have different cohorts and purposes so merging wouldn't be an option.
Closure of Grassroots Day Care Service -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce opening hours • Keep open through community action, grant applications, fundraising 	

Failsworth (CSA-BR1-431)		
Adult Social Care Prevention and Early Intervention Service (CSA-BR1-434)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closer with other agencies • Bring back in-house support workers 	
Mahdlo Funding Reduction (REF-BR1-415)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents should pay some towards the cost • Outsource, especially on school days 	
Service Review of SEND QEST Team (CHS- BR1-440)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the service with a charge attached • Focus on the core offer to increase efficiency 	

Table17: Proposal alternatives

Other suggestions

Children's Services

The largest category of suggestions fell within the theme of looking at current practices and potentially improving them (43%). The suggestions in this theme were wide-ranging and encompassed everything from a Digital First strategy to having PA's work the same hours as youth workers:

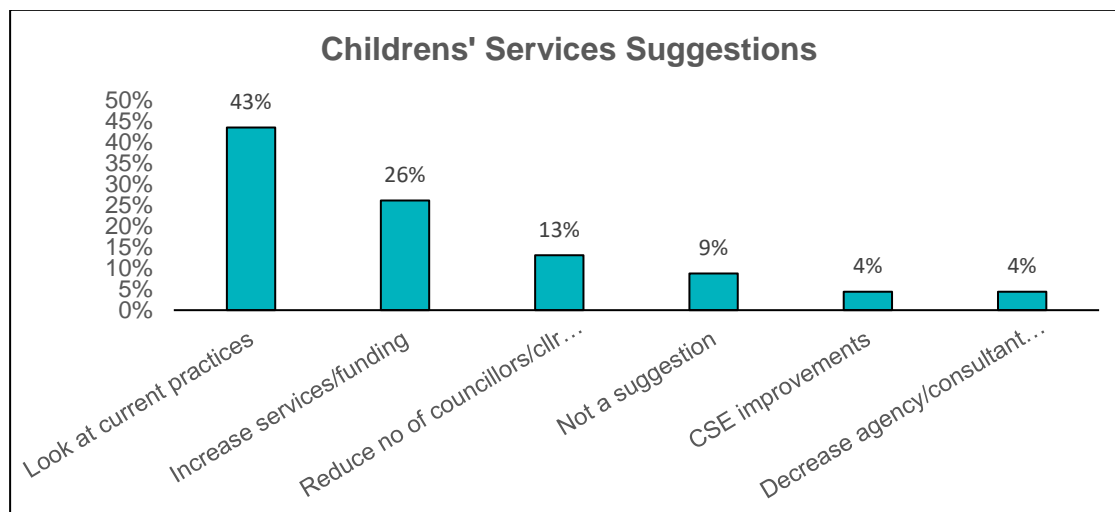


Figure 3. Children's Services suggestions

Communities and Reform

From the Communities and Reform Directorate the main themes that came out when looking at suggestions of where to save money were improving on current practices (35% of responses) and reducing the number of councillors and/or councillor/staff pay (29%).

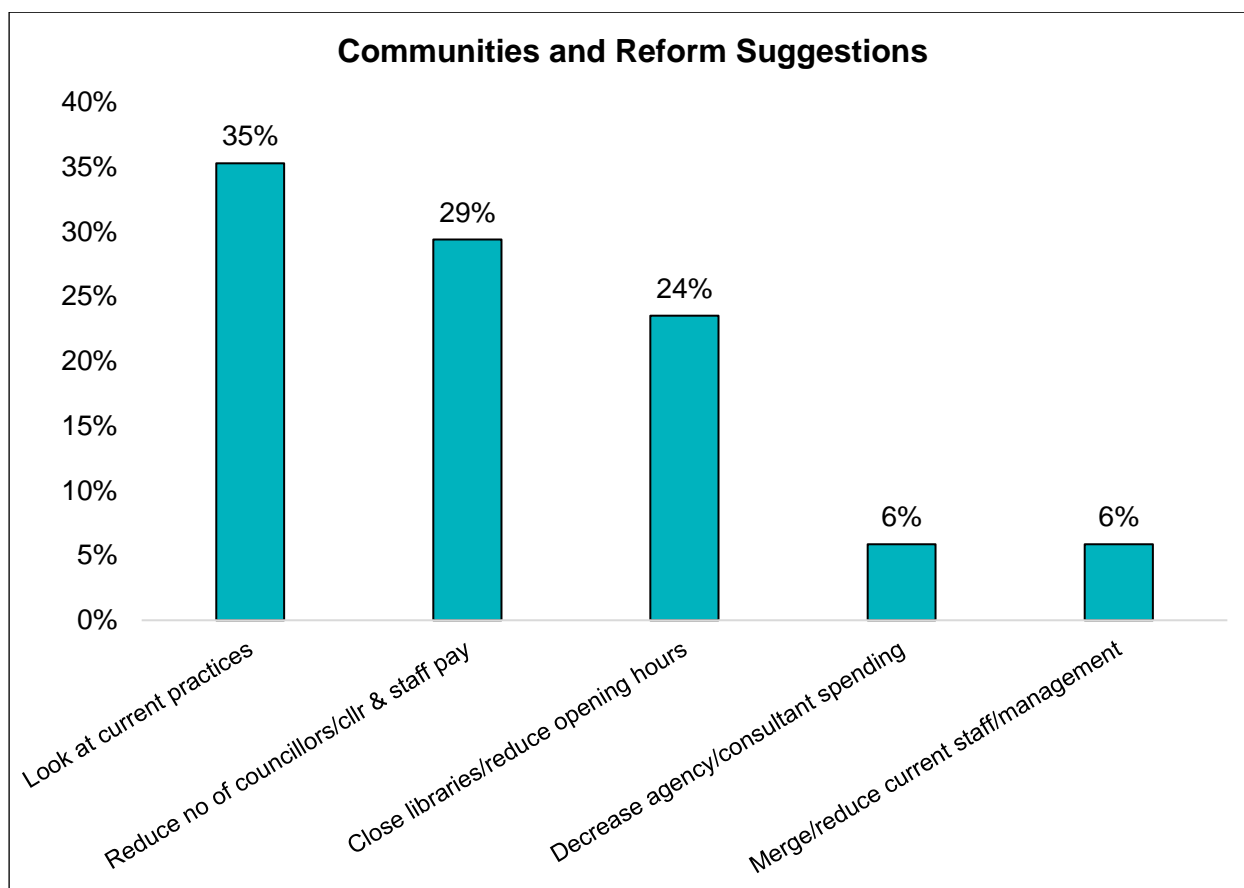


Figure 4: Communities and Reform suggestions

Community Health Adult Social Care (CHASC)

When we look at the themes that came out in the responses to the Community Health and Adult Social Care Directorate, we find that the two most prominent revolved around the idea of looking at other services to find savings instead (36%) and increasing services/funding (32%). The responses from the latter emphasise the importance of these services and the fact that they are already struggling to provide the services required:

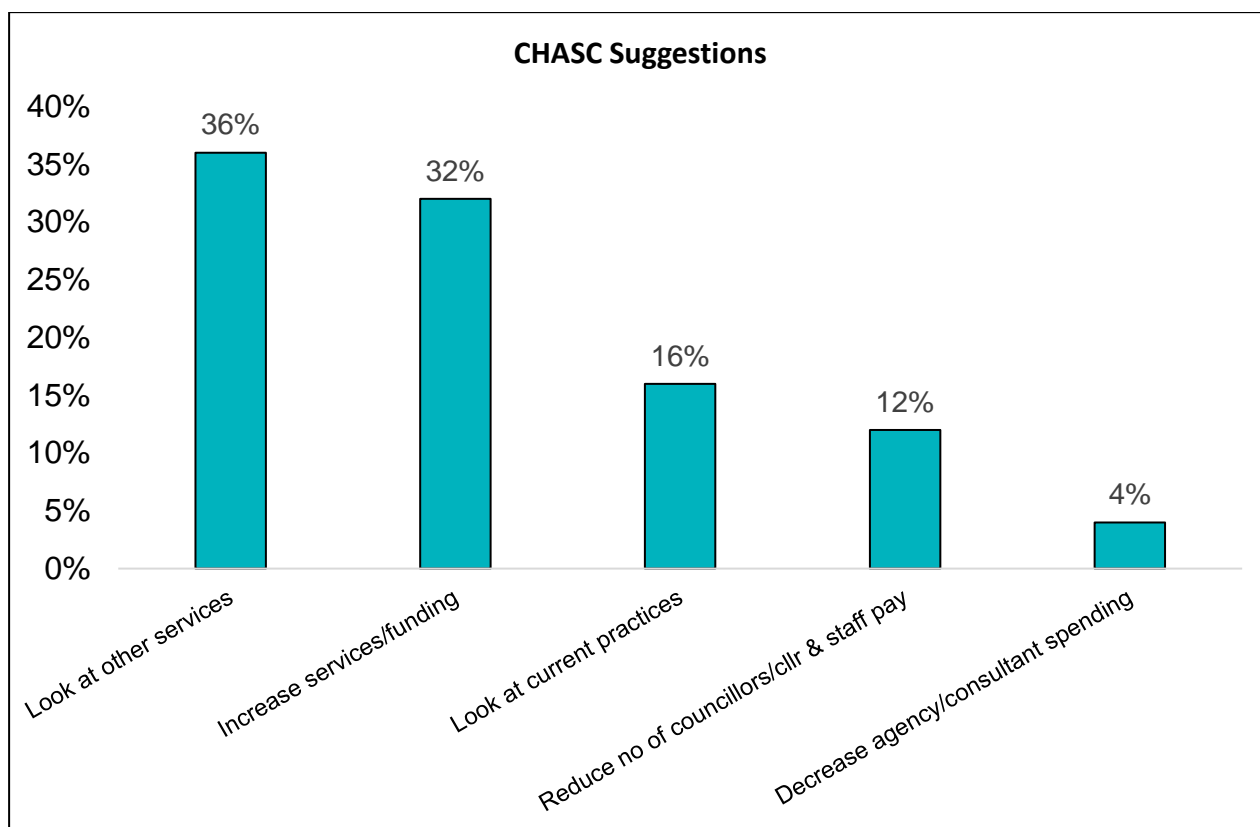


Figure 5:CHASC Suggestions

People and Place

Looking at current practices to save money made up 34% of the suggestions made in the People and Place Directions, while reducing money spent on floral displays made up nearly a quarter of the suggestions. There were also comments suggesting reintroducing rates to businesses and selling off public land adjacent to homes or that held by landowners.

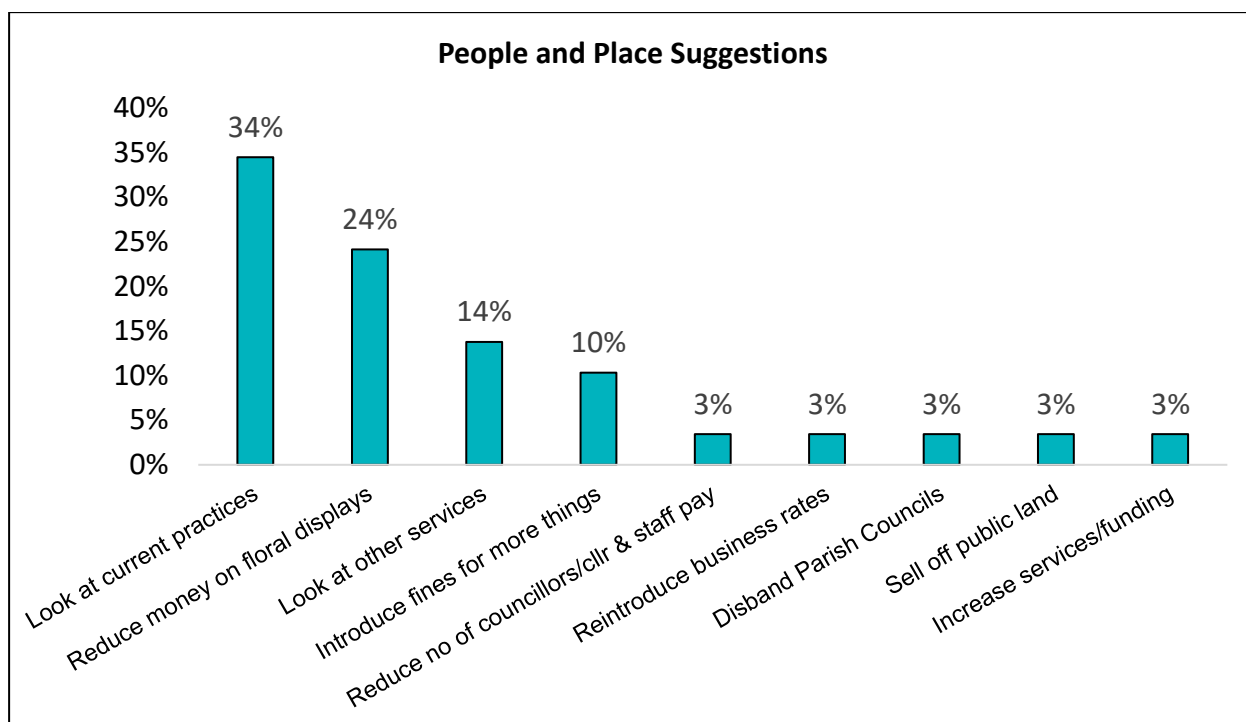


Figure 6: People and place suggestions

Unity Partnership

Over half of the suggestions from Unity were based around the ideas of either merging or reducing current staffing positions. A significant minority of the responses highlighted the potential of providing more funding for local businesses:

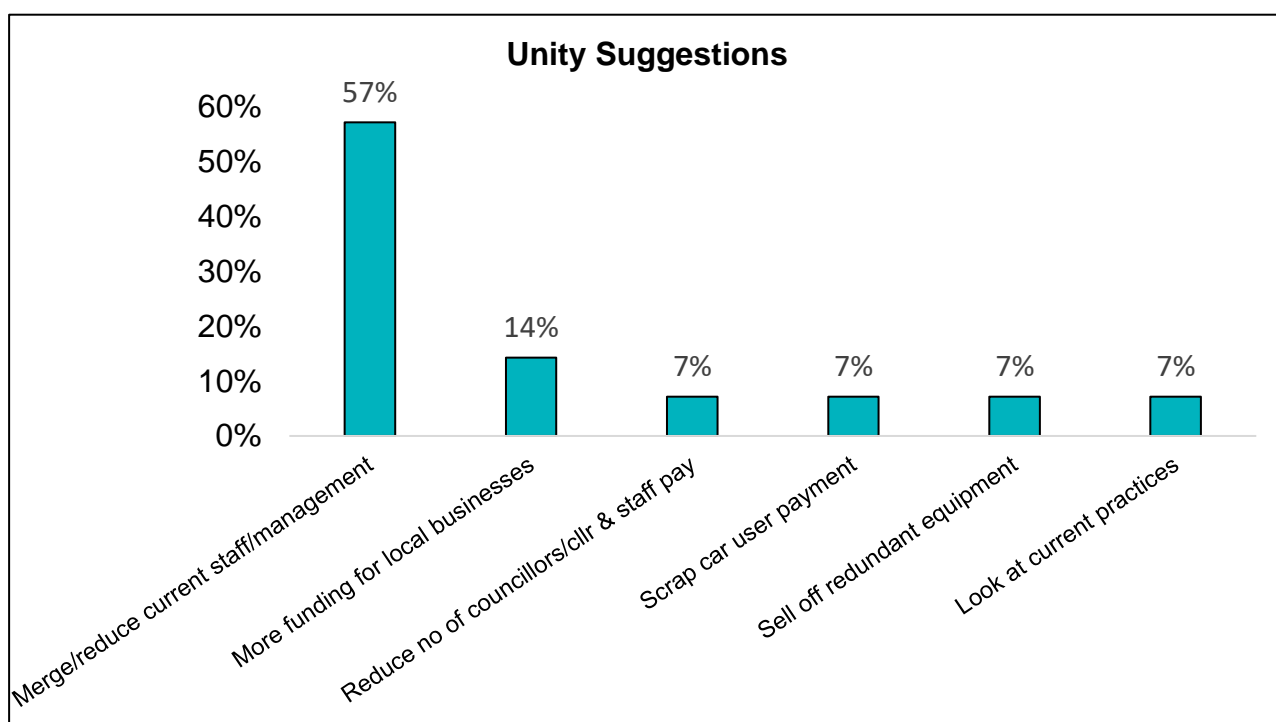


Figure 7: Unity Partnership Suggestions

Chief Executive

From the responses regarding the Chief Executive directorate the two most prominent themes that came out were that of reducing the number of councillors and/or councillor/staff pay (40%) and looking at current practices (26%) to save money. Of concern was the level of highly paid staff in the council, particularly in the Chief Executive's office. Merging or reducing current management made up nearly a quarter of the suggestions (24%).

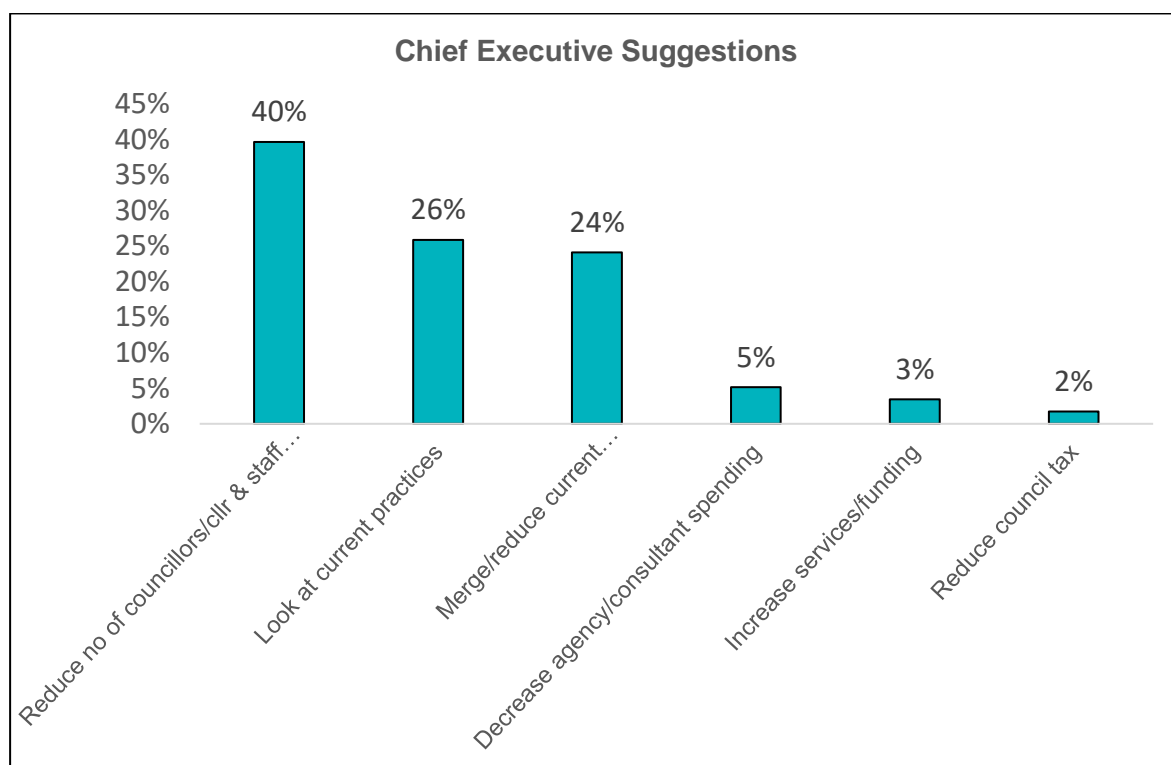


Figure 8: Chief Executives Suggestions

Conclusion

The suggestions received by respondents across each directorate were wide-ranging. These included ideas from reducing the number of councillors to reducing the amount of money allocated to the borough's floral budget. In general, the main themes that came out across the directorates were that savings should be found by looking at current practices within the council and looking at services other than those which the current proposal targets.

Youth Voice

Five groups were held facilitated by Oldham Youth Service staff. Table 18 below illustrates the attendance of these groups. Overall those engaged disagreed with just two proposals:

- Cease funding for Age UK Men in Sheds Project
- Service Review of SEND QEST Team

Participants did highlight some considerations. These can be found in table nineteen

Group	Demographic	Count
Barrier Breakers	Aged 13-25	8
Children in Care Council	Aged 15-21	10
Oldham Youth Council	Aged 12-21	27
Young Voices	Aged 8-13	8
Ambassadors	Aged 14-19	13
Total		66

Table 15: Summary of Youth Voice discussion attendance

Proposal	Comments
To remodel the Early Help Service	Most agreed with this proposal as long as the benefits of the services are not hindered by this change. Those that didn't agree abstained from voting.
External Placements for Children – reducing costs	Over 95% of the group ticked agree. Those agreed said only if the residential homes available are regularly checked (anyone can set up a children's home) this should be regularly monitored. Also corners shouldn't be cut and children's safety should be prioritised over how much money it costs at a placement. This should only happen if children are not going to be heavily disrupted by the change
Reducing the cost of SEND placements	Groups agreed with this proposal UNLESS they allow the current under-18 SEND students to stay where they are (due to interruptions) As long as the young people still get the same level of support that is needed. Can this be increased again once cut if it isn't working positively for young people? Regarding agreeing with parents and carers is the young person's views also taken into account if they are able too? We should invest more money in teaching staff

Mahdlo funding reduction	<p>Most young people agreed with this proposal.</p> <p>If they were the only youth provision, I would disagree but there are other providers</p> <p>It's a lot of money for a small percentage of young people in Oldham</p> <p>For those that disagreed they felt the cuts should be spread over a larger term e.g. 5 years (-£40k per year) so that Mahdlo had time to adapt how it works.</p>
School Swimming	<p>Young people agreed but felt it should be regularly reviewed to make sure the quality isn't less</p>
Keyring	<p>Most agreed and commented that the young people's support services such as social care should be doing this and prepping young people for independence anyway.</p>
Sheltered Housing Support	<p>Housing providers should do this as their roles anyway</p>
Cease funding for Age UK Men in Sheds Project	<p>All disagreed</p> <p>This is a fantastic service that should be continued</p>
Service Review of SEND QEST Team	<p>The groups disagreed with this proposal.</p> <p>Barely any savings for a real inconvenience</p> <p>Children's education and current plan might be negatively impacted</p> <p>Some schools won't bother to source the additional service so, children's education and current plan might be negatively impacted</p> <p>We are just moving the problem if this went ahead</p> <p>But all the services that are used now that are going to be dropped/ WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESING THEM?</p>
Adult Social Care Brokerage	<p>Young people felt this didn't affect them so neither agreed or disagreed</p>
Reduction in Traineeship Programme	<p>The groups were 50/50 on whether they agreed or disagreed with this proposal.</p> <p>Helping people get a job is more cost effective in the long run than supporting them financially. Won't reducing this budget cost more in paying people universal credit etc</p> <p>So long as there's a process that directs people to the other options available and they're at the same quality if not better</p>

	COVID has made youth unemployment has risen and surely we need more help regarding getting people into work and traineeships
--	--

Table 16: Summary of youth voice discussions.

Conclusion

With over 750 contributions this consultation has exceeded expectations around the number of responses we would receive. In total, 46% indicated an agreement with our proposals and 34% against them.

Overall, eight proposals have been met with overall disagreement, with the majority emerging from proposals developed within the Community Health Adult Social Care Directorate. Other affected areas include Children's services and Communities and Reform. These are shown in Table 5.

Of these negative received proposals, the key theme that emerged from each one was a concern that the implementation of the proposal would have a negative impact on vulnerable people, carers and children.

There were thirteen proposals that were received positively by respondents – of these, proposals 421 (Transformation of the Contact Centre) and 447 (Registrars Service Restructure) had the highest levels of net agreement (67% net agreement and 61% respectively).

Three proposals were met with a neutral response – that is, neither significantly agreed nor disagreed with.

Most suggestions for alternatives to proposals relate to these negatively received savings options. Of the suggestions for alternatives made by the respondents the key themes that came out were looking at current practices to save money and looking in other areas than those which the proposals were targeting.

Young people were engaged in the process through several groups facilitated by the Oldham Youth Service staff. From these groups it became clear that young people disagreed with just two of the proposals – these were proposal 436 (the cessation of funding Men in Sheds) and proposal 440 (review of the SEND QEST team).

This disagreement is in line with the wider responses, as these two proposals were among those that received a negative response.

Other representations regarding the proposals came in the form of an alternative proposal from Age UK relating to proposal 436 (the cessation of funding for Men in Sheds), representations from four local Rotary Clubs regarding proposal 415 (reduction in funding for Mahdlo), and a change.org petition, also regarding proposal 415. In addition, OPAL members expressed concerns about proposal 429 (Keyring).

Appendices

Appendix One: Engagement

A full range of engagement and communications activity took place over the 12-week consultation period.

Staff, residents (including community groups) and businesses were all encouraged to participate in the budget survey, using channels including social media, newsletters, traditional media, email and text messaging.

Hard copies of the survey were posted to 500 addresses across the borough, in areas of lower internet usage, to encourage take-up among all communities and to mitigate against digital exclusion.

Service lead engagement took place for two proposals

(External Placements for Children – reducing costs (CHS-BR1-443)

- Shared with all our commissioned provider at our Forum and in email to all of our CLA Commissioned providers
- Held a Child in Care Council consultation event.
- Weekly comms to all community based commissioned providers of services for CYP

Gallery Oldham opening times (REF-BR1-413)

- Around 700 service users were made aware of the consultation via the Gallery Oldham mailing list.
- Schools and community groups directly contacted

Traditional media

A press release was distributed to local and regional news media, and shared on the Oldham Council website, on 10 November 2020. This resulted in media coverage in titles including the Manchester Evening News, Oldham Times, Oldham Chronicle, Saddleworth Independent and the Shaw and Royton Correspondent. Links to all coverage are in appendix two

Business Newsletter

Details of the consultation, with a link to the online survey, were included in our regular business newsletter in November 2020 and January 2021. The article was viewed by 2241 and 2067 businesses respectively.

LinkedIn

Details of the consultation were shared with Oldham Council followers on LinkedIn (4317) in December 2020 and January 2021. A post on 9 November achieving 1376 impressions and another on 27 January achieving 188 impressions.

Staff

Copy for staff, managers, members, Team Oldham etc – all staff emails, team brief, shared with partner orgs.

Social Media

A total of 21 social media posts was shared across Social Media on Twitter (16 posts) and Facebook (5 posts) during the consultation period, reaching a total of 32,657 residents⁵

SMS/ E-Mail

SMS messages (n214) and email messages (n479) were sent to residents who had requested further details of consultations.

Oldham Council Website

A budget specific webpage contained within the Oldham Council site (www.oldham.gov.uk/Letstalkbudget) has achieved 542-page views including 479 unique views. Around three quarters have accessed the survey.

⁵ This figures do not allow for double counting

Appendix Two: Media Coverage

Manchester Evening News - Cuts proposed in Oldham including axing funding for charities

<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/cuts-proposed-oldham-including-axing-19331536>

The Oldham Times - Budget consultation launched on millions of pounds of cuts

<https://www.theoldhamtimes.co.uk/news/18893427.budget-consultation-launched-millions-pounds-cuts/#:~:text=Oldham%20Council%20has%20launched%20a,next%20year%20does%20not%20deliver.>

The Correspondent – Oldham Council launches budget consultation

<https://www.shawandroytoncorrespondent.co.uk/oldham-council-launches-budget-consultation/>

Saddleworth Independent - Oldham Council faces £30m funding shortfall and launches public consultation ahead of 2021/22 budget

<https://saddind.co.uk/oldham-council-faces-30m-funding-shortfall-and-launch-public-consultation-ahead-of-2021-22-budget/>

Saddleworth Independent – Save our Sheds Health and wellbeing initiative in jeopardy as Oldham Council plans to axe funding

<https://saddind.co.uk/save-our-sheds-health-and-wellbeing-initiative-in-jeopardy-as-oldham-council-plans-to-axe-funding/>

The Oldham Times - Youth charity urges Oldham Council to reconsider budget cuts

<https://www.theoldhamtimes.co.uk/news/18928222.youth-charity-urges-oldham-council-reconsider-budget-cuts/>

Oldham Chronicle - Budget consultation launched on millions of pounds of cuts

<https://www.oldham-chronicle.co.uk/news-features/139/main-news/137778/budget-consultation-launched-on-millions-of-pounds-of-cuts>

Oldham Chronicle - Rotary clubs in 'don't cut youth budget' plea

<https://www.oldham-chronicle.co.uk/news-features/139/main-news/138510/rotary-clubs-in-don%E2%80%99t-cut-youth-budget-plea>

Appendix Three: FINAL RESPONSE from the Oldham Carers Partnership Board to the Oldham Council 'Let's Talk Budget' consultation

FINAL RESPONSE from the Oldham Carers Partnership Board to the Oldham Council 'Let's Talk Budget' consultation, specifically in relation to the Carers Personal Budget proposal (CSA-BRI-426)

'AGREE' with the proposal, subject to account being taken of the following comments and actions which may help to mitigate any potential impact on informal carers of the proposed budget reduction and more generally.

In the section 'WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS PROPOSAL' the following response has been submitted on behalf of the Board:

The Carers Partnership Board's intention is always to advocate in the interests of carers. However, we also recognise that the Council and local partners are facing difficult decisions in order to continue to support and protect Oldham's most vulnerable and in-need residents. Although this proposal will lead to a reduction in the total carers personal budget envelope, we also believe that those carers with the highest support needs will be prioritised to receive a personal budget under these proposals, should they choose to be assessed.

Balancing what we know about support and provision for carers in Oldham, we feel in principle that the proposal is a reasonable one, and it is in line with the overall ambitions expressed in the Oldham Carer's Strategy 2018 – 2021. Whilst a one-off carers budget (following a carers assessment) may offer welcome, additional financial support to some carers, it is our view that the most valuable aspect of the carers assessment is that it should offer a high-quality, considered and holistic needs assessment and support planning process, which taps into what is already available for carers to potentially benefit from. We have heard this feedback from carers and the Oldham Carers Team, who conduct the carers assessments. Our understanding is that access to the carer's assessment is not affected by this budget proposal.

We fully recognise however that this proposal *will* narrow the access to a carers personal budget for carers in Oldham. However, increasing the eligibility thresholds will ensure that carers with the highest level of need will be prioritised for a carers personal budget. Although there will also be a reduction in the potential budget that an individual carer may receive, this means that the total available budget will stretch further, benefitting more carers but at a reduced level.

Our main concerns relate to carers already in financial hardship, for example, because they are unable to work or work reduced hours due to their caring responsibilities, they are heavily or partially reliant on state benefits, and some carers may have experienced new unemployment/reduced income as a direct impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. For some of our most financially vulnerable carers, we recognise that a carers personal budget may have provided a lifeline which enables them to continue caring.

Looking at Oldham as a whole (relative to other towns in GM), we know that absolute unemployment is higher, and pay is generally lower. We also know from Carers UK State of Caring report 2019 that many carers face ongoing financial challenges, with around 2 in 5 carers (39%) struggling to make ends meet and 21% of carers have experienced debt as a result of their caring responsibilities. With this in mind, we suggest that the following mitigating actions are taken when implementing this budget reduction:

- Advice for carers around welfare rights and benefits advice is strengthened within the carers assessment/support planning process and offered systematically to all carers undergoing a carers assessment
- The review of the carers assessment and support planning process is completed as quickly as possible in line with objective 4.2 in the Oldham Carers Strategy action plan
- Consideration is given to how new assessments of carers previously unknown to Adult Social Care are prioritised, given that current social and economic circumstances may lead to more residents with caring responsibilities needing early advice and support

Abridged version submitted online 21 / 01 / 2021:

The Carers Partnership Board's intention is always to advocate in the interests of carers.

However, we also recognise that the Council and local partners are facing difficult decisions in order to continue to support and protect Oldham's most vulnerable and in-need residents.

Our main concerns relate to carers already in financial hardship, for example, because they are unable to work or work reduced hours due to their caring responsibilities, they are heavily or partially reliant on state benefits, and some carers may have experienced new unemployment/reduced income as a direct impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. For some of our most financially vulnerable carers, we recognise that a carers personal budget may have provided a lifeline which enables them to continue caring.

We suggest a number of mitigating actions e.g. advice for carers around welfare rights and benefits advice is strengthened within the carers assessment/support planning process and offered systematically to all carers.

Appendix Four: GMDPP

Oldham Disability Budget Consultation Thursday 28th January 2020

(GMDPP) – Okay, we have still got people arriving, so we'll give it about five minutes or so. Just get yourself settled. We will start off in a few minutes.

(GMDPP) – Ok, we will start with the first item which is the Keyring proposal. So, Keyring provide a service supporting people to live independently. In total over the next two years, they're looking to remove £70,000 from their funding. Does anyone want to talk about the clearing service and how they use it?

(Keyring Service User) – I would like to say something. I've been recovering for six years now. Without the service of Keyring my life would be unbearable. I wouldn't know who to turn to and I'm a Christian. I'll would probably have gone to a church or called the Samaritans, or something like that. Keyring have always helped me in anything that I've done. I've done-up the house where I'm living and have polished all the floors. I made a garden in the back and put in new lights and a new shower. I've been really busy during lockdown. I suffer from diabetes type two and I'm certain I've lost weight and feel a lot better now and can get about more easily. I've always got on with everybody that works with keyring well.

(Keyring Representative) – With your support from Keyring how's it helped you? What would you think if you didn't have keyring? How would you feel and what do you think would happen?

22:00

(Keyring Service User)– I would have trouble. I would have to go to the library or something like that, to find out how I should go about doing things correctly. Keyring are always pointing me in the right direction, of which way to go. I suffered from depression and panic attacks and anxiety. I did use to drink and take drugs, but that's a long time ago now. I tried to overcome all these barriers.

Keyring Representative – Do you think if didn't have Keyring you'd have been able to manage that?

Keyring Service User – I don't know. I don't think I've got the intelligence. I mean, I know I'm intelligent. I like Keyring because of the great people. They all understand everybody's got problems that need to be overcome. It's just a matter of understanding how to do that, isn't it, how to solve these problems.

(Keyring Representative) – So, I'm just going to ask a question for you to help you a little bit. If you didn't have support from Keyring what do you think you'd struggle with?

(Keyring Service User) – I would struggle. I'm doing quite well with my physical health from walking and pedalling about on my bike. I find walking is the best exercise. I could possibly do with learning and understanding the diabetes, you know, how to keep my body in order.

(Keyring Representative) – And what about the support around your benefits and bills. Do you think you'd struggle without Keyring there?

Keyring Service User – Yeah, I think I would yeah. Ella helps me, she's lovely. I like her bubbly personality. She's nice. She told me how to use a spreadsheet. I'm going to stick to the budget, I've got everything I want in this house now. I'm not buying anything else off some Amazon or anything.

(Keyring Representative) – You've come a long way, haven't you? With help from caring people. And you've had a massive amount of support from Keyring, it was a 40 hour a week you had. You have become so much more independent, haven't you?

(Keyring Service User) – I like to be my own boss. I like to be active all that I like to be busy. I was doing a course in the college, finding out about communication on the internet. Keyring told me which things to buy, like setting me up with a computer.

(Keyring Representative) – That's really, helpful. Thank you.

(GMDPP) – Would Terry like to say something about Keyring?

(Keyring Service User) – My wife and I constantly need them. I was in hospital for four and a half months roughly. I had been in a coma and my wife was vulnerable. Keyring checked in on her every day. I would not be here today without Debbie and Keyring. They are lovely, lovely people. We need them here; I cannot praise them enough. We would have been totally lost without them. They have helped me with me everyday bills because we are literally cluelessly when it comes to bills. We would not be here without them.

(Keyring Service User) – I'm new to Keyring. I've only been with them for a week. They ensure my disabilities are supported. There's no support anywhere in Britain for dyslexia. I deal with dyslexic. People treat you like trash and stuff. There just needs to be more support for people like that.

(GMDPP) – George if you'd like to put your statement into chat. There we go. I'll read it quickly. "After having to fight my way from homelessness for the second time in my life. With Keyring I can schedule doctor's appointments, dentist appointments and deal with official documents. The reality is I cannot look after my own affairs due to my autism. It is Keyring that gives me a standard of life. Due to my lack of ability to communicate I have issues with my benefits or paying bills. I also want to say the lack of awareness to be able to refer disabled people to help from council workers, for example, homeless welfare and so on, is dire. I see so many people who clearly want their help, but I got no help in my darkest times.

(Keyring Representative) – Thank you. So obviously, a lot of our members are very passionate about Keyring which is wonderful to hear. We have a lot of people that couldn't join me today, and there's a lot of, a lot of us that want to contribute. I supported a number of our members to write written statement, but unfortunately, they couldn't be here today. Quickly, without Keyring she would have a lot of issues around her mental health, and she actually said she probably wouldn't be here today if it wasn't having her support from Keyring and our continued support. Hopefully, this is what is going to keep the funding in place as much as possible. And so I do

have a lot of questions for the Oldham commissioners about what services would be available to our members if Keyring was cut.

(Oldham Council representative) – Okay, I think, from the conversation we picked up a number of key points around the value that people place on Keyring and the services that it provides and the key difference it makes in people's lives. I think people are concerned that we're going to come in from the 1st of April and withdraw support, but this is not the case. These proposals are out for consultation, it's the opportunity for people to feedback and inform what this should look like going forward. This isn't a given. This is why we're consulting with people. The consultation runs until Monday so I would say to people, either. Feedback online, though if this is a barrier, we will capture what Karl and others have said. We are taking your feedback back, which is really important. Layton, it would be great to get any feedback sent through to us so we can feed in as part of the consultation. However, we need to be aware of the significant financial challenge for the local authority and that's been compounded by COVID. I'm not trying to make excuses, but it's where we find ourselves, what we're trying to find a way through by working collectively with people.

(GMDPP) – Okay, so I'm going to move on to the next one, which is the Age UK Men in Sheds project. Does anyone want to speak to that?

(Men in Sheds Representative) – We are doing a comprehensive written response. So, today I'd like to support a couple of the users to say something, if they wish to.

(Holroyd Family Foundation) – I'm an Oldhamer born and bred, but I don't live there anymore. We recently supported Men in Sheds Greenfield with a £10,000 donation to expand their services. This proposal obviously then came as a bit of a shock. It really struck a chord because I visited the site and saw the people they help. I just couldn't see another place that these people would go to. They combat so many different things, you can't highlight everything, but loneliness, you know, mental health, all sorts. It's an incredible facility in Greenfield so that's why we had put proposals together to expand the site, so the proposal just seems counterintuitive to us.

(Men in Sheds Service User) – I have been visiting Men in Sheds for the last 18 months to two years. It's been a very valuable thing to me, because at the time, my wife was suffering from dementia, and I needed somewhere to go, you know, just to give me a break from caring. And it was just an outlet for me. And the outlet was that I was able to meet men of similar age to me,

and chat to them do things and learn things from them. And it was just the community thing, and I think it's so special that you can get together to talk about things and do things together. If the funding is going to be taken away it might be better to share the money around to give everybody a bit each to try and carry on.

(Men in Sheds Representative) – We have roughly about 53, maybe 54 members based at both sheds. We have a shed in Greenfield which is open two days a week and we also have a shed in Failsworth which is open two days a week. Across those two sites across those four days, we have about 5,353 members who attend. Some of them have got varying levels of mental health problems. We have a few that come just because they are lonely and social isolation seems to play the biggest part in that. They're able to come and make friends. If you've got skills, you can share the skills and a lot of them just like to get out for the company. But, as I was saying, we have lots of community support. It's a really, really good service.

(GMDPP) – Ok next item, if anyone on direct payments wants to talk to Oldham Council about the proposal please get in touch. I know that there is some alarm from people with learning disabilities about the possibility that there could end up with less money every month. But a lot of service users you currently aren't able to attend

(Oldham Council representative) – It's lovely to meet you all. It's the first time I've been on this call so thank you and it's been so powerful listening to everybody's feedback. I just wanted to the last proposal. We are doing things in a different way, and it's what we call strength based, a strength-based approach. I was fortunate enough to be part of the first PCCA project that was undertaken in Salford around five years ago about implementing strengths-based networks, especially for people with learning disabilities and autism. So just to give you that reassurance if someone has an assessed need, the outcomes that they receive to meet that need will still be the same – who provides that support might change, but they won't be left with nothing. So, they might be assessed by a social worker and the outcome might be they need to be able to get out and socialize or they may need help with some of their bills. So those needs will still be met, they won't lose out. And I think Karl made a really good important point about liking to be his own boss and have control over his own life. It is about enabling people to be as independent as they possibly can be. And as a social worker my background is about supporting people in their own communities as well, so we are really working on how we connect people to their communities. Sometimes it's isolating to have one-to-one support, because actually what you find is that you spend most of your time talking to your support worker and not to other people.

So, it's not about taking full support away, that's absolutely not what we're going to do. It's about meeting people's needs in a different way.

(Keyring Representative) – A lot of what you said about community-based work is a lot of what Keyring is about. A lot of our networks are all around bringing the members into the community and joining them together and helping them be independent as possible. We don't just provide one-to-one support, but we also provide the network support, helping people live as independently as possible. Our users are worried that they've got such a bond with their current service, that they've got to swap it to another service they would have to start from scratch.

(Keyring Representative) – I was just going to mention some of the things that Layton was saying. It is very much about the community. It's about place based support, community support, and that's very much what we do. And, you know, it's like a lot of people that might have been around for a while about quite high support packages but then that's been reduced over the years, and people gain skills and independence. And you might have people who always need an element of support. But if you look at that at the cost of providing accommodation those people, living independently is a massive saving and a massive difference.

(GMDPP) – Okay so moving on to the next one which was Adult Social Care Prevention and early Intervention Services. So if no one's got a particular comment on this, then the next is carers personal budgets. Is anyone in receipt of that, or know anything about it that they'd like to talk about? If no one's got a particular take on that we'll move on again to Adult Social Care brokerage. So, if no one wants to talk about this we can go to the next one. So, the last one that I have here is supported living and learning disabilities. Does anybody want to talk about this, particularly before we get to a general discussion.

(GMDPP) – So, in the Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel, we produced a survey on the effects of COVID on disabled people across Greater Manchester. And we reported back to the combined authority, the Mayor Andy Burnham, MPs, and service leaders across the districts. Really what we found and what we're saying is that when the pandemic began, we'd already suffered some 10 years of regression because of austerity. So, the pandemic was a second blow and an intensification of an existing crisis and potential further cuts. I think we're very, very happy to work with the systems and the system leaders and the council to make this case to central government we are involved in meetings with the Cabinet Office disability unit. I

just want to make the point that to some extent sometimes we're being set up to fight amongst ourselves on a local level, where maybe the pressure should be applied at a national level. And that's something that, that, you know, we are happy to work with you on that rather than, you know, make this just a local issue that people have to struggle over. Most services and the VCFSE sector are already running on fumes and has been for a while, further cuts to statutory provision, with the expectation that the gaps might be filled by the VCFSE sector is whistling past the graveyard. But I think I'd like at this point to ask Pauline if you'd like to speak because you're the chair of Oldham forward together, and you're involved in lots of things.

(Oldham Forward Together) – I knew some of the services that were in Oldham, but I didn't know all of them. It's been good to listen to you all, and I really think that all the services do an excellent job, and long may they continue. COVID has caused lots of problems, and we do realize that there's not enough money around. But I do hope we can try and keep all these things going. Thank you.

(Oldham Council representative) – I think we completely understand the concerns that have been raised by the panel, and I recall reading the report that came out of the panel in the summer. And there was a particular focus for ourselves around how we engage with disabled people. And in our local communities within Oldham as well. And I think one of the things that we took from the findings from that survey was that, we've been very reactive to what was happening. And it's actually how do we, we, I suppose, take the challenge on collectively to co-produce. And so, we'd really welcome the panel's engagement in that. I think picking up around the financial challenges both prior to COVID, and now, the impact on our work has been exacerbated by COVID. I don't know whether people remember the council started the campaign last year, the SOS campaign: Save our Services. We have been trying to highlight to challenges we face, as well as the crisis of funding in social care at the national level as well. And we echo what you've said. Myself, Hayley and Joe would welcome any further questions that people have got around budget proposals.

(Keyring Service User) – You know we read and write from this phone. Without Keyring we would be in a complete mess. We 100% rely on Keyring. I am so, so worried about that. It frightens me, because of what I've been through. I don't know what we would do if we were to lose all this, it would be detrimental to our health and to my wife.

(Oldham Council representative) – We are here to give those reassurances that we're not just going to take services away on the first of April, then it's gone. It's around working with people

and understanding each individual's situation because it is different for each person, and the support that they need and looking at that and the wider impact on you as an individual.

(Oldham Council representative) – Thanks Terry, the points that you've made there are what we don't want: we don't want people to be scared and worried. What we'll do is be transparent with people and honest about the situation. We are here to get that feedback about what the impact will be. We've got a really fantastic piece of law and legislation which is the Care Act. We're not going to come in and say okay first of April, you now need to sort yourself self out now, we're not going to do that. So, it's about not taking those services away. It's about being really innovative in how we provide them so we don't want people having friends that are paid for, when we support natural friendships in the community. There of course will be those instances where people will need paid services to be able to maintain their quality of life and that's OK. But that's not the case for everybody. But just to give you that reassurance and everyone on the call. We're not looking at just coming and stripping things away we're looking at doing things differently. So, people can still have the same outcomes that they've always had, we will just be meeting those outcomes and doing it in a different way.

1:13:41

(Keyring Service User) – I'm under KeyRing and I only need their help for a short amount of time, will this impact on people like me who only need the help for a short amount of time? I struggle a lot with being able to leave the house, but with Keyring's support I've started an online course. I am looking to get back into work and to start contributing more personally. Other people like me who need that short amount of help, will it affect them with the budget cuts.

(Oldham Council representative) – That's good. That's a really interesting point, there's lots of people that dip in and out of services just as and when they need it because unfortunately life isn't a straight line. So, there's times when we do really well and there's times when we need the best support in life. So, I think the way that I think about it is if you start with the person, so what can an individual do for themselves; what can we do to help that person do more for themselves. What can the family and friends help them do? What can the volunteer agencies, and our community organisations help them do? And at the very bottom it should be that paid support because we have loads of networks that are open to us. So, Sophie where I want to reassure you, when you do need that support, but for a short time, you will still be able to access that. What we've been looking at is what is the right service for you at the right time. I can't say that there's not going to be a waiting list, but hopefully by exploring a different

alternative, we might be able to speed that process up a, think of different innovations and different services that we can try and support people so they're getting access to services quicker, rather than spending two or three years on a waiting list.

(GMDPP) – Okay, I've got a couple of comments in the chat I want to read out for everybody. So, Sam says, I would struggle without keyring, I would still be in debt and probably end up on the streets. Thanks Sam, for putting that in. And George says to everyone, “I have a follow up question, if the reality is someone will lose out from the cuts. And there is the lack of ability to cut them at the current time, will there still be budget cuts.”

(Oldham Council representative) – We're currently going through what we call budget setting now which decides how much money is taken off our budget. Once we know that, we know what's left. It won't be any more than what is out for consultation, so these proposals that we've talked about today. It might be less: we need to see what comes from the consultation. Then as a service we're told what we need to deliver. We look across all our services and resources to balance our budget. Every year we have to balance our budget. We get a lot of demand for Adult Social Care Services, so we constantly look at what are we spending, how can we generate more income, and how can utilize alternative models of funding, for example, grants. We are constantly managing our financial resources as any business does and unfortunately, we have to manage our budgets in the same way as a business.

(GMDPP) – I think maybe one question I have is: in the case where you've changed how a service is delivered or you've removed say brokerages or something like that. If it isn't working for someone, is there a quick way they can communicate that to you and you can adjust how things are going?

1:23:06

(Oldham Council representative) – Yes, we've always got our duty desk so anyone can ring in and speak to a social worker and they will ensure your situation is assessed. So, if something isn't working people can come back to things like brokerage as well we're not seizing it completely, but we're targeting the service at those individuals with the most complex needs so we can offer this to those who need it the most.

(Men in Sheds Service User) – you know you allocate the funding around, but somewhere along the line there's some more funding found. Would it be something you would consider taking on, or would the services just stop?

(Oldham Council representative) – So, it's like the process that we're going through now, we always must go through these types of processes. No provider would get a letter on a Monday telling them they are no longer required. We would always work through it because ultimately the services that are provided through Adult Social Care are focused on vulnerable people who need additional support. Through the Care Act, we have a duty to support, so we would never just do that overnight Roger.

(Men in Sheds Service User) – Yeah, I don't ever think that you would drop somebody completely, so would you encourage all the charities to try and source funding from outside Oldham Council?

(Oldham Council representative) – There is a whole vetting process and safeguarding process to make sure funding is appropriate and support the right service. We wouldn't turn anyone away, I mean Joe who's with us from commissioning, they're constantly work with new people that are approaching us, we see it all the time with brokers for direct payments, we see small homecare organizations coming through, so I would expect to see more and more of that absolutely.

(Keyring Service User) – I was just wondering if you are thinking about mixing some of the charities and what ideas you have for that?

(Oldham Council representative) – As we said, it's about the right service at the right time for the right people. So, it's about working together because we haven't got all the answers so I wouldn't want to commit to anything, but anything we do will always be in consultation with service users. It's about working together to achieve the best outcomes for the people of Oldham that need that service.

(GMDPP) – Okay, thanks. We have hit the half three times so I'm going to wrap up. Thank you for everybody's time and expertise and lived experience today. I've put the link in the chat to the online consultation, please do go and fill it in to your heart's content.

Appendix Five: Age UK Men in Shed's

Age UK Oldham Men in Sheds Proposed Budget Cuts

Budget Consultation

Thank you for including our Men in Sheds service in your budget consultation. We were pleased that the men who use the service were able to have their say on your proposals as this highly valued service makes a huge difference to the lives of many older men across Oldham – a group of people with a wide range of physical and mental health needs, who would otherwise not engage in activity that helps them maintain and improve their own quality of life

We would like to take this opportunity to make our response to the consultation – firstly, offering our own alternative proposal regarding the continued funding for this service; and secondly to tell you more about the Sheds and the difference that they make.

Our proposal

In response to the proposed withdrawal of the funding, we have looked for alternative ways to fund the service and of course kept our service users and staff informed that the service may need to close. Having seen the positive impact that the Shed makes to the men's lives and concerned that the service may end the Holroyd Family Foundation have made an offer to contribute £10k annually over 2 years and our Board have also agreed to supplement this by £15,640k per year to enable continuation of the service. We would like the council to consider this match funding proposal which would reduce the Council's current expenditure by £25640 – a relatively small amount for such a valuable preventative service.

About the Sheds:

Our two Sheds – one in Failsworth and one in Greenfield, provide 80 places a week and work with an average of 55 men per year between the ages of 50 and 85. Each man attends for approximately 6 months, at the end of which we help the more independent men to move on to other community activities so they can maintain the benefits they've achieved.

The Sheds provide the men with the opportunity to participate in meaningful hands-on activity and learn new skills with others – providing the dual benefits of enhancing their self-esteem and

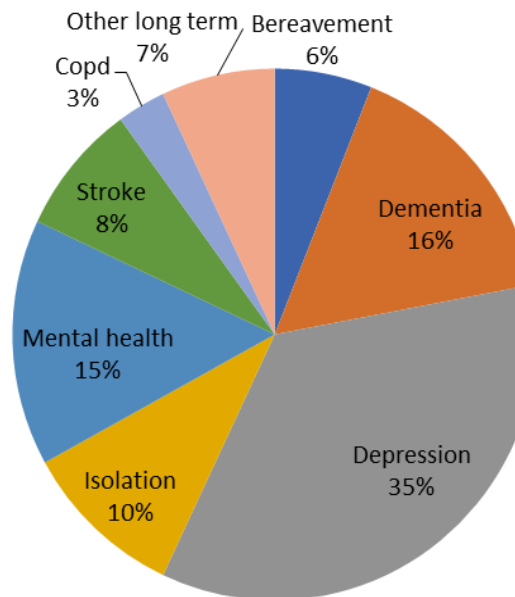
confidence and reducing their isolation. We support them to identify ways of maintaining and improving their physical and mental health thus reducing the risk of chronic disease and social isolation (e.g. increasing awareness of and reducing the stigma of depression; supporting men with physical disabilities following strokes; encouraging men to present sooner to their GP / support services with serious health concerns etc). Men are interested in their health but messages have to be presented in the right way for them to take this on board and manage their conditions independently. The Sheds provide a creative and effective way to do this.

We also know that the Sheds provide much needed respite opportunities for carers, especially those whose men have early to moderate dementia.

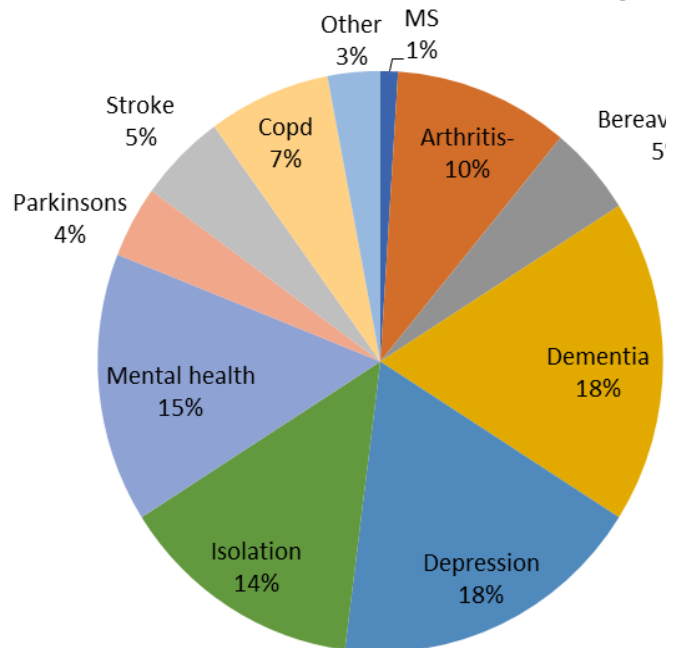
The benefits of our Men in Sheds service are well recognised for improving the lives and chances of older men and we are a valued referral route for agencies across Oldham, including the Mental Health team (average 20% referrals); Social worker / GP (average 20% referrals); Age UK PIP service (average 12% referrals); Job Centre (average 5% referrals); Stroke unit (average 5% referrals). These providers recognise the effectiveness of our service in supporting men with long term health conditions; improving physical and mental health / emotional wellbeing; and improving access to services / activities and benefits.

The men who are referred into our service have a wide range of physical and mental health conditions and the graphs below our service supports a large proportion of men with mental health conditions – not represented in the Equality Impact Assessment in September We, and the agencies that refer to us, know that men with mental health conditions are particularly hard to engage and do not access traditional support. Without our Sheds, we anticipate that the mental health of many of these men would deteriorate, they would not receive the support they need and that they would become increasingly isolated and non-engaged in the community.

MIS Failsworth Health Analysis



MIS Greenfield Health Analysis



Evidence of the positive impact of our service is not only anecdotal. To understand the impact of our service, we ask the men to complete the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS) self-assessment tool every quarter.

In our January to March 2020 assessment:

- 84% of the men reported reduced social isolation
- 80% of the men reported increased wellbeing
- 88% of the men reported improved confidence and self-worth

These outcomes provide evidence that the service continues to fulfil the vision of the Oldham Locality Plan for Health and Social Care Transformation. Through innovative programmes, new ways of working, and partnerships our population will be encouraged and empowered to:

- Take more control, improve their life chances, reduce risks to health and live well and adopt healthy lifestyles;
- Access care and support at an earlier stage;
- Manage their own conditions and live independently.

Efficiencies/Income generation

We have continuously made efficiencies in the service over the years to reduce the LA funding expectations and generated income from the practical projects the men produce (recent successes range from constructing bird boxes for domestic gardens to crafting a public bench commissioned by the Saddleworth Civic Trust at a cost of £1500 .

In addition, AUO has routinely sourced small pots of external funding (e.g. Greenfield Tesco carrier bag scheme) to assist with purchase of materials.

Sustainability/Community Social Enterprise

Consideration has already been given to work towards this service becoming independent but the majority of the men referred to our service need varying degrees of physical and mental support during their sessions and if the staffing element was withdrawn, the dynamics of the service would need to change and the more dependent and vulnerable men would be excluded.

Safety and Risk management in the Sheds

Safety is vitally important within our Sheds. At both sites we have a fully equipped workshop with a range of industrial and domestic power tools. As you can see from the graphs AUKO is open to all men regardless of their abilities and disabilities. For example, one shed accommodates 14% of men who have a range of dementia diagnosis whilst 6% of participants have suffered strokes leaving them with limited mobility and communication. Most of the remainder of men attend due to a life changing event that has led to mental health problems and/or physical health conditions which in turn has resulted in isolation and lack of self-esteem.

Age UK Oldham is committed to ensures the safety of users and day to day responsibility for ensuring the safety of users and volunteers rests with the Shed Co-Ordinator. A full assessment of all referrals will be initially be undertaken followed by a comprehensive risk assessment with each user based on their skills and ability, what power tools they can use and what level of supervision is required whilst they are taking part in projects/activities. This is constantly monitored and updated.

Many men need a staff member, mentor or a volunteer to assist them to be able to participate in projects safely with others having a basic level of ability and needing constant supervision within the workshop environment. The sheds are divided up so that those who are less able can participate in less manual activities yet still feel they take an active part in projects.

If it were to become entirely a social enterprise project, this would exclude many of the men who already attend, and the Shed would become a facility for men who are able to participate fully unsupervised and used as a community workshop.

However, Age UK Oldham offer a holistic package and are able to monitor and provide support to the user and their carer/family, giving them the help to access health and care services where necessary, link them with other services/activities as and when the opportunity arises and in times of crisis. It is also a much welcome respite for both relatives/carers and users. An added concern would be the recognition of men who appear to function well but have underlying health conditions, undergo changes in medication etc which sometimes affect concentration or a change in ability which could result in a mishap to themselves or others.

Our Proposal

At our Failsworth shed we encouraged a number of “shedders” to form a constituted group to join an allotment society, lease their own plot and attract external funding to help regenerate and equip the venture. This was initially successful but it soon became apparent that the men needed the ongoing help of the Shed Co-ordinator to support and motivate them to continue.

To overcome this challenge, our plan is to garner community support and explore development of the unmanned days to be run independently by the local community whilst existing sessions for the more vulnerable would continue staffed days. There has been considerable interest from the local community to explore and set up shed activity for women and this would be a welcome addition at both centres.

Learning from the expertise and knowledge we gained during the five years of successfully delivering “Ambition for Ageing” funding. Using an asset-based approach, including older people in the decision making and offering skills training to give them the confidence to develop and ultimately take control to enable their allocated days to be fully sustainable.

We have 4 months of funding available from April 2021 in Ambition for Ageing before the project comes to an end and we are proposing to the Lottery that this would be worthwhile for our staff in AFA to engage with the community and, if there is enthusiasm, support them to develop and establish a community enterprise to run alongside the existing service.

Post Covid Recovery

We anticipated that the need for our Sheds will have grown during the pandemic and that the impact of Covid-19 will make our service even more important for men in Oldham. Older men are one of the groups most affected by coronavirus and those with health conditions such as heart problems and obesity are most at risk.

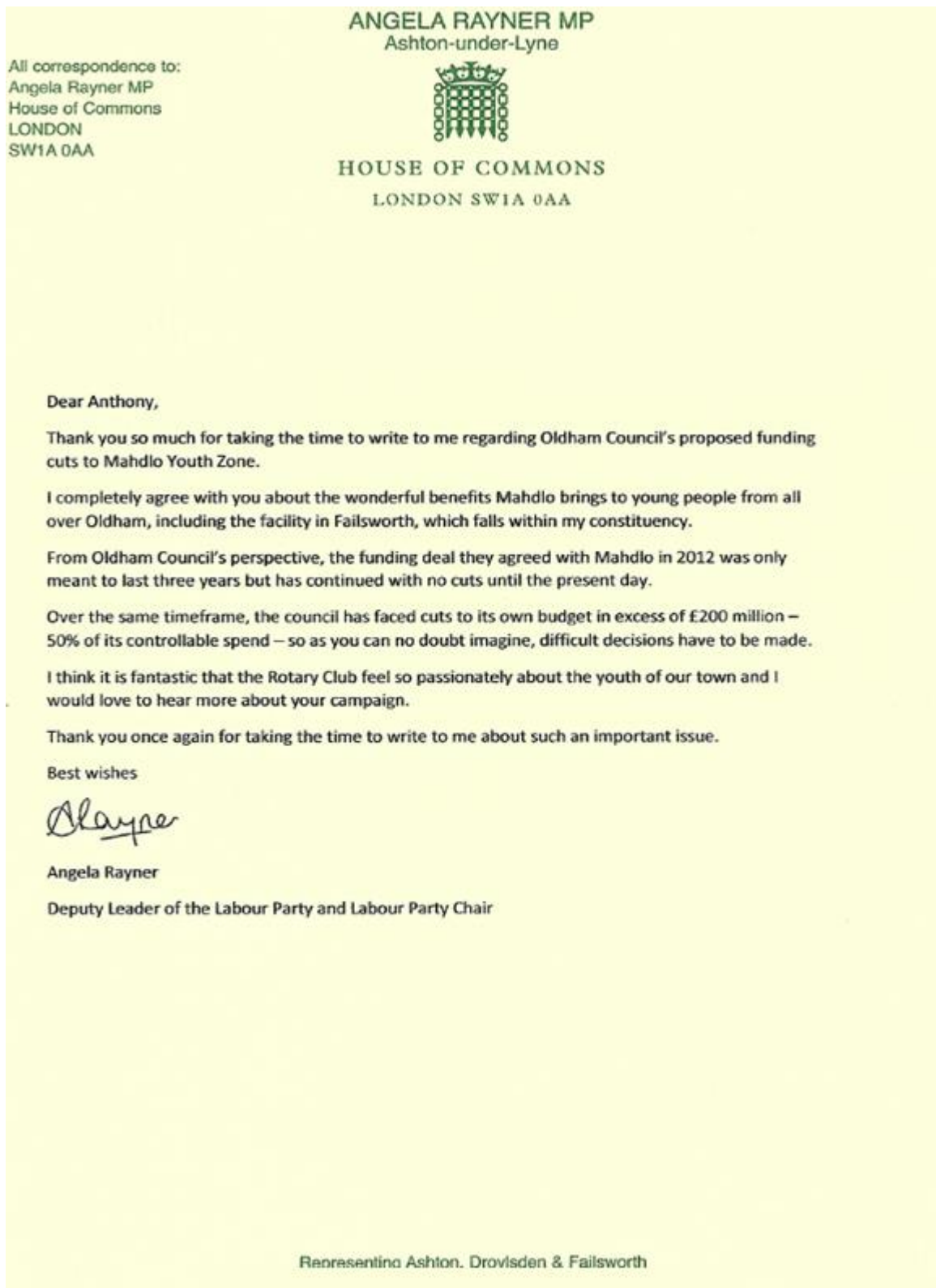
Age UK's report '[The impact of COVID-19 to date on older people's mental and physical health](#)' published in October, has found that older people staying at home to protect themselves from the virus has led to other serious problems and **Oldham's Covid recovery Plan** echoes these findings and we continue to work as an ally for the council communicating, engaging and activating the community.

Throughout the pandemic we have been in daily/weekly contact (making over 2,000 phone calls each week) with those people whose services have been suspended, supporting carers/families at risk of carer breakdown and others who were not known to us previously and are ready to re-instate our Men In Sheds service to address the issues that they have been experiencing - give them the confidence and support to return to engaging/socialising in the community in a changed environment.

With the approval of commissioners, we have already formulated detailed recovery plans and reinstated some of our contracted services and transport to accommodate the most frail and vulnerable. Following the re-opening we identified 4 cases of users/staff testing positive there has been no internal transmission – testament to our strict infection control measures, staff training and vigilance and would replicate this approach at Men in Sheds.

We ask that this proposal for match funding be given your full consideration. Older men in this group are already disadvantaged. The isolation that Covid restrictions imposed have affected them severely and to remove this facility which is so vital to their future health and well-being would be a backward step.

Appendix Six: Angela Rayner MP Response to Rotary Club re Mahdlo⁶



⁶ Contact details redacted from Public document