

Delivering Excellence – Community Engagement

Report by Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive

1 Purpose of Report

This report proposes an approach to developing a community engagement programme to inform the implementation phase of the Delivering Excellence Framework previously presented to Council on 23 June 2015.

2 Background

The Delivering Excellence framework has been developed to respond to the financial and service challenges the Council will face in future years as a consequence of wider public sector reform and continued financial constraint.

The need to transform and reposition services has never been greater and the “Delivering Excellence” framework sets out an approach that provides the means to:

- Realise savings of the scale and magnitude required and to continue to deliver high quality services by engaging staff, partners, stakeholders and citizens to determine the nature of service delivery, the level of service standards and the method of delivering these services;
- Forward plan, for the period beyond known financial settlements, to prioritise the services to be delivered and to clearly identify those services which will no longer be funded or indeed provided or may be provided through alternative mechanisms or approaches;
- Ensure that there is achievement of the outcomes and priorities of the Council and Community Planning Partners.

A report proposing the adoption of “Delivering Excellence” as a framework to secure service and financial sustainability was presented to Council at their meeting on 23 June 2015 with a recommendation advising that a more detailed proposal for the engagement and consultation aspects of the framework would be brought forward after the summer recess.

3 “Delivering Excellence” Framework

The “Delivering Excellence” framework set out in Appendix 1 builds on existing service reviews and transformation activities already established by the Council. It aims to utilise these activities as effectively as possible to ensure that they are delivered to their full effect. The introduction of the framework provides a cohesive and consistent approach to future service delivery and transformation with the customer at the core and employees across the Council empowered to reshape their services.

The proposed engagement and consultation activity consists of two phases; firstly engagement on the financial and service challenges the Council faces over the medium term and secondly consultation on the proposals to address these.

The original timetable presented to Council in June and for convenience shown below, sets out the timeline for engagement and consultation through to December 2016:

Table 1 – Timeline

Date	Activity
July – May 16	Consultation with Midlothian Community on financial and service challenges.
June 16	Update to Council setting out proposals. Proposals published
July 16 – November 16	Consultation on proposals
December 16	Update to Council on Consultation and recommendations to set a balanced budget for 2017/18 and future years.

4 Community Consultation and Engagement

A primary requirement noted in the June report was that the proposed consultation and engagement should be statistically robust wherever possible; it should use a range of approaches from the Midlothian Citizens’ Panel to web-based surveys and also include engagement through briefings, seminars and workshops with relevant groups. Ensuring that relevant information is made widely available is an important element of this. As a result a draft community consultation/engagement plan for Delivering Excellence is shown in Appendix 2 and includes the following activities:

- Winter 2015 Questionnaire to the Citizens’ Panel. This is a panel of 1,000 residents. The panel is a representative sample of Midlothian’s population and generally has a response rate of 60%. This method is already a key method adopted by the Community Planning Partners at a cost of approximately £4,000 per survey.
- Questionnaire and information is also available to the wider public at Council receptions/libraries etc and online.

- Broadcasts on local radio and the use of social media.
- Targeted engagement with service specific groups and outreach workshops as appropriate.
- Targeted engagement with wider community groups and communities of interest would include community councils, neighbourhood planning groups, voluntary organisations and private sector representative bodies.
- Public engagement events.

Whilst the information above references the traditional approaches used by Midlothian for consultation and engagement, the approach for Delivering Excellence, whilst building on the good work that is already happening, should also ensure a focus on:

- how community feedback can influence our decision making process
- moving towards more meaningful community empowerment and how we manage and enable this change
- identifying increased opportunities to work in partnership both internally and externally to reduce costs and consultation fatigue
- how, where and when we disseminate and share our information, knowledge and expertise across the Council and with our partners.

As a Council, we want to make sure our communities can influence, and shape decisions and services that affect the communities in which they live and work. Therefore an effective campaign for Delivering Excellence should ensure that any consultation and engagement activity is necessary, effective and of a high standard. It should also ensure that local people and local communities have more influence and power to improve their lives.

In order to support the above the proposed approach for consultation and engagement, whilst drawing on traditional methods will also look to make the most of some newer or less used tools and techniques to encourage wider engagement and targeted discussions for example:

- Greater use of the Council's website and materials in an 'easy read' and/or info graphic format (See Appendix 3)
- Media briefings, releases, blogs
- A social media campaign to reinforce key messages and themes and to generate discussion and encourage people to get involved via Facebook and Twitter
- Making the most of existing 'touch points' in terms of the existing consultation calendar, planned communications (See Appendix 4) and relationships and skills of staff who already engage on a daily basis.

As the proposed approach will take the form of a targeted campaign the intention would be to identify a resource with the appropriate skills and experience who, whilst being responsible for introducing and delivering a

refreshed approach would also focus on targeting the potential areas for improvement within our current approaches as follows:

- We need to maintain a better overview of the full range and extent of consultation and engagement activities that are being undertaken both by the Council and its partner organisations to ensure opportunities to engage in a more joined up and cohesive way are not lost.
- More information such as where and when consultation and engagement activities feed into the decision making process and how often exercises are undertaken is needed. This information will help to highlight areas of cross over and duplication and in turn identify where collaborative activities can be undertaken to make cost savings and avoid consultation fatigue.
- There should be better use of participatory, e-consultation and social media methods which presents more opportunities for our residents to fully engage with us and become more involved in the planning and delivery of our services. However, whilst we need to increase our use of technology we need to be clear that this increase is for the right reasons and should continue ensuring that we undertake consultation and engagement activities that are inclusive, cost effective and contribute to our decision making process.
- We need to do more to better understand and combine the outputs from the various data sources and systems that the Council has access to.

The initial aim of the early engagement is to foster a wider understanding of the challenges the Council faces, whether service or financial, the existing transformation activity and any emerging options for future service delivery and how individuals and groups can contribute to shaping it. The early consultation will also ensure a link from the initial survey responses to the subsequent proposed programme for continuous improvement. The second phase of consultation will support the transition from developing options to options implementation. The output from the various consultation and engagement activities will help inform the options taken forward which form the core of the Council's medium term Service and Financial plans.

In parallel with the community engagement activity there will also be continuing engagement with Trade Unions through the existing forums.

5 Report Implications

5.1 Resource

Whilst the proposal to make more use of digital channels incurs little or no additional costs, the success of the campaign will be dependent upon the right resource being in place to further develop, oversee and analyse outputs therefore further consideration of funding for this is required.

The proposed wider community engagement will require the prioritisation of staff time to support the proposed consultation activities and events.

Additional, non staffing costs, for example the Winter 2015 Questionnaire to the Citizens' Panel, can be funded by prioritising the use of existing budgets.

5.2 Risk

The Framework offers a robust process which incorporates the need for services to be aware of and responsive to risks identified throughout the approach.

Further consideration will be taken throughout the approach to monitor and reduce any associated risk in delivering the Framework with wider risks being addressed with the appropriate stakeholders.

There is a risk that by not involving our employees and communities, they will become less engaged in delivering sustainable services; however it is also recognised that the organisation requires continuing support to ensure successful delivery of the Framework.

There is also a risk that consultation will be overly influenced by a vocal minority. Therefore to mitigate this it is also proposed to broaden the consultation to include as wide a range of feedback as possible.

5.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☐ Sustainable growth
- ☒ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

5.4 Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

Service Planning and Review is a fundamental part of the framework and services are currently tasked with ensuring that their plans and activities are informed by the outcomes and priorities captured in the Single Midlothian Plan.

5.5 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Service Planning and Review is a fundamental part of the framework and services are currently tasked with ensuring that their plans and activities are informed by the outcomes and priorities captured in the Single Midlothian Plan and therefore performance continues to be measured and monitored against the key priorities and outcomes identified in the Single Midlothian Plan.

5.6 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Whilst the proposals in this report do not directly impact on the adoption of a preventative approach, adoption of the framework will undoubtedly allow resources to be prioritised to support prevention.

5.7 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Engagement and consultation with Communities and other stakeholders is embedded within the framework and associated timeline and is the

focus of this report. Specifically the timeline provides for engagement with communities later in 2015 on the service and financial challenges the Council faces over the coming years with further engagement and consultation during 2016 on the proposals to address these challenges.

5.8 Ensuring Equalities

Prior to the consultation being finalised an interim EQIA will be carried out and a link will be embedded in the equalities section of this report.

5.9 Supporting Sustainable Development

The Framework sets out a series of approaches to service planning and review which focus on delivering sustainable service improvements.

5.10 IT Issues

There are no direct IT implications arising from this report.

6 Recommendations

Council is recommended to;

- a) Endorse the proposed consultation and engagement approach note in the report and set out in Appendix 2.

Date: 9 September 2015

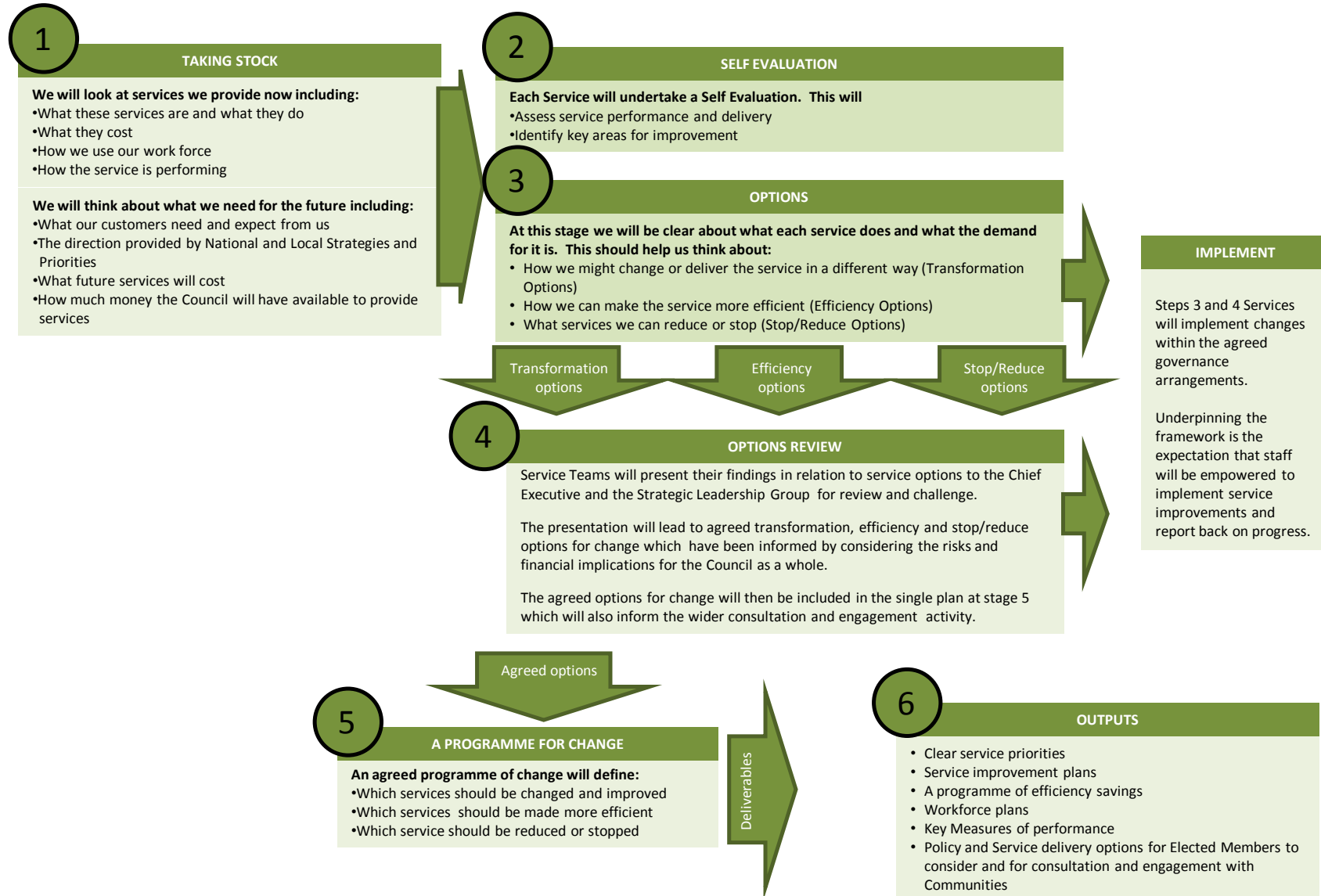
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Background Papers:

None

Delivering Excellence Framework



Appendix 2 – Delivering Excellence Consultation and Engagement Plan

Timeline	Method	Audience
October – December 2015	Council Website –Core Information/Get Involved	Public
	Winter 2015 Questionnaire	Citizens' Panel
	Winter 2015 Questionnaire – Online	Stakeholder Groups and Public
	Winter 2015 Questionnaire – Council Receptions/ Libraries etc	Stakeholder Groups and Public
	Media briefing/releases/blogs	Public
	Local Radio Broadcasts	Public
	Social Media Campaign (Facebook/Twitter)	Public
	Outreach workshops/existing engagement opportunities	
July 2016 – November 2016	Council Website – We said/You said refresh/Get involved	Public
	Media briefings/releases/blogs (Thematic)	Public
	Social Media Campaign (Facebook/Twitter)	Public
	Targeted engagement with service specific groups and outreach workshops	<p>This is a suggested list of stakeholder groups. A variety of methods will be used to engage as appropriate e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending meetings • Sending information out as part of existing newsletters • Distributing questionnaires by email etc <p>Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Partnership Forum (Health) (Hot Topics Group) • Voluntary Sector Forum – hosted by MVA • Interfaith Group • Education Advisory Group • Pupil Councils • Thematic Partnership Groups • Parent Groups
	Targeted engagement with wider community groups and communities of interest	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federation of Community Councils • Neighbourhood Planning Groups
October – November 2016	Public engagement events	Geographically targeted across Midlothian



Midlothian's future

The plan for change

Midlothian Council has to spend less money. The Government has said that all public services have to spend less money. This includes the things like the Health Service, benefits and local Councils.

Savings so far

We have already saved a lot of money. We have tried to do this without making big changes to services for people in Midlothian.

In the last 3 years we have saved £XX million.

Here are some examples of how we have saved money:

- £X million by having less managers
- Almost £X million by finding better ways to buy things and services
- £X million from having less offices
- Almost £X million from changing the way we deliver services such as
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- Over £X million from doing less road works
- Over £X million by looking at how we run things like libraries

We have to plan to save more money

The Government is giving less money to councils. At the same time, more people need our help.

For example, there are more older people that need help.

This means that the council will have to save more.

We need to save £X million over the next 5 years.

We have plans to save £X million, but we still need to decide how to save another £X million.

We would like you to help us decide how to save £X million.

Appendix 3 – Easy Read / Info Graphic Example

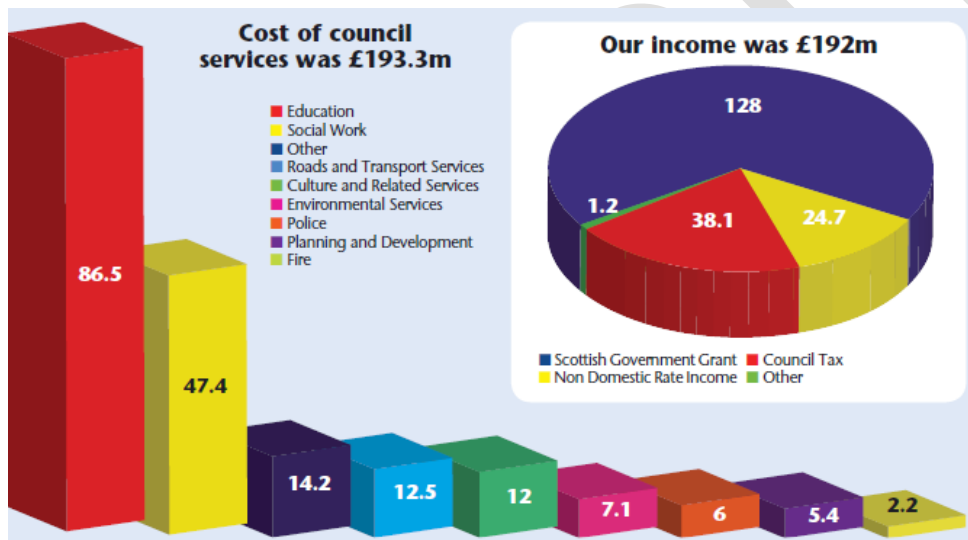
What does the council spend money on?

The council spends £X million on services for people who really need our help. This is over half of all our money each year.

This includes services for

- older people
- transport for people who need our help
- young children and their families
- keeping children safe
- people with learning disabilities
- people with physical disabilitieshealth
- young people

The following chart (Example) shows how we spend that money:



The council spends almost £Xm on services which everyone uses.

This includes things like

- rubbish and recycling
- country parks
- schools
- sport
- libraries
- roads

Appendix 3 – Easy Read / Info Graphic Example

The plan

The council cannot save enough money by just taking a bit off what we pay for the services we have now.

The council will have to look at new ways of doing things. Some things will stop.

The council will need to work with services and organisations and the people of Midlothian.

Here are some of the ideas that we are already working on or thinking about:

- working with the Health Service
- working with the Police
- working with local people, community groups and voluntary organisations to plan and run services

Examples of how things could work:

Example 1: Waste

Think of an example of change which could release savings (e.g. collection routes/timeframes)

Waste collection and disposal currently costs the council more than £X million each year.

Example 2: Supporting Midlothian's Families

It costs the council a lot of money to support families who really need help. Some families experience the same problems from one generation to another. Examples of problems include being unemployed, domestic violence and being addicted to drugs or alcohol.

Many families have problems that require help from services like:

- social services
- health services
- school support staff
- police

Families often deal with many services at once.

They are the families that need our support most. Working with them differently will help reduce the need for different services. This will also reduce costs.

Appendix 3 – Easy Read / Info Graphic Example

The council, the police, NHS and other agencies are now working together to improve support for families.

Example 3: Communities taking charge

Community facilities are run by the council.

The council is considering the option of

This means the community is in charge of the facilities. They can also apply for funding, which might not be available to the council.

Midlothian Council has been exploring this since XXXX.

Some places have done this already. (Examples in Midlothian??)

Your views

We need to know what you think, so that we can make decisions.

Over the next few months, we will:

- meet with organisations and services
- ask community groups to get involved
- talk to local people
- write about this in our magazine, Midlothian News and let people know how they can tell us what they think

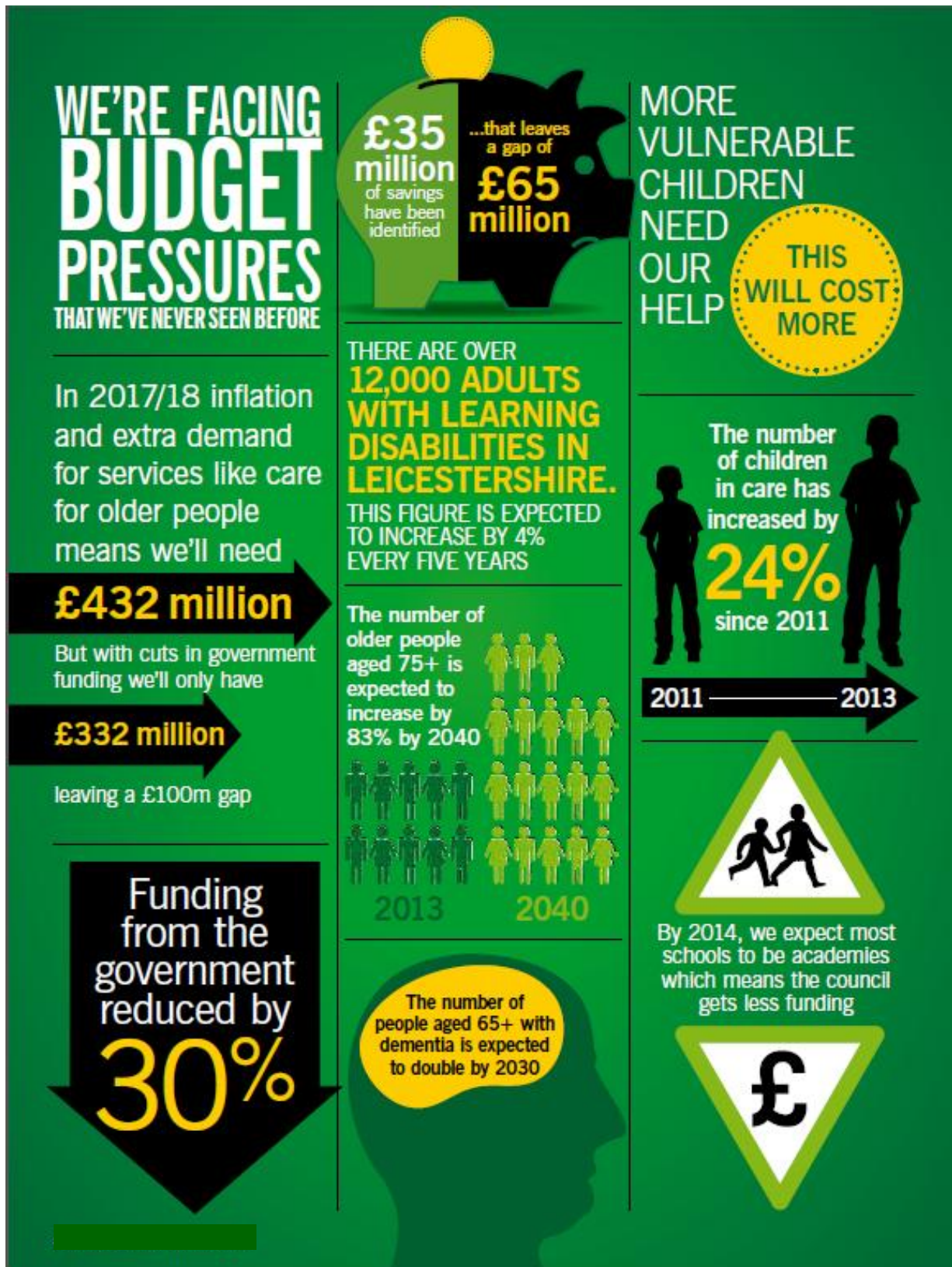
Please fill in a form to tell us what you think.

We will think about what you tell us before we decide what to do.

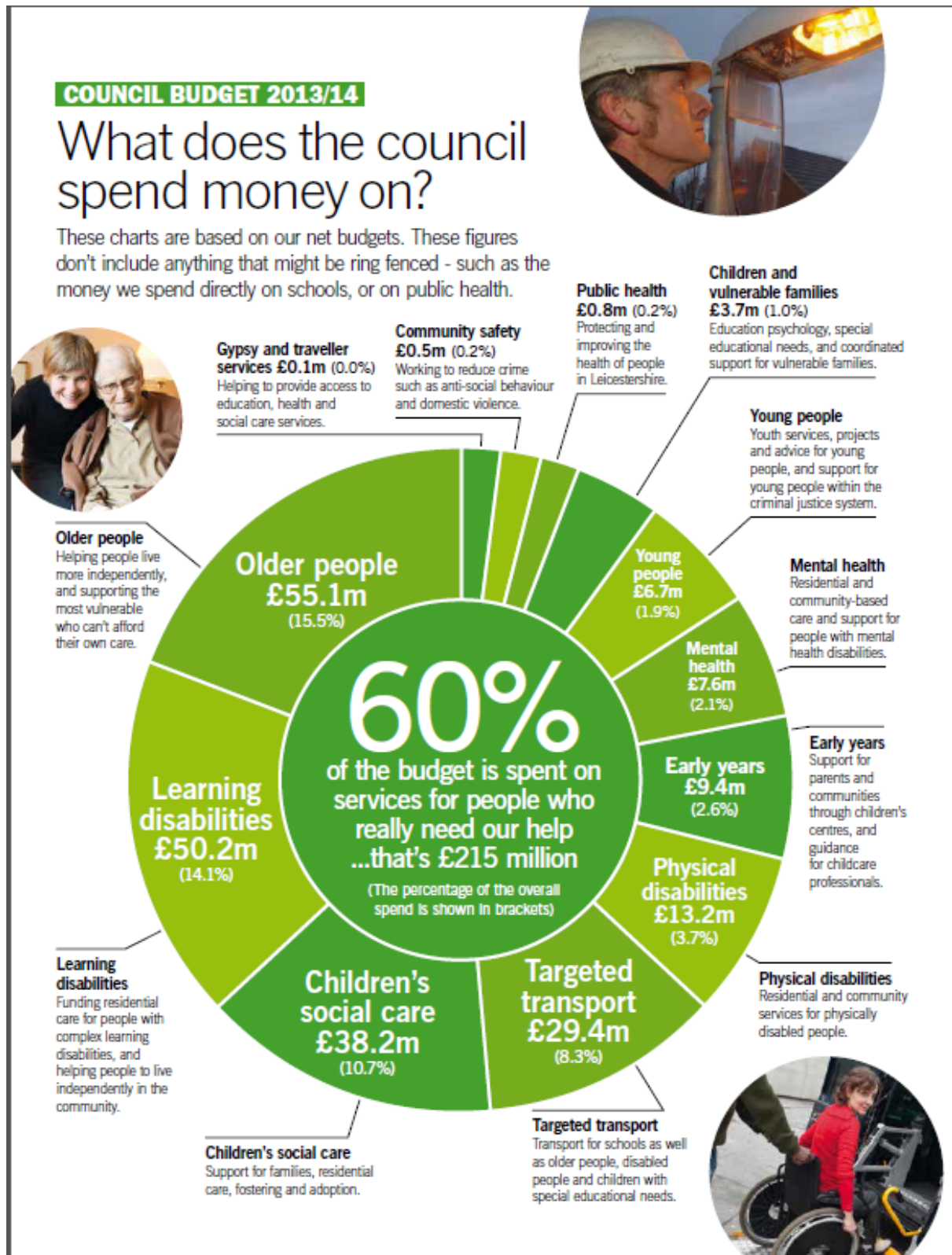
Please complete a survey by XXXXXXXX. It is available online at xxxxxxxxx
Or you can ask for a copy by post by calling xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

If you need any help, call xxxxxxxx or email xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

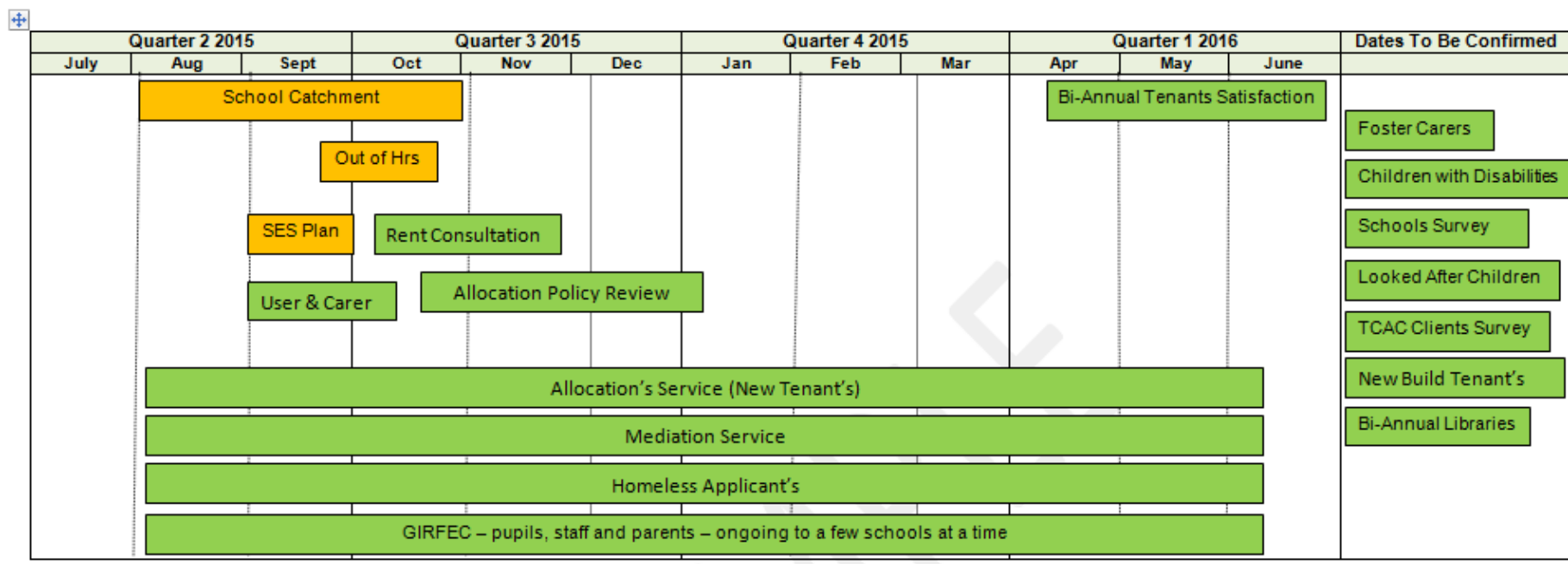
Create infographics for Midlothian along the same lines as the following example from Leicestershire County Council:



Create infographics for Midlothian along the same lines as the following example from Leicestershire County Council:



Appendix 4 – Consultation and Engagement Activity (Sample)



Key:

