

Appendix 3.1 Consultation Feedback Individual Open Responses via survey

Why too much Part 1

Response

Adult Social Care has been cut to the bone already. Are Councillors aware of the full impact and cumulative effect of cuts past and present plus those planned for future years? Have they considered the likely unintended consequences in terms of increased deprivation and neglect? Are they aware of the severe problems already caused to the vulnerable by the government (e.g unjustifiable loss of benefits and the bedroom tax) or by the lack of 'reasonable adjustments' and consistency in the NHS? Adults with learning disabilities are 3 times more likely than the rest of the population to die unnecessarily, have 50% higher levels of depression. One person can be hit from all sides. There is always a domino effect: if one thing goes wrong or is changed - then a myriad of other problems result. A small thing can become a big thing in the life of someone who is intellectually and physically disadvantaged and who also has complex health problems. The details of their lives are often held in delicate balance to ensure success. Where family support exists, the proposed cuts will affect the health and quality of life of the whole family. Where it doesn't, the less able, both physically and mentally, will become invisible, especially as there will be less assessment and monitoring. The Care Act places a statutory demand on Councils to increase the well being of the whole population. The proposed cuts will have the opposite impact. The intention seems to be to rely on charities, volunteers and external agencies. Volunteers are hard to recruit and sustain. They also lack necessary expertise and knowledge of complex client groups. Private profit making agencies are notoriously unreliable. My own son, who lives alone in supported living, has gone through several domiciliary care agencies. Carers are late, don't come at all, go to the wrong place, change all the time and are often uninformed as to his needs. Agencies fail to pass on important messages. 6101795 Cont on Q.1

A little bit taken from Social Care has a huge impact on people's lives, so a huge amount taken away is going to have a disproportionate impact and be very damaging now and in the future.

Adult social care is a vital service for the local council to continue in order to save the larger costs connected with housing residents who are unable to look after themselves in their own home.

Adult Social Care is primarily about looking after people at the end of their life when they have given so much during their lives. No amount of money is too much to ensure their dignity and quality of life, it is what we all expect as we reach the same point in our lives.

adverse impact on ASC services

All services I am though gratefully received but necessary for my wellbeing, are already very time reduced and uncomfortable, becoming less efficient and satisfactory

Any cuts to vulnerable people's care packages cannot be justified

ASC spending in Merton is already very low by London standards. Cuts in previous years have reduced services to a basic level and there isn't scope to cut further without having a major impact on the lives of vulnerable people using these services and their carers. Merton should make use of the permitted 2% Council tax levy plus reserves to remove the need for these cuts.

Because there are better ways of saving money that will not have a detrimental effect on people's Health and Wellbeing. For example: Get rid of the "My Merton" publication - it's a useless publication as all the information it contains are available on the council website Many voluntary groups are awarded large grants to provide services to the community but they are not monitored and no QUALITY checks are carried out to validate the effectiveness of the services they provide. Substantial savings will be made if those services are evaluated thoroughly as the majority of them are not fit for purpose. In trying to be PC, Merton pays lip service to their malpractices. There are hundreds of thousands of outstanding payments for services by Service Users right across the board that have been outstanding for years because Merton doesn't have an effective system for collecting these payments. Revamp the outdated and convoluted Website to enable people to use it more and locate information more easily. This will reduce the volume of calls and visits to the Civic Centre so you won't need a football team to man the phones and reception area. I could go on but I've got other things to do today!

Consultants are employed at huge salaries to look at cuts why? Merton gave undertakings years ago when it was published in the local guardian, they would not use consultants but use staff who had the local knowledge.

Cuts appear to be detrimental to the most vulnerable members of Mertons community.

Cutting the budget by too much will leave the vulnerable people of Merton at risk.

Cutting the Meals on Wheels service would appear to be a short term saving but its closure would result in higher costs as the elderly in receipt of this service will through isolation make More visits to doctors surgeries when admitted to hospitals - spend longer blocking beds as insufficient support will be available within their homes Current daily "safe and well check" with any health or environmental concerns are reported to Adult Care and/or next of kin which the delivery staff carry out 365 days a year will be lost This provides a comfort to next of kin - who will often live far away - knowing that their Mum/Dad is being checked on daily Daily social contact - in many instances the delivery driver is the only human contact that meal recipients have Reduces the risk of Malnutrition amongst the elderly - Malnutrition is a major cause and consequence of poor health and older people are particularly vulnerable. It is estimated that in the UK around 1 million people over the age of 65 are malnourished or at the risk of malnutrition - this will again increase costs as malnourished patients are admitted to hospitals

Experienced staff replaced by less experienced or not replaced means lower quality care in day centres. Experienced social workers can help people better than less experienced ones. Care act and DOLs legislation mean more work and less time to help carers/clients. It is already very difficult to even see a social worker. No one is getting improved care packages due to cost cutting but some need it.

False economy, you should be taking care of the vulnerable and be fighting the Government against these cuts. You are cutting resources to the most vulnerable who can't stand up for themselves. How about NOT buying the bins which are costing approx Â£3 to 7 million, the most ridiculous waste of money. We are all going to be disabled at some time in our life.

How on earth can you seek to promote preventative services for those with mental health diagnoses and the. Propose to cut the only services currently available to us?

I think the reduction in spending for adult social care is too much my son and daughter rely on their day care services so they can have as normal every day life as you or I do every day and I feel it is their right to have this for if they did not where would they go?.

It is too much in a time when we have an ageing population and an increasing population. So need is going up, whilst services are being reduced. But I appreciate it is a difficult decision because in many respects Social care could absorb an infinite amount of money- no matter how much you pump in, there could always be a case for more. Social Care needs are less 'clear cut' than health needs. They are not scientific, more subjective and open to interpretation.

It will reduce the quality and level of services below a level compatible with MBC's commitment to protect the most vulnerable in the community; it will heap more pressure on incredibly stretched carers; it will force more of us to give up and seek residential care for our family member, which costs MBC far more than day services. And because these specific spending cuts are avoidable.

Many vulnerable people will suffer

Merton Carers help the growing number of dementia sufferers.

Merton has to have some staff available to carry out its legal duties and my concern is that Merton is already not doing this in some cases, the proposed cuts and deletion of posts will make it even worse.

My mother receives meals on wheels, she is 89 frail and cannot cook for herself as she cannot stand for any length of time. The current service (which is excellent) provides her for a hot meal and some contact with another person daily which is wonderful for her.. She pays for these meals. Any reduction in this service which cannot be replaced by supermarket microwave meals as she cannot plate her own meal would be detrimental. This service must not be reduced.

Need urgent funding for meals on wheels and imagine(will close without funding) also funding for housing and day resource services for people with mental illness

Once again, the cuts (not "savings") hit the most vulnerable members of society. the weak always suffer, at the expense of the able

People are in need!

People are living longer these days and social care is more in demand as they get more unable to cope. A majority of pensioners have contributed over the years paying their taxes and National Health payment. It should be that they get reasonable amount of help when they need it.

Protecting the most vulnerable in society is the hallmark of a civilized country.

Removin

Savings will be targeting some of the most vulnerable groups.

Services already at the bare minimum

Services were cut last year and day centres have less staff and less activities and less hours. Carers are often elderly and when caring for a severely disabled adult have to work very hard. The Learning Disabled need good quality care and this is now endangered causing worry and stress to carers. We see services becoming worse and less available every year.

Some of the most vulnerable people in Merton rely on these services.

The general directive from central government is to increase support to those that need it NOT to decrease

the impact to vulnerable adults (elderly and disabled, to include learning disabled) will mean that it is only cost shifting and worse will come from the impact of cuts. people can get buy with something but to give them nothing can send them over the brink

The Meals and Wheels element is a vital part of the care for the elderly. It saves lives and is far more than a meals on Wheels service

The number of people requiring help is growing year by year. I know my needs will increase as my husband's Alzheimer's progresses.

The overall impact of these cuts will be reduced service, available to fewer people, resulting in greater isolation, poorer wellbeing and reduced independence for local disabled people and older people.

The proposal to scrap the Meals on Wheels service is short term and will cost the Council more in other areas including Increased admission to care homes (costing over Â£600 per week) as residents not getting the support needed to remain independent living in their own homes Increased loneliness resulting in more frequent visits to GP's and increased number of hospital admissions Bed blocking in hospitals - The Kings Fund reports that around 1 in 4 people over 75 in hospital beds have no medical need to be in hospital " older people frequently report lack of support on discharge from hospital Older people with complex needs, including long-term conditions and frailty, are at particularly high risk of readmission to hospitals without adequate home support Increased incidences of malnutrition in the community The Malnutrition task force have reported that Malnutrition is a major cause and consequence of poor health and older people are particularly vulnerable. They estimate that in the UK around 1 million people over the age of 65 are malnourished or at the risk of malnutrition

the reduction is being taken out on the most vulnerable people in the borough; they are most likely to break down and end up hospital outpatients

There are more users of Adult Social Care. The past 5 years spending has already been cut by too much. Merton currently spends less than average.

There is an increase in care needs as the population of elderly increases, more care in the community as both NHS and governmental aims to move those from hospitals to the community, The reduction in day centres, specialist homes, places more pressure on already struggling unpaid carers/families. Benefit reductions and sanctions are causing more people to already use charities which are overstretched. Increase in winter excess deaths due in part to care reductions, heating and food bill people unable to prepare warm meals safely and affordably.

There is no care for those in extreme need now!

These are some of the most vulnerable in society. It is wrong to make them shoulder so many cuts.

We must look after the most vulnerable. To take away meals on wheels service is nonsensical. My brother relies on this service for 1 hot meal every day and also daily contact is only common humanity. I live too far away to call in and check he is ok and I know that if anything is wrong concerns would be raised. I fear removal of the service will result in people deteriorating and more hospitalisations and interventions required by social services. Supermarket deliveries are not a viable replacement of these services.

Why is it always the elderly that have to suffer, when in the same week, you are proudly talking about a MULTI MILLION re-vamp of Morden Town centre?
Will have a major impact on service users!
Year after year cuts are being made - if Merton did not hold its council tax and at zero yearly increase there would be enough funds
You will be cutting down in the care for disabled people which is not fair on them. I think it would be better if you made reductions somewhere else and not meals on wheels and other services for disabled people, they deserve this service. Adult Social Care is so important. The stress carers and the person cared for is so intense even filling in forms and deadlines. The smallest problems are huge when caring.
Because it will affect disabled peoples lives and the elderly. Their health will deteriorate due to the cuts and have a very severe impact on their lives.
Because Merton needs to save money social care needs to go
Cuts in hours
I want to be able to do the activities and visits I do to the day centre and I don't want this to be less.
Its a lot of money to be taken away
It's lots of money
It's wrong. There have been cuts for a long time now. It has to stop
People will get less support
Services have already been cut and its difficult to get good carers especially with the living wage
The mark of a civilised society is measured by the way it cares for the weak or disabled. It seems to be too easy for those in authority to say "we'll cut services to the vulnerable who might not be able to comment for themselves"
The most vulnerable in the borough are being targeted
Too many cuts. I will feel very upset and lonely and depressed.
We don't want to lose staff
Will impact greatly on users most vulnerable
You are reducing services for disabled people which is not right. They will suffer as they survive because of the services.

Comments on staff savings Part 2

Response

Please make sure that there are staff with enough experience to deal with the increased pressure.

I believe this will put more pressure on front line staff, particularly with middle management being targeted. More responsibilities, more management decisions to be made without management input - all for no more pay. Not a way to keep staff. However, I do believe that the council will take on more bank staff to cover, thus dissolving a lot of their responsibilities towards staff.

All local authorities are having to find saving and it is only reasonable to expect adult social services to meet their quota, and a reduction in the establishment would be essential.

Already too many failings due to lack of staff. This will put more people in

danger

Although it is recognized that staff costs are high - but by decreasing the number of staff clients at day care centres will have even less choice or constructive things to occupy them

Am strongly opposed to all cuts-staffing and care costs

As already stated, Merton won't be able to provide a meaningful service to its residents anymore with even less staff available. In addition, the remaining staff will be so stressed out that the service they will be able to provide is of such poor quality that people will be affected by that - something which is already happening.

By cutting staff you won't be able to fulfil your statutory duties (especially safeguarding) and won't be able to adequately monitor third party services.

Can the staff left achieve to complete the requirements of the role of employment without compromise

can you save more by reducing the staff overheads even more?

Concerned about the impact that staffing reductions will have on the level of service provided as a local government employee, I am well aware that the workload rarely reduces following such cuts.

Cut on bureaucracy, secretaries, PAs and managers, because modern technology will save money

Cutting staff only puts more strain on the existing staff which in turn causes mistakes to be made.

deletion of 47-52 posts seems madness

Fewer staff will have an impact on the quality of service provided to users of services.

Found it difficult to work out exactly where the staff would be deleted from but front line staff already at the bare minimum

I am assuming that having balanced the options that this is the best professional advice to manage the government cuts as safely as possible

If staffing is reduced for adults with LD in their day centres then this would be and cause disruption in their day centre needs and also effect the support and activities that they take part in for they need stimulation and activities for this is a great part for them in their day to day lives and learning

I'm sure that there is massive overstaffing, with some people doing very little to earn their money and at the same time providing poor service for the community. I believe a streamlined more efficient service with less staff is a good way forward.

In order to protect front line services - all jobs should be re-evaluated to ascertain what value each position delivers

instead of deleting that amount of full time posts, which may lead to redundancies, i suggest, pay cut or freezing pay increment for some time.

It is already hard if not impossible to see a social worker with knowledge of the client. Less staff cannot cope with the extra work load of Deprivation of Liberty legislation, Care Act and increasing elderly population. Less staff won't be able to commission suitable services. Monitoring of services will be poor and clients put in danger.

its difficult to comment without knowing where you propose to make the savings

Less staff = less quality, less safety particularly in an emergency. Cutting back room staff can mean less services in commissioning good services and impossibility of sufficient monitoring to ensure quality and safety. The Learning Disabled are very vulnerable and need quality services.

Many staff don't appear to do very much. I'm sure that staffing strategy could be more cost effective

More people will go back to hospitals or wander the streets or cause disruption in society involving extra police and hospital costs and putting the public at risk

No one is going to say yes to this. No one wants to reduce services to vulnerable adults, or to children. We don't want to close libraries or children's centres or leave children at risk or having over grown parks. If you believe these are the best option then you should stand by them

No one will answer yes to this - it is a loaded question. Within the envelope of money you have is this the best way of delivering your savings?

Only you will know if you are cutting the right number of employees/managers and whether you are currently overstaffed and whether outsourcing will cost more and deliver an inferior service.

So as to protect front line services - Every position within the Council should be re-evaluated to determine the benefit being returned to the Community
The advised cost of the current meals service would be paid for by the reduction of a further 4/5 posts

Staff are extremely important everything is so long winded for children and adults who have special educational needs.

Staff have already taken on much heavier workloads and good people are deciding to leave. Waiting times for reviews and assessments have gone up, staffing levels in day centres have been significantly reduced, health specialists in the LD team can't cope with the demand for their services. These cuts can only make the situation worse.

Staff play an important role in service delivery to elderly residents of Merton

Staffing levels are already stretched to limit. Any more cuts will be incredible pressure on staff and users

The best care is provided by people who know a person consistently and regularly. Less staff in direct provision means less individualisation programmes, trips out, work experience support or travel training. People with complex needs are already left doing nothing active all day at the JMC. If a staff member is sick, then plans can be cancelled - to the extent of closing a centre for the day so that family carers also have to change their plans suddenly. Someone in supported living will spend the day entirely alone. Increased use of agency staff in supported living leads to risky mistakes being made. Lack of time and staff means that service users will increasingly become people who must have things done to and for them rather than people who must be supported to do things for themselves (thus giving a lie to the 'promoting independence' aim of both the Council and the CCG). A great deal of high level expertise and knowledge has already been lost. If one rings the Council for advice, it is already the case that the caller can know more than the person they are talking to. Who will know the right 'signposts' to provide in future? The loss of assessment and commissioning staff will mean less monitoring, risk assessments and DOLs, less safeguarding. How can these be 'tightened up and made more efficient' with less staff? A one size fits all approach will not work with an adult with a learning disability. It takes a great deal of time to discover such a person's

needs, wishes and capabilities. Someone who seems to communicate well can actually be very bad at personal care and decision making while someone with limited communication skills can actually understand a great deal more and be more able than appears at first sight. There is always a danger of 'diagnostic overshadowing' (making the wrong assumptions/conclusions) if a professional does not know a person or their history well.

The council appears to have a low level of staff employed.

The hierarchical structure within Merton Council is too top heavy.

The staff are needed to run things properly. They are already stretched to the limit.

There are fewer Merton Council staff employed than any other borough, but they do a fantastic job and don't deserve any additional cuts

There are too many managers and middle managers

This entirely depends on where the savings in staff are coming from. The removal of people who give one-to-one support, would be a tragedy, while an admin position wouldn't be so bad

This is an area that is worrying many people. Frontline staff and services should be protected as far as possible. A reduction in bureaucracy would be better, because all these bureaucratic processes are what creates the need for more staff in the first place.

To the extent that these are front line staff or managers working directly with service users this will hurt those users and their carers by reducing the level or quality of service, as a result hurting carers who already take a lot of the care burden off MBC, and generally makes the lives of service users and carers worse. This will impact in turn on local health services, and force more into residential and more expensive care.

Waiting times for responses and form applications is already too slow this will get worse as more applications backlog! Car dumping, litter, food safety and health and safety will all suffer without enough inspectors etc using outside contractors will increase costs in the long term, more services should be brought in house

We need staff - this is another false economy and vulnerable people will now fall through the cracks more than ever.

What do they do?

Who is going to do the work? End up overloading people lucky enough to keep their jobs or put the work onto people who aren't earning the relevant salary to reflect their increase in responsibility

Why are there staff? There is no support! No care nothing! People are dying! While you are paid, to neglect, ignore and abuse!

will getting rid of staff compromise safety.

Yet again staff are being cut - cant anyone realize that the services is just getting worse

A lot of people in the centre need support from staff

Frontline staff are essential

How do you cut down on a already low staff problem. Vulnerable people will suffer more

I don't want to lose good relationship with good staff

It all depends if the staff that are left after the cuts can run a good service to the community - support the community - disabled and the elderly.

It's bad to cut staff

No front line staff or social workers should be cut

Ratio of staff to clients must not be too low. This must be taken into account.

Reduce top management categories

Staff are already under pressure to manage caseloads with decreasing resources. More staff cuts will increase pressure on the staff leading to staff not being able to meet the needs of service users.

Staff support me and our meetings-not good if this can not happen anymore.

Support cuts at management level Keep frontline staff

What's going to happen to the centres with no staff. What's going to happen to outreach? People should be paid for their job.

Comments on commissioning savings Part 3

Response

cuts in mental health services may result in these issues causing other services to have more pressure eg NHS services and further problems in the community.

- Carers Support is a lifeline. Who will advise us when there is no-one left in the Council with the knowledge of what is available? - Merton has already discovered that it cannot save money on domiciliary care agencies or respite provision. Agencies are already beginning to withdraw from the market because they cannot survive. - It has been said that the meals on wheels service is no longer necessary because people have microwaves and can buy ready meals. Many cannot use microwaves (my own son has cause fires with his). Ready meals are full of salt and sugar. The learning disability community already has an unacceptable high rate of diabetes. For some even the limited contact of someone delivering a meal is better than no contact at all. - If voluntary services such as Mencap lose 50% of their funding, then clubs and activities which are a lifeline for both service users and carers will shut down. - The loss of Crossroads will mean that some carers can no longer go out to work or to shop for groceries. Their socialising opportunities will be nil. Even going to necessary appointments will be hard. Whatever replaces it will never make up for the loss of expertise in Crossroads staff and their knowledge of and long-term relationships with the families who use the service.

I think meals on wheels may be essential for some elderly people

Adult Support Services 1908 - 2015. Experienced good, personal, but no room for less staff. Meals on Wheels. Experienced 24/7 from 1908. Excellent but needing more staff now due to evening traffic problems etc. Provides coeliac gluten free diet, personally essential. No alternative whatsoever. More detail when requested

adverse impact on disabled community of Merton

Again this is a loaded question. Assuming the council has to make the savings I assume this is a least worst option

Although all care services need regular reviews as circumstances change. i.e. possible to deliver meals for a whole week to be used in microwaves; proposed cuts are too severe. Government needs to provide more funds and allow rates to rise.

Carers get very little recognition of their work - to take what little support there is away is disgusting

Carers support services provide many hours of free respite and taking away that support will cause many people to break down and need residential care which will cost the NHS much much more than the overall savings

Commissioning rarely actually saves money, how will you guarantee this

Crossroads is an extremely valued respite care service with high quality experienced staff. IT IS IRREPLACEABLE. Some people need meals on wheels to keep them going and those with mental health problems deserve support.

Crossroads provides essential respite care for a few hours a week. Well qualified experienced staff mean carers can have a break without being worried and the client can enjoy friendly well qualified care.

Cutting out vital services will only cost the council more in the long run. You will see more depressed vulnerable people. This will lead to an increased number of heart attacks, suicides, requiring more medical treatment and stays in hospital.

Cutting services to vulnerable people in their homes will be detrimental. Often it is through these services that people who need additional care are identified. Loneliness in this group is also endemic and this can lead to increased feelings of isolation and depression.

Decommissioning these services what sort of Council are you? It is scandalous to leave vulnerable people in your community to the mercy of private companies whose only priority is making money.

Elderly people that cannot manage with everyday tasks plus disabled people have enough to cope with without the worry that they may not get help when they need it. Some people cannot cook for themselves, some have memory issues like my brother whom would forget to eat or would not be able to make a meal for themselves, where meals on Wheels has a positive for them, at least they know they will get a meal each day and there will be some contact with the outside world on a daily basis. Other people with mental health issues do not see anyone other than their ability of the day support service. To cut these services will put extra strain on the social services on a whole in the long run and probably cost across the board.

How will the Council fulfil its new obligations under the Care Act, particularly with regards to carers, when those services will be decommissioned?

I disagree with cutting Carer support for without this I would not be where I am today carers need support as we save the government a substantial amount of money each year

I speak from personal experience having been the carer for both my elderly parents within Merton since 2009. The meals on wheels service is very poor and I feel very sorry for any elderly residents who have to survive on this rubbish. I'm sure a better quality service could be provided simply by having a "borough kitchen" with more nutritious meals provided for the boroughs elderly. As for the carers support service all I can say is that this is definitely an area where some money can be saved. The care provided by Crossroads is both inadequate and unsafe. To say that they provide quality respite care and even to say that they provide end of life care is simply untrue. In many cases the elderly are left AT RISK by these people. Many of their "carers" are old and infirm themselves, their skills in care raise some serious doubts about their ability and the office administration is beyond a joke. As a service user I can tell you that there is absolutely NO respite knowing that you have left your vulnerable and infirm parents at the mercy of these people. If you would like to discuss my concerns and issues further please call me on X Thanks.

I strongly disagree. Carers support need this services especially carers need a break from caring at home you should not cut this service.

If the home meals delivery service is decommissioned a lot of residents using this service will need a replacement which I am sure will prove to be more expensive for the council due to the health of current customers. It is more than just a hot meal, which in itself is vital, but also provides a personal, regular, safe service which also includes a daily check on circumstances/environment. My mother who uses the service has dementia and any change to her daily routine causes problems as she gets very confused. Without the support she is currently receiving she would not be able to remain in her own home.

If you decommission carers' services and mental health services, your result will be a sharp rise in hospital admissions. Services such as advocacy offered by Imagine, for example, are crucial to recovery, as many of us rely upon these services for our housing and benefit needs and access them when we are in crisis. It is a short-sighted, knee-jerk reaction on your part, which seems rushed and not considered.

Ignoring or pretending that these issues don't exist in society because you don't have the carers support etc to inform the council does not mean the need will not be there and increase as the population age increases and more people are disabled or ill and returned to the community by the NHS having to clear beds etc means that more people who are sick, elderly or vulnerable will suffer, becoming malnourished returning to hospitals increasing their budgets or die unnecessarily due to councils negligence in providing Support or meals! Once removed these services will cost so much more to restart as a new council is elected as more people see there loved ones, neighbours or friends suffering under these cuts and express there dissatisfaction with the current regime!

In my mind there is little justification in handing services to the private sector at the expense of quality. I have yet to see any benefits from selling of council assets.

Independent studies have shown that an investment in a delivered service delivers a benefit worth over 5 times the cost of the running the service (Hertfordshire County Council's study showed that for every Â£1 spent on its meal service a Social benefit of Â£5.28 was realised - with Service Users reporting improved health and independence Hot delivered meals will result in better nourished elderly residents, fewer hospital admissions, reduced length of stay for admitted patients and reduced demand for GP services. NICE identified malnutrition as the 6th largest source for NHS savings. Early identification and treatment of malnutrition in adults could save the NHS £45.5 million even after costs of training and screening - Meals on Wheels makes a significant contribution to reducing malnutrition

It depends on what will replace these services. For example, well trained, reliable and consistent carers can replace the Crossroads service, and then it would work. But it can't be left up to carers to organise this themselves and the cost of setting up replacement services may well wipe out much of the savings.

Just who is going to support the vulnerable?

MBC's mental health services are reportedly among the worst funded in London; support for mental health is shockingly sparse so making it worse is a truly frightening prospect. The voluntary bodies who might partly step into the gap you will create have themselves had their funding cut by MBC so you're presenting care users and carers with a cruel double whammy you could avoid.

Meals on Wheels is an essential service for some of the very most vulnerable in society. Are they supposed to just starve???

Meals on Wheels is outdated - all supermarkets do online shopping and people should pay for their food

Meals on Wheels is vital

Merton Carers are essential for the wellbeing of those caring and being cared for.

My 85 year old mother is the primary carer of my 88 year old father. With the exception of 2.5hrs per week respite from Carers Support, all my father's care, and all other ancillary support services (such as domestic help) is either privately funded or provided by family members. The decommissioning of the Carers Support service will cause disruption and stress to both my parents as continuity of care is very important. They will be forced to provide an alternative provider as it is highly unlikely that they will qualify for any alternatives provided by the Council.

My mother is 89 lives alone and is frail. She relies upon meals on wheels to provide a hot meal daily, which she pays for without this she is likely to have to go into care which would be a tragedy. A reduction in this service would be a blow to the most vulnerable in our society.

No carers services, mental health day services or meals on wheels? Well this is multiple serious case reviews waiting to happen. So the most vulnerable people suffer so the majority can save a few quid on council tax?

No one is going to say yes to this. No one wants to reduce services to vulnerable adults, or to children. We don't want to close libraries or children's centres or leave children at risk or having over grown parks. If you believe these are the best option then you should stand by them

Obviously some services need cutting, but some people rely on a meal being delivered and mental health controlled

People suffer while you spend money on the rich!

People will die!

So using voluntary organisations who are not trained and putting strain on these organisations completely ridiculous.

Some of these services are essential. These savings appear to be targeting some of the most vulnerable. Their could be an element of means testing to raise income, also there could be competitive tendering or a mutual could be set up.

The cut isn't around how you commission, it is the fact you will no longer commission these things. Loss of these services will have detrimental affects on these service users' (carers, older, mental health) wellbeing and trigger more crisis. The so called alternatives ie support packages and voluntary sector are also being cut.

The Meals on wheels hot meal delivery service is more than just a delivery - the delivery staff who are all police checked carry out a "daily safe & well check" where Driver asks Service User how they are feeling and if anything is worrying them Looks to see if they look unwell or if they notice any deterioration in Service User or they seem more confused than normal Checks whether the environmental state of their accommodation is adequate and asks if Service User is warm enough reporting back any issues or concerns Where required opens the meal container and plates the main meal and ensures that Service User has a drink and cutlery available and sits them down with their lunch Wherever possible the provider ensures that the same delivery person visits the same Service Users each day which Builds a friendly relationship with Service Users Hold keys or have key codes to access properties of Service Users with poor mobility or visual impairment The obvious benefits from this are Keep Service Users out of hospital and having fewer visits to Doctors surgeries Daily person contact " stops instances of SU being left on the floor " or worse deceased and undiscovered with the associated bad press Alleviates loneliness " in many instances our delivery staff are the only daily personal contact that Service Users have The National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) have advised that hot delivered meals result in better nourished elderly residents, fewer hospital admissions, reduced length of stay for admitted patients and reduced demand for GP services An independent study by Hertfordshire County Council has shown that for very £1 spent on its hot meal service a social benefit of £5.28 was realised - with Service Users reporting improved health and increased independence

There are too many duplicate services in Merton - Taylor Road, Focus 1 to 1, Imagine, St Mark's Church, Horizon, Avanti etc. Overall poo old fashioned services. Poor quality staff also.

These are baseline services. Re the Carers Support Service, there has been no consultation on options to reduce, rather than de-commission it completely. a review of this service could have brought savings but nobody has bothered to take this route. It's throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

These services allow people to remain in their homes. It is unclear how these people's needs will be met in these services are decommissioned.

This is a comparatively small saving to make to the detriment of our more vulnerable members of the borough.

This is extremely regressive and will cause further suffering and misery

THIS SERVICE IS A LIFELINE FOR SOME PEOPLE

Those that look after vulnerable people need the meagre support they currently get. For those who receive meals on wheels, it is probably the only hot meal they have, and in a lot of cases the only contact with the outside world

We must look after the most vulnerable. To take away meals on wheels service is nonsensical. My brother relies on this service for 1 hot meal every day and also daily contact is only common humanity. I live too far away to call in and check he is ok and I know that if anything is wrong concerns would be raised. I fear removal of the service will result in people deteriorating and more hospitalisations and interventions required by social services. Supermarket deliveries are not a viable replacement of these services.

Will this mean that services are tendered out to private organisations? If so, what accountability will there be?

You are expecting more people to remain at home and not in residential care but are cutting services that support people to remain at home
A lot of people are unable to shop for food or be capable of preparing ready meals

I don't want people to get less day centre days. I will be bored at home.

I need meals on wheels and Ark Care to keep me out of hospital and/or a home. Rest of comment is eligible

It is vitally important that carers are supported regarding their health and well being; otherwise they will need services themselves.

It will have a very big impact on the very vulnerable people in the borough. They rely on the support to remain in contact within the community.

It's wrong-people should have meals on wheels.

Meals on Wheels, Mental Health and Day Support are vital services preventing adults that are vulnerable from going hungry, having a breakdown. More hospital admissions will arise.

Mental Health Day Support is cut too much now-if you cut anymore it will disappear.

Not sure

Process will take longer to move people from one place to another

Same as above(6101824)

Should not be gone completely

Some of these commissioned services provide vital support to mental health sufferer. Without some support the likelihood of relapse will increase substantially.

Who will take over roles now done for respite as i've heard Crossroads will no longer be covering Merton? Can people cope without Meals on Wheels? You can't lower the price agencies are paid for care support like Direct Payments!

Comments on support package savings Part 4 Response

No comment

support packages should be regularly reviewed with a quality of life index along side. Many people have large packages of care with poor quality of life.

You need to re-think the way care packages are approached generally and to allow more flexibility, less "one-size-fits-all" approach

Again this will cause distress to the customer and their families whom rely on this service

Agree that support packages should be reviewed but where appropriate customers should be provided to find alternatives for services which are removed/reduced to achieve necessary savings.

All recipients of care packages should have their needs re-assessed as needs change The Council should ensure that the most vulnerable persons within its authority are identified and their health & wellbeing protected Removing the meals service will Reduce the number of Service Users able to live independently in their own homes Increase the number of car home beds needed - and as most of the current recipients live in social housing paid for by benefits then it would need only 6 to have to move into care homes where the Council has to fund the place to cost the same as the existing meals service! It will also put pressure on local hospitals with more older people being admitted and a difficulty to discharge due to lack of Home support

And are you going to investigate why people who want to die, are at risk because those in power do not care? Autistic adults exist!

As I have said before this hits the most needy, with little effect on the able members of society

Assessments are meant to look at clients needs and come up with ways to meet them. As adults with LD live longer and their family carers get into their 70s, 80s, 90s needs will rise. Cutting care packages in this scenario will mean an even bigger gap between assessed needs and the proportion of them being met. And the massive reduction in staff, who will carry out these reviews?

Before the support packages are even reviewed you are saying that you will save Â£1,831,000 - this means only one thing - all support packages will be reduced

Carers and clients have had to argue to get what little help they get. They need the time at day centre or Crossroads or a Mencap club but all three are threatened by lessening quality of care or shortened hours or by unsuitable replacement staff (relatively unqualified)

customers support packages were assessed at start of claim so should remain the same not reduced to save money

Cuts here are a direct attack on people's independence and will be extremely damaging to people's lives and wellbeing.

don't understand the statement

I assume you are recommending this as a least worst option in difficult times. i strongly agree with this decision. in fact, i believe that review of support packages should be done every year to ensure service users are getting the right level of support.

I understand that you wish to save but it will be at the cost of human lives.

If Care Packages lose 15-20% of funding this will presumably mean loss of time at day centres - so that people spend time idling at home and carers become more and more housebound themselves. Funding of centres will lessen, making them less able to survive. Yet Merton has discovered that day centres are the most efficient way of offering support. Other councils have closed their day centres and then realised the necessity of re-opening them - but with different names. It will be hard to employ PAs or any kind of meaningful assistance. Direct payments are not the answer if there is not sufficient money provided. Elderly carers cannot cope with the paperwork or the prospect of becoming employers and are too tired by the day to day to consider creative solutions. There IS the Merton Managed Account but how long can this service last? There are examples of direct payment money being reclaimed because it has not been spent, despite the fact that the money is being retained for a service that the officers themselves have promised to organise but have delayed in doing so. There will be less time provided for domiciliary care. Swift visits by various and changing staff means that appropriate and decent care will be sacrificed to expediency. A stranger cannot recognise a change in behaviour that might indicate a clinical problem.

In some instances, control is needed for them what really need this support package

It is probably a good idea to review all customers' support packages but this does not automatically mean that savings will be made. There is a danger that some customers will be left at risk if their support is cut.

Just another tick box exercise!

Mental Health Services - only one unified service will do to cater for these services. Clients need to be assessed properly, in order to qualify and set up target for them to get better and move on to jobs or self-management or voluntary works.

Merton is not currently offering these to users of mental health services.

Most clients already have care packages that only just keep them going. Cutting care packages will hurt the vulnerable very considerably. Carers may have to give up giving the council and NHS extra responsibilities.

Need more evidence that reviews will be fair and impartial and not just a budget reduction exercise.

No one is going to say yes to this. No one wants to reduce services to vulnerable adults, or to children. We don't want to close libraries or children's centres or leave children at risk or having over grown parks. If you believe these are the best option then you should stand by them

Only if it is done fairly. Reviewing to deliberately cut support is quite cruel. But cutting where it isn't needed is logical.

Our adult son's care package has already been significantly reduced. The further cut that a review will undoubtedly result in will make his life and ours worse - he will have less activities; less contact with friends; less support from trained expert staff; while as his parents - both in our 60s - we will get more exhausted with less respite, while also suffering the pressure of trying to maintain his quality of life.

People in need, do not have support packages!

Question 7 definitely needs clarifying - what and how specific support packages will be reduced. It would appear that people with physical disabilities are the 'poor cousins' of people who have learning difficulties

Review care support packages for best value but services must continue to support those needing support

Reviewing and considering the cost effectiveness of care packages should be part of on-going service provision and social work practice. Packages were already (until the Care Act) reviewed annually and at our discretion (even if this annual target was not always met) I think reviews do need to happen, but not with the specific aim of making savings. I also know, from conducting reviews, that they often lead to cost increases, and throw up all kinds of issues, because they highlight areas of need which were previously hidden under the radar. E,g an informal carer has been struggling but not asked for help, until the review. I think therefore we do need to do reviews, but not just to make savings and primarily to ensure needs are being met. If reviews are done properly, it's important to be aware that reviews are just as likely to increase costs as to make savings. I strongly disagree with the creation of some kind of generic reviewing team. My experience (from other boroughs) is that this doesn't work. Reviews are better done by the team that knows the client and has the expertise in their condition (eg learning disability, physical disability etc) If more reviews are needed, it would be better to recruit reviewing officers to specific teams or convert existing posts to focus on reviews. Another concern is whether the data on savings created from reviews is actually correct. The internal mechanisms of the council have become so complex. It's important that savings on paper actually reflect whats going on in the real world. Some savings (eg when someone qualifies for NHS CHC) are really just cost shunting.

Save the cost of the review and look to figures easily available from statistics office concerning the facts of the increase in the elderly at home many alone, the disabled and sick returning to the community these are known facts and don't need a costly review!

some packages could be reviewed and cut to save money

Support already at a minimum

The only way that there will be savings is if the support packages are reduced - soon there will no support at all

The support people are already receiving is already at the bare minimum, any further cuts will be detrimental to their well-being, independence and long term health.

The target is totally unrealistic and cutting down on care packages to such an extent will put the most vulnerable people at risk as carers won't have the time to complete the necessary tasks.

This is done annually so it is pointless and cutting care will put people at RISK!!

This is probably something that should be done on a regular basis anyway.

This makes sense. Reviewing rather than blindly cutting services

to arrive at a proportionate sum is a serious error; peoples needs do not present this way. I don't mind a review and looking at cuts but a review should not be just to balance a budget. My son has a review in January (adult with learning disability); I've asked what the format will be and I've just been given the line of 'looking/addressing needs' or something similar. I know full well that a reduction will be on the cards and the council needs to be very transparent as to how this will be applied. they should be telling us where we can get support with this process.

We need this extra support to care for the person we look after at home we need this support.

While all support packages should be regularly reviewed, I worry that those who need help are going to lose the support they need. If such cuts lead to greater mental health problems, or hospitalisation it will cost society more in the long term.

While I am sure there are residents within the borough who have been receiving more support than perhaps they need, the majority and their families will suffer greatly from where your savings fall. The resulting hardship and stress will cost in many more ways such as health and there doesn't seem to be anyone willing to look at the long term problems caused only the short term supposed benefits. Very shortsighted.

Without support packages how are our sons and daughters meant to survive if cuts are made where is any extra support going to come from Direct Payments money paid for caring services is essential and is not that high now! Finding agencies to cover is hard enough and quality of care will suffer.

I fear that reducing and lowering costs for services and support will mean some needy individuals will not get all the support they need

If they cut the money what's going to happen to us. People will be isolated. It makes me annoyed and upset. It's ridiculous.

If this must be done it should be very carefully regulated to meet needs and criteria should not be over restrictive.

Looking at the current support packages and seeing if it is working will help to see if this will cut down costs.

Reduce where the system is abused but some support services are vital

This service is already inefficient. Vulnerable old people are 'just waiting for god'. A disgrace.

very confused about savings

We need the support we get

Well this will effect those people who live independently and really will have a huge impact on their lives.

You cannot cut the hourly rate for carers as this is lower than some boroughs and some agencies already have dropped out of Direct Payment schemes.

Other priorities Part 5

Response

No comment

- Be aware that many of us with physical disabilities pay FULL Council Tax - We held responsible and productive jobs until we became unwell - Our partners continued to work until they retired - contributing pro-actively to the community and obviously paying taxes.

(comment from Question 2) I do not know why a bus picks up people over 60 who do not have a disability - these people get a free bus pass and should use that - not a Merton bus!

Again, you cannot talk about prevention and recovery if you are proposing to cut the only mental health service in the Borough.

An independent assessment of NEEDS should be made for each client

As much as I agree with these priorities I am not sure they are realistic. Not everyone has friends and family willing to step in and if too much pressure is put on carers this could result in poor health of carers or abuse/neglect of vulnerable people in Merton.

Comments on Priorities: 1. Cutting grants to the Voluntary Sector by 50% doesn't suggest retaining investment in prevention and recovery 2. Minimising costs of long term support-what about quality for life? 3. What does promoting independence mean in practice? beyond removing services wherever possible? 4. Ensuring everyone makes a contribution they are able to-over and above pretty much giving up your life to care for someone you love? Other priorities-how about including as a priority maintaining the quality of life of ASC clients and their family carers?

Consider effects on patients

cut back on other services.

Don't know

'Don't Know' responses because this table is bogus and a misuse of survey methodology because it forces respondents to agree that things you're planning are desirable and hence apparently accept your spending plans. Nor does it allow criticism of assumptions implicit in some questions - eg, we expect "promoting independence" to mean you spending less on our son and us, as his carers, having to do even more than we do now.

encourage people to look to themselves and families with good support packages for carers

Ensure that the service is sustainable. Ensure that service users are not adversely affected.

From Q.9 - Cannot promote independence without support Stop spending money on things that are not needed. Wheelie bins are not needed and a complete waste of money

I don't know!

I feel you should visit day centres to see the work that is done and how staff help our children they need adult education from birth to death so councils should make this their priority to make sure this stays so

I think you should promote the rights of adults to make their own choices, and that means allowing more flexibility in service provision (and allowing people to refuse services) Financial contribution should be assessed fairly and not just by reference to the ability to pay financial contribution should be fairly assessed and it is not.

In my opinion an awful lot of managerial and administrative posts take up a vast amount of costs and could be narrowed down a little and delegated to other staff within the structure.

in trying to save, more often than not, it so happens that the service user is always left out of the equation when it comes to planning and implementation. I suggest that (I know it will be time consuming) service users are consulted all the way through. changes and savings should be made bearing in mind the service user. ie. what impact will it have not just physically but psychologically as well? what provision will the council make? will there be a trial period for the council to assess the impact on the service user? holistic approach all the way is my suggestion.

Keep the day services of the carers

Listen to feedback from front line staff (just to avoid any misunderstandings, I am not working for Merton, but experience shows that front line staff often are not listened to where they think savings can be achieved).

Look at duplication in terms of what the state already pays for. This is especially the case with transport. A lot of clients with disabilities get very costly taxi services, yet also receive the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance. A lot of carers don't work and could and should provide more transport where possible. Yet people have come to expect transport as 'part of the package'. I think transport should be reduced, though refusing to pay for transport as a blanket policy should be avoided. Another broad approach would be to focus on the informal support that's being provided by carers. It's right that carers are supported to care, but we are not here to replace the function of families. It is very sad that some carers feel they are 'saving social services money' by looking after someone and 'doing us a favour'. Carers are now well aware that they are not legally obliged to care and if they put their hands up and say they can't cope, we would have to intervene. We need to push back some responsibility onto carers, neighbours, family and community. Its true that our society is losing this sense of responsibility, but this will only get worse unless we start pushing back.

Make a commitment to people who will need long term support for their whole lives (as is the case of adults with learning disabilities). Some people do not recover and cannot be independent. the 'promoting independence approach' is just a phrase to justifiably take support away. There should also be a commitment to value and support carers

Making sure vulnerable don't starve, become homeless, become driven to suicide, etc, by cuts to their support. At least set up an institution they can go instead of ending up on the streets.

More focus in assisting charitable and voluntary organisations with low level grants as they offer good value for money.

More 'joined' provision for those needing care in the community and at home, particularly long term care to ease pressure on families.

overall cost, including NHS costs incurred because of lack of social care leading to illness and hospitalisation

Partnership in work need full input. Long term support only when essential for outcome. Staff should be competent in their position of employment or not employed

People are dying and you have blood on your hands!

Promoting independence sound good and reasonable but when you are talking about elderly vulnerable people it is ridiculous. They have probably lived independent lives like you but now they cant, they need help. We must recognise that not everyone can be independent or make a contribution at certain times in their lives particularly when they are elderly or have other problems which make them extremely vulnerable in the world we live in. Please have some humanity and retain these services which are vital

Prompting independence are just fancy words which give an excuse to ignore what's occurring and placing the blame and total responsibility on the sick, elderly and vulnerable rather that societies need to support these individuals and not to punish their disabilities or lack of wealth

Reducing waste and duplication. Also get the most out of staff employed by the council directly

Scrutinise the types of mental health clients using drop ins, day centres and other duplicate supports in Merton. Too many (men, women) are still on the same big state benefits do not wish to get better and enjoy a lifetime doing nothing, except attending the services for food and to enjoy themselves.

Seek additional funding from Central Government!
Support people!
The actual needs of people.
The categories in Q9 amount to empty rhetoric. With fewer staff how can any of these aims be realised. Members of staff with irreplaceable expertise are leaving. Small savings might be made as some officers spend a disproportionate amount of time finding them. 'Promoting independence' can only happen with the support of people who know a person and work with them closely. It can take years to help an adult with a learning disability to increase their self sufficiency. Down syndrome individuals (50% of the learning disability population) often develop early onset dementia and their health problems multiply as they age - so that they need more support not less. There should be care co-ordinators/navigators who hold all the knowledge about a person and who liaise with clinical and social agencies. Such navigators should also work closely with family carers (where they exist) as 'experts by experience' who can contribute their own knowledge of a person and share in decision making and the construction of care plans and pathways. There should be training of staff as to how to approach people with learning disability and how to involve family carers from the start of any process, especially those who have power of attorney. If Merton becomes a commissioning or brokerage council who then has the duty of care?
the elderly should always be prioritized
The Service User contributes to the cost of Meals on Wheels - the current contribution is £3.43 per meal which has not increased in around 4 years- if this was increased to £4.50 then the Council would raise an additional £40K per annum
the strategies are good but its the way the strategy is delivered that i fundamentally disagree with
The way these points are worded makes it difficult to disagree. However the impact on those who use Adult Social Care is unlikely to be good.
There are no such things as savings it's CUTS! I have answered Question 9 as 'don't know' because they seem to be loaded questions, which can be used whichever way you wish to interpret.
These are not contentious.
This question should have been earlier. By sequencing them as you have people will all disagree with the savings proposed
To provide a safer, more efficient range of services to the elderly residents of Merton. To provide a healthy and nutritious diet to the elderly and vulnerable people within the borough.
Work with other neighbouring authorities - don't try and compete
You should be looking at ALL your available levels to increase funds (eg. tax) and take the budget as a whole and recognise that environments could cut more to support social care which is your statutory responsibility. Ask people to voluntarily make a contribution. Ask people to pay for equipment or part payment and Council pay for upkeep maintenance and parts. I've noticed firms who do repairs charge alot for parts that can be bought much cheaper.
How can this be answered? This service is underfunded and understaffed already. Some carers should not be doing this job, regardless of poor, less than minimum wages.
I will be bored at home

Promoting independence is not a reason to cut my support

Savings is a wrong term. Costs are needed to provide some support services. Without some ancillary support, vulnerable people will suffer more.

Comments about alternatives Part 6

Response

No comment

have a common register with the NHS so that duplication is reduced and records are streamlined.

If you believe these are the best options then you should consider them

1. Day centres are a lifeline for many family carers providing a safe and at some times enjoyable place for their relative to spend a small part of the week, seeing friends and (staff levels permitting) taking part in activities and outings. They are also extremely cost effective-providing PAs for individuals clients who can't go out alone or even stay at home alone would be much more expensive. 2. Outsourcing-nightmare scenario! Have you considered setting up a trading company? 3. Shared Services-impossible to comment without an example 4. Fee Reductions-Unrealistic in most cases 5. Staff reductions-see Q.4

6101795 Cont from Q.1 - Such problems raise my son's anxiety levels to the extent of making him ill. One man missed 21 visits from a domiciliary care agency because his usual carer was away. If someone is completely wheelchair bound, cannot speak up for themselves and has no family advocate, severe neglect will result, especially with less monitoring and assessment occurring. One person can be left alone for days. Q.11 - Increase Council Tax and Use reserves Q.12 Closing day centres might save money in the short term but will cost a great deal in the end as it will lead to increased health and personal needs on the part of service users. Most family carers of people with LD are elderly and might also be caring for a sick spouse and be sick themselves. Merton's strength (also a weakness I know) is that it is a small borough. Our people with LD gain support from each other - they meet each other on various occasions and they are familiar with the officers dealing with them. Linking with other authorities will diminish such benefits and save little money while introducing impersonal (and therefore less effective) services. Some already spend several hours a day on minibuses - this might increase. Making bigger staff reductions: not viable, for the reasons presented above. Outsource all in house services: this will not work if available organisations such as Mencap and Carers Support are losing their funding. Direct payments must be sufficient to buy in alternative services if they in fact exist. Negotiate fee reductions from providers: Profit making care organisations already cut corners and there is a high turnover of underpaid and untrained staff. They are often unable to meet their existing commitments and some are already closing down because of the new minimum wage. In house services (similar to the Supported Living Team) would provide a better service.

A more joint up approach, particularly with the NHS will save money as it reduces duplication

As it is, there are service users who attend mental health services in Merton by "Imagine", "Focus I to I", St Mark's church who do not pay for snacks, food or soft drinks and while others have to pay. This is unfair

Council sharing provisions could benefit all

Day Centres are sometimes the only social contact people have. Those that are not attended should close. Enough staff to fulfil the need of the folk attending. Outsource services if they are money saving and efficient.

Day centres are vital for adults with LD they get great joy in going to meet friends and join in activities for many adults with LD can only go to day centres they cannot go out in the community without support sinc a lot of I house services have been contracted out and this then accounts for many problems arising

Day Centres save money in the longer term. Strongly disagree with out sourcing and I am not an employee.

Do not agree with any of them although regular reviews of 'Value for money' should be made. More Government Funding needed.

Fees reductions sounds good, but in London staff face high living costs. Many carers are on zero hours contracts and have long journey times between clients. We do not want home support visits to be so rushed that those who rely on them suffer. Sharing services should definitely be investigated further. On slide 23 it says "we do not believe this will generate savings during 16/17. Should we not be looking at longer term strategies and, if savings are likely in 17/18 or further ahead, we should be working towards them.

I think you should consider staff reductions in an open minded way and not seek to avoid or limit redundancies as an objective in itself when there is no money to provide eg long term care for the elderly

If these options make most financial and service sense you should do them

In an ideal world there would be no segregation ie. no day centres! but this is not an ideal world so they should stay open

It is absolutely right not to close day centres...Look at Sutton. Direct payments just don't work for those with complex needs. Doing 'community activities' with a PA is all very well, but what community activities are there, for those with severe disabilities in Merton? eg those that need hoisting, are highly challenging in their behaviour etc. such clients also usually need 2:1 support from a specialist agency (which is far more costly than a day centre). Pushing Fee reductions with providers is not advisable, because the sector is already really squeezed. We are already giving providers more and more risk for less and less money.

More in house carer support instead of the long term expenses of using outside agencies and providers

No

Outsourcing could be an answer, however this would need to be tightly monitored so that there is no reduction in quality of service.

People with LD are the most vulnerable and cannot usually speak up for themselves. They need good quality day centres to keep them safe and happy. Carers need the little bit of time they get to get on with their own lives or do essential tasks. Close day centre = collapsed carers = extra NHS and council costs.

Please don't close Day Centres as where will people with Learning Disabilities go and what will they do, the carer needs a break from caring that's the only break.

Seek extra funding from Central Government

Share educational facilities with other boroughs

Some people are paid too much

Stop spending on war then we would have the money needed.

The day centres are absolutely essential and are a very cost effective way of providing support. Going to meet her friends is an essential part of my daughter's life and the regularity and quality of the provision is essential. Carers would become ill and exhausted without day centres (many carers are over 65, some over 75)

There are not enough alternatives, ie, you could outsource some (rather than all) in house services. Bring down the cost of Merton's in house transport. It is well known that the cost of this is prohibitive; I suspect the Unions have a stronghold here but I really don't care about that. It costs silly money for day centre transport and the council seems to scared to do anything about it.

There is only one centre for people with physical disabilities although there are at least two for people with LD (All Saints is in fact for both people with PD and LD) We fought incredibly hard to keep All Saints Centre open. We do not want to lose it. It's an invaluable service both for people who attend and their carers.

They haven't been well explained, and I think alternatives should include taking more from areas other than social care. You are making choices and prioritising flowers in parks over people's dignity.

They should only be considered if cost-effective and lead to a sustainable service.

Why are staff paid? There are no services! There is no support!

Why do your alternatives not include considering a local authority trading company or staff owned mutual to run the whole service? Conventional outsourcing would be viewed as a disaster for service users and carers. You cannot entrust management of care of such vulnerable residents to firms whose statutory Companies Act duty is to their shareholders and profit.

Why would you not include "Negotiate fee reductions from providers" Some of these outside agencies charge an absolute fortune for the poor quality service they provide while the owners of these companies live in a nice big house somewhere in the Surrey countryside! What a complete rip off and I cant believe you wouldn't be looking for cheaper options. These companies SHOULD NOT be able to dictate to the council the prices charged!!

Working with other councils makes sense. Sharing and pooling resources makes sense. Outsourcing to private for profit companies is BAD.

You should do what makes sense to get the best service from the resources available

Don't want to lose relationships with good staff

Encourage people to attend and make Day Centres more profitable to be open. Offer other Councils places and get payment. Get sport centres like Lloyds and Virgin to offer cheap membership or use of facilities free to people in their area. They have creches and make and create classes. Loads of fitness centres in the Borough.

In house day centre care will reduce costs as it can be managed efficiently. Providers can be less costed by being competitively priced as the big supermarkets do.

No

No matter what savings are made or cut it will affect the very vulnerable people in our community.

none

Other boroughs are going to become bigger boroughs sharing services. It cuts costs and share resources.

Q.11 - get rid of some of the "suits" in council Q.12 - Some people would need extra support to manage personal budgets so would need staff back up which could negate some of the savings

Some care packages are too expensive. They need to be reviewed and find other less expensive services for the residents.

They shouldn't close day centres or get rid of the staff.

Other savings ideas Part 7

Response

- Wheely bins don't provide. Save this money tell people to buy their own. - Increase council tax - Cut down on staffing in Civic suite

(1) Reform the procedures which are ridiculously bureaucratic and time-wasting and seem to be (badly) designed to "avoid liability" rather than to provide good care. People should stop duplicating each others work and focus on what they are supposed to be doing. (2) Try to make social care more collaborative and user friendly and more willing to accept compromise. For example in allocating carers, instead of doing it by checklist ("if you can't walk that means six carers a day") try to understand a person's choices and disabilities and consider what is being done and how that can be supplemented (3) Stop being so high-handed and try to work better with unpaid carers

Alcohol and substance abuse is self-inflicted, this is where cuts should be deepest.

Although it'll contribute very little to the overall Council's money, put up Council Tax. Do we need so many management posts? Can they be shared? Are all the staff in day centres vital?

As above

council tax rises

COUNCIL TAX! Everyone else accepts an annual increase. If people were informed about who suffers as a result of the low council tax in this borough I am sure the vast majority would happily pay more

cut back on unnecessary receptions, parties, and or expenses for councillors mayors etc Firmly with news campaigns, popular voter support insist that government provides more funding for these issues instead of accepting cuts from central government try being honest to your population on whats being cut by central instead of accepting party politics

Efficient compliant staff only

Have GOOD admin support not cheap. Make more use of volunteers in the services you do keep, e.g. the lunch clubs and faith organisations.

Have you considered: Collective buying to cut down procurement costs? Cutting the pay of senior officers/councillors allowances? Reducing expenditure on consultants and agency staff? Selling services to other boroughs? Working out why Merton's Inhouse Transport is so expensive? However it seems in the short term much more sensible to raise the permitted 2% levy and use a small fraction of Merton's reserves, ie increase council income rather than make these cuts.

Higher Management salaries and packages should be closely scrutinised.

I'm racking my brains... As previously mentioned, pushing some of the responsibility back on to carers is important- though this needs to be done in a fair and sensitive way. A tiny increase in the council tax would help, and the benefits of this need to be publicised to residents. Benefit fraud and mis-use of appointeeships is also a real issue- eg DLA money that doesn't go to the client, but goes in to the family pot, or carers still claiming DLA care component when the relative is in residential care. I know this is a central government issue, but it would mean there is more fairness and support can be better targeted. Local authorities need more powers to access information on people's benefits and finances. We need more powers generally to ensure people 'evidence' their needs. At present we just take it on trust and what the clients/ carers say. A lot of our clients needs are complex and very clear, but sadly there is also a lot of potential for lying/ exaggerating need. I don't think we want to go down the road of checking everyone's health conditions with their GPs/ other organisations- as that would require consent, be very bureaucratic and GPs are stretched enough as it is. But we need to be more probing in assessments, and if there is any doubt about the genuineness of someone needs, seek further information. At present we often work on a 'who shouts loudest gets what they want' approach- which is wrong, but what else can we do when we base most of our information on what the clients/ carers tell us? I also think monitoring of Direct payments needs to be much more robust, as there is so much potential for misuse.

Increase rates to continue and improve level of service

Make much better use of technology

More Government grants!

None

Not savings but raise council tax by the 2% the Chancellor is offering.

Outsourcing the catering facilities within the day centres would save money and meals could be provided by existing provider of meals on wheels services

Raise council tax slightly.

remove the layers of management that are not needed: a flat management structure, outsource all internal services, reduce monitoring, stop wasting money on tendering and negotiate direct with providers

Sack everyone and start to actually employ people with intelligence - empathy even! Is incompetency a requirement, to be a member of staff? Because that is what it looks like!

Sack the council.

Scrap the Wheelie-bin pilot. Huge waste of money. Turn off some street lights to save money, between 1am to dawn.

Sell off valuables, as has been discussed in Coventry council (apparently they are sitting on millions of pounds of artwork etc). The government has now allowed these to be sold. what does Merton have? Get rid of rubbish staff; use performance reviews and get rid of those who do not make the grade. Install a dot matrix system outside on civic offices (at the top) and let people buy messages, eg happy birthday etc (a bit silly I know, but who knows?!

Share physical space with other agencies

So many vulnerable people depend on your vital services. In some cases they are a lifeline. Make cuts in other departments.

Staff mutual

The Council/Cabinet must consider increasing Council Tax as Merton simply needs more money in the pot to comply with its legal duties. The mantra "we have not increased council tax and under no circumstances will" is so unhelpful. If we as residents want to keep services, we must be prepared to pay more for it.

The root of the problem is the ridiculous amount of savings that are forced on us by central Government. However the Comprehensive Spending Review did offer the possibility of a 2% precept. We should calculate how much of the cuts could be avoided by applying the 2% precept to Council tax. We should be consulting residents to see if they would be in favour of this.

The time has come to bite the bullet and raise council tax by 2%. These cuts are so devastating and the same family is being hit by 3 or 4 of them (and government cuts). Also consider using some of the reserves.

There have been several instances of racism, violence, bullying, abusive telephone calls, women abuse and gangster porn on mobile phones at these places. - "personalisation budgets" - Employ only qualified staff - As mentioned, only one properly unified administered mental health services drop in, will do in Merton - Ensure properly assessed clients. Risk factors, proper genuine names, addresses and Doctor, and Merton residents only.

These are drastic times. Merton Council should RAISE THE COUNCIL TAX and USE ITS RESERVES - which are kept for emergencies - and there can be no greater emergency than now. Please think creatively e.g. by funding your departing experts in social care to start up alternative self funding social enterprises or charities that will seek to regain some of the ground that we have lost. ...6101795 continued from Q.15... - Reviews have resulted in certain recommendations which are never acted upon eg. promised transport not materialising so that an elderly carer has to drive her son, despite her arthritis. - The loss of the LD Outreach service to those in supported living, leading to increased isolation and loss of social opportunities and new experiences. If you cannot initiate such things for yourself you lose confidence and get depressed. The loss of courses and tutors familiar to them and the opportunity to socialise with a diversity of people resulting from the closure of Whatley Avenue. If you don't get many replies to this survey it's because carers are already too tired and worn down or have no time to do so and most of the people they look after would find it completely inaccessible. Family carers deal daily with unnecessary mistakes and misunderstandings. These problems will increase if the expertise and time of existing staff is lost. The Council wants carers to do more but a great many are already stretched to their limit.

To save money on consultation fees with all the meetings I have been to it always goes for consultation then meetings. About previous meetings and maybe a small rise in council tax would help

Transport costs are large. Sometimes cuts just aren't possible without a negative impact. say no, before deaths occur.

Wandle Housing don't have any food bins. Not enough facilities for waste by the council.

Work better with the NHS

Work more in partnership with the NHS and the VCS. Ensure all your contracts are fit for purpose. Maximise self funding.

You must raise council tax by 2%. Services will be of extremely low quality or totally destroyed soon unless you do this. Think about using the reserves

Your alternatives should also include salary reductions for senior MBC staff; use of the Government's 2% social care levy; and taking a very small % from reserves that are high compared with many other councils.

Be more efficient when reviewing a client/customer for those needs - when its ongoing - to cut down the phone calls and not to be going around the world - just get the review completed.

Make more parking around Crown House. Max 30mins - 1 hour pay and display

Pay and Display parking limited hours as some roads are permit holders and can't be used at all. Some roads near stations could be pay and display down one side instead of yellow lines.

Reduce number of managers and stop using so called consultants, often costing far more than regular staff

Other comments about changes since 2011 Part 8 Response

No comment

out sourcing home care with very short visits is a false economy leaving both staff and clients unsatisfied.

The Council effectively doubled care charges for people having two carers at a time. Where patients are being compelled to pay for two carers, the council should look carefully at whether the duplication is really necessary and be prepared to allow other choices.

1. Shorter days at day centres because of need to cut transport costs, despite pledge to introduce option of longer days when needed. 2. Loss of Mencap Carers Advisor post-leading to long wait for assessment, poor quality assessments, lack of specialist advice/help etc. 3. Noticeably larger groups at day centres with wide range of needs -very hard for staff to engage with them all. 4. Many more cancelled activities due to lack of staff in centres.

As a carer within Merton I can say that the service provided was minimal and hard to access

Day centres have now stopped being a means to an end and have really become just an end in themselves. This is no criticism to staff; they are just doing a very good job in difficult circumstances. Adults with learning disabilities are a group that has significant health issues and also gain an enormous amount from being active and engaged. I'm not sure if there have been more incidents but my son hit someone when there were no staff around. You cannot measure effectiveness by thinking it's ok to have people sitting around on computers etc. My son has a lot of energy to get rid of and now brings it home to me. How is that good. I asked if my son could use some of his Personal Budget to try a fitness trainer in the day centre; I was given a flat 'no'. I have also just moved house (to escape the bedroom tax) so life is stressful enough. I'm on antidepressants and want to come off of them; can't see that happening in the next few months

Day services are so cut back that clients no longer have constructive daily activities

Delay in appointments in many clinics/hospitals/GPs. Lack of services provided, not helpful occupational health when needed.

Do not have personal need or involvement at the moment but may always need in the future.

For me personally, I have not experienced any change, but the threat of cuts hangs over me like the Sword of Damocles, this has done nothing to improve my mental health.

I believe that people are being seen at a later stage of need, it is taking longer to assess them and also there appears to be a far greater deterioration in circumstances and personal needs before this is acted upon by Adult Services. All in all there appears to be a crisis with low morale with this service.

I have no support.

I think you have cut everything you can reasonably cut. Any more will start to negatively affect people's lives.

It is getting harder and harder every year to access services.

Less people are able to access reduced services causing further suffering to those already at the poor already at the bottom of life's ladder the most vulnerable and those most unable to cope causing unnecessary suffering, deaths and further illness, For example preventing OT's from being able to supply necessary aids ie. chairs, wheelchairs etc etc to keep families and the elderly together instead of having to go to care homes, hospitals or to engage in social activities i.e church, cinemas, sports or day centres etc etc that is taken for granted by those of good health or those with more wealth

Mainly very poor care services

Mental Health Services, i.e drop ins, day centres, are still out of date, poor quality staff, poor quality helpers, not enough transparency. Clients are still the same, have not improved and still on benefits.

Merton has been a wonderful borough in which to bring up a child with learning disabilities. Services and officers have been excellent in the past but things have already changed drastically: - Less staff at day centres has meant more passive activities e.g. relaxation, music or sensory session, video time - which for the less able means sitting around all day. People with LD go home with excess energy levels, which is hard for elderly carers to deal with. - The LD nursing team has lost its most highly trained personnel and the team is much smaller. Just one example of the loss of irreplaceable assets and financial investment. - The cuts in transport availability means that people tend to arrive at day centres later and leave earlier. Many spend a lot of time just sitting in a minibus. Family carers' time to themselves or to work lessens. - Support workers change all the time, so that one person in supported living for example can have up to ten people interacting with them in the course of one week - people who have not had time to read the relevant notes e.e dealing with a person with specific communication problems. This can lead to support workers making serious mistakes eg. ordering 2 sets of medicines, one of which had replaced the other, and attempting to give both, not knowing a particular service user is deaf and acting upon his inappropriate responses, taking someone for a hospital appointment but not knowing why they are there, referring unnecessarily someone to a consultant because they have misunderstood the service user. The latter examples occurred to one person and would not have done so had his notes been read and if he had had one person only dealing with him. An agency carer bought someone with a specific diet plan a giant family pizza. Different people can contradict each other which increases anxiety levels in the service user. ...6101795 continued on Q.13 answer

My husband is 88. He has had strokes, is doubly incontinent and suffers with dementia and COPD. I am his full time unpaid carer. I am not young either. I depend totally on Crossroads for a few hours' respite. My doctor says that I have a 25% chance of a heart attack within the next few years. Who will look after him then? Better give me a few hours off - it will cut down on your costs in the long run. So please don't scrap the vital services offered by Crossroads Merton!

No chance of seeing a social worker. Requests for improvements in care packages either ignored (passed from one person to another and then forgotten) or turned down. Having to fight extremely hard to get a suitable package. People in supported living will have a lack of continuity in support.

Overall council services seem to have got better but I don't use adults services so I don't know. They may have got better or worse with or without savings

Regarding Merton Transport - I am taken to the day centre by my husband who's now retired. However, on one of the days, he's extremely busy so I need to be dropped up early. Having the staff escorting the people who attend day centres, means that two staff members are less in the am therefore less activities. The buses who leave an hour earlier at 2:30pm means less time at the centre.

See section 1. Meals on wheels. Everyone in a "tare"?

Service may have got worse or better due to other reasons apart from the savings. They may be better managed - or conversely less well managed.

Services are worse because there are fewer staff; lower morale; less funding for support and activities - yet despite all this your care staff do a fantastic job against all the odds while constantly having to do more with less. Our adult son gets less of the support he needs because you've cut his care package; and as his carers we have to try to fill the gap, while already overstretched, stressed and tired.

Services have effected my so and daughter significantly their activities have been reduced because of a cut in staffing their transport has changed staffing for that has had to change they don't do as much as they used to, they can only go out in the community if there is staff to take them if they are off sick then activities don't happen.

speaking as a provider for Merton we have made a large deficit for several years. we have been unable to invest in new cost saving processes to improve customer satisfaction (which is high)

The quality of care seems to be declining.

The quality of the mental health services offered by Imagine have not suffered as a result of prior savings. In fact, new services, like advocacy, are now offered, which in some cases, are lifelines for us.

There are less staff at day centres and less activities. It is extremely hard even to speak to a social worker. Reviews of care packages are not taking place or only taking place with a determination to cut services and cost. No improvements in care packages are taking place. Everything we need is threatened - quality care, crossroads, even Mencap services (voluntary sector to have 50% cut) Clients entering Adult Social Care are receiving minimal services.

THERE ARE NO SERVICES!

There is less choice for the clients and now overcrowding in the Day Centres

This may not be due to the savings... good staff may have gone

Through reassessment of all recipients of the home delivered meals - numbers have decreased by around 50% from around 75,000 per year in 2011 to circa 36,000 now. This re-assessment has meant that now only the most frail and needy residents are in receipt of the service This has resulted in delivery drivers now having key code access to 50% of the Service Users - and having to provide more intervention with plating up of meals - providing a drink with meal etc. if requested A large number of the service users are lonely - in many instances they advise that the delivery driver is the only person they see on a daily basis On average one Service User per month is found on the floor after falling by the delivery driver resulting in a hospital admission each month Without the daily check these people would be left undiscovered for long periods which could result in their deaths! We have carried out some focus groups around the meals service and identified the following outcomes from clients receiving a regular nutritious meal Human contact - knowing someone will see them and check on them Improved happiness Improved health and wellbeing Feeling safer Feeling more secure Improved independence Increased ability to stay in own homes Peace of mind for NOK

Waiting times are getting longer and longer, it's harder to get responses from the different departments, staff are stressed out and therefore the quality of services is poorer.

As a carer for a user of services, I feel a lack of support for mental wellbeing through groups, exercise etc. has made users suffer.

CARERS NEED RESPITE COVER ESPECIALLY CROSSROADS OTHERWISE I WOULD EXPLODE

Equipment is not serviced sometimes. Hard to get agencies to do Direct Payments if they drop out. Quality of agencies. At the moment i'm lucky I have a good one.

Services got worse when they shut down Chapel Orchard in Merton and the womens drop in in about 2004. So I can not comment on the day centres or mental health services that are provided now. Talking to mental health services clearly it's got worse. With freedom passes stopped in 2013 this has affected me. Talking to mental health services, clearly a lot of services have been reduced.

When you see respite care cut and then expect you to use the cheapest respite it is really degrading to have to stay in one of these homes. They are Council run and are not up to a very good standard for a customer.