

Rural Services Network
1st Sounding Board Survey
Local Authority Responses

'The impacts of austerity measures on local services'

32 Local Authority Councillors responded to the survey on the impacts of austerity measures on local services.

Q1. Compared to 3 years ago how would you rate current public services?

Much Better	6.45%
Slightly Better	32.26%
Unchanged	12.90%
Slightly Worse	38.71%
Much Worse	9.68%

Q2 a) In respect of specific services how have these changed over the last 3 years?

	Much Better	Slightly Better	Unchanged	Slightly Worse	Much Worse	Don't Know
Recycling Collection	35.48%	22.58%	32.26%	3.23%	6.45%	0
Parks and open Spaces	20%	16.67%	50.00%	10.00%	0	3.33%
GP Surgeries	3.33%	20%	46.67%	26.67%	3.33%	0
Refuse Collection	24.14%	34.48%	31.03%	6.90%	3.45%	0
Local Hospitals	3.33%	23.33%	30.00%	33.33%	10%	0
Schools and Colleges	10.71%	21.43%	25%	14.29%	0	28.57%
Bus Services	0	6.45%	25.81%	25.81%	29.03%	12.90%
Street Lighting	0	13.33%	53.33%	26.67%	3.33%	3.33%
Libraries	13.79%	6.90%	21.14%	24.14%	3.45%	27.59%
Street cleaning	3.23%	16.13%	48.39%	19.35%	6.45%	6.45%
Police	6.67%	10%	40%	23.33%	6.67%	13.33%
Care for the elderly	0	3.57%	28.57%	25%	10.71%	32.14%
Road Maintenance	6.67%	13.33%	16.67%	23.33%	40.00%	0
Meals on wheels	0%	0%	25%	0	10%	65%
Social Services	0%	7.14%	21.43%	25%	7.14%	32.29%

Housing Advice Services	3.85%	7.69%	34.62%	3.85%	0%	50%
Planning Services	14.29%	21.43%	32.14%	10.71%	3.57%	17.86%
Environmental Health Services	6.67%	10%	46.67%	6.67%	0%	30%
Sport and Leisure Facilities	10.34%	31.03%	34.48%	6.90%	0%	17.24%

Q2b)

Respondent were asked whether they used the list of services above. The responses below therefore show the same areas of service with responses from the users of the services:

	Much Better	Slightly Better	Unchanged	Slightly Worse	Much Worse	Don't know
Recycling collection	36.67%	23.33%	30.00%	3.33%	6.67%	0.00%
Parks and open spaces	21.74%	17.39%	47.83%	13.04%	0.00%	0.00%
GP surgeries	3.33%	20.00%	46.67%	26.67%	3.33%	0.00%
Refuse collection	24.14%	34.48%	31.03%	6.90%	3.45%	0.00%
Local hospitals	3.45%	24.14%	27.59%	34.48%	10.34%	0.00%
Schools and colleges	22.22%	33.33%	11.11%	22.22%	0.00%	11.11%
Bus services	0.00%	9.09%	36.36%	27.27%	27.27%	0.00%
Street lighting	0.00%	16.67%	50.00%	25.00%	4.17%	4.17%
Libraries	18.75%	12.50%	37.50%	31.25%	0.00%	0.00%
Street cleaning	3.85%	19.23%	50.00%	19.23%	3.85%	3.85%
Police	10.53%	10.53%	36.84%	31.58%	10.53%	0.00%
Care for the elderly	0.00%	10.00%	20.00%	50.00%	20.00%	0.00%
Road maintenance	8.00%	16.00%	16.00%	20.00%	40.00%	0.00%
Meals on wheels	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Social services	0.00%	18.18%	9.09%	54.55%	0.00%	18.18%
Housing Advice Services	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Planning	18.75%	25.00%	31.25%	12.50%	6.25%	6.25%

services						
Environmental Health services	7.69%	15.38%	69.23%	7.69%	0.00%	0.00%
Sport and Leisure facilities	21.43%	35.71%	28.57%	14.29%	0.00%	0.00%

Q3. Have you noticed any changes in the accessibility of services provided by your local Council(s) over the last 3 years in terms of:

a) The opening times when a service is available:

Yes- longer hours	6.45%
Yes –shorter hours	22.58%
No Change	70.97%

Shorter Hours included:

- Shorter library opening hours x 4
- Sports Centre opening hours reduced

Longer hours included:

- Customer services being open later

b) How frequently a service is provided:

Yes- More often	3.33%
Yes-Less often	26.67%
No Change	70.00%

Less often comments included:

- Public toilets cleaned less frequently, volunteer led libraries open less often
- Street cleaning frequency reduced. Rural footpath maintenance cut
- Ceasing to support a service

c) The location from which services are provided?

Yes - Wider range of locations	6.45%
Yes - Smaller range of locations	29.03%
No Change	67.74%

- Co-location of partners
- Closing one stop shop
- District Council now joint working with a Council in Oxfordshire, some activities are based there rather than within SNC
- Reduction in libraries

d) The charges made for particular services?

Yes – Increased charges	61.29%
Yes – Decreased charges	0.00 %
No Change	38.71%

Increased charges included:

- Green waste collection x4
- Entry to sports facilities, charging for types of rubbish and non statutory grass cutting by County Council facilities, change
- Cost of carers increased
- Increased charges for planning advice. Increased car parking charges. Increased charges for pest control. Higher bus fares.
- Car Parking, special refuse collections, planning fees
- Car parking-Rents-Planning fees-Building regs

Q4. Please list the three most significant impacts of changes in service provision affecting your local area over the last 3 years.

There were a range of responses to this question which can be collated into four main areas:

Negative Impact	Issues with Roads
Reduced bus service in rural areas Reduced street lighting Fewer community grants available More isolated and vulnerable people Total loss of meals on wheels service leaving elderly/vulnerable people struggling in rural areas No support for rural access to services Removal of bus service subsidies and free school transport for post 16 students Limitation of council tax increases Expectation of residents re Planning (particularly renewable energy) Need to consider withdrawal from non mandatory services. Reduced street lighting Reduced grass cutting of roadside verges Need for more benefits help for residents	Highways maintenance expenditure not kept up with demand Highways management reduced More damage to cars due to roads Poor road maintenance Reduced road maintenance to include drain and gulley cleansing Better repair of potholes and other highway problems Reduction in road maintenance

<p>means all applications take longer than previously</p> <p>Loss of community police</p> <p>Negative impact on young people 26-18 of lack of school or public transport which dictates their choice of education or training.</p> <p>Withdrawal of workers and students early morning and late evening non subsidised bus by bus company and county council decision not to supply – impact reduces access to work and study in Bournemouth and Poole.</p> <p>Police cover is increasingly provided by PCSOs who do not have powers of arrest-impact is reduced ability to deal with vandalism, traffic offences (driving through pedestrianised areas)</p> <p>Reduces buses to rural areas</p> <p>Reduced library services</p> <p>Reduction in library/mobile services</p> <p>Reduction in rural bus subsidy</p> <p>Ability to get an appointment with GP</p> <p>Appaling ambulance service</p> <p>Stricter review of qualification for care funding</p>	
<p>Positive Impact</p>	<p>Additional Charges</p>
<p>Increased membership of leisure facility following refurb.</p> <p>The county sharing offices with the district.</p> <p>Improvement on the Town Hall</p> <p>Volunteer libraries</p> <p>Volunteer/private sector tourist information provision</p> <p>Handing over of parks and play areas to parishes/communities</p> <p>New refuse contract</p> <p>New Recycling arrangements</p> <p>Improved leisure facility</p> <p>Improved recycling services</p> <p>Huge improvement in recycling collection</p> <p>Move towards computer contact rather than availability of walk in services</p> <p>Opening of a new fire station (but closure of others) to widen the area within which target response times can be met.</p> <p>Most have stayed the same.</p>	<p>Garden waste collection through a subscription</p> <p>Introduction of on street car parking charges</p>

Q5) Looking forward are you aware of any planned changes to local services that have yet to be implemented?

67% responded yes to this question and below are they're responses in more detail.

Reduction in opening hours for libraries and closure of some. Adult Social care increased charges. Reduction in funding to voluntary organisations. Change in policing structure.
Mini recycling bins going, toilets in rural areas being reviewed - some shut.
New way of delivering library services planned but not fully implemented
Move to kerbside collection
Closure of most elderly and vulnerable peoples day care and residential care
County Council planned cuts.
Hospital provision
Support for Community Composting and other green groups.
Confidential
Impact of kerbside collections
District Plan. Move of District HQ
Planned savings in adult social care
There will be a complete transformation of the way in which this Council operates. This will improve customer service as well as helping with budget difficulties.
Closure of Day Care services. Closure of Council run Residential homes ofr the elderly. Closure of libraries
Changes to library services are under consideration by Kent County Council
Changes to family support and services for youth
Changes planned for refuse collection and recycling
Grass cutting on main routes
Some libraries particularly on rural areas may close, new policing regime waste collection may change
Review of rural bus services
Total Review of Social Care and the development of closer relationship with Health