

**Harrogate Borough Council  
Statement of Account  
Public Consultation**

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# CONSULTATION REGARDING HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

## 1.0 METHODOLOGY

1.1 In September 2008 Harrogate Borough Council consulted residents of the District to seek views on the Harrogate Borough Council Statement of Account. A copy of the questionnaire can be found at Appendix A.

1.2 The following questionnaires were returned:

<b>Analysis of responses</b>		
<b>Total questionnaires analysed = 996</b>		
	<b>Questionnaires returned</b>	<b>Response Rate %</b>
<b>District Panel</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Voluntary Sector</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Business Sector</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Local Strategic Partnership</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Parish Councillors</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Councillors</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Staff/Internet</b>	<b>97</b>	

1.3 In total 996 responses to the Statement of Account survey were received. Please note not all respondents answered every question within the questionnaire, the analysis below is based on valid responses to each individual question and 'not answered' questions have been omitted from the analysis.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

### **2.1 Harrogate Borough Council Statement of Account**

- The majority of responses (60%) regarding the statement of account were favourable and complimentary with such comments as 'excellent', 'very good', 'clear and easy to understand' and 'concise and informative'
- Respondents most commonly thought the form and layout of the statement of account could be improved by increasing the size of the print, adding colour and graphics and simplifying
- 49% of respondents thought the content of the statement of account to be easily understood
- 90% of respondents would like the statement of account to be made available on the HBC Website.
- 85% of respondents agreed the current statement of account to be sufficient and that a more comprehensive annual report (subject to funding) is not required

### 3.0 RESULTS - HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

- 3.1 A copy of the Statement of Account was included with the questionnaire and can be found in the accompanying pdf.
- 3.2 Respondents were asked what they thought of the form and layout of the statement of account (the Statement):
- The majority of comments (60%) were favourable and complimentary with such comments as 'excellent', 'very good', 'clear and easy to understand' and 'concise and informative'.
  - In 184 responses the Statement was classed as 'satisfactory'
  - 94 responses were critical of the Statement

More details can be found in Appendix B

What do you think of the form and layout of the statement?	
Excellent	9 including
Very good	41 including
Very clear	10 including
Good	90 including
Fine	37 including
Clear	101 including
Informative	4 including
Straightforward	8 including
Simple	2 including
Understandable	97 including
Good Format/Presentation/Layout	26 including
Miscellaneous positive comments	21 including
<b>Total</b>	<b>446</b>
Reasonable	7 including
Fair	1
Adequate	20 including
OK	128 including
Satisfactory	24 including
Acceptable	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>184</b>
Basic	1
Poor	1
Difficult to understand	22 including
Too much detail	43 including
Print too small	8 including
Not enough detail	15 including
Miscellaneous criticism	4 including
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>
Miscellaneous	19 including
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>743</b>


- 3.3 Respondents were asked how the form and layout of the Statement could be improved, a variety of responses were received most common of which was 'increase the size of the print', 'add colour and graphics' and 'simplify'.







More details can be found in Appendix C

How could the form and layout be improved?	
Increase the size of the print	36
Add colour/graphics	33
Simplify	30
More Explanation	30
More user friendly/Less technical	19
Doesn't need changing	16
More space	15
Cost comparisons	7
Glossary of terms	5
Miscellaneous	33
<b>Total responses</b>	<b>224</b>

3.4 Respondents were asked whether they thought the content of the statement was understandable

- 49% of respondents thought the content to be easily understood
- When analysed by category of respondent it was found that the majority of District Panel, Parish Councils, Councillors and VCS respondents thought the content of the statement 'easily understood'. The majority of business' and staff/internet respondents found the content 'mostly understandable'


Combined results									
Do you think the content of the statement is understandable?									
	Easily understood			Mostly understandable			Not easily understandable		
	No	%		No	%		No	%	
<b>Combined Results</b>	447	49.2		389	42.8		72	7.9	








Do you think the content of the statement is understandable?									
	Easily understood			Mostly understandable			Not easily understandable		
	No	%		No	%		No	%	
<b>District Panel</b>	402	51.5		332	42.6		46	5.9	
<b>Councillors</b>	6	54.5		3	27.3		2	18.2	
<b>Parish Councillors</b>	16	57.1		11	39.3		1	3.6	
<b>Business</b>	2	28.6		4	57.1		1	14.3	
<b>LSP</b>	5	29.4		8	47.1		4	23.5	
<b>VCS</b>	9	50		7	38.9		2	11.1	
<b>Staff/internet</b>	7	14.9		24	51.1		16	34	

3.5 Respondents were asked where they would like the Statement to be made available:

- Overall 90% of respondents would like the Statement to be made available on the HBC Website,
- 63% would like it to be available at local libraries
- 61% would like it available at Council buildings


- No further comments were received
- When analysed by category of respondent it was found that a greater majority of all categories of respondent would like the Statement to be made available on the HBC website








<b>Combined results</b>									
<b>Where would you like to see a more comprehensive annual report (subject to funding)</b>									
	<b>HBC website</b>			<b>Libraries</b>			<b>Council Buildings</b>		
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	
<b>Combined Results</b>	722	90.2		634	63.1		482	61.5	

<b>Where would you like to see a more comprehensive annual report (subject to funding)</b>									
	<b>HBC website</b>			<b>Libraries</b>			<b>Council Buildings</b>		
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	
<b>District Panel</b>	612	79.7		557	75.1		407	53	
<b>Councillors</b>	8	72.7		6	54.5		5	45.5	
<b>Parish Councillors</b>	25	92.6		16	59.3		12	44.4	
<b>Business</b>	6	100		4	66.7		3	50	
<b>LSP</b>	15	93.8		8	50		11	68.8	
<b>VCS</b>	12	75		9	56.3		7	43.8	
<b>Staff/internet</b>	44	95.7		34	73.9		37	80.4	

3.6 Respondents were asked if they would like to see a more comprehensive annual report (subject to funding) that would show the Councils financial performance for the year.

- Overall 85% of respondents agreed the current Statement to be sufficient
- When analysed by category of respondent it was found that a significant majority in all categories of respondent agreed the current Statement to be sufficient

<b>Combined results</b>						
<b>Would you like to see a more comprehensive annual report (subject to funding) that shows the Council's financial performance for the year, or is the statement attached sufficient?</b>						
	<b>I would like a more comprehensive annual report</b>			<b>The current statement is sufficient</b>		
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	
<b>Combined results</b>	155	15.4		850	84.6	

<b>Would you like to see a more comprehensive annual report (subject to funding) that shows the Council's financial performance for the year, or is the statement attached sufficient?</b>						
	<b>I would like a more comprehensive annual report</b>			<b>The current statement is sufficient</b>		
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	
District Panel	103	13.4		688	86.6	
Councillors	12	13.6		66	75	
Parish Councillors	4	14.3		24	85.7	
Business	1	16.7		5	83.3	
LSP	3	18.8		13	81.2	
VCS	3	17.7		14	82.3	
Staff/internet	29	42		40	58	

3.7 Finally respondents were asked if they would like to make any other comments regarding the Statement.

Full details can be found at Appendix D

<b>Are there any other comments regarding the statement of accounts that you wish to make?</b>	
<b>More Explanation</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Simplify</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>On Request/On line</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>No change</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Waste of Money/Time</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>More information</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Staff Wages</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>User friendly/Less technical</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Reduce paperwork</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Cost Comparison</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Performance</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>32</b>

## Appendix A Questionnaire

### Harrogate Borough Council's Long-term Vision for the Harrogate District

In 2008 the Council published its long-term vision and priorities for the Harrogate District in a single document, called the **Harrogate Borough Council Strategic Plan**. The aim of the plan is to explain to residents, partner organisations, staff and visitors what the Council is focusing on and what it is aiming to achieve in the next ten years.

The Strategic Plan sets out the vision, goal and priorities of the Council and identifies key actions the Council needs to take in order to achieve the Vision.

### Harrogate Borough Council 10 year Vision

“To make the Harrogate District a better place to live, work and visit” by:-

- ◆Conserving its heritage
- ◆Enhancing its unique environment.
- ◆Delivering first-class public services.
- ◆Enabling everyone to share in its success.
- ◆Putting into place effective arrangements for better local government to meet the future needs of the District

The aim of this Vision is to achieve a district by 2018 that has the following features:

**Social** - An inclusive community with equality and accessibility at its heart, providing affordable housing and ensuring that no parts of the District fall within the bottom bands nationally for levels of poverty, health or deprivation.

**Economic** - An economically-active and prosperous economy with high levels of employment, sustainable tourism, inward investment and business profitability.

**Environment** - A high quality natural and built environment with conservation and recycling central to protecting our heritage for this and future generations.

#### Q1 **How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the above features?**

*Please tick one box for each feature*

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree strongly</i>
Social	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Economic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Harrogate Borough Council Corporate Priorities

**In looking to deliver its Vision, the Council has identified Seven Priorities. These form the framework for the next three years to ensure we deliver the Vision for the Harrogate District.**



**4. Safer and Strong Communities:** communities across the District are strong, safe and secure; people feel safer and part of their community.

**The Council is proposing to deliver this priority using the following means:-**

**a** - reducing anti-social behaviour (eg graffiti, vandalism)

**b** - encouraging young people to engage in positive activity (eg sport, leisure)

**c** - reducing the fear of crime (how safe you feel)

**d** - providing opportunities for all our citizens to be involved in decisions that affect them and their communities (eg District Panel, public meetings)

**e** - working with others to address disadvantage and promote strong, healthy, vibrant communities where people want to live and work (eg tackling poverty, health inequality, discrimination)

**Q5 Please indicate which you think are the 3 most important of these means in order of priority** *Please ensure you tick only one box for each priority*

	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>
<b>1st Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2nd Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3rd priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5. Supporting our Local Economy:** a robust and diverse economy that benefits local people and creates employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas and the market towns across the District.

**The Council is proposing to deliver this priority using the following means:-**

**a** - meeting the renaissance needs of our market towns (investing in Ripon, Knaresborough, Boroughbridge and Patelybridge)

**b** - creating a range of employment opportunities focussing in particular on job creation in our rural areas and market towns

**c** - creating an effective tourism, marketing and visitor management service (tourist information centres)

**d** - capitalising on the District's reputation for floral excellence

**e** - sustaining the Harrogate International Centre as one of the country's top international centres and the Region's conference and exhibition destinations

**f** - playing a full part in the development of the City Region

**Q6 Please indicate which you think are the 3 most important of these means in order of priority** *Please ensure you tick only one box for each priority*

	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>f</i>
<b>1st Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2nd Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3rd Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**6. Delivering First-Class Public Services:** services delivered throughout the District which meet the needs of customers, are accessible and of a high quality.

**The Council is proposing to deliver this priority using the following means:-**

**a** - improving the public's access to our services (eg face to face, on-line, telephone)

**b** - strengthening how we care for our customers (eg handling customer questions, complaints)

**c** - responding effectively to civil contingencies and emergency planning (eg flooding, sever weather)

**d** - providing services that are good value for money and valued by local people

**e** - developing our customer-facing services (eg Community office in Masham, local offices)

**Q7 Please indicate which you think are the 3 most important of these means in order of priority** *Please ensure you tick only one box for each priority*

	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>e</i>
<b>1st Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2nd Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3rd Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**7. Organisational Improvement:** being a good employer and improving our capacity to deliver first-class services and meet the needs of the local community.

**The Council is proposing to deliver this priority using the following means:-**

- a** - providing clear direction and leadership (clear plans, based on local needs)
- b** - improving our performance and efficiency (achieving more service for less costs)
- c** - strengthening how we engage with local people (communication, consultation, involvement)
- d** - improving our capacity to deliver our priorities (training, partnership working)

**Q8 Please indicate which you think are the 3 most important of these means in order of priority**

*Please ensure you tick only one box for each priority*

	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>
<b>1st Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>2nd Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>3rd Priority</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q9 Do you think that 7 Corporate Priorities is the right number of Priorities for Harrogate Borough Council to have?**

*Please tick one box*

- Yes.....
- No - Too many.....
- No - Too few.....

**Q10 If you answered 'too few', what would you add to the list of priorities?**

*Please specify*

**Q11 If you answered 'too many', what would you delete from the priorities?**

*Please specify*

## Harrogate Borough Council's Budget 2009/2010

These questions are seeking your views on Harrogate Borough Council's Budget for 2009/2010 and proposed Council Tax rise. We understand that you may wish to make further comment and a space for this purpose is provided at Question 20.

**The Council receives funding from 3 main sources:**

- ◆ **Central Government Grant** ◆ **Council Tax** ◆ **Fees and Charges**

If one of these sources does not increase annually, for example no Grant increase from Central Government, then increased expenditure, including inflation, must be met from the remaining sources i.e Council Tax and Fees and Charges

In July 2008 the Cabinet agreed the following proposals relating to the Council's budget:-

- ▶ Increase the overall budget by 3.3% to £24.659m
- ▶ Increase fees and charges between 4% and 5%(Calculated rate of inflation)
- ▶ Make efficiency savings of 2% cash

Following the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Central Government Grant the Council will receive for the three years 2008/2009 to 2010/2011 was announced. For 2009/2010 the Council will receive an increase of 1.7%. Based on the above budget the Council Tax will increase by 4.2%

The Council is facing a number of cost pressures in particular in relation to concessionary travel where government funding has been insufficient to meet the predicted cost of the new National Concessionary Travel Scheme. In addition there are considerable pressures on the Council for new spending on **Waste Recycling and Waste Collection** where the Council is required to meet Government targets on recycling and compost or face financial penalties.

The Council must decide if it wishes to invest further in this area and is seeking views on how this might be achieved. As a guide, a 1% increase in Council Tax produces an additional £130,000 to spend. However, if the Council increases its Council Tax above 5% it will face financial penalties from the Government.

**Q12 Were you aware that of the Council Tax billed in 2008/2009:**

- ▶ 14.6% is for Harrogate Borough Council to spend.
- ▶ 68.1% is for North Yorkshire County Council to spend.
- ▶ 13.3% is for North Yorkshire Police Authority to spend.
- ▶ 4% is for North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to spend.

Please tick one box

Aware .....  Not aware .....

**Q13 If Aware, how did you know?**

*please specify*

**Q14 What is your preferred Council Tax rise?**

*Please tick one box*

- Less than 4.2%** (this will lead to cuts in existing services and/or a further increase in fees and charges) .....
- 4.2%** (services will remain broadly as they are) .....
- 4.3 - 4.9%** (this will enable the Council to provide a limited response to demands for additional spending) ....

**Q15 Do you agree that additional expenditure should be spent in 2009/2010 in any of the following areas?**

*Please tick one box for each statement.*

	Yes	No
Green Waste Scheme expansion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expand existing Kerbside scheme to include plastic bottles.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Other**

*If you think additional expenditure should be spent in an area not specified above please specify*

**Q16 If you answered Yes to more than one of the additional expenditure areas in question 15, please prioritise.**

*Please tick one box for each statement*

	First Priority	Second priority	Third priority
Green Waste Scheme expansion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- |   |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Expand existing Kerbside scheme to include plastic bottles. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q17 In order to achieve the lowest Council Tax rise, in what order would you do the following?**

*Please tick one box for each statement*

- |  | <i>First</i>             | <i>Second</i>            | <i>Third</i>             | <i>Fourth</i>            |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Reduce existing Services.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Not undertake the additional expenditure .                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Increase existing fees and charges for services by more than the planned 5%. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Introduce new charges for services.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q18 Which services would you reduce?**

*(Please specify)*

**Q19 For which of the following services would you increase the fees? (Please note some fees are statutory or set by regulatory bodies cannot be changed. These are not included here)**

*Please tick all that apply*

- |  |                          |
|--|--------------------------|
| <i>Environmental (including refuse collection, recycling, licensing, pollution).....</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Car parking .....</i>   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Bereavement services (Cemeteries, Crematorium) .....</i>                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Sports Centres / Swimming Pools / Outdoor Recreation .....</i>                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Q20 Please use this space to write any comments or suggestions you have regarding the budget questions above**

*(Please specify)*

**Harrogate Borough Council Statement of Account**

Harrogate Borough Council would like your views on the form, layout and content of the Summary Statement of Accounts (See attached leaflet for the 2007/2008 statement). The statement is published annually to explain the Council's financial accounts. We think it is in a format that is simple and easily understood, but what do you think?

**Q21 What do you think of the form and layout of the statement?**

*Please specify*

**Q22 How could the form and layout be improved?**

*Please specify*

**Q23 Do you think the content of the statement is understandable?**

*Please tick one box*

*Easily understood* .....

*mostly understandable* .....

*not easily understood*.....

**Q24 Where would you like the statement to be made available?**

*Please tick all that apply*

*Harrogate Borough Council website www.harrogate.gov.uk* .....

*Libraries*.....

*Council Buildings* .....

*Other* .....

*Please specify*

**Q25 Would you like to see a more comprehensive annual report (subject to funding) that shows the Council’s financial performance for the year, or is the statement attached sufficient?**

*Please tick one box*

*I would like a more comprehensive annual report* .....

*The current statement is sufficient* .....

**Q26 Are there any other comments regarding the statement of accounts that you wish to make?**

*Please specify*

**Anonymous Personal Details**

**Q27 Are you?** *Please tick one box*

*Male*.....

*Female* .....

**Q28 How old are you?** *Please tick one box*

17-24 .....

45-54 .....

75+ .....

25-34 .....

55-64 .....

35-44 .....

65-74 .....

**Q29 Are you?** *Please tick one box*

*Employed*.....

*Unemployed*.....

*Student*.....

*Self employed* .....

*Retired*.....

*Looking after family or home* .

**Q30 Do you consider yourself to have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and longterm effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities?** *Please tick one box*

*Yes*.....

*No*.....

**Q31 Are you a full-time carer for a disabled, sick or elderly relative or partner?**

Please one box

Yes .....  No.....

**Q32 Which ward of Harrogate do you live in?** Please tick one box

- |  |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| Bilton..... <input type="checkbox"/>         | Starbeck ..... <input type="checkbox"/>                   | Boroughbridge ..... <input type="checkbox"/>  | Pateley Bridge..... <input type="checkbox"/>                    |
| Granby ..... <input type="checkbox"/>        | Stray ..... <input type="checkbox"/>                      | Claro ..... <input type="checkbox"/>          | Ribston..... <input type="checkbox"/>                           |
| Harlow Moor ..... <input type="checkbox"/>   | Woodfield..... <input type="checkbox"/>                   | Killinghall ..... <input type="checkbox"/>    | Spofforth with Lower Wharfedale..... <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| High Harrogate..... <input type="checkbox"/> | Knaresborough East <input type="checkbox"/>               | Kirby Malzeard ..... <input type="checkbox"/> | Washburn ..... <input type="checkbox"/>                         |
| Hookstone..... <input type="checkbox"/>      | Knaresborough King James ..... <input type="checkbox"/>   | Lower Nidderdale.... <input type="checkbox"/> | Wathvale..... <input type="checkbox"/>                          |
| Low Harrogate ..... <input type="checkbox"/> | Knaresborough Scriven Park ..... <input type="checkbox"/> | Marston Moor..... <input type="checkbox"/>    | <b>Unknown Harrogate Ward.....</b> <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| New Park ..... <input type="checkbox"/>      | Ripon Minster..... <input type="checkbox"/>               | Mashamshire ..... <input type="checkbox"/>    | <b>Unknown Knaresborough Ward.....</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pannal..... <input type="checkbox"/>         | Ripon Moorside ..... <input type="checkbox"/>             | Newby..... <input type="checkbox"/>           | <b>Unknown Ripon Ward.....</b> <input type="checkbox"/>         |
| Rossett..... <input type="checkbox"/>        | Ripon spa..... <input type="checkbox"/>                   | Nidd Valley..... <input type="checkbox"/>     | <b>Unknown Rural Ward.....</b> <input type="checkbox"/>         |
| Saltergate ..... <input type="checkbox"/>    | Bishop Monkton..... <input type="checkbox"/>              | Ouseburn ..... <input type="checkbox"/>       |   |

**Q33 To which of these groups do you consider you belong to?** Please tick one box

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| British..... <input type="checkbox"/>                 | White and Black Caribbean ... <input type="checkbox"/> | Bangladeshi..... <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Irish..... <input type="checkbox"/>                   | White and Black African..... <input type="checkbox"/>  | Any other Asian background . <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Any other White background . <input type="checkbox"/> | White and Asian..... <input type="checkbox"/>          | Chinese ..... <input type="checkbox"/>                |
| Caribbean ..... <input type="checkbox"/>              | Any other Mixed background . <input type="checkbox"/>  | Other ethnic group. .... <input type="checkbox"/>     |
| African ..... <input type="checkbox"/>                | Indian ..... <input type="checkbox"/>                  |   |
| Any other Black background . <input type="checkbox"/> | Pakistani ..... <input type="checkbox"/>               |   |

## **Appendix B**

### **What do you think of the form and layout of the statement?**

#### **Excellent x 9 including**

1. Excellent and easily understood.

#### **Very good x41 including**

Very good - concise and clear.  
Very good, easy to read.  
Very good. Specific detail.  
Very good. Clear and easy to understand.  
Very good. To the point.  
Very good, clearly stated questions.  
Very good, easy to understand.  
Seems very good to me.  
I think it is very good format.  
Very good, especially front-page analysis.  
Very good, concise but gives all necessary information.

#### **Very clear x 10 including**

Very clear and easy to follow.  
Very clear and understandable.  
Very clear and well laid out.  
Very clear and concise.  
Very clearly laid out and surprisingly easy to follow.

#### **Good x 90 including**

Generally good and clean.  
Getting such a vast amount of information on to one A sheet was good.  
Good - print large enough to read.  
Good layout, easily understandable.  
Good layout. Seems fairly easy to understand.  
A good and easy to read statement.  
Good. Comprehensive.  
Good. Like the idea of a per capital cost.  
Good - easy to use.  
Good, simple.  
Good - clear and precise.  
Good, easy to read.  
Good and clear.  
Good overall summery.  
Good and all on one sheet of A4.  
Good, easy to understand.  
Good lots of information and annotates explained.  
Good especially the net cost per resident.  
Good. A little busy on page and crowded.  
Good, concise and clear.  
Good, easy to understand. Pleased only one sheet of A4 is used.

Good. It provides enough information for the general public and details of where to get more for the curious.

Good as far as it goes. Particularly like cost for resident and easy comparison.

Quite good

### **Fine x 37 including**

Just fine

Fine, easy to understand.

Yes I think it is fine as it is.

The form and layout are fine.

### **Clear x 101 including**

As clear as can be.

Very clear.

Clear, the charts and graphs make it easier to understand at a glance.

Clear and concise and well explained.

Clear and concise.

Clear, concise and on one sheet of A.

Clear layout, adequately broken down.

Seems quite clear and understandable.

Clear using diagrams.

Quite clear and relatively jargon free.

Clear and understandable.

Concise and easy to understand.

Perfectly clear.

Clear and neat size.

Clear and well laid out..

It is clear and fairly easy to read - especially the pie charts.

Very clear, well explained.

Nice and clearly set out. Clear to see individual items.

Clear and well presented.

Clear and acceptable..

Pretty clear and modern

Looks interesting/eye catching, clear to follow and not too long.

Clear and concise

The pie charts make it easy to understand the figures. I found the information concise and clear. All members of my family liked to see how the council tax was being spent and where the funding came from.

The use of graphs and pie diagrams makes it easier to see how funds are divided.

Concise and informative.

### **Informative x4 including**

Very informative

### **Straightforward x8 including**

Straightforward - easy to read.

Simple/ straightforward.

It appears straightforward

### **Simple x2 including**

Simple to read and understand.

### **Understandable x97 including**

It's understandable.

Easily understood.

Congratulations - it is understandable.

I agree it is easy to understand.

It is easily understandable.

Found the pie charts and block graphs easy to understand.

Good and understandable.

Easy to look at the information with in the charts.

Yes I agree. Simple as can be and readily understood.

Easy to read and take in the information.

It looks O.K and easy to understand.

Easily read.

I think it is fine. It gives sufficient information, in a compact way so it avoids being too daunting.

Good that it's quite short but not that easy to understand. E.g. what is the general fund balance?

Layout perfectly understandable.

Concise and understandable.

Simple and easy to understand.

Concise, easy to digest.

It is easy to read by. Why is there a gross cost and net cost? Why is only £ coming from taxpayers when we pay over £, each?

Interesting and quite easy to understand.

I think the statement is easily understood.

Comprehensive and fairly easy to understand.

### **Good Format/Presentation/Layout x26 including**

There is certainly a lot of information contained in a small space and it is quite well presented and condensed.

Very economic with use of size paper.

I can see that you are trying to provide information in an accessible form.

The form is concise and easy to follow. There s a lot of information on a small space especially in the middle pages.

The form and layout are quite satisfactory.

Well laid out and informative.

Concise and designed to make maximum use of the sheet of A paper.

A lot of information packed into a cost effective format.

Quite like the compact nature of the statement

Compact and informative.

Fairly standard account layout. Basic summary information all there.

I agree that the format is simple and easily understandable.

I believe the form is adequate and easily understood.

Layout very full but colourful and well headed.

There is a lot of information squashed onto a relatively small area. The different ways of presenting information is good, however, for example using words and graphical images.

### **Miscellaneous positive comments x21 including**

A lot better than usual.

Much better.

I don't think it can be improved.

Does not need improvement. Those who need to understand it will be well acquainted with the jargon.

Practical.

Logical.

Pie charts work well and best of all, cost per resident.

Very sensible.

Appears to cover accounts.

Seems comprehensive.

Very well thought out.

Some of it is clear.

Very helpful and useful. It shows where out money is spent.

It's all right.

Brief and to the point.

Interesting content.

Fine. Very interesting.

More graphs than tables - easier to read.

Liked - more qualitative answers.

I find it all right as it is now.

No problem

### **Reasonable x7 including**

Reasonable, but insufficient description of the services.

### **Fair x1**

### **Adequate x20 including**

I think it is quite adequate and readable.

Adequate and well laid out.

### **OK x128 including**

O.K. But differences between gross costs and net costs should be explained.

O.K for someone who understands these things.

O.K but took a while to work out.

O.K. A lot on a small space.

O.K, but there should be a way of finding more detail.

O.K, but I do accounts in my job so it is clear.

O.K. Simple to understand.

O.K. Nice small sheet, clearly set out.

OK - but does anyone bother to read it?

It's okay - is it available in different languages or formats accessible to people who cannot read print though?

### **Satisfactory x24 including**

User friendly. Satisfactory.

Generally satisfactory.

Fairly satisfied.

Adequate and satisfactory

### **Acceptable x4**

## **Basic x1**

## **Poor x1**

### **Difficult to understand x22 including**

To the layman they make little sense, as the title needs to be related to actual things that people understand.

Hard to take in, but O.K to refer to.

O.K to me, but I see layouts like this quite often. I am sure it is totally incomprehensible to at least % of the population of HBC.

It is fine. Most people will not read it. Many will not understand it because they do not have the necessary knowledge/ understanding of accounts at this level.

I believe % of people will not look at it. Money could not therefore be saved by not issuing it and putting it on website or sending on request.

Don't really understand sheet enough to comment.

Easy to understand if you work in finance, but for others too many figures and jargon (e.g. net and gross) on the first page. Would tend to put people off reading it.

I don't think it makes a huge difference. Those who have a knowledge of financial documents will understand it, those who don't won't.

Could it be that the simplification has gone too far and the result is less easily understood?

Some phrases not explained e.g. difference between gross and net costs, general funds, revaluation reserve, etc.

It is not immediately clear what the column headings gross cost and net cost refers to.

I understand it (most of it). I doubt if % of council tax payers understand it.

Far too much information. Seeing all these figures the average person will not make an attempt to understand.

Hard to understand.

Very difficult to understand.

Too complicated.

O.K, but to the layman not easy to understand. Accountants probably know the ins and outs.

O.K but a lot of people will not understand it.

The form is quite confusing.

Not very clear on some points.

Reasonable - don't quite understand gross cost and net cost.

Reasonable, apart from unexplained technical terms.

### **Too much detail x 43 including**

Looks technical, not accessible.

First page looks intimidating if you don't know anything about balance sheets and those people will not read any further.

Too many figures.

Dull and too much information - meaningless.

Too long.

Too many figures. Graphs are easier, especially bar graphs.

Reasonable. Front page has too much information on it. Items too close together. Makes difficult to read and follow.

Very clear to people who understand balance sheets, but I think the majority of people would be put off by too many figures.

A little too much data and so not easy reading.

A little busy in design.

Cluttered information - numbers are large and mean virtually nothing to council taxpayers - give an idea of the costs to them.

It is a little dense and the print is small but it is good that it only uses a single A4 sheet.  
A lot of information in a small space.  
Too compressed, should be on an A sheet and folded.  
It's as good as you can make it. Never easy to follow, so many different numbers and areas.  
Layout seemed rather cramped.  
O.K. A bit too busy making it difficult to read.  
Fine. Slightly busy.  
A format makes it look very cramped.  
Busy, too much information in a small space.  
Too much information, boring layout.  
It looks awfully busy.  
Maybe too much information in such a small booklet?  
Too much detail and numbers. Did not appeal to me. Would have preferred more things like capital spending in section.  
It looks quite daunting at first because there are an awful lot of words and figures crammed into a small space.  
Too many figures.  
Too complex.  
Dreadful. Uninteresting and too much data.  
Dense. A little overwhelming.  
Cluttered.  
Too much detail and switched off when I turned the page.  
I like the economy of space but it does make it look very dense with figures.  
Old fashioned - cramped.  
Layout is too small, difficult to read and too cluttered.  
It was a bit cluttered.  
Not bad, but the centre page looks a bit close together. It looks a bit of a jumble.  
Too complex.  
A lot of information in a small space.  
Too many different styles of presentation.  
Looks overly complicated.  
Hard to read. Looks uninteresting.  
Too detailed. Too small. Overwhelming.  
Too complicated.

### **Print too small x8 including**

Too small, print too small.  
A bit small. Many elderly people/ visually impaired would find this difficult to read. There is too much information, too close together.  
The format is not easily understood plus too small a print for the elderly to understand and read clearly.  
Layout O.K but printing small so if someone like me picks it up and does not have glasses with them (reading) cannot see.  
Relatively clear but the font is smaller than that recommended by the former disability rights commission.  
O.K. Print small.  
Fairly clear but busy. Print would be too small for many to read.  
Rather small type.

### **Not enough detail x15 including**

Not detailed.

A very simple income and expenditure format. However what it does not reveal is the efficiency or otherwise of each category and any potential cost savings that could be achieved. Without detailed management information it is fairly meaningless.

Harrogate spending explained. Would like some detail of NYCC spending.

Costs too simplified. E.g. What is cultural and related services - not open enough.

All right but it doesn't explain what is gross cost and what is net cost.

Not detailed enough.

The difference between gross cost and net cost should be explained.

It requires more detail.

Generally O.K but net cost and gross cost on front page not explained. What do they relate to?

Fine, however it would be nice to be shown income from the services.

Too small and cramped presentation. First page suggests cost of services per resident are £ p.a. So why is council tax so high - not enough explanation.

I agree it is easy to understand, but shouldn't we have more detail about spending within sections?

What is the difference between gross and net cost? These are the largest figures with no explanation given.

Use of terms such as gross and net not really explained.

All right but not a lot of information.

### **Miscellaneous criticism x4 including**

Very poor.

Boring.

Dry as dust.

Very poor - hardly noticed it.

### **Miscellaneous x 19 including**

Because of the current financial situation, further rising of council tax and fees above planned % would seem difficult. Additional areas of expenditure would be better put on hold. Waste collection is paramount whilst reducing carbon footprint is not, in my opinion.

You could include the website address.

Should be made available as e-mail to save paper.

Do not waste ink and paper with pointless statements such as working for you.

Subjective. Biased wording designed to produce the desired answers.

## Appendix C

### Q22 How could the form and layout be improved?

#### Increase size of print x36

1. Front page spending on services, rather small print.
2. Larger print.
3. Larger print.
4. Larger print.
5. Larger print and spread out more for the older people to read.
6. Larger print.
7. Bigger type/ text.
8. Made simpler. Bigger text.
9. Could be bigger - A3 folded to A4 - I have poor eyesight.
10. In larger print for blind people.
11. Make it bigger.
12. Larger print.
13. Larger print/ A4 sheets.
14. Perhaps larger print.
15. Bigger text size and spacing.
16. Larger font size might improve readability.
17. Large print for others as print very small.
18. Bigger type.
19. Larger font.
20. I would prefer larger type, but commend the existing format as economical on paper used.
21. Bigger print, spread it out more.
22. The advise on how to get copies in large print could be given in bold type to help those with impaired vision.
23. Writing larger.
24. Bigger print.
25. Pie charts and graph too large.
26. Larger with larger print.
27. I appreciate the desire to keep it compact but the font should be larger
28. Why do forms like this always have the information about the availability of large print/ Braille/ tape in small print at the bottom of the last page?
29. Graph at bottom of page 2 could be much smaller and allow more room for other content. Bullet point should be alongside the relevant point without a gap.
30. Large form A4 sheet.
31. Maybe larger print.
32. Print too small. More simple pie charts.
33. Using consistent fonts. More modern design e.g. use of boxes for sections rather than just plain text.
34. Bigger text
35. Larger print. Diagram.
36. The print size could be larger, but I would prefer to keep it the present size and not lose any of the existing information.

#### Add colour/graphics x33

1. Colour printing.
2. Maybe put graphics in colour.
3. More visual and less verbal.

4. I would include more simple graphs like the pie charts. This would be attractive to the general public. The more complex financial statements could be available separately on request, on line or a specified site.
5. Colour for impact, less information on sheet and set out in larger text.
6. A picture says a thousand words.
7. Colour.
8. Possibly more use of graphs.
9. More pie charts and block graphs. Less accounting columns of figures.
10. Colour. Less words and more graphics.
11. Develop a colour statement as an alternative.
12. Colour.
13. More pie charts.
14. Use of colour.
15. Colour (but too costly).
16. Use more pie charts.
17. Any chance of pie charts here? Vast amounts of money and I glaze over. Personalise it and it makes sense.
18. Possibly increase amount of pages used or use colour? I am not sure the average person reads closely such information, but it is not a very appealing document which would encourage people to read it.
19. Use of colour to highlight different years.
20. A pie chart relating to where you council tax goes could provide perspective.
21. Get a graphic design team to produce it.
22. Use a bit of imagination. Graphical or pictorial representation.
23. A4 presentation and colour pie charts.
24. More graphs, easier to understand.
25. Add pictures to make more interesting.
26. Use of tables - lines assist the eye.
27. More use of diagrams and charts.
28. Be more eye catching.
29. More pictures.
30. Bit more space as it currently looks crowded.
31. Spread things out more, although I appreciate that it is wanted to be all on one sheet only
32. Space it out a bit.
33. More space, colour/ gloss paper.

### **Simplify x30**

1. Simplify. Not as many figures.
2. Simpler format.
3. Simplify and when you have it down to 1 page try it out on the staff.
4. More simplistic for non-mathematical types.
5. Simple questions.
6. Simplify.
7. Simpler.
8. Clear and easy to understand.
9. Page 3, right hand side - suggest Mar - 08 and Mar - 07 columns should have been other way round to conform with other parts of leaflet.
10. Keep it slightly simpler and use less technical language.
11. Less information.
12. Print on two A4 sheets, reduce graphs.
13. Easy to understand.
14. Keep mission statements and questions together.

15. Page 3 is a bit difficult to grasp as it is 2 columns. The descriptions should be more concise. An obvious e.g. North Yorkshire doesn't need to be written out in full each time, just once the NY.
16. Set out in a simple way so it can be easily understood.
17. Questions and answers on same page.
18. Less detail.
19. The information should be shown in just one format either tables, pie charts or graphs, not all three.
20. Simplify by reducing content a little.
21. There is rather too much data to easily take in
22. The language simpler,
23. Think it should be available but not in this detail on the statement.
24. Simpler
25. Simpler
26. More simple layout and better information.
27. I think it should be simplified.
28. Make it more user friendly - more space but this would affect cost. No point producing it if people are put off and don't read it.
29. Reduce amount of text
30. Shorten the form to save money.

### **More Explanation x30**

1. There needs to be more explanation and guides to understand what they mean - related to ordinary peoples understanding and experience.
2. Explanation of goods cost and net cost - large, not readily obvious or explainable.
3. Explain the difference between gross and net cost on income and expenditure.
4. Start with the pie charts. Split text into boxes. Give more explanation. Why an 8-year bar chart of general fund balances?
5. There needs to be far more explanation.
6. Have 06/07 numbers next to 07/08 figures. Explanation of any significant changes.
7. More explanation.
8. More explanation on individual costs.
9. A few more words of explanation might have helped.
10. More detail.
11. Explain the difference between gross and net costs.
12. By explaining gross and net costs.
13. Explain jargon.
14. Explain all significant year on year changes.
15. If abbreviations are used please explain at beginning. I only discovered that HRA meant housing revenue account on the back page.
16. Explain what the largest item covers.
17. Explanation of some of the terms that are being used or re-wording.
18. A little more explanation for each topic
19. By breaking down each subject to its part i.e. cultural and related service, each recorded separately.
20. I think you should explain in words the difference between gross cost and net cost.
21. Some services need enlarging upon.
22. Provide more information about some subjects - I do not know how big a problem homelessness is.
23. Be more detailed on expenditure - how can we give opinions without knowing exactly what is spent.
24. A little more detail on expenditure.
25. Highlight key points

26. Needs more notes. I have no idea what many of the headings point to, examples - highways and roads, what transport? Corporate costs and overheads £4.1m and 45% increase.
27. Traffic light system to indicate if spending is on track/ budget.
28. Why not quote some examples of how much is paid.
29. Highlight items of expenditure where significant changers.
30. Explanatory notes for 7 inflation for each budget item that exceeds inflation target.

### **More User Friendly/Less Technical x19**

1. Less information and worded in user friendly way.
2. More use of bullet points - less wordy points if possible.
3. Other information I would need to access overall efficiency and cost effectiveness would be too detailed for general circulation.
4. Simple, plain English format available.
5. More layperson friendly.
6. Simpler English needed, too much jargon.
7. Avoid jargon.
8. Explain or replace accounting terms.
9. Explain difference between gross cost and net cost.
10. Put it in simpler form for those of us who have no knowledge of spreadsheets.
11. Less wordy.
12. Use plain English and less biased in favour of council priorities.
13. Language is the main problem. Official - speak and vagueness is irritating. Words like sustainability, integrating vision, accessibility.
14. More user-friendly information on front - summary in non-jargon language. Summary of each section in English.
15. Less jargon.
16. Plain English version available.
17. Use more simple language, too many examples of officer speak.
18. Get rid of jargon Explain where you can get more info from
19. Less text. Larger text. Use of 'plain English'.

### **Doesn't need changing x16**

1. It's fine.
2. Fine as is.
3. Leave alone its O.K.
4. It's fine.
5. By not making so many changes.
6. I am happy with this layout.
7. Its layout is quite clear as it is.
8. No need to change it.
9. Can't think of further improvement.
10. If anymore was added it would become too deep to read quickly.
11. Layout - O.K.
12. Concise, but presumably more detail could be accessed if needed. Stick to black and white, no colour or glossy publication.
13. Yellow paper with black type - like this form.
14. Layout O.K if definition of terms referred to above ways provided.
15. No improvement needed. Doesn't need to be improved.
16. Layout O.K. Could be improved by offering other options.

## More Space x15

1. Too cramped and difficult to read as a result.
2. Less busy/ more spaces.
3. More space in the column next to fold.
4. Spaced out format needed.
5. Its too squashed to make it fit onto a folded sheet of A4. Layout could be more attractive/ clearer.
6. A little cluttered - lots of information in a little space.
7. Bar and pie charts take up too much space the rest of the information is squashed in convenient spaces. Remove charts and make headings relate to information underneath.
8. Better use of spaces and margins.
9. A bit more space between the major items.
10. Spread out a bit more.
11. Bigger paper or more pages.
12. Bit more space and larger print.
13. Spaced out more.
14. Spacing better between items. The pie charts should not be side by side.
15. Less cluttered

## Cost Comparison x7

1. Compare cost per resident until previous year(s).
2. Maybe by breaking down the net cost figures for the biggest expenses.  
A) By showing how and by what elements the gross costs become net. B) By detailing other operating costs.
3. Make first page bolder with the money in and money out information the first item seen.
4. Give information relevant to council taxpayer - individual costs. Include comparisons with national average.
5. Put all costs together total spend in red £23.8 million. Put all income together total in red £23.6 million.
6. More detail in what money is spent on pie chart. The big headings are pretty useless as they are.
7. Graphic representation of income and expenditure account - allow easier comparison of 2006/07 and 2007/08, this also applies to other data e.g. capital spending.

## Glossary of Terms x5

1. Glossary of terms.
2. Glossary of terms.
3. Possibly with a glossary of terms.
4. Explain some terms.
5. HRA needs explaining on page 1.

## Miscellaneous x33

1. Is it really necessary - Are Wayne and Waynette interested?
2. Stop asking loaded questions.
3. A bit more practice on the DTP software.
4. When do tax bands get discussed? Why are we not considering higher bands for properties above £1 million? Why reductions for second and third homes?
5. Just the clarification mentioned above.
6. If the enclosed leaflet is the summary statement of accounts, why does it not have this as its title?

7. Take advice from people more inspired than I am and act on it if appropriate, but otherwise spend the minimum possible on it (time and money) because it is going to end up in landfill or recycling without being read in most cases.
8. Form - internet only.
9. Supply a bigger envelope for return.
10. Trends over 5 years not true.
11. Printed on recycled paper.
12. Have name priorities for question 8.
13. Maybe put on website if not already there?
14. Subsidise borough council by district.
15. More opportunity to emphasise rural support.
16. Teach some readers to understand.
17. Page 1. Delete gross cost/ net cost per resident. Page 2. Why all general fund information? Page 3. Why detail balance sheet - just total net assets/ reserves. Page 4. Is all this information necessary?
18. Put a box round net cost for residents.
19. Improve print quality.
20. Print it on the cheapest recyclable paper.
21. Less paper.
22. Less options provided.
23. Leave out all of page 2 except the pie charts.
24. Perhaps for older or people finding it hard to complete forms the boxes might seem a bit perplexing.
25. Better use of space would make information clearer i.e. margins and headings.
26. Looks a bit like its is at the draft stage.
27. Not booklet A5, just A4 sheet.
28. Specify why net cost is so much lower than gross cost.
29. Need more personal answers to know what is really wanted.
30. Simplify it
31. Put it on-line
32. Depends on if it's obligatory to include certain details but would be preferable to headline items.
33. Areas of success e.g. savings made of pie charts for visual impact.

## Appendix D

### Q26

#### Are there any comments regarding the statement of accounts that you wish to make?

#### More Explanation x29

1. It would be helpful if a breakdown on NYCC spending was readily available.
2. Explanation of corporate costs overheads and council tax payers/ non domestic rates. Glossary of terms would be helpful.
3. According to the statement the council spent £6.6 million on cultural and related services. I'd like to know precisely what this covers.
4. The difference between gross cost and net cost is not explained.
5. Explain the difference between gross and net - they are enormous, e.g. having service gross £35.6 million but net £1.1. million. Net cost per resident - is this per year? Does this include children? Would per household be better? Total gross cost £98.3 million from front page. Pie chart on page 2 says £98.1 million. Why is there a difference of "0.2 million?
6. More detail of salaries for top end council staff.
7. Large increase in pension reserve - no explanation given.
8. Total council wages for year.
9. Highlight exceptional expenditure e.g. Royal Hall redevelopment and when it will finish.
10. Where is the statement/ evidence of efficiency?
11. Explanatory notes for 7 expenditure and than inflation target set by government.
12. Like an investor who gets an annual report, could we have a basic one with general stuff and detailed one for those who wish to follow things up (website and offices available by request)? I would rather know what is compulsory and what is up to the council with the remainder. I am sure many people think the council has more power than in reality. Concessionary travel - I am sure most people would be prepared to pay up to half the price rather than lost the bus services. I have just given up my car and find the local services brilliant.
13. There needs to be an explanation to residents of the performance targets for the council and how the council has performed.
14. More interesting facts rather than numbers. Unclear for me what has been a success this year. What are key successes of HBC? What do they want to achieve next year?
15. Explain what gross cost and net cost means.
16. The increase in pension liability stands out against other figures yet no explanation is given.
17. The information does not tell us if the finances are healthy or not in a simple form and what the implications are for changes to council tax. It seems incredible that capital spending and financing match exactly!
18. If we are assured to comment on where savings should be made we need to know all the detail on accounts.
19. There could be greater explanation of the services/ expenditure for the county council as this is such a high proportion of the tax.
20. It is not clear what the gross costs and net costs are. What is the difference apart from the amounts?
21. I would like to see a better account of the running expenses (elaborate on what costs what to run).
22. More detail of all costs and expenditure
23. It is a good idea but only if people understand it and get explanation of anomalies and charges. How do movements relate to corporate priorities? Why does the council retain council houses and not transfer them to housing association? We are told we are the government hostages when it comes to funding - yet 59% of revenue causes from our own

generated resources - I doubt many would understand that.

24. What is the spend on education?
25. I cannot see the relevance of the last question re ethnic group. What has it got to do with the above?
26. Net cost to collect my council tax by direct debit is £6 - why?
27. Figures are alright on paper but where does the money get spent? Roads? Which roads? Environmental services and cultural and related services? Council tax payers?
28. Why is there such a massive difference between net cost and gross cost? Where has the money gone?
29. A graph to show how the council is reaching or falling behind its predicted annual budgets.

### **Simplify x18**

1. Please simplify your use of English.
2. Keep it simple. You can't cover all the angles and it is too easy to over complicate reports and statements. Anybody who wants more in depth information can always approach the council.
3. Too much information crammed into one A4. I think it would make some people switch off and not bother to read it. For such an important paper the facts need to be set out in a much more clearer type set, and the use of colour would help to define facts.
4. Try to keep it simple to encourage people to read it. Then send it out and the detail with the rates as usual.
5. The title central services to the public and corporate costs and overheads are meaningless to the general public.
6. More than sufficient - needs to be simplified with full information available on-line or by request.
7. Most people of Harrogate are not accountants, so why is the statement produced so only people with knowledge of accounting can understand.
8. I'm sure that most people do not read or understand the financial statement. Public explanation at meetings should be more widely accessible to enable some of the issues in this document to be discussed.
9. Remember we are not accountants. The use of terms such as gross and net should be clearly defined.
10. Please don't waste money and resources on a wordier statement.
11. The information is understandable however may not be to those who do not understand financial reports e.g. assets less liabilities, this could be re worded e.g. what we have and what we must pay.
12. I do not have the time to complete this survey and if I did have the questions are well beyond my level of understanding it is well beyond things which non-accountancy trained people should be expected to comment.
13. A considerable number of residents would not understand the information or have any interest.
14. Simplify the information.
15. I think it is important that people realise how small the proportion of council tax is for the Borough Council. Simplified, graphic versions of information could be published as posters around the District. The 2 pie charts are very good, and the method could be used to make other detail more easily read.
16. A simple one and a full one so everyone will be happy.
17. A more comprehensive report would be far too expensive.
18. Please make simpler to understand.

### **On Request/On line x15**

1. A more comprehensive annual report should be available on request. PDF is an economical method with low on-cost per copy.
2. Those wanting a fuller annual report should be able to apply for one.
3. A full statement should be available on-line or on request. It would be a waste of money to distribute one to all.
4. Assuming a full report has to be produced for legal reasons, copies could be available for reference in main libraries.
5. Can a more detailed account be made available on the council website?
6. I would presume that a more comprehensive annual report is available for those that wish it - advertise availability on website.
7. Don't waste any money on distributing these - people can always ask for it.
8. If people want further information they can request this with the freedom of information act. I feel this is more than adequate.
9. The detailed report available to councillors could be available on the website (if no significant cost is involved).
10. Comprehensive reports available on-line.
11. Most people probably don't read them. Make available on request only.
12. While not presumably wishing to see a more comprehensive report one should be available on the website.
13. Presumably someone could if they were interested, obtain a copy of relevant council agenda papers. Therefore totally unnecessary to produce a more comprehensive annual report for the public. Don't spend anymore money on this.
14. The option to see a more comprehensive report should be given to all. The report to be available to see as above centres and to purchase at cost if desired.
15. Larger print versions should be available in the library/ council offices please.

### **No change x12**

1. Keep it low, don't waste money on fancy packaging.
2. As long as sufficient why incur more expenditure. This modern age can supply information not appreciated thus increasing costs which are not necessary.
3. I think that anything more comprehensive would make it more difficult to understand by the majority and therefore a waste of the extra resource requested to produce it.
4. It is important to keep the cost down and not keep changing formats.
5. Seems to cover most expenditures. I am sure if someone wants a particular breakdown of expenditure not listed they could always find information from HBC offices, or their local MP.
6. A more comprehensive annual report would mean more expense and is not necessary.
7. The current statement is sufficient for all normal purposes, but tax payers should be aware of where they can gain access to a more comprehensive statement.
8. The accounts are professionally presented and any queries would be answered if needed.
9. Clear statement of what the services are.
10. Statement is sufficient provided further detail can be accessed if needed.
11. Any more pages and people won't be bothered to read it.
12. The quality of income is about right. If more information is sought then use of council, local government association websites and an annual report could be appropriate.

### **Waste of Money/Time x8**

1. Ridiculous amount of money spent on Royal Hall, I know you got lotto grant, but sending to India for paint, when you could have got the same colour mixed in this country is really wasteful.
2. How much is the cost off printing and supplying of this statement going to cost? Could the cost be got from central government?

3. The capital spending was interesting, especially the fact that more was spent on the Royal Hall than on maintaining council housing in spite of the fact that much of the Royal Hall costs were met from grants. In my opinion £700,000 is still too much to waste on a white elephant that is still under utilised.
4. How much money is lost/ wasted on frivolous expenses, etc?
5. How many people actually dread this, could money spent on these leaflets be used better elsewhere?
6. Too many statements to make paper and time wasted.
7. Council spending is already high and no more money should be spent on something that the vast majority of residents do not and would not read.
8. More paper work means more money.

#### **More information x4**

1. The statement itself is good but more detailed accounts should be available be request.
2. More transparency on staff costs, including overtime, expenses.
3. Would like to see examples of where funding has gone. Visible examples that residents can relate to.
4. However a more comprehensive report could be made available on line or in offices.

#### **Staff Wages x4**

1. Wages for a lot of council staff are too high for the results we get.
2. More detailed account of employees salaries.
3. The wages and pension bill is very high. Shed enough employees to save 2%
4. The costs seem high for admin yet you are proposing increased expenditure on training, etc. Why not hire people who have skills and don't need training?

#### **User friendly/Less technical x4**

1. Boring!! Make it reader friendly.
2. Some people may find the columns of figures difficult to follow and understand, i.e. is it pounds or millions or billions? Too much information in too smaller space.
3. Pie charts are good, easy to see proportions of income and expenditure. Lists of figures do not mean much to lay people. The narrative on page 2 and 3 is interesting also page 4.
4. It would help if such items as capital and % and capital receipt were explained.

#### **Reduce paperwork x3**

1. Cut down on all paperwork.
2. Too much paper sent out.... could just give people links to find info on website.... most probably don't look at what is sent and that creates waste.
3. A waste of money putting them in all council tax bills as most just get binned added to waste that you have to deal with.

#### **Cost Comparison x3**

1. Could you include some comparisons in expenditure with some similar councils.
2. Who are NYCC and NY Police Authority accountable to? What about a balance sheet showing their expenses?
3. I would like to see a similar report from other authorities taking funds from the council tax.

#### **Performance x3**

1. Indication of performance on each service and potential increase/ decrease for future budget.
2. It would be nice to see a measure of success indicated.
3. I would like to see actual performance results against target performance set at the start of the year. Without this information it is impossible to assess performance of the council. Therefore any statement of accounts is pointless. We need to know if the council is meeting targets/ objectives within budget or not.

### **Miscellaneous x32**

1. Question 5. All of these are essential and hard to priorities. As you specify rural and market towns, I have ticked 1-3 but all are essential. Question 8. Again all 4 are essential and should be combined to solve the problems. If one of the four priorities is missing, the best solution will not evolve.
2. Page 3. Capital spending - other projects. Is £577,000 making it the fourth largest amount of money.
3. Perhaps this statement could be included in the yearly council tax, etc.
4. Why doesn't the council run it's own lottery to raise revenue? Along the lines of the hospice or hospital lottery. Or if a scratch card lottery could be produced we could sell them to visitors.
5. Not an accountant so will not comment.
6. You will always have people who don't understand such statements.
7. How many people have not paid poll tax and get away with it.
8. Will it make any difference to all rural dwellers. I think not.
9. The statement of accounts has been carefully proof-read. This questionnaire has not.
10. I would like a bigger envelope to send my reply in.
11. Not sure if local opinion can make any difference, but wouldn't it make sense to retain a greater % of local tax making a contribution to fire, police, etc. I'd also like to see what county council deliver for 68% of local tax?
12. I do object to the term customer - this implies a choice in respect of service provider. I am a rate/ tax payer obligated to pay ones rate!
13. I am amazed that it costs so much to collect council taxes?
14. There are rubbish bags appearing on my street on a Thursday (bins are emptied Wednesday) causing a health hazard. Fines should be imposed to stop it happening.
15. It is clear that over half of the capital spending was spent on Harrogate itself - can we expect to see a larger share spent on other areas in the district this year?
16. Corporate costs and overheads are the second largest area of costs.
17. The increase in council tax in the previous year is more than the government rate.
18. Is the 45% increase referred to correct or a misprint?
19. I don't think many people would read it.
20. If you make longer report, fewer people will read it.
21. HBC is doing O.K.
22. I think those who are interested in the content will probably understand it.
23. Stay in budget.
24. Its difficult to make financial information interesting to read, unless you particularly want to read it of course. Think this needs to be more visually engaging - just looks like another boring council leaflet
25. Not an accountant so will not comment.
26. It is useful to see how some expenditure has no relevance to many of us taxpayers. We pay for services we do not directly benefit from, especially in rural areas.
27. Very informative.
28. Remember that the vast majority of young people are good citizens and just because they cannot vote, does not mean that they should be ignored.

29. I find that ticking boxes about things that I know very little about was very worrying and stressful. But felt obliged to try.
30. What are cultural and related services?
31. The difference between gross and net cost.
32. I think that you should have 2006/07 next to 2007/08 (not on the other side).