

Spotlight on Transformation transcript

Allerdale Borough Council met on 7 October 2009 to decide on ways to save £3.5m through its transformation process.

In this video, [Councillor Tim Heslop](#), the Leader of Allerdale Borough Council, explains why the savings are necessary and what it will mean for Allerdale residents.

Councillor Tim Heslop said: “The discussions last night were a result of four or five months of discussions right throughout the Council, especially through the Transformation Working Group, to come up with a model that will take Allerdale forward for the next few years.

“We are beset by difficult economic times and government grants have been cut and we can’t see us getting any more money in the foreseeable future so we have got to cut our cloth to deal with the situation we are in.

“I think more differences in the way that services are provided more than really noticeable savage cuts. I mean yes, we are putting charges up for parking and other services but we will still only be sort of up to the average of other councils and I suspect when it comes to next April that they will be putting their charges up and go ahead of us again.

“We are in difficult times, I mean everybody knows the Government has got savings to find and one of the ways they have found these savings is by cutting the amount of grants that they give to councils, not just district councils but unitaries and metropolitan boroughs, county councils. Everybody is feeling the pinch, although I think it is fair to say that district councils have probably suffered more than most but certainly I must say that Allerdale is not alone in this situation.

“If we didn’t tackle this we would be in the situation of DCLG coming in and running the Council for us, we would be put into special measures and they would set the budget and I don’t think that would take much account of local priorities or anything that would be a blunt instrument and they would just slash ‘X’ per cent off the budget and that would be very crude and probably very damaging to the people of this area”.

Interviewer said: “What would you say about the decision purpose for what would seem to be very difficult decisions?”

Councillor Tim Heslop said “There were difficult decisions and councilors have asked, I mean I must emphasise this as an all party task group and councilors have asked for various things to be investigated and come back to the next meeting.

“Sometimes we have changed our decision in the light of further information other times we have found that that information backed up our decision to reduce the money put into that service. I mean we have reduced the money put into services but we are looking to deliver them in a different manner, some of them in partnership with other bodies and some of them by more efficient, efficient way of delivering services.

“So yes, I mean you cant say people wont notice anything but I hope that with a better way of doing things the general public will still get a good service from this council and I must remind people that Allerdale Borough Council has got the lowest council tax in Cumbria and I think that is something that has got to be taken into consideration because at the end of the day what people should be interested in is the total amount of money that they pay out for the services they receive. I think hopefully we will be offering even greater value services you know, if we can get them more efficient they should be better value.”