

# De-protecting EU Budget Contributions

The *Survation* polling company last week revealed that “lowering the cost of membership so the money could be spent at home” was the third most important item the voters wanted to see change in the EU.

Of course, the costs of membership do not include just the cost of EU budget contributions, they also include contributions and liabilities to other EU institutions, higher food costs, fishing losses, some regulation costs when these are EU specific, the costs of free movement of people, etc.

However, just focussing on the EU Budget, this paper shows how the UK would save £11 billion if it left the EU but remained in the Single Market like Norway and Iceland with participation levels in EU programmes at a similar level to Norway. Against this, there would have to be deducted whatever the UK government decided to spend on agricultural support, rural development and EU funded infrastructure, plus some minor programmes as these areas would no longer get EU funding.

Up to now, the EU budget has been ‘protected’ from UK government cuts like the budgets for the NHS and overseas aid. Once these programmes, inherited from the EU, are entirely funded by the UK government, they will fall into areas where the government is targeting big cuts. Surely no-one believes that all, or indeed any, EU spending should be ‘protected’ from any cuts whatsoever.