

11 February 2008

Dear Councillor

EXECUTIVE CABINET - THURSDAY, 14TH FEBRUARY 2008

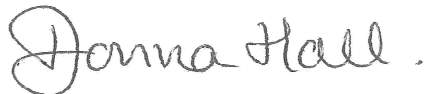
I am now able to enclose, for consideration at the above meeting of the Executive Cabinet, the following report that was unavailable when the agenda pack was printed.

Agenda No Item

7. **Proposals for General Fund Revenue Budget and Council Tax, 2008/09 (Pages 107 - 128)**

Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) enclosed.

Yours sincerely



Donna Hall
Chief Executive

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Distribution

1. All members of the Executive Cabinet, Lead Members and Chief Officers for attendance.

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આ માહિતીનો અનુવાદ આપની પોતાની ભાષામાં કરી શકાય છે. આ સેવા સરળતાથી મેળવવા માટે કૃપા કરી, આ નંબર પર ફોન કરો: 01257 515822

ان معلومات کا ترجمہ آپکی اپنی زبان میں بھی کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ یہ خدمت استعمال کرنے کیلئے براہ مہربانی اس نمبر پر ٹیلیفون
کیجئے: 01257 515823



Report of	Meeting	Date
Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) (Introduced by the Executive Member for Resources)	Executive Cabinet	14/02/2008

2008/09 BUDGET UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To seek the Executive agreement to changes to the draft budget for 2008/09 and which will form the basis of the recommendation to Finance Council on 26 February 2008.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That the following amendments be made to the Executive's Draft Consultation budget.
 - The Council Tax increase for 2008/09 be 2½% rather than the 3% previously proposed.
 - That following budget consultation further investment monies totalling £20k are allocated to the Get Up And Go programme with a similar reduction in the sum allocated to the extra opening of Astley Hall.
 - That a sum of £100k is taken from working balances and reserves for spending on improving neighbourhoods.
 - That members note the addition of the Cotswold House grant bid at a total cost of £3.2m to be financed from grant and £500k of the Council's own resources.
 - That further sums of £300k and £150k respectively of capital be spent on improving the Council football pitches and improving the Council's buildings specifically making them more energy efficient.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. The updated financial position for 2008/09 is outlined in this paper and allows the Executive Cabinet to make some further policy changes in relation to the budget. After consideration of the position and the results of the budget consultation which is almost complete a series of amendments are proposed, the results of which are outlined in the report. In summary the position is as follows:

- the proposed Council Tax increase has been reduced as compared to the draft budget.
- significant extra sums are to be spent on the Get Up And Go programme and improving neighbourhoods.
- Further capital expenditure is to be incurred improving football pitches and energy efficiency of the Council.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

4. To finalise the Executive’s budget proposals for 2008/09 which will form the basis of the recommendation to Finance Council on 26 February 2008.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. None.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region	✓	Develop local solutions to climate change.	✓
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances	✓	Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	✓
Involving people in their communities	✓	Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	✓

The budget forms the Council’s resources allocation to its strategic objectives, therefore any decision regarding budget allocation potentially affects all of its priorities.

BACKGROUND

7. At its meeting on 6 December 2007 the Executive sets out its proposals for the 2008/09 budget. This draft budget was approved at that meeting for consultation. Subsequently much of the consultation has been completed and I have now been able to update some of the draft budgets based upon the latest and more detailed information.
8. Consequently the Executive now has a choice to make as to whether or not to amend any of its draft budget proposals.
9. The rest of this paper sets out in more detail the changes to the draft budget as a result of the latest information being available and outlines the key messages from the consultation exercise. Whilst consultation is almost complete, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is yet to meet to finalise their views but I will update the Executive verbally at the meeting.
10. Finally the report sets out the proposed amendments with regard to policy options.

11. The draft budget position in the broadest terms was as follows:

	£'000	£'000
Budget gap based upon service continuation		640
Less proposals to balance and rebasing		- 315
		<u>325</u>
Savings proposals	-187	
Income generated	-223	
3% Council Tax Increase	-180	- 590
Headroom for Growth		- 265

The headroom for growth to be invested was as follows:

	£'000
Cash spent in neighbourhoods	100
Projects delivered by the Council and 15 parties	90
Extending opening hours at Astley Hall	40
Events and Tourism Officer	25
Extend Get Up And Go Scheme	10
Total	265

12. Changes to draft revenue budget:
13. Since the draft budget was issued in December there have been a number of key policy changes that have affected the budget position. In addition more accurate information is now available in relation to government grants and statutory fees and charges increases. Attached at Appendix A is a summary of the key movements and the resultant impact on the bottom line.
14. The Appendix shows that as a result of the budget update a further £35k of headroom is available to spend in 2008/09.
15. An explanation of the key changes to the draft budget is also shown below and summary explanations are included in the appendices for other items.

CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL

16. It is possible that pooling of the concessionary travel budget is the most likely outcome in Lancashire. Consequently this increases the sum that had been budgeted for but reduces our exposure if the scheme is in total overspend. Broadly speaking the draft budget allowed for a 20% increase in costs whilst the pooling arrangement will allow for a 40% increase, based upon the Council putting all the additional grant it received (£275k) into the pool.

17. A further consideration having increased the base budget figure is whether my ascertainment on the prudent level of working balances is now appropriate? I will return to this issue later.

CAR PARKING INCOME AND CAPITAL FINANCE CHARGES

18. The effect of the decision by the developer to postpone the Market Walk development means we are able to add back the anticipated loss of Car Parking Income. Netted off against this is the impact of the loss of the receipt which was to be used to pay off Council debt. Whilst this would have resulted in an increase in capital financing charges, other changes on this element of the budget but in particular slippage on the Capital programme and a better cash flow position means that there will be no equivalent increase in the Capital Finance Charge in 2008/09. Whilst the amendments proposed with regard to those set out in the draft budget for car parking are unchanged. A more detailed proposal explaining how the tariffs will be structured from 2008/09 is attached at Appendix B.

RESULTS OF BUDGET CONSULTATION

19. Attached at Appendix C is a summary of the results of the Council's budget consultation and the outcome from the Scrutiny Panels' review of the budget. In the broadest terms, the key messages are as follows:

- No feedback has been received on the proposed Council Tax rise of 3% or amendments to any of the fess and charges.
- All those consulted were in support of the Council's priorities for investment.

At a more detailed level the consultees ranked the priorities as follows:

- Improving your neighbourhoods
- Improving the town centre
- Putting on more Get Up And Go activities

20. Members of the Executive should note the key messages in respect of any further budget amendments. The Scrutiny Panel also put forward a number of suggestions which broadly mirrored the public consultation. However, they also made suggestions with regard to the proposed fees and changes amendments and details of their view are attached at Appendix D.

OPTIONS FOR THE EXECUTIVE

21. The amendments to the draft budget results in an overall net surplus which means that the Executive has a number of choices to make with regard to the level of proposed Council Tax increase and the level of investment.
22. Following further discussion with the Executive Leader and Members of the Administration the following are proposed as amendments to the draft budget.
- i) A reduction in the proposed level of Council Tax increase from 3% down to 2½% which will result in lost revenue of £30k
 - ii) Following consideration of the views received in budget consultation £20k of the proposed investment in opening hours at Astley Hall to be switched to a further increase in the Get Up And Go programme.

23. As a result the Executive's Investment Proposals will be as follows:

	£000
Investment in frontline neighbourhood services	100
Project delivered in partnership with the LSP	90
Extended opening hours at Astley Hall	20
Events and Tourism Officer	25
Extended Get Up and Go scheme with a focus on rural areas	30
TOTAL	265

24. In addition Members should note that a further £100k of funds is being allocated on a non-recurrent basis to spending in neighbourhood. This money will come from the Council's working balances which are currently forecast to be £1.580m at 31 March 2008. This will leave working balances still in the accepted range outlined in the Council's financial strategy of between £1.25m - £1.50m.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

25. Whilst very little response has been received with regard to consultation on Capital, again the investment plans particularly in the town centre were welcomed.
26. I have however been able to update the resources forecast and now have clarification on a bid for funding for the homelessness hostel (Cotswold House). In addition further thought has been given to in particular the level and amount of investment in the Council's football pitches. Historically these areas have received very little investment, but have now become a priority as part of the Council's corporate strategy objective to improve the green corridor. Finally full consideration has been given to how the Council might reduce its own carbon footprint. We have received some initial findings from an energy review which indicates investment is likely to be required which over time will be paid back. The details are not yet finalised but it is recognised that some investments will be required along with some further sums to ensure compliance with various regulations to make our building assets fit for purpose.
27. As a result of the above the following amendments are proposed:
- £500k of the sums set aside for meeting housing needs are allocated to the Cotswold House housing bid totalling £3.2m, with £2.7m coming from grant if the Council is successful in the bid.
 - £300k is to be spent on football pitch improvement over the next three financial years.
 - £150k is allocated for making our building assets fit for purpose and energy efficient.

28. Summary of Capital Programme amendments

Summary of Capital Programme Amendments				
	2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000	Total £'000
<u>Spending</u>				
Homelessness Hostel (Cotswold House)	3,200			3,200
Reductions in other housing capital expenditure	(500)			(500)
Investment in Council Assets	150			150
Improvements to Sports Pitches	100	100	100	300
	2,950	100	100	3,150
<u>Resourced by</u>				
Additional Capital Receipts	250	100	100	450
Government Grants	2,700			2,700
	2,950	100	100	3,150

The table shows the amendment to be made to spending and the resources of that additional spending. The additional resources to finance the expenditure come from additional capital receipts and means that overall the level of anticipated borrowing over the three-year period will not increase from the £600k reported in the draft budget.

GARY HALL
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION)

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Gary Hall	5480	07/02/2008	ACE/Reports/2008/Budget Update – Exec Cab 14 Feb

Appendix A

Changes from Budget Assumptions made 06/12/07

Description	Budget Assumption 06/12/07 £	Revised Figures £	Change £
Aggregate External Finance - less grant to be received	(8,249,650)	(8,221,000)	28,650
Benefits Admin. Grant - less grant to be received	(711,510)	(705,100)	6,410
Homelessness Grant - more grant to be received	(23,000)	(30,000)	(7,000)
Employee Costs & impact of Job Evaluation Additional Cost			28,950
Planning Fees - National rate increase of 20% is being proposed by the government	(351,000)	(421,000)	(70,000)
Dev Control salary costs - additional resources to cover workload			16,000
Liberata Contract (Property Services) less savings than anticipated	379,830	389,150	9,320
Delay in Telephony contract (ICT Services) less savings than anticipated	19,300	36,000	16,700
Public Conveniences cleaning as a result of better prices from tendering	88,030	78,050	(9,980)
External Audit Fees - national increase of 14% proposed	109,460	121,510	12,050
Special Expenses - lost income due to changes from stock transfer			23,590
Contact Centre SLA to continue in 08/09 - not included in original draft	0	(20,000)	(20,000)
Assistance to Public Transport - no contractual commitment	10,610	0	(10,610)
Market Walk Ph2 - Car Parking Income	(556,470)	(806,470)	(250,000)
Pooling of Concessionary Travel	750,000	915,000	165,000
Pest Control Income - excluded from draft budget	(740)	(12,000)	(11,260)
Neighbourhoods Restructure - delay in implementation			35,000
Other minor changes			1,580
TOTAL CHANGES AND NET SURPLUS OF FUNDS			<u>(35,600)</u>

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CAR PARK TARIFF PROPOSALS 2007/8**LONG STAY PERMITS**

1. Long stay permits currently cost £220 per annum. The suggestion is to increase this amount by approx 20% per year until it reaches a comparable cost of a weekly bus saver ticket, thus encouraging alternative travel.
2. A bus saver pass from, for example Bamber Bridge to Chorley is £15.50 per week, £728 per annum.
3. An increase to £265 per year will, based on this years sales, increase revenue by £9.8k per year.
4. Additionally, it is anticipated 75 permits will be sold next year to Chorley Community Housing and others. This will generate £20k.

SHORT STAY CAR PARKS

1. The decision to reduce the 3-hour tariff on the Flat Iron has proved popular and successful and should be expanded to include the other short stay car parks.
2. Agreement has already been given in principle to removing long stay parking on short stay car parks and we suggest that the opportunity is taken to rationalise the remaining tariffs uniformly, as three different charging regimes currently exist. One standard tariff across all similar car parks will reduce customer confusion.
3. We propose to
 - Retain a 1 hour rate on all short stay car parks
 - Apply the same rate for 1 hour as the Flat Iron – 0.60 p instead of 0.50p
 - Remove the two hour tariff
 - Apply the £1.00 for 3 hours on all short stay car parks
4. Using ticket sales figures from last year we assume that the number of 1 hour tickets will stay the same, and the number of two hour tickets purchased will migrate to the three hour band. Taking into account the change in income resulting from lowering the 3 hour tariff to £1.00 from £1.50, we estimate an increase in revenue of up to £38.6 per annum.

LONG STAY CAR PARKS

1. We propose to reduce the number of tariffs available on Long stay car parks to 2.
 - £1.00 for up to 3 hours and
 - £3.00 all day
2. We are aware that a number of customers are using the short stay car parks for all day parking by “meter feeding”, i.e. going back to their car every 3 hours and purchasing another £1.00 ticket, thus staying all day for £3.00. The new tariff reflects this and still remains competitive. If current levels are maintained then we estimate an increase in income of approx £24k per annum.

3. All these proposals depend on each other to achieve the estimated increases. We need to ensure turnover of spaces on the short stay car parks and ensure that those customers wishing to stay for longer than what has been agreed as the optimum shopping trip time of 3 hours, are directed to the long stay car parks.
4. A small number of customers may find it attractive to purchase a permit at the full price for designated short stay car parks. These customers include solicitors/court staff. We propose to introduce a limited number of permits for Portland Street, Farrington Street and West Street car parks at a cost of £720 per annum. This is revenue neutral as it reflects the loss of income from the spaces whilst the permit holder is occupying it. The number of permits would be restricted to the present level as determined from surveys, approximately 50 in total.

Report of	Meeting	Date
Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation and Improvement)	Members	4 th February 2008

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2008

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To update Members on the results of the consultation carried out around the draft budget.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That Members determine if any changes to the draft budget should be made as a result of the budget consultation information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. Consultation on the draft budget 2008 was carried out by undertaking a straw poll on the markets to gain a broad understanding of the views of members of the public and a more detailed consultation workshop with members of the Making Chorley Smile panel. In addition, the Council's Overview and Scrutiny panels, but not the committee, have completed their scrutiny.

The results of the consultation were positive, with positive comments about most of the priorities for investment. At the workshop, support was strongest for, increasing the Get Up and Go! activities, improving local neighbourhoods and improving the town centre. More detailed comments were made by the group on each area, and these are outlined in the report.

The views expressed by the Making Chorley Smile panel were mirrored by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny panels, who were keen to see more resources put into neighbourhood working, particularly around street cleansing in rural areas and youth activities in areas where there is limited access to the Council's and CLS leisure facilities.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

4. N/A

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. N/A

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the Central Lancashire sub-region		Develop local solutions to climate change.	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chances		Develop the Character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	
Involving people in their communities	✓	Ensure Chorley Borough Council is a performing organization	

BACKGROUND

7. Consulting on the budget, and taking in consideration the views of the public and other stakeholders is an important process in ensuring the Council is able to take account of the views and needs of the community it serves. The consultation that has been undertaken provides information that Members can use when making their decisions in the budget setting process.

This report contains details of the results of the consultation carried out for the 2008 budget cycle. It has included; taking a straw poll in the covered market of what people saw as a priority for Chorley, a workshop with representatives from the Making Chorley Smile panel and meetings with the scrutiny panels.

INTRODUCTION TO CONSULTATION

8. In each public consultation, people were asked to comment on the areas identified for investment. These were:

- Improving your neighbourhood
- Helping organisations work together to improve Chorley
- Open Astley Hall more
- Put on more Get Up and Go! activities
- Invest in more events and tourism
- Helping create more affordable housing
- Improving your town centre, including the markets

The main qualitative and quantitative results have come from a workshop held with 29 members of the Making Chorley Smile Panel on the 30th January. Where appropriate, the views expressed during the consultation with members of the public have been fed into the results.

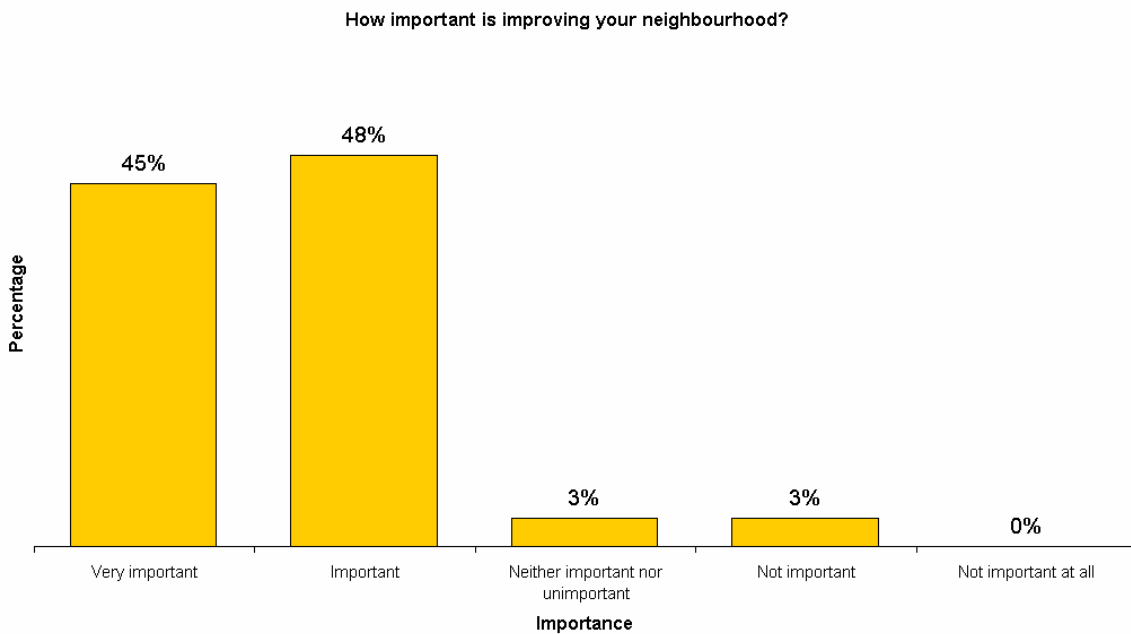
The following section outlines the responses received from the public about each priority investment area. The percentages referred to are a result of voting by the Making Chorley Smile Panel.

9. **Improving your neighbourhood**

93% of the workshop thought that improving their local neighbourhood was either ‘very important’ or ‘important’. This priority was also a popular option during the consultation on the markets, with a large number of people selecting it as a priority.

When asked what they meant when thinking about their ‘neighbourhood’, the panel indicated that they would be talking about the areas within walking distance from their home, and particularly the streets in the immediate vicinity. Those members from more rural areas would normally consider their village to be their ‘neighbourhood’.

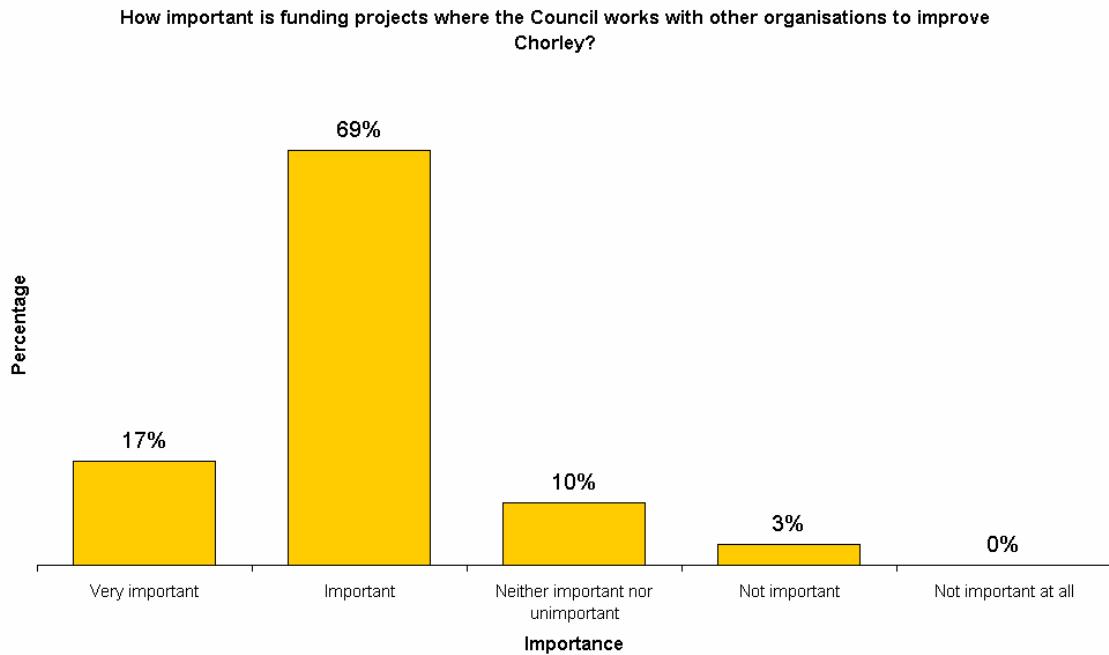
The issues that were identified as important in improving neighbourhoods were largely based around environmental quality (street cleansing and parks and open spaces particularly), activities for young people, community assets and tackling low level anti-social behaviour.



10. **Helping organisations work together to improve Chorley**

86% of the panel thought that investment in this area was ‘very important’ or ‘important’, although a majority only thought it was ‘important’, a weaker endorsement of this priority than was seen with neighbourhood working.

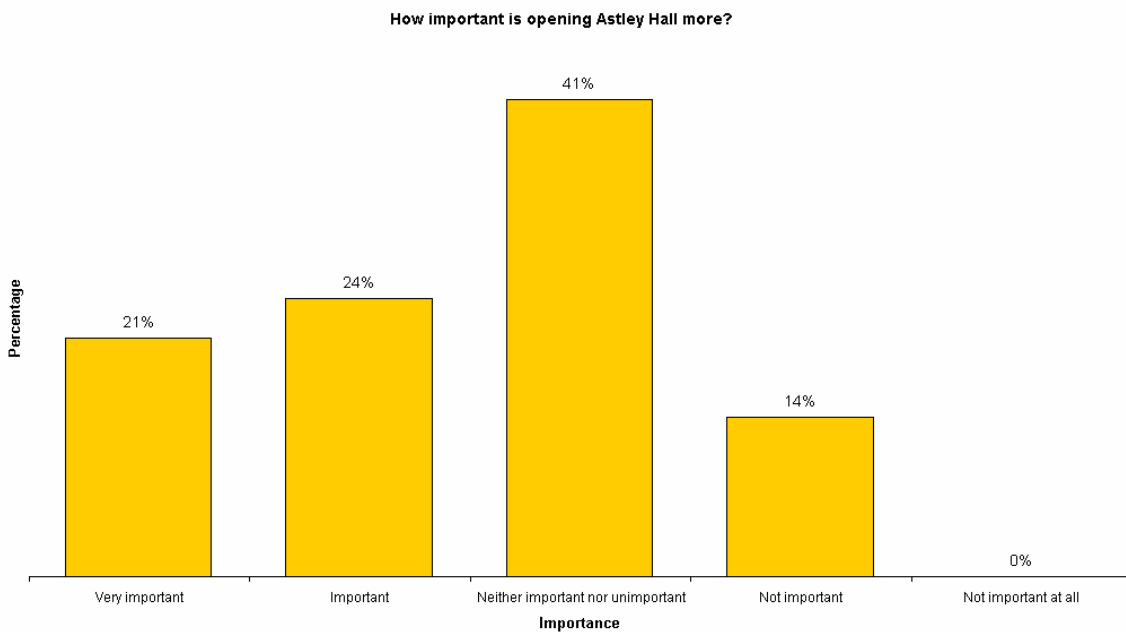
The workshop group did not understand why the partners on the Local Strategic Partnership could not work together without funding being made available to them. In addition, there was some concern that the success or otherwise of projects may not be fully monitored and that the bodies receiving money may not be held to account. One comment was that the work of the LSP needed to be better communicated.



11. Open Astley Hall more

45% of participants in the workshop indicated that they thought that opening Astley Hall more should be a priority. A majority (41%) thought that it was neither important nor unimportant. A similar message came from the consultation carried out on the market, with only a small number supporting this as a priority.

The workshop group emphasised that they thought the work in Astley Park was positive, and that Astley Hall was an asset for the area. They felt, however, that with limited resources, it was not a priority. They particularly felt that the provision of activities for young people should not be detrimentally affected by increased provision of Astley Hall.

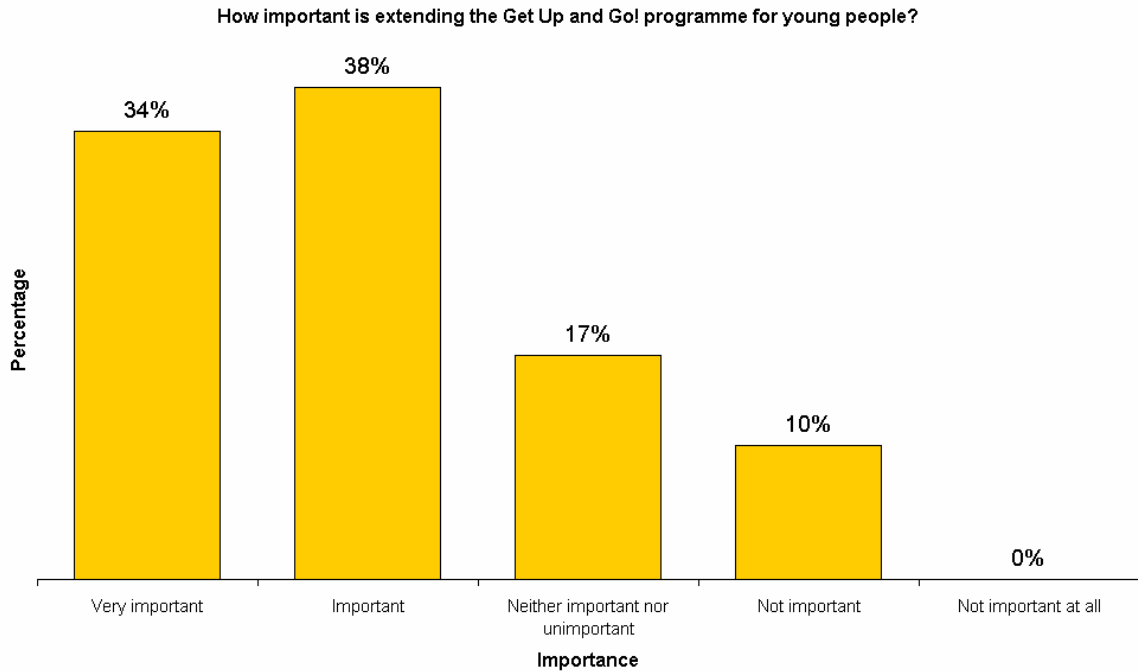


12. Put on more get Up and Go! activities

The panel felt strongly that the Get Up and Go! programme could have a positive impact on young people and, in addition, help to tackle anti-social behaviour by providing diversionary activities. The programme needs to be developed to target those older age

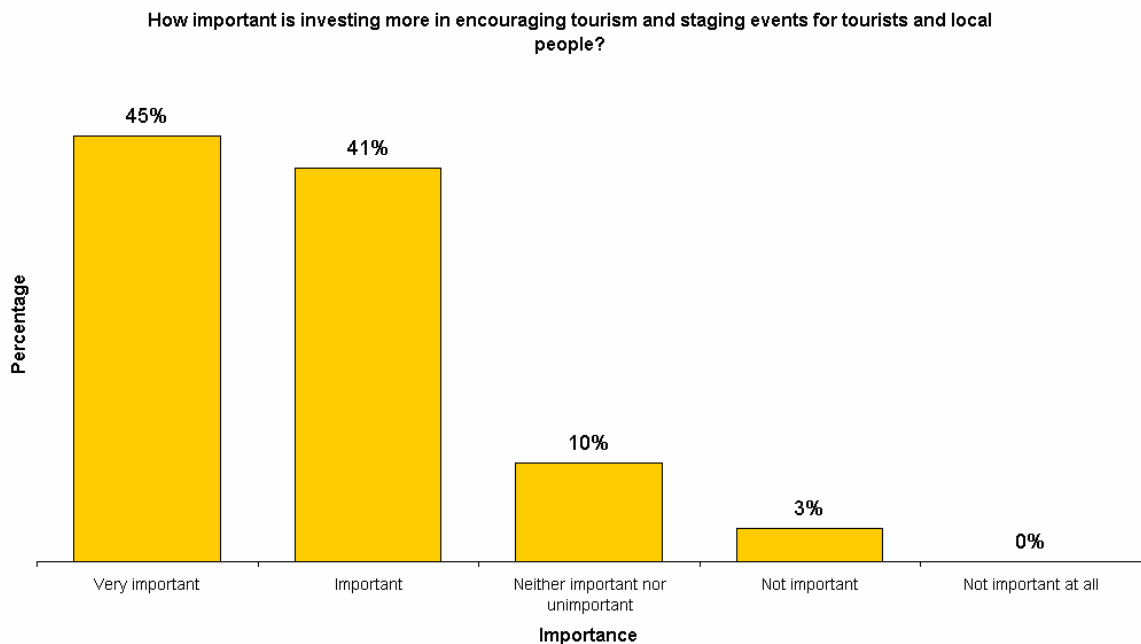
groups and rural areas. If the programme is to be successful, it was felt that young people need to be consulted with to ensure that the activities available are attractive and suitable for them. In addition, the programme should be sustained, rather than just offering short term diversionary activities.

The straw poll on the markets also showed a strong support for the provision and extension of Get Up and Go! activities.



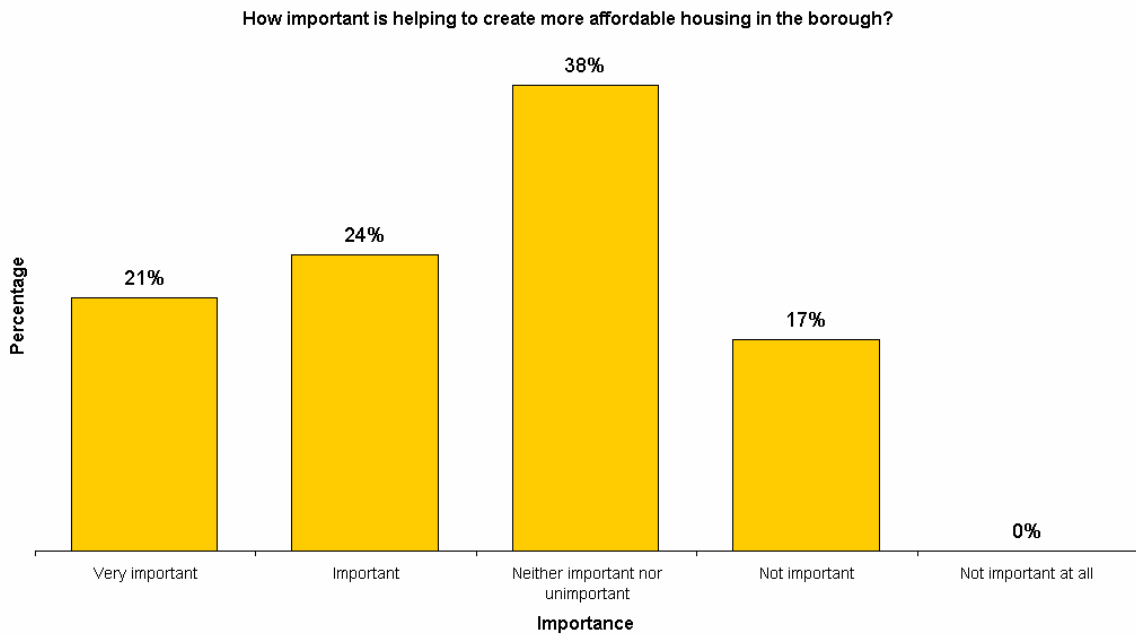
13. Invest in more events and tourism

The workshop group supported the marketing of Chorley, particularly if it is linked to securing more inward investment and jobs creation. The comments made by the group centred around the need for Chorley to be better marketed to attract more visitors, but that this need needed to be balanced to ensure that facilities such as car parking, could cope with additional visitor numbers.



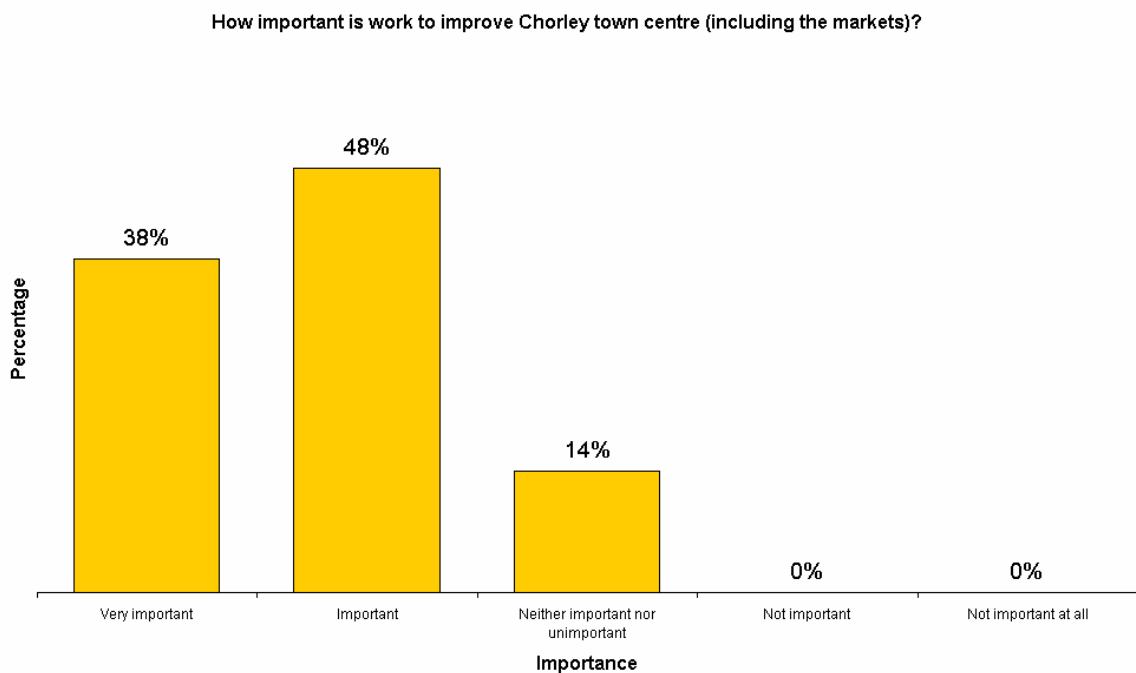
14. **Help create more affordable housing**

The group was supportive of the proposal, but felt that they would need more information about how the proposal would work. For example, they would need information about where housing would be located and what type of affordable housing is being referred to. For these reasons, there was generally less support for investment in this area.



15. **Improve the town centre, including the markets**

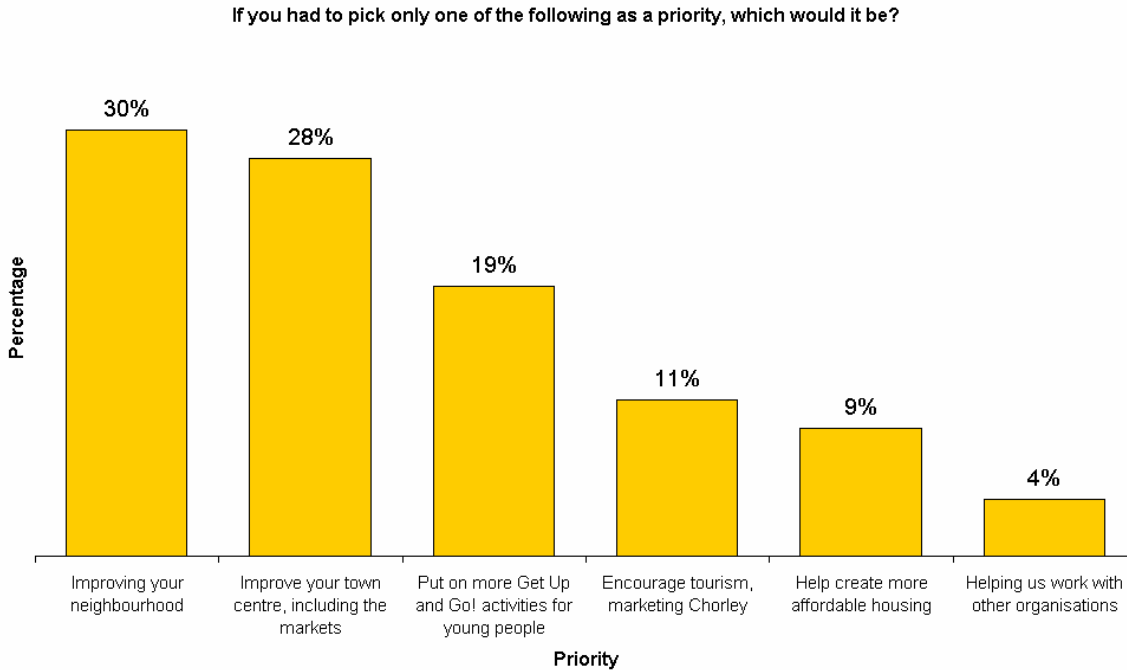
There was general support from the consultation workshop for developing and improving the town centre. The group felt it was important that the Council are aware of the need to retain the balance between attracting new, chain shops to Chorley and retaining its distinctive character and shopping experience.



16. Top Priority

At the Making Chorley Smile panel consultation workshop, the group were asked to selected one priority that they saw as the most important. The majority of the group felt that improving their neighbourhood would be the top priority, if they had to choose one.

The graph below illustrates the combined responses from the consultation workshop and the straw poll on the markets.



17. Conclusion

Many of those involved in the consultation around the 2008 budget expressed satisfaction that the Council was trying to ensure that the views of the public were taken into account when decisions were been made around the budget and making additional investment in priority areas.

Generally, most support was received, from both the market consultation and the workshop, for the work around improving local neighbourhoods, improving Chorley town centre and further developing the Get Up and Go! programme of activities, particularly in rural areas and for older age groups.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

18. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Corporate Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal		No significant implications in this area	

COMMENTS OF THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT)

19. As this report will influence the budget setting process, it has financial implications. The implications of any decisions made by Members will be covered in budget setting meetings.

GARY HALL
ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION AND IMPROVEMENT)

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Chris Sinnott	5337	31 st January 2008	Budget Consultation Report

Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 22 January 2008

08.CCS.05 BUDGET SCRUTINY FOR 2008/2009

The Panel considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) on budget scrutiny. The report set out the spending and performance context for key spending areas at the Council, details of the rationale between the Executives draft budget proposals and details of the key budget proposals for 2008/09.

Members noted that the budget proposals aimed to achieve the objectives set out in the refreshed corporate strategy. It was noted that the updated Corporate Strategy includes new targets, particularly in relation to climate change and older and younger peoples activities.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) outlined the spending and performance context for key spending areas at the Council and answered a number of queries raised by Members. The Panel congratulated the Council on the achievement of maximum scores for both the use of its resources and value for money in the annual use of resources assessment. Improvements in satisfaction have been seen alongside improvements in performance and this score demonstrates that the Council continues to offer good value for money.

Members made several general suggestions for the Executive Cabinet to consider:

- 1. To increase the number of Environmental Wardens.**
- 2. To provide another vehicle for the Environmental Wardens.**
- 3. To improve the process to request the cleaning of footpaths, clearing of hedgerows and ditches outside the urban core. Currently there can be confusion as to where the responsibility for this lies and how best to deal with Lancashire County Council when the responsibility lies with them.**
- 4. To increase the use of the machine that removes chewing gum throughout the Borough.**
- 5. To distribute to Members the schedule of work for street cleaning and grass cutting for their information and comments.**
- 6. To identify areas where there is a lack of recreational facilities and either provide additional facilities or improve transport links to existing facilities nearby.**
- 7. To explore concessionary arrangements with South Ribble where residents would be entitled to concessions within Chorley but South Ribble recreational facilities are closer.**

The Panel made observations on the following:

1. The customer service received when a missed bin was reported was excellent and the bin had then been collected promptly.
2. The conditions of the new waste and recycling contract to put financial penalties on the contractor for not returning the receptacle to the point of collection and new style receptacles for recycling were commended.
3. It was hoped that the issue of waste littering areas after collection would be reduced under the new contract.
4. It was hoped that the plans for Market Walk phase 2 would come into fruition in the future.

On the base budget review savings 2008/09 Members asked for clarification on several items and commented that the maintenance of bus shelters and street furniture, although not the responsibility of Chorley Council, did have a positive impact on the streetscene. It was noted that one of the corporate priorities was to “develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live”. The increase in charges for the hire of the Lancastrian was noted with some concern.

Members considered the schedule of potential savings for Directorate savings targets 2008/09. It was highlighted that proposed savings should not have a negative impact on the service delivered to the customer. Support was given to merging the enforcement functions currently delivered by Governance and Neighbourhoods.

The Panel discussed the proposals for increasing fees and charges in 2008/09. **Members discussed the increase proposed for grant of right of burial fees and a suggestion was made that the increase be phased.**

Members considered the plans for Capital Resources and noted that the priorities were affordable housing, the town centre, sustainability and climate change and investing in the green corridor. Members clarified several points and supported the proposals relating to affordable housing and the green corridor. It was noted that Chorley Council would manage the homelessness function in the future.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) for his report and attendance at the meeting. It was noted that the discussion on budget scrutiny had been useful and the approach to budget scrutiny had been an improvement on last year.

RESOLVED – That the

- 1. report be noted and**
- 2. comments of the Panel be forwarded to the Executive Cabinet.**

Environment and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 24 January 2008

08.ECS.6 BUDGET SCRUTINY FOR 2008/2009

The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) submitted a report setting out the spending and performance context for key spending areas at the Council, details of the rationale between the Executive draft budget proposals and the details of the key budget prospects for 2008/09.

The analysis of comparative data had shown that in the main the Council continued to drive down costs as measured by our relative performance against our nearest neighbours whilst continuing to improve both performance and in the main satisfaction with services.

The budget proposals aimed to achieve the key targets and increase in terms of the Council's Corporate Strategy with some of those requiring additional resources whilst others required working in a different way. New targets included climate change and older and younger people activities.

The Council continued to demonstrate good value for money resulting in maximum scores for both the use of its resources and value for money in the annual use of resources assessment.

The report set out an analysis of service costs against our nearest neighbours using the value for money profile tool for the following services within this Panel's remit, planning, waste management, street cleansing, Economic and Community Development, parking, community safety and sport and recreation.

Members of the Panel were requested to consider the Executive's draft budget proposals in the context of current spending and the Council's corporate priorities and make appropriate representations to the Executive for consideration during the finalising of the budget proposals.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Business Transformation) reported that the Corporate and Customer Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 22 January 2008 had put forward several suggestions for the Executive Cabinet to consider and Members noted that a majority of them related to this Panel.

Members also considered the Capital Programme 2008/09 to 2010/11 and noted that the priorities were town centre investment, affordable housing, sustainability and climate change and investing in the Green Corridor. These priorities were based upon the key objectives contained in the Council's refreshed Corporate Strategy and upon a measure of our performance to date against that plan.

It was **AGREED** that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be recommended to submit the following suggestions to the Executive Cabinet as part of this year's budget consultation exercise.

1. To increase the number of Environmental Wardens.
2. To provide another vehicle for the Environmental Wardens.
3. That the hours of the Environmental Wardens be made flexible as currently they work to a restrictive core time pattern.

4. To improve the process of requesting the cleaning of footpaths, clearing of hedgerows and ditches outside the urban core and reporting of faulty street lights. Currently there can be confusion as to where the responsibility for this lies and how best to deal with Lancashire County Council when the responsibility lies with them.
5. To increase the use of the machine that removes chewing gum throughout the Borough.
6. To distribute to Members the schedule of work for street cleaning and grass cutting for their information and comment.
7. To identify areas where there is a lack of recreational facilities and either provide additional facilities or improve transport links to existing facilities nearby.
8. To explore concessionary arrangements with South Ribble where residents would be entitled to concessions within Chorley but South Ribble recreational facilities are closer.
9. That the proposed increase for grant of right of burial fees be phased.