

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Special Council	3 March 2015

BUDGET CONSULTATION 2015/16

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. This report provides the Council with the results of the public consultation carried out on the Executive’s draft budget investment proposals for 2015/16.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That Members use the results which highlight the views of residents to inform their decisions on setting the budget for 2015/16.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3. Consultation on proposed budget investment areas for 2015/16 shows a good spread of support for each of the investment areas with working with all other public service providers in the borough to make sure residents are getting the best deal possible coming out as the top priority for Chorley residents.
4. Additional comments and suggestions were also provided by just under half of the respondents. Suggestions about improvements of the services provided by LCC have been grouped together and therefore form the highest response rate, however below that reference to improving the town centre and its offer, and to improving the cleanliness of the borough were also mentioned in a number of the comments.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	✓	A strong local economy	✓
Clean, safe and healthy communities	✓	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	✓

BACKGROUND

6. The 2015/16 budget consultation process started following approval of the budget position paper, which set out the budget position along with proposed investment areas, by Executive Cabinet on the 22nd January 2015.
7. The proposed investment areas were grouped into ten categories for the purposes of the consultation, and respondents were asked to look at each one and score how much of a priority they considered it should be for the council to spend in each of the areas so that we can ensure money is being spent on the things that matter to local people. The categories were as follows:
 - Involving residents and improving local areas by working with communities to develop and deliver community specific action plans and helping people to make the most of the internet;
 - Supporting businesses and improving the local economy through progressing new employment sites and working with local businesses to increase visitor numbers to Chorley;
 - Improving the town centre through delivering further enhancements to Market Street;
 - Supporting safer communities through improved CCTV provision;
 - Supporting healthy communities through developing plans for the Friday Street Health Centre;
 - Improvements to play areas in the borough including a new play area in Astley Park and improvements to Rangletts recreation ground;
 - Putting on more events for families to help attract more visitors to Chorley;
 - Working with all other public service providers in the borough to make sure residents are getting the best deal possible;
 - Supporting residents who are struggling financially, including helping people to get on the property ladder; and
 - Providing services for young and older people including developing plans for a youth zone and an extra care scheme.
8. Respondents were also asked for any additional suggestions about where the council should be investing its money but aren't.
9. The survey ran until the 15th February with respondents encouraged to complete an online survey; however paper copies were also available. The consultation was widely promoted through the Council's website, local press, social media and invitations to take part were also emailed to a number of groups including, parish council clerks, the VCF sector network, the equality forum and myaccount holders.

BUDGET CONSULTATION RESULTS

10. The 2015/16 ran from the 26th January to the 15th February and received 607 responses. This consultation response is significantly higher than recent years.
11. The first question asked responded to score each of the investment areas out of five, with one being low priority and five being high priority. Respondents were able to give as many fives or ones as they wished. The results are shown below:

	Priority	Overall score	Overall Score %	No. of response scoring 4 or 5	% of responses scoring 4 or 5
1	Working with all other public service providers in the borough to make sure residents are getting the best deal possible	2411	11.90%	440	74.07%
2	Supporting businesses and improving the local economy	2297	11.34%	381	63.93%
3	Providing services for young and older people	2146	10.59%	334	56.13%
4	Improving the town centre	2125	10.49%	335	56.40%
5	Supporting safer communities	2063	10.18%	298	50.34%
6	Putting on more events for families	1911	9.43%	251	42.91%
7	Improvements to play areas in the borough	1902	9.39%	241	40.50%
8	Supporting residents who are struggling financially	1880	9.28%	251	42.18%
9	Involving residents and improving local areas	1777	8.77%	207	34.73%
10	Supporting healthy communities	1746	8.62%	194	33.11%

12. The results show a good spread of support for each of the investment areas with working with all other public service providers in the borough to make sure residents are getting the best deal possible coming out as the top priority for Chorley residents. This is a new priority area, which was included in the consultation due to the proposals on the public service reform board and the proposal to set aside money from the NHB for a possible unitary poll.
13. Supporting businesses and improving the local economy also remains a high priority falling one place in the rankings from last year. A number of the budget growth proposal will support delivery of this priority area including 'progress key employment sites', 'increase visitor numbers' and 'support the expansion of local businesses'.
14. From the 607 responses, 283 provided additional comments and suggestions about areas that they felt the council should be, but are not currently investing in. These have been grouped together and prioritised in order of the highest frequency of comments. It should be noted that responses often included more than one comment or suggestion, covering more than one area.
15. Included in the table against each category is a brief note of the work that the council is already undertaking or has plans in place to address. The copy of all the comments received can be found in Appendix I1.

Category	Details	Note
LCC Services including road and transport improvements	Included are comments regarding the need to repair and improve the roads, followed by transport infrastructure, improving schools, keeping libraries open and reducing speed limits.	The council will continue to work with and lobby Lancashire County Council to improve issues experienced by our residents. This feedback is also consistent with the feedback received from our monthly customer satisfaction surveys.
Town centre improvements	Comments referenced the markets, range of shops and need for more entertainment facilities in the town centre.	There are a number of town centre schemes either currently being delivered such as improvements to Market Street, as well as further projects being planned such as progressing plans to extend Market Walk. These are in addition to the ones mentioned in the budget proposals such as the Youth Zone, delivery of further improvements to Market Street, investigate opportunities to extend the Market and the project to develop a business case for extra care scheme and land assembly.
Cleaner, greener Chorley	<p>Comments have been made around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • street cleansing; • fly tipping; • dog fouling; • bin collection, reducing waste to landfill, recycling; • renewable energy; • floral displays; and • Increased allotment provision. 	The cleaner Chorley and don't mess with Chorley campaigns encourages residents to report issues and challenges people who do litter and do not clean up after their dogs. In addition, the funding provided to support neighbourhood projects means that local areas can target issues relevant to their locality for improvement. The development and delivery of communication actions plans will involve working with communities to improve their local environment, amongst other things. The Council will also continue to develop it's floral displays and is keen to build upon successes in Britain in Bloom and North West in Bloom.
Supporting the local economy/businesses	Additional comments referenced the importance of broadband provision and business rates. Supporting people into employment.	There is significant investment proposed in the budget to support the delivery of the economic development strategy and the corporate strategy key projects. This includes progressing key employment sites and supporting the expansion of local businesses.

Parks, play and open spaces	Including environmental improvements, footpaths, playing pitches and sporting facilities.	There is lots of work currently underway and planned to improve the borough's parks, play areas and open spaces. This includes the development of a destination play area in Astley Park, along with other improvements to Astley Park and Hall as part of the Astley 20:20 project. 2015/16 will see the third year of a programme of play area improvements. The budget proposals also include projects to improve car parking at Yarrow Valley and delivery of a recreational playing pitch strategy.
Car Parking	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the repair of car parks • payment methods and enforcement; • Issues with parking permits and on street parking for residents and businesses. 	A programme of improvements to Chorley's car parks has been undertaken in 2014/15. In addition a review of town centre car parks is being undertaken as part of the corporate strategy project to progress plans to extend Market Walk.
Investment in outlying areas of the borough	Comments mainly focused on the level of investment in outlying and rural areas compared with the town centre.	While there are specific projects aimed at improving the town centre, many of the other proposed projects should benefit residents from across the whole borough. Examples include the project around digital access and inclusion, the development and delivery of community action plans, the delivery of neighbourhood priorities, supporting communities to access grant funding and support the expansion of local businesses.
Community safety	References to CCTV and street/park lighting and tackling anti-social behaviour.	The council will continue to work with the police and other partners to improve feelings of safety. Within the budget proposals there is further funding proposed to provide a mediation service for ASB case resolution as well as capital funding proposed to improve CCTV provision. Street lighting is the responsibility of LCC, however the Council has been working to improve the lighting to parks and open spaces.
Activities and events for children, young people and families	Activities in addition to park and play provision mentioned above. Youth activities Holiday clubs Delivery of more events including sporting and cultural events.	The council continues to support activities for children and young people, with the provision of programmes such as Get Up and Go. The budget includes investment to continue the free swimming programme, and support for the development of a Youth Zone, as well as budget proposals which will deliver family events. The council will continue to support and deliver events which provide an opportunity to make use of Chorley's assets and encourage visitors.

<p>Support for VCF sector organisations, community groups and charities</p>	<p>Better support and volunteering</p>	<p>The Council continues to work with the VCF sector through the VCFS Network.</p> <p>The council is continuing to work to encourage volunteering, including through the time credits programme, the civic pride campaign and core funding commissioning.</p> <p>Neighbourhood areas have been working to develop suggestions for projects for the coming year. A continued resource has been proposed in the budget to support the delivery of that work and linked to this will be the community action plans.</p>
<p>Planning / Housing</p>	<p>Protecting green space – not developing on green belt land. Adoption of estates Ensuring that new developments include adequate amenities to match the increase in population Affordable and suitable housing</p>	<p>The council is continuing to work to deliver affordable housing across the borough, including making use of its assets to bring forward sites for development.</p>
<p>Health</p>	<p>Health centre, protecting Chorley hospital services</p>	<p>The Council is working closely with health care providers including LCFT, CCG and NHS England to develop and agree plans for a Health centre on Friday Street, and more widely we are talking to our health partners to consider how we might be able to work better together to deliver health services to people across the borough</p>

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

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

Finance	X	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	X	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

17. The financial implications of the budget are set out in the main report and the Medium Term Financial Strategy,

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

18. There are no comments.

GARY HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Rebecca Huddleston	5779	16 th February 2015	Budget Consultation Council Report 2015