

Appendix B: Detailed interim results of Business Plan consultation

Section 1: Community Events

Cambridgeshire's Budget Challenge: Wisbech

Sunday 13th September 10-3 Wisbech Heritage Craft Market & Car Boot

Members of County Council staff and a local councillor talked with over 100 people at the Heritage Craft Market (with 61 feedback forms being completed as some talked as a couple or group). People were shown information about the County Council's budget challenge and were asked about their level of awareness, their initial reaction to the budget cuts and what they thought of the County Council's plans to cope with the cuts. People were also asked if they supported an increase in Council tax. Conversations were wide ranging and people commented on local issues as well as the County Council's budget. There were many positive examples of people volunteering to support the community. Thirty people gave their e-mails in order to participate in the on-line survey when it became available.

Awareness of the Budget Challenge

- Almost half the people we talked to were unaware of the budget challenge faced by the County Council. In total 46% were unaware of the issue prior to meeting County Council staff and a further 11% only had a little awareness of the issue.
- Some people expressed '*surprise*' at the scale of the cuts needed over the next five years whilst others found them '*A bit shocking / worrying*'. One person indicated that they were '*saddened and appalled*' and another said that £100million was too much.
- Within some people's minds the scale of the cuts were combined with what they considered to be a history of underinvestment in Wisbech. Several referred to Wisbech being '*underfunded*' and money being spent in other parts of the County.

Suggestions for Savings

- Savings suggestions from members of the public included cutting Councillors' expenses 'you don't need £7,000 to be a Councillor', cutting senior pay ('*cuts should not come from services. Why do high end Council employees get paid so much - cut their salary*') and not spending money on consultants

- A few people pointed to expenditure on translation fees as an area where money could be saved and one person suggested that this was where volunteers could help.
- There were suggestions that street lights could be turned off late at night; although more people mentioned this as a negative idea saying that Wisbech was not safe enough for this to happen. These people went on to say that local policing was inadequate or needed protecting from cuts.
- Some suggested that money could be spent in a more efficient or targeted way and there were suggestions that different parts of government could be merged. A couple questioned spending money on proposals to reopen the Wisbech to March railway line.
- There was general support expressed for charging more for some services if people could afford the additional amount.

Community Action to support services

- Generally there was a very positive response to the suggestion that increased community action and volunteering could help to support local services. For example people thought that it was possible for libraries to be staffed by volunteers (*'Volunteering is a good idea as it increases feelings of wellbeing and helps the community'*)
- There were many examples of people doing a considerable amount within their local communities. There was a positive story about the benefits of 'Wisbech in Bloom' in maintaining the built environment of the town. Another person was involved with the University of the Third Age (the 43 separate groups/activities in the March area) and the additional informal support that had grown out of this. There were also more personal examples *'I look after my brother who is mentally ill. We come under Norfolk NHS and their mental health team are always at the end of the phone in an emergency - they support me to support him'*. Generally, existing volunteers were able to point to further opportunities for collaboration.
- When asked if they personally would be willing to volunteer more there was a mixed response. Some people felt that they already did what they could and cited work / family commitments as a barrier, for example one person said that *'they already visit three people'*.
- There was considerable discussion about where new volunteers would be drawn from. The people we spoke to identified the young as well as the recently retired as being groups to target. One person recognised the skills amongst recently retired people. Several mentioned the unemployed and suggested that an element of service should be linked to benefit entitlement.

- There was a mixed response regarding community spirit. Those who regularly volunteered felt that the community spirit in Wisbech was really strong and cited many positive examples. Others thought that there wasn't a strong spirit and a small number linked this issue to migration.
- It was positive that a number of people provided their e-mail addresses in order to hear more about volunteering opportunities.

Paying more Council Tax

- Of those who gave a direct answer to this question (50 people) 52% said that Council tax should not be increased. A small number argued for a decrease. For those who said it shouldn't go up, *'Feels like we pay enough already and get little for it'* was a common comment.
- 48% of people said that they would pay more but for over half of these people this was a conditional statement. There were three common conditions; the first was that the increase should not be too high; the second was that it was inevitable; the third was that it should be clearly demonstrated what the additional money was for: *'target services that need protecting'*, *'depends on services'* and *'yes – for direct delivery of priorities'* are example comments.
- Some people highlighted that taxes should be means tested with some groups (older people, those on a low income) paying less than those who are better off.

Cambridgeshire's Budget Challenge: Cherry Hinton

Saturday 19th September Cherry Hinton Festival, Cherry Hinton

Members of County Council staff talked with over 100 people at the Cherry Hinton Festival with 59 feedback forms being completed, as some talked as a couple or group. People were shown information about the County Council's budget challenge and were asked about their level of awareness, their initial reaction to the budget cuts and what they thought of the County Council's plans to cope with the cuts. People were also asked if they supported an increase in Council tax. Conversations were wide ranging and people commented on local issues as well as the County Council's budget. There were many positive examples of people volunteering to support the

community. Thirty-six people gave their e-mails in order to participate in the on-line survey when it became available.

Awareness of the Budget Challenge

- The level of awareness about the cuts was very good. Of the people who specifically answered this questions (50) 62% were very aware and a further 22% were broadly aware. It should be noted that a proportion attributed this awareness to being public sector workers e.g. from the NHS.
- Five people linked their awareness to the scale and scope of the cuts to the proposals to turn off streetlights between midnight and 6am.
- Of the minority who did not have much awareness there was some shock expressed as to the scale of the cuts that needed to be made over the next few years; one person admitted turning off the news because it was all *'too depressing'*.

Suggestions for Savings

- There were not many savings suggestions from members of the public. Rather they found it easier to list services that they valued. These included Mental Health Services, Transport (Bus passes being described as a *'life-line'*) and *'Concern about the impact on children from low income families and older people'*.
- Bus passes were also raised by an additional two people in relation to the ability of some to pay for bus services that they currently got for free. One thought was that bus passes should be means tested. One person wrote *"Understand it's very challenging. Important to protect transport - although not necessarily as it is at the moment - it could be increasing community transport and decreasing bus subsidy"*. One person also mentioned 'pay to use' library services.
- Making increased use of the internet was mentioned. *"Should do more digitally. Stop posting stuff, only use online. And equip people so that they can engage digitally - training, providing tablets, etc"*

Community Action to support services

- There were many excellent examples of people already doing an extensive amount of volunteering within the community. *'Community readers' do Saturday morning session each week for children'*; *'I live in a small village and that is already happening - there are lots of*

elderly volunteers'. 'I'm 76 and happy to do my bit - I've been part of St John Ambulance most of my life. I've also set up an Old Boy's Club recently'

- Many people mention the need for signposting for people to be able to help volunteer more *'Yes to volunteering - has volunteered at Cambridge ReUse and Children's Society - would do more if she could find the right opportunities'* also *'people can help but they won't - need a coordinator otherwise people will sit around waiting for others to help'*. Others mentioned how inspiring some individuals are *'Could have lost the library - one person was key to saving it - now things have turned around.'*
- Time pressures were mentioned as one of the reasons people couldn't volunteer more *'Does mowing for old people working / time pressure limits ability to do more'* and *'I'm not sure that they can - they are squeezed too - working longer, raising children and retiring later and looking after parents. Need to make more opportunities for working people. Think capacity is declining'*
- Another barrier mentioned for volunteering was not being perceived as an official or being allowed to help without running into red tape. *'You run into problems litter picking. I'd get an earful for not being 'official'.*
- Some conversations centred on how to move volunteering on from something that is person or local e.g. *'I know my neighbours we do the odd thing for each other - we just pay our way - that's how it is.'* Or *'Needs to be directly relevant to family - e.g. children's football team.'* To something that is outside someone's normal scope of community involvement; time credit schemes were praised in this regard.

Paying more Council Tax

- Of those who gave a direct answer to this question (44 people) only 20% said that Council tax should not be increased. For those who said it shouldn't go up almost all said that they would struggle to pay the additional amount or they were already struggling to pay.
- As many as 75% of people said that they would pay more but for over half of these people this was a conditional statement.

The common conditions were;

- A specific area of public service work would receive the additional funding or would be protected. The NHS was mentioned in this regard as was children's centres as well as the police.

- That there was some sort of fairness or means test attached to the increase. People mentioned *'big corporates'* paying more and another person suggested that *'students'* should be taxed. *'Only for people who can afford it'* and *'personally wouldn't mind an extra £150 p.a., but concerned about people who can't afford it'* were also two recorded comments.
- Some people also highlighted the transparency in spending and knowing about the sort of things local taxes were spent on.

Cambridgeshire's Budget Challenge: Ramsey

Sunday 27th September, Ramsey Plough Day, Ramsey

Members of County Council staff talked with over 50 people at the Ramsey Plough Day (with 37 feedback forms being completed as some talked as a couple or group).

People were shown information about the County Council's budget challenge and were asked about their level of awareness, their initial reaction to the budget cuts and what they thought of the County Council's plans to cope with the cuts. People were also asked if they supported an increase in Council tax. Conversations were wide ranging and people commented on local issues as well as the County Council's budget. There were many positive examples of people volunteering to support the community. Eighteen people gave their e-mails in order to participate in the on-line survey when it became available.

Awareness of the Budget Challenge

- Well over half the people we talked to were aware of the budget challenge faced by the County Council. In total 63% were aware of the issue prior to meeting County Council staff.
- Some people expressed *'surprise'* at the scale of the cuts *'sounds like a lot more than I thought'* and *'Shocking - couldn't believe the amounts involved'* were two of the comments recorded.
- Others expressed that the cuts were inevitable given the state of the public finances *'everyone's money is squeezed'*.
- There were some expression that the cuts were either unfairly targeted at local services *'Shame there has to be cuts and sharing the amount around needs to be fair to make up the deficit. Shire Counties are being hit the hardest';* *'Staggering amount - can understand why*

we don't see coppers on the beat anymore' and 'Sounds like a lot more than thought.

Noticing run down paths and hedgerows and other things slipping'

- There was a further comment about the most vulnerable being hit the hardest *'Well as usual it will be the vulnerable people, older people that get hit, suffer as a result. Provision for children with disabilities and social services is in free fall (that's what I've heard). Infrastructure isn't funded appropriately, respite care is underfunded'.*

Suggestions for Savings

- Savings suggestions from members of the public included cutting Councillors and their allowances *'Stop paying councillors -expenses only'*
- A form of local government reorganisation was also mentioned by several people *'District councils not needed. Remove this tier'* and *'Cheaper offices. Fewer Councillors, Shared facilities, commercialise and charge for more services. Reduce levels of government'*
- People were aware of the problem of playing services off against each other; *'difficult to think about how it can be met without removing services that are essential. Cuts to roads rather than youth services'* and *'Spending money where we don't need to i.e. on street lighting. Put it in roads instead'.*
- There was also some concentration on the current quality of services and the current approach to spending. Someone commented *'Can understand there must be savings but don't think CCC is clear about how the money is spent. Also some departments don't seem to do anything i.e. Conservation. Feels things are going back rather than improving'* and also *'Wasted at source before it is ever spent. This needs to be looked at.'*

Community Action to support services

- Unlike the other areas where this consultation has been carried out there was a mixed response to the suggestion that increased community action and volunteering could help to support local services.
 - There were many examples of people doing a considerable amount within their local communities. People volunteering to run health walks, with the Ramsey Museum (run entirely by volunteers), street pride initiatives, community gardening and with cancer charities.
 - There was also some pessimism that the community would be able to respond with additional effort as services are cut. Someone observed *'Community won't do it. Used to*

have many more volunteers within communities. Commuters - often not interested / able in volunteering within communities’ whilst another said ‘Warboy’s community spirit hangs by a thread. Job to get volunteers to run things’.

- When exploring in more detail why there were problems with volunteering people attributed this to the work pressures placed on the young *‘Already do a lot of volunteering. When people are working can be very difficult - if you get a volunteer under fifty then you are very lucky’* and *‘It is always the same people volunteering and younger people have more work / financial pressures. Volunteers need support as well. Can’t just do it on their own’.*
- It was positive that a number of people provided their e-mail addresses in order to hear more about volunteering opportunities. There was also particular praise for the Ramsey Million project and also for the St Neot’s Time Bank as being better ways to engage younger people in the community.

Paying more Council Tax

- Of those who expressed an opinion only 22% said yes to paying for an additional amount of Council tax.
- A much larger proportion of 41% said that they would pay an increase but it was conditional. The main conditions are as follows:
 - The money is spent well and not wasted;
 - That they could be sure that the money was spent on some very specific services *‘If the money went to services I used then yes’* or *‘Need to know a lot more about what it would be spent on i.e. £20 more council tax ...this is what will be achieved with it. ’*
 - That the increase would not be unfairly charged to those on a low income e.g. poorer pensioners or struggling families.
- A few people referred to the quandary of being asked for ever more council tax at the same time as services were being cut, feeling that if this was the case there was little point in paying the increase *‘Wouldn’t object to paying more council tax if services remained’.*

Cambridgeshire’s Budget Challenge: Ely

Saturday 16th October, Ely

Members of County Council staff and a local councillor talked with over 100 people in (with 60 feedback forms being completed as some talked as a couple or group). People were shown

information about the County Council's budget challenge and were asked about their level of awareness, their initial reaction to the budget cuts and what they thought of the County Council's plans to cope with the cuts. People were also asked if they supported an increase in Council tax. Conversations were wide ranging and people commented on local issues as well as the County Council's budget. There were many positive examples of people volunteering to support the community. Thirty one people gave their e-mails in order to participate in the on-line survey when it became available.

Awareness of the Budget Challenge

- Only a quarter of the people we talked to were unaware of the budget challenge faced by the County Council. In total 25% were unaware of the issue prior to meeting County Council staff and a further 23% only had a partial awareness of the issue.
- Just over 50% of people said they were fully aware of the situation. Most attributed put this awareness down to what they've read or seen in the media but a few also reported direct experience of the cuts as either service users or because relatives worked in public services.
- Some people expressed their reaction to the scale of the cuts in one of two ways:
 - shock; *'Shock, that much money is being spent...you have 'opened my eyes' to the scale of the cuts needed'; 'Shocking about the amount that needed to be saved'.*
 - The cuts as an unfortunate reality, particularly in light of the national budget situation; *'Not shocked by the level of the challenge. Deficit has to be cleared. (It's like any household budget). No good living in cloud cuckoo land about it'; 'Pragmatic - do what needs to be done. Start at the top - councillor's expenses'.*

Suggestions for Savings

- Some savings suggestions by members of the public were made in light of a perception that local government was wasteful;
 - *'people at the top get too much. We should start with getting rid of golden handshakes / huge salaries';*
 - *'They find it frustrating that so much is wasted on ideas / planning projects that don't happen. Move on prevention - i.e not leaving road damage until it costs a fortune to repair'*
 - *'Money is wasted on outsourcing'*
- The proposal to reduce street lighting arose and opinion was divided as to this being a good idea or not. One person suggested that the streetlights were one of the few benefits that they got for their council tax (alongside bin collections). Whereas others approved of the

measure, particularly in light of other areas that could be cut;

- *'Happy to see a reduction in street lighting but not older and vulnerable people'.*
- *'Turn the street lights off and turn libraries into community centres'*
- *'Yes people should help in their communities would be happy to go without streetlights'*
- Rather than suggest areas for cuts people put forward area that they wanted to see protected.
 - *'It is wrong that the savings might be taken from children and the disabled. The elderly should be properly supported - better support for those who need it. Worry about essential services going even though they are supposed to be protected.'*
 - *'Worried about the impact on care for older people. Children need a good education, felt all services described were important.'*
 - *'Protecting vulnerable people is most important'*
 - *'Shouldn't lose libraries as they offer so much.'*
- People also raised issue of service quality.
 - *'Roads are rubbish, we've only four street lights and I've never seen a bus.'*
 - *'I go to London for eye Hospital appointments. Often miss the last bus [there aren't any later ones] when I get home and have to pay £30 for a taxi'*

Community Action to support services

- We heard lots of stories about how much volunteering was already taking place in the community.
 - *'Already work within their community - helping a number of elderly people'.*
 - *'Member of Soham Rotary Club so raise money for good causes'*
 - *'Local volunteer / secretary of village centre.... there is community spirit there. Older people pull together'*
 - *'runs a dementia group - finds it difficult to inspire people - runs group herself after funding was cut'*
 - *'School / college do volunteering and also donate to charity'*
- Generally there was strong support for the idea of encouraging more volunteering and other forms of community action but people questioned if it would be a suitable replacement for paid services.
 - *'It's not wrong to be asked. Some people would be happy to be asked. But it's not for everybody, depends on the circumstances of the person. Volunteering is brilliant if you are that type of person. Cannot be compulsory'*

- *'yes it can be right to ask people to help - but the same people want to be paid to deliver services. Not sure about community spirit'*
- *'This initiative should cover health services as well. People do 'keep an eye' on neighbours but worried this is seen as being nosey'*

Paying more Council Tax



- Of those who gave an opinion only 16% gave an unequivocal yes to increasing council tax. This can be balanced against the 24% who said no to an increase.
- 59% of people gave an answer that amounted to a conditional yes. Agreeing to an increase but placing caveats on that agreement.
 - *'Yes for specific things - i.e. roads. People need to know what the extra money will be spent on.'*
 - *'I don't mind as long as the money goes to the right services.'*
 - *'Yes as long as the Council doesn't waste money.'*
 - *'Yes but it needs to be spent on appropriate things - essential services not bypasses and roads.'*
 - *'Wouldn't mind a slight increase if services improved'*

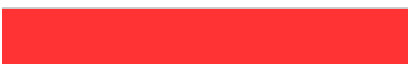


Section 2: Interim Results for the Online Survey

Please note that the survey has currently been online for six weeks (at the time of writing). The tables shown here were extracted on the 9th November. The survey will now remain open until the 11th December so people can react to savings announcements made during the November committee round.






At the time of extraction **506** survey forms had been filled in.






2. Our Budget Challenge

Have you watched the video? (If not, you can continue with this survey but it will not be possible to answer a number of the questions):			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		95.25%	481
2	No		4.75%	24
			answered	505
			skipped	1

Did the video leave you with a good understanding of the challenges that the County Council faces?			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		83.56%	422
2	No		3.96%	20
3	Unsure		12.48%	63
			answered	505
			skipped	1

Before watching the video, how aware were you of the scale of the financial challenges facing the county council?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very aware		36.38%	183
2	Aware		47.51%	239
3	Not aware		12.13%	61
4	Not at all aware		2.39%	12
5	Unsure / Don't know		1.59%	8
			answered	503
			skipped	3

How concerned are you about the financial challenges faced by the County Council?				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Very concerned		52.88%	266
2	Concerned		39.76%	200
3	Not concerned		5.37%	27
4	Not at all concerned		0.20%	1
5	Unsure / Don't know		1.79%	9
			answered	503
			skipped	3

3. Looking forward

Looking at the three broad categories of service explained above, and bearing in mind that service reductions need to happen, where would you make spending reductions?

	Spend about the same	Spend a little less	Spend a lot less	Response Total
Universal services which anyone can access	30.7% (155)	50.1% (253)	19.2% (97)	505
Targeted services	49.7% (251)	44.2% (223)	6.1% (31)	505
Care packages for people with the greatest need	58.8% (297)	35.8% (181)	5.3% (27)	505
			answered	505
			skipped	1

4. Our Priorities

To what extent do you agree with the County Council's Priorities as shown in the video?						
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure/Don't know	Response Total
Older people live well independently	32.3% (163)	52.3% (264)	7.9% (40)	1.6% (8)	5.9% (30)	505
People with disabilities live well independently	32.7% (165)	50.1% (253)	9.5% (48)	1.0% (5)	6.7% (34)	505
People at risk of harm are kept safe	38.0% (192)	46.7% (236)	5.7% (29)	2.4% (12)	7.1% (36)	505
People lead a healthy lifestyle and stay healthy for longer	31.7% (160)	48.3% (244)	11.9% (60)	2.6% (13)	5.5% (28)	505
Children and young people reach their potential in settings and schools	38.0% (192)	47.7% (241)	7.7% (39)	2.6% (13)	4.0% (20)	505
The Cambridgeshire economy prospers to the benefit of all Cambridgeshire residents	33.3% (168)	45.0% (227)	10.9% (55)	5.1% (26)	5.7% (29)	505
People live in a safe environment	36.2% (183)	53.3% (269)	6.3% (32)	1.0% (5)	3.2% (16)	505

To what extent do you agree with the County Council's Priorities as shown in the video?




	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure/Don't know	Response Total
					answered	505
					skipped	1

5. The role of the community in Cambridgeshire's future

To what extent do you agree that the following messages of the video are realistic:



	Something that is realistic everywhere	Something that is realistic in some communities but not in others	Something that is unrealistic	Response Total
Encouraging communities to get involved in delivering our services	23.2% (116)	55.6% (278)	21.2% (106)	500
Encouraging communities to take actions that save the Council money	42.7% (212)	45.9% (228)	11.5% (57)	497
Encouraging individuals to increase their involvement supporting the local community	35.0% (175)	52.6% (263)	12.4% (62)	500
Seeking greater involvement in our services by established voluntary groups	33.2% (165)	56.1% (279)	10.7% (53)	497
Seeking greater involvement in our services by town and parish councils	45.6% (226)	45.2% (224)	9.3% (46)	496
Seeking greater involvement in our services by local businesses	42.7% (212)	47.9% (238)	9.5% (47)	497
			answered	502

Do you think these ideas will enable us to continue to help people whilst having significantly less funding?




			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		34.65%	175
2	No		26.53%	134
3	Unsure		38.81%	196
			answered	505
			skipped	1







6. Taking Part in your Local Community

Do you think it is a good idea asking residents to become more involved in their local community to help us to provide council services?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		78.42%	396
2	No		21.58%	109
			answered	505
			skipped	1

What do you think are the greatest barriers to people getting involved in helping our services? Please select the top three barriers:

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Community volunteering already at capacity		20.16%	101
2	Unwillingness among communities and individuals		45.71%	229
3	Time (for communities and individuals)		73.25%	367










What do you think are the greatest barriers to people getting involved in helping our services? Please select the top three barriers:				
			Response Percent	Response Total
4	Understanding of what is expected		43.71%	219
5	Money / funding		27.15%	136
6	Community facilities		9.38%	47
7	Trust within communities		11.38%	57
8	Trust between communities and the council		27.15%	136
9	Other (please specify):		16.77%	84
			answered	501
			skipped	5

7. Local decision-making

How much influence do you feel the following have on local services?						
	Very significant	Significant	Insignificant	Very insignificant	Unsure	Response Total
National government	45.5% (230)	36.4% (184)	8.1% (41)	7.5% (38)	2.4% (12)	505
Local government (county and district councils)	47.5% (240)	39.4% (199)	5.3% (27)	4.6% (23)	3.2% (16)	505
Local councillors	17.2% (87)	49.3% (249)	20.8% (105)	7.1% (36)	5.5% (28)	505
Parish councils	4.2% (21)	30.5% (154)	43.4% (219)	14.1% (71)	7.9% (40)	505

How much influence do you feel the following have on local services?						
	Very significant	Significant	Insignificant	Very insignificant	Unsure	Response Total
Voluntary groups	5.1% (26)	27.7% (140)	41.8% (211)	19.6% (99)	5.7% (29)	505
Local businesses	4.8% (24)	28.1% (142)	40.4% (204)	17.4% (88)	9.3% (47)	505
Informal networks of friends / communities	5.1% (26)	22.8% (115)	36.6% (185)	26.9% (136)	8.5% (43)	505
					answered	505
					skipped	1



8. Your Current Involvement in your Community

In an average month, approximately how many hours do you spend volunteering, or helping out in your local community?					Response Percent	Response Total
1	0				36.83%	186
2	Up to 5 hours				27.92%	141
3	6-10 hours				14.46%	73
4	11-20 hours				8.51%	43
5	21-30 hours				4.95%	25
6	31-40 hours				1.98%	10
7	41-50 hours				1.58%	8
8	51-60 hours				0.40%	2
9	Over 60 hours				3.37%	17
					answered	505



In an average month, approximately how many hours do you spend volunteering, or helping out in your local community?

			Response Percent	Response Total
			skipped	1

Are you involved in your local community?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		63.37%	320
2	No		36.63%	185
			answered	505
			skipped	1

Would you be willing/ able to provide more of your time to support your local community in Cambridgeshire?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		38.81%	196
2	No		61.19%	309
			answered	505
			skipped	1

Looking at what you do now, do you feel you personally could:

	Yes - a lot	Yes - a little	No - I do a lot already	No - I do not have the time	No - I do not want to	Response Total
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Looking at what you do now, do you feel you personally could:

	Yes - a lot	Yes - a little	No - I do a lot already	No - I do not have the time	No - I do not want to	Response Total
Recycle more	5.7% (29)	28.1% (142)	64.6% (326)	1.0% (5)	0.6% (3)	505
Volunteer more	3.0% (15)	32.7% (165)	28.9% (146)	32.1% (162)	3.4% (17)	505
Access county council services online more	15.8% (80)	25.3% (128)	51.1% (258)	2.2% (11)	5.5% (28)	505
					answered	505
					skipped	1

How far would you be interested in giving some of your time to support:










	Very interested	Interested	Not interested	Not at all interested	Response Total
Your local library - for example volunteering to staff for a few hours a week	4.2% (21)	24.4% (123)	47.5% (240)	24.0% (121)	505
Volunteering to lead Health Walks	2.6% (13)	19.8% (100)	50.3% (254)	27.3% (138)	505
Vulnerable older people in your community	4.4% (22)	31.1% (157)	43.4% (219)	21.2% (107)	505
Children in need of fostering	2.6% (13)	11.5% (58)	48.5% (245)	37.4% (189)	505
Local youth groups	3.2% (16)	16.4% (83)	50.3% (254)	30.1% (152)	505
Volunteering at local schools	5.7% (29)	25.5% (129)	43.8% (221)	25.0% (126)	505
Assisting the disabled	4.2% (21)	20.6% (104)	50.3% (254)	25.0% (126)	505
Helping young families	3.0% (15)	20.8% (104)	49.3% (247)	26.9% (135)	505

How far would you be interested in giving some of your time to support:


	Very interested	Interested	Not interested	Not at all interested	Response Total
	(15)	(105)	(249)	(136)	
Local democracy - for example joining your parish council	13.3% (67)	23.6% (119)	38.0% (192)	25.1% (127)	505
Local politics - for example becoming a councillor	9.5% (48)	14.7% (74)	44.2% (223)	31.7% (160)	505
				answered	505
				skipped	1

9. Council Tax







Which Tax Band are you in? If you don't know what Band you are in, you can look up your property here. Alongside your tax band, we have highlighted how much of your money went to the Council for 2015/16.

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Band A (£762.84)		5.56%	28
2	Band B (£889.98)		9.52%	48
3	Band C (£1,017.12)		20.83%	105
4	Band D (£1,144.26)		23.21%	117
5	Band E (£1,398.54)		18.25%	92
6	Band F (£1,652.82)		9.92%	50
7	Band G (£1,907.10)		8.93%	45
8	Band H (£2,288.52)		1.59%	8
9	Don't know		1.39%	7

Which Tax Band are you in? If you don't know what Band you are in, you can look up your property here. Alongside your tax band, we have highlighted how much of your money went to the Council for 2015/16.

			Response Percent	Response Total
10	I don't pay Council Tax		0.79%	4
			answered	504
			skipped	2












How far do you agree with the idea of increasing Council Tax to reduce the cuts to services we need to make?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		27.38%	138
2	Tend to agree		34.72%	175
3	Indifferent		6.94%	35
4	Tend to disagree		14.29%	72
5	Strongly disagree		15.28%	77
6	Don't know		1.39%	7
			answered	504
			skipped	2



Considering the above, by how much would you personally be prepared to increase Council Tax by? Against each percentage change we have highlighted what the annual cost would be in pounds and pence for a Band D resident.



			Response Percent	Response Total
1	0% (no increase)		17.46%	88










Considering the above, by how much would you personally be prepared to increase Council Tax by?
Against each percentage change we have highlighted what the annual cost would be in pounds and pence for a Band D resident.

			Response Percent	Response Total
2	1% (£11.44)		10.32%	52
3	1.5% (£17.16)		4.56%	23
4	1.99% (£22.77)		17.86%	90
5	2% (£22.89)		8.53%	43
6	2.5% (£28.61)		2.78%	14
7	3% (£34.33)		7.34%	37
8	3.5% (£40.05)		2.98%	15
9	4% (£45.77)		3.57%	18
10	4.5% (£51.49)		2.38%	12
11	5% (£57.21)		12.10%	61
12	More than 5%		10.12%	51
			answered	504
			skipped	2



10. Section 1: About You

Are you...				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male		40.73%	202
2	Female		55.65%	276

Are you...				
			Response Percent	Response Total
3	Other		0.60%	3
4	Prefer not to say		3.02%	15
			answered	496
			skipped	10

Please provide your age:				
			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Under 18		0.40%	2
2	18-24		1.41%	7
3	25-34		12.90%	64
4	35-44		19.15%	95
5	45-54		27.62%	137
6	55-64		20.36%	101
7	65-74		14.11%	70
8	75+		1.61%	8
9	Prefer not to say		2.42%	12
			answered	496
			skipped	10

Would you like to be kept updated about the Business Planning process for 2016?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		33.06%	161
2	No		66.94%	326
			answered	487
			skipped	19

Section 3: Interim Results for the Business Consultation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction and methodology

Consultation with the business community is integral to the 2015 Cambridgeshire County Council budget consultation. This report summarises consultations carried out with 75 businesses through the Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce Local Committees in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, Ely, Fenland, and Huntingdonshire Between September and November 2015, and at the Chambers of Commerce B2B event held at Quay Mill Hotel in September 2015.

The consultation sought to gather the views of businesses about what the County Council can and should be doing to develop an environment within which local businesses can thrive. The exercise focussed on small to medium enterprises (SME), especially important for the count since 68% of all businesses in Cambridgeshire employ four people or fewer.¹

The questions were designed to be open so as to promote discussion and gather businesses' views without being constrained by any specific line of questioning. Business representatives were asked to discuss what they value from the Council, where improvements could be made, and how they engage with their local community. They also considered how the County Council might be able to support businesses to do more.

Results

In total, 75 businesses were engaged with 33 of these were through in-depth discussions through the Chambers of Commerce Local Committees, with a further 42 individual discussions at the B2B event.

Representatives were asked about their engagement as businesses with the local community. Key examples cited included:

- Taking on apprenticeships and work experience placements
- Direct engagement with schools and colleges, providing support to develop 'soft skills' such as CV-writing and interview preparation.
- Supporting the promotion of appropriate waste disposal and recycling.
- Engaging with providers / councils to seek improvement to local transport options (this was recognised as a significant block to development particularly within rural areas).

At the Chamber of Commerce local committee meetings, five key themes arose from discussions:

¹REF: [Inter-Departmental Business Records](#) (IDBR): Business by employment band, 2013. Records outline 41,785 companies in Cambridgeshire, and of those 28,620 companies (68%) have between 0-4 employees, with 81% having fewer than 10 employees on the payroll.

1. Transport and infrastructure

This was a theme common to all representatives, and was also a major part of the feedback received from businesses last year. It was recognised that improvements are taking place, and things are slowly progressing in the right direction, but that there was a lot more work to be done. It was noted that *'poor road structure stunts business growth'*. Specific topics included the A14, A10, public transport, the electrification of railways and road/roadside maintenance.

2. Broadband

Feedback this year was much more positive than last year. Many commented they had seen an improvement in broadband speeds, but concerns were also raised about the way in which the rollout was taking place, and the results achieved (for example, the reach of provision, and the speeds promised).

3. Skills and Staffing

Business representatives raised concerns about staffing shortages, especially in the skilled manual labour or customer service industries. They highlighted a need for schools to provide students with a full view of all potential options for their future.

4. Schools and Apprenticeships

Each Committee discussed the how positive apprenticeships were and the significant benefit they gave businesses. The majority of representatives had taken on apprentices and found them to be a very beneficial resource. Representatives noted difficulty in schools engaging with businesses; sometimes this was down to a general lack of awareness of local business, but there was concern that more often it was due to the stigma associated to progressing down alternative routes to university.

5. The role and structure of local government

Representatives from some committees discussed the role and structure of local government, and the repetitious nature of policy and planning processes. Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire representatives identified issues where they felt that local government organisations regularly “buck-pass” questions and issues. It was noted that there needs to be a joined up approach between different parts of local government so this doesn't happen. Many felt that it was currently unclear what the County Council does to support businesses (beyond the obvious maintenance of roads and other universal services).

Communication processes within the Council were also discussed. It was felt that communication both with businesses and with the public was often not as strong as it could be, with a need for greater clarity and consistency of messages.

At the B2B event, the majority of comments focused on the accessibility of their business to their customers. For many this focused on the quality of road and rail networks, for others concern around a lack of suitable office space and broadband was raised. Key issues included:

- Advice and support
- Communication
- Transport infrastructure
- Travel and congestion
- Availability of office space
- Broadband

Businesses also made the following points:

- Infrastructure provision to support housing developments – *“it is okay to build homes but if there is no surrounding infrastructure to support it you will have difficulties.”*

- Apprenticeships / work experience placements also need to be sought out by schools: *“Expectation by colleges to have people come to them ... Used to get direct work experience requests - doesn't seem to happen in Cambridgeshire.”*
- Congestion is a challenge and things are worsening, especially around Cambridge City. There is a need to invest in public transport – *“busway is fantastic”* and cycle-ways - *“Lack of safe cycling paths, lack of interest from CCC in cycling²”*.
- Concern over procurement support: *“SMEs find it very difficult to negotiate the public sector procurement system, [they need] more support on how to get into the system.*
- The implementation of the living wage. Views were mixed – some (typically larger businesses) felt it was a very positive move, whilst others expressed concern that it might destabilise their business and that even now it stopping them from hiring new staff.

²When the respondent was then advised about cycling initiatives across the City, they were impressed, but questioned why the Council did not promote it more.

Introduction

As part of its business planning process, the Council consults with the public, businesses and other interest groups to gain insight into their views about what should be considered priority areas for budget spending. In the case of businesses, the Council wished to develop an insight into their views about what it can do to help local businesses thrive. The Council was also keen to talk with businesses about how they engage with and support their local communities.

In order to develop this engagement, the Council sought to run a series of consultative meetings with businesses across the County. To do this, it was agreed with the Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce that County Council research staff should gather views by attending local Chamber committees. Alongside these sessions, individual businesses were consulted at a Chamber of Commerce B2B event. Experience has shown that face to face conversations are the most effective approach to engage with businesses. A decision was made not to run the online consultation this year due to the typically low response rate of this engagement.

This report summarises consultations carried out with 75 businesses through the Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce Local Committees in September, October and November 2015 and at the 2015 Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce B2B event held at Quy Mill Hotel in September. In its 6th year, the event hosted over 100 exhibitors and 600 visitors.

Methodology

The consultation sought to gather the views of businesses across the County about what the County Council can and should be doing to develop an environment within which local businesses can thrive, through having a semi-structured discussion. The face to face consultation with businesses had the following objectives:

- Focus predominantly on small to medium enterprises (SME). The Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce advise that 68% of businesses in Cambridgeshire employ four people or fewer.
- Gather the views of businesses across the County about what the County Council can and should be doing to develop an environment within which local businesses can thrive.
- Explore the involvement of local businesses in the community through processes such as work experience placement and apprenticeships.

There were two parts to the consultation. The major part was open discussions similar to a focus group with the business representatives on the four local Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce committees for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, Ely, Fenland, and Huntingdonshire. These were carried out through September to November 2015. In-depth discussions with 33 businesses took place through the Chambers of Commerce local committees in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, Ely, Fenland, and Huntingdonshire.

The second part looked beyond the representatives sitting on the Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce committees to other businesses involved in the local area. County Council representatives manned a stall at the annual B2B event, held this year at the Quy Mill Hotel in September. Discussions were focused in the same way as for those at the Chambers meetings.

The face to face consultations and the survey were run by the County Council Research Team. Promotion was conducted by the Cambridgeshire Chamber in tandem with the Research Team.

Question Design and Delivery

The questions were designed to be open so as to promote discussion and gather businesses' views without being constrained by any preconceptions.

A short paper was circulated beforehand to the business representatives on the Chambers of Commerce Local Committees which explained the level of savings required from the County Council budget, the main areas of current spending and a summary of progress the Council has made over the past year addressing the key issues raised in our 2014 engagement exercises.

At the B2B event, this was provided alongside presentation of some key facts and figures on the saving we need to undertake. A guide questionnaire was developed, and following a brief run through of the circulated paper to ensure understanding, discussions with business representatives were guided around the following open questions:

- How aware was the person of the scale of the savings challenge. What was their reaction to the savings challenge, and how do they think their business has been affected?
- What does their business value from the County Council – what are the best bits that we are doing currently that supports their business to thrive? (*e.g.: transport links, childcare, broadband, digital first, staff training, qualifications for staff, licensing and rogue traders*).
- What do they feel Cambridgeshire County Council should be doing to help their business thrive that we don't already do. What do we need to do more of to support their business most? (*This also examines the community involvement of the business and how the Council can support a business to do more.*)

The Council Research staff recorded discussions at the Commerce meetings and the B2B event in note form. The discussion points were sorted into themes as presented in this report. In total 75 businesses were engaged with. 33 of these were through in-depth discussions through the Chambers of Commerce Local Committees, with a further 42 individual discussions at the B2B event.

Engagement with Local Communities

Within our discussions with business representatives both at the B2B event and the Chamber of Commerce local committees, Research staff questioned respondents on their current degree of engagement with their local communities, from what they do now, to ideas of engagement they could do – and what the barriers were, if any.

A key focus by almost all representatives was around local apprenticeship schemes and work experience placements. Some businesses gave excellent examples of strong engagement with local colleges and schools, including engaging in 'in-house' support on soft skills such as CV-writing and interview preparation. A number of representatives across Cambridgeshire did raise concerns about the difficulties in engaging with some schools, with a number citing examples of the times they had attempted to engage but had no response.

Looking at transport and environmental issues, some did note the promotion of appropriate waste disposal (including recycling) on their premises. Others discussed supporting roadside maintenance. One example was given by a local company wishing to engage in promotion on roundabouts, with a willingness to pay and to assist in the maintenance / beautification of the area. They highlighted difficulties in engaging with the local council and questioned why more roundabouts were not available for sponsorship. A best practice example for this would be Milton Keynes.

Transport was discussed as a blocking issue for staff and for engaging with local communities. Some funded taxis to enable potential work experience students and apprentices to get to work, but did highlight that this was not a long-term viable process. The loss of public transport routes, especially within more rural locations was cited as an issue and it was recognised that if the transport connectivity of business was improved then much more could be done to support local communities.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FINDINGS

During September, October and November, members of the Council's Research Team attended each of the Chamber of Commerce Local Committees: East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. In total, 33 representatives were engaged with through these meetings.

Transport and infrastructure

This came up as a key topic in 2014, and again has been raised by all Chamber of Commerce meetings. For some, positive statements arose, for others, concerns were raised about the accessibility to their services by other businesses and customers. It was recognised that improvements are taking place, and things are progressing in the right direction, but that there was a lot more work to be done. It was noted that *'poor road structure stunts business growth'*.

Specific topics included:

- The A14
- The A10
- Electrification of railways
- Public transport
- Road and roadside maintenance

Two key issues about poor transport and infrastructure were discussed, focusing on how it stunted a business from developing. Firstly, that customers could not easily access and engage with a business. Secondly, that recruitment could be hindered, with the staffing and apprentice pool becoming limited to local residents.

Developments on the A14 were noted by the Cambridge & South Cambridgeshire and East Cambridgeshire meetings as being generally positive, with some improvements identified around traffic flow. It was however recognised that these developments are some way off completion, so further developments might still result in marked improvements. The A10 was noted as being a barrier to businesses, especially when seeking to expand their customer base. This mirrors feedback from 2014.

Representatives from Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire noted the degree of delay that took place when planning projects, and that this often meant that improvement only took place slowly. This reflects back on another common point of discussion around the repetitious nature of government, especially around policy and project planning.

Road maintenance was discussed as an issue, especially in rural areas. It was noted that there was a need for local communities to take on verge-side maintenance, with residents performing simple tasks such as mowing the grass directly outside their property. It was noted that Councils need to positively recognise that behaviour, however.

Developments around the train station in Ely were discussed positively by the East Cambridgeshire business representatives. Access to businesses and customers would be significantly improved. Concerns around parking and taxi ranks within the station were discussed.

Further electrification of railways was discussed specifically by business representatives from Fenland, as a requirement to boost reliability of services and production. The cost of HS2 was noted as being possibly better-placed in investing in local train services across the country.

Broadband

The rollout of super-fast broadband has been recognised and was applauded, however concerns were raised about the methodology behind the achievement of "95% coverage". It was suggested that this might be far from the case in more rural areas. Concerns were raised that in some areas, boxes were installed but that they did not cover a full village – hence they were recording as having coverage incorrectly.

Broadband and connectivity is still viewed as a significant issue in rural areas – especially so in Fenland, with businesses suffering as a result. Access speeds were also discussed, with many representatives expressing scepticism that the pledged speeds matched actual speed. One example was provided by a local business owner who still had difficulty with simple requirements such as processing card payments.

Business representatives stressed the need for good broadband access and described the lack of broadband access for households and for businesses as a deprivation indicator. It was noted that poor coverage impacted not only on businesses but also on families and schools and education. The benefits of the roll out were discussed, where better broadband might have an indirect positive impact in other areas – for example reductions in traffic, improving road and rail links, and boost business productivity, labour markets and increase potential cost-saving methods.

Skills and Staffing

Business representatives raised concerns about staffing shortages, especially in the skilled manual labour or customer service industries.

Difficulties in recruiting staff were linked to skills gaps, but also to the pool of workers to hand. As above, poor transport and infrastructure can act as a block for staff, and as such the pool of potential employees can be drastically reduced. Housing affordability was also noted as a block, specifically for Cambridge City.

The EDGE Jobs and Skills Service was discussed by representatives at the Huntingdonshire meeting, and it was noted that adult learning and education departments are engaged with the service. Job application skills development required improvement, and should be integral to education in schools.

Schools and Apprenticeships

Each Committee discussed how positive apprenticeships were and the significant benefit they gave businesses. The majority of representatives (including those from the B2B event) had taken on apprentices, and found them to be a very positive resource. The introduction of the Living Wage and its impact was discussed, with recognition that this was pushing businesses to reconsider employment and apprenticeship processes, re-examining the age profiles of staff to plan for the future.

There was a general sense from representatives that the demand for apprentices and work experience outweighs the candidates currently available. Difficulties in getting potential apprentices to work was also discussed – again with regards to transport provision, and the limited local pool of candidates.

Representatives noted difficulty in schools engaging with businesses – sometimes this was down to a general lack of awareness of local business, but there was concern that more often it was due to the stigma associated to progressing down alternative routes to university.

It was recognised that some schools fully engage with businesses, in a very rewarding fashion, but for the most part the feedback was that there was a need to push schools to engage with trades and local business opportunities. Typically, communications to schools received no response, and this was a point where the Council should play a lead role in transforming how schools link with local businesses.

The Role and Structure of Local Government

Representatives from some committees discussed the role and structure of local government, and the repetitious nature of policy and planning processes. Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire representatives identified issues where they felt that local government organisations regularly “buck-pass” questions and issues. It was noted that there needs to be a joined up approach between different parts of local government so this doesn’t happen. Many felt that it was currently unclear what the County Council does to support businesses (beyond the obvious maintenance of roads and other universal services).

Communication processes within the Council were also discussed, with similar reflections as those engaged with at the B2B exhibition. It was felt that communication both with businesses and with the public was often not as strong as it could be, with a need for greater clarity and consistency of messages. In the view of some businesses Councils appear to communicate only from a defensive point of view, responding to an issue or a problem raised in the press. It was felt that there was a need for the council to better communicate its successes, and that *‘there are probably some very good news stories that the Council are simply not raising awareness of’*.

The potential of devolution was raised, with mixed opinions around accountability, and the inevitable cost of the process in the form of meetings, debates, and repetitious discussions across the organisations in question.

It was emphasised that Councils need to '*be more business-like*' in both its management and decision-making processes, drawing similar teams together and being more forceful with partner organisations.

COMMENTS FROM BUSINESSES AT THE B2B EVENT

In its sixth year, the B2B event at Quy hosted over 100 exhibitors and 600 visitors. The day was a great success for many, providing numerous networking opportunities as well as the chance to learn through the inspiring seminar programme. Cambridgeshire County Council manned a stall at the event and through this and walking through the event engaged with a high number of businesses.

The majority of businesses were aware of the financial pressures faced by the County Council. For some this was due to having relatives working in the public sector, whilst for others it was due to their business' historical involvement with local groups. In general, those questioned were less concerned about the impact this might have on their businesses, but did reflect on wider impact this might have— for example degradation of road networks and reductions in free parking. Concerns about the focus on SMEs were raised, with some suggesting that the council could do more to engage with and support smaller business.

The majority of comments focused on the accessibility of their business to their customers – for many this focused on road and rail networks, for others concern around a lack of suitable office space and broadband was raised. Key issues raised include:

- **Advice and Support.** Some felt that little support was provided directly from the County Council to assist businesses in promoting their brand. This ranged from a need for more business advisors to a willingness to let out land (e.g. roundabouts) for promotion. Guidance on how smaller businesses can bid for projects was also requested.
- **Communication.** It was felt that engagement between the County Council and the SMEs needed improvement, with some commenting that it reflected a wider communication issue. This is a similar issue to that raised last year. There was a sense that many positive activities run by the council were not widely communicated and hence not recognised.
- **Transport Infrastructure.** Respondents spoke positively about improvements that have taken place over the last year across the county. Some noted that their selection of business location was specifically guided by the fact that some key roads become blocked – specifically referencing the A14 and the A10.
- **Travel and congestion.** Whilst it was recognised that roads have improved, there was a concern that congestion had not. Some reflected positively on the A14 developments, but added concern that this had not led to the improvement in travel time that had been hoped for. Concerns were expressed that this was limiting their customer pool as well as their access to skilled staff.
- **Availability of office space.** Businesses questioned felt that a lack of availability of affordable office space was a significant issue, specifically with regards to Cambridge City. One smaller business explained they were being pushed out of their premises in Cambridge for a new housing development, but could find nowhere else to move to.
- **Broadband.** In contrast to last year, feedback on broadband and the availability of super-fast connections was spoken of very positively. Whilst concerns were raised about the continuing existence of small areas with no access (typically more remote rural locations) feedback was positive and reflected on the improvements seen over the past year. Questions were raised about the promised connection speeds compared to the actual speed provided.

Businesses were asked about how they get involved in their local community, with a specific focus on work experience placements and apprenticeships.

Businesses also made the following points:

- **Infrastructure provision** to support housing developments – *“it is okay to build homes but if there is no surrounding infrastructure to support it you will have difficulties.”*
- **Apprenticeships / work experience placements** also need to be sought out by schools: *“Expectation by colleges to have people come to them ... Used to get direct work experience requests - doesn't seem to happen in Cambridgeshire.”*
- **Congestion** is a challenge and things are worsening, especially around in **Cambridge City**. There is a need to invest in public transport – *“busway is fantastic”* and cycleways - *“Lack of safe cycling paths, lack of interest from CCC in cycling³”*.
- Concern over **procurement support**: *“SMEs find it very difficult to negotiate the public sector procurement system, [they need] more support on how to get into the system.”*
- The implementation of the **living wage**. Views were mixed – some (typically larger businesses) felt it was a very positive move, whilst others expressed concern that it might destabilise their business and that even now it stopping them from hiring new staff.

³When the respondent was then advised about cycling initiatives across the City, they were impressed, but questioned why the Council did not promote it more.