

COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION STRATEGY
(INCLUDING THE APPROACH TO BUSINESS PLAN 2017/18 CONSULTATION)

To: **General Purposes Committee**

Meeting Date: **26th July 2016**

From: **Executive Director: Customer Services & Transformation**

Electoral division(s): **The business plan consultation applies to the whole of the County Council's Area**

Forward Plan ref: **N/A** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To seek approval for the approach to be taken to the business plan consultation for 2016/17.**

Recommendations: **General Purposes Committee is recommended to:**

- a) approve the approach to Business Plan 2017/18 consultation as laid out in this paper; and**
- b) approve the consultation questions as laid out in Appendix One.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. The organisation's consultation strategy was approved by General Purposes Committee (GPC) in May 2016. At this point GPC also approved the general approach to be taken with the County Council's approach to Business Plan (2017/18) consultation. As part of the discussion on this GPC asked for the questions for the formal consultation to be brought back to the July committee for approval.

2. BUSINESS PLAN CONSULTATION

2.1 Methodology

GPC has already approved the following methodology:

- There will be a paid for, household survey of approximately 1,300 residents so the results will be significant at a County level. The sample will be a stratified, random sample. That is to say participants will be randomly selected within the criteria of having a final sample that reflects the age / location structure of the County's population. The survey would be competitively tendered with a guide price of about £25,000.
- As with previous years there will be accompanying digital / on-line consultation.
- As more detailed proposals emerge ready for committee, together with supporting narratives; these will be communicated to the public and a second round of consultation will begin.
- Both consultation strands will be supported by consistent communication messages regarding the overall financial position of the County Council.
- The planned time-scale is for the survey to take place during September 2016 with initial results available during the week beginning the 24th October.

2.2 Development of consultation questions

The proposed questions for the household survey have been developed with the Member Working Group for Consultation (the group met on the 7th July to consider the content).

The initial thinking for developing the questions as laid out in appendix one was as follows:

- The survey should be relatively short and simple to participate in; taking no more than 10 minutes.
- The first part of the survey should introduce the context.
- The main questions should ask about the public's attitude to council tax increases with four options being presented.

- Appropriate parallels will be drawn between possible increases and cash amounts per month together with comparable items from household budgets.
- Additional questions will ask about the respondent's reasoning behind their choice and establish the context for their decision e.g. which services the respondent currently uses.
- Finally, respondents will then be offered the chance to provide their e-mail details in order to participate further in consultation and additional demographic questions will be gathered to support analysis.

2.3 Supporting Work

In addition to the formal survey outlined above it is proposed that the broad strategy for the County Council's Business Plan consultation takes in the following points

- Part of the premise of the approach is to communicate the on-going level of pressure and challenge faced by the organisation. A key theme will be '**bridging the gap**' between the County Council's income and the cost of services as they are currently organised.
- Members have indicated approval for last year's approach in terms of the visual illustration and key messages. We will build on this demonstrating that we were **listening** to people's responses at the time and feeding back what we learnt and actions taken since then. E.g. *'79% of all respondents last year felt that it was appropriate to ask residents to become more involved in their own communities and 41% of respondents were prepared to give more of their time to their local community.'*
- There will be a continuation of last year's theme of **celebrating** how much **communities** achieve for themselves and showing where greater community involvement in services is working e.g. at a Parish Council level or with Time-banking.

2.4 Additional activities

In addition to the formal survey outlined in section 2.1 it is proposed that the additional activities will be an on-line survey to complement the household survey; attendance by County Council staff to community events around the County during September and the delivery of a social media / media package including simple 'infograms' to address the themes covered in section 2.3 above.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

There are no significant implications for this priority.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

There are no significant implications for this priority

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

There are no significant implications for this priority

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

The commissioned survey is being competitively tendered with a guide price of about £25,000.

Other consultation activity proposed would be met within the County Council's existing staffing / resources.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

The County Council has a broad duty to consult in regard to major decisions such as the development of the Business Plan.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

Effective consultation is one of the ways the County Council can meet its equality and diversity obligations.

4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

This is the core subject of the paper.

4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There is a role for elected members to support the business plan consultation as described here.

4.6 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

Source Documents	Location
General Purposes Committee 31 May 2016 – Report and Minutes	https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccs_live/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/47/Committee/2/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx

APPENDIX 1 – PROPOSED QUESTIONS FOR THE BUSINESS PLAN CONSULTATION.

Household Survey – Version Three

Please note the following:

The layout shown here is indicative. The appointed contractor will be responsible for the final layout of the survey for completion on the doorstep.

In addition to the questions asked here each of the contractor's interviewers will ask qualifying questions to achieve appropriate sample size / age group representation.

Introduction

“Cambridgeshire County Council is currently reviewing its annual business plan which includes looking at the authority’s priorities and deciding our budget for next year, including setting the level of council tax.

Due to increased demand and inflation coupled with cuts in funding, the County Council needs **to save £xxx over the next xxx years, with £xx.x million to save next year**. Last year the County Council saved **£xxx and over the last five years the County Council has had already saved £xxx**.
[Figures to be inserted in consultation with finance colleagues]

This inevitably means we (along with all other local authorities) will need to make significant changes to the services we provide.”

Initial Questions:

1. Before taking part in this survey, how aware were you of the scale of the financial challenges facing the county council?

Very aware	<input type="checkbox"/>
Aware	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not aware	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all aware	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure / don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. How do you feel about the continuing financial challenges faced by the County Council?

Very worried	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worried	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not Worried	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not at all worried	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unsure / don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. a. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being 'very important' and 1 being 'not at all important', how important do you think each of the following **outcomes** are that County Council services are working to achieve?

	10 Very Important	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1 Not at all important
Older people live well independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities live well independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
children are helped to reach their full potential	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Cambridgeshire economy prospers to the benefit of all residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People lead a healthy lifestyle and stay healthy for longer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People live in a safe environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People at risk of harm are kept safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. **B.** Is there anything else that is important to you that you think we've missed?

If yes, please tell us what this is?

Council Tax

5. Do you or someone in your household pay council tax?

Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
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6. Do you know which Council Tax Band your property is in?

A <input type="checkbox"/>	B <input type="checkbox"/>	C <input type="checkbox"/>	D <input type="checkbox"/>
E <input type="checkbox"/>	F <input type="checkbox"/>	G <input type="checkbox"/>	H <input type="checkbox"/>
Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>			

7. Which of the following **four options** for the **County Council's part** of Council tax do you support (other parts of council tax also go to pay for police, fire, parish and district council services)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Not increasing council tax.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Just raising the Adult Social Care Precept of 2%. An average band D property would pay an extra 45p per week (£23.34 a year)</p> <p>This would raise an additional £x million from across the County to be spent on just on Adult Social Care.</p> <p><i>The Adult Social Care Precept (ASCP) is an amount the Council is allowed to increase council tax by specifically to pay for care for adults, particularly the elderly.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Just having a general increase council tax of 1.99%. An average band D property would pay an extra 45p per week (£23.34 a year).</p> <p>This would raise an additional £x million from across the County to be spent on a wide range of services.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Raising both the Adult Social Care Precept of 2% and increasing council tax by a further 1.99%.</p> <p>This would raise an additional £x million from across the County to be spent on Adult Social Care and a further £x million to be spent on other services.</p> <p>An average band D property would pay an extra 90p per week (£46.72 a year)</p>

8. Can you please tell us why you chose this option for Council tax?

Free text question.

Experience of County Council Services

9. Do you or a member of your close family regularly use any of these specific County Council Services?

Service	Service used	Service	Service used
Children's Centres	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support services for disabled adults including adults with learning disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support services for disabled children including children with learning disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Care services for older people	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education Support Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Adult Learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support with living a healthier lifestyle	<input type="checkbox"/>	Subsidised Public Transport or community transport schemes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support for mental health and well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please state)	

10. Is there any part of County Council services that you particularly value?

If yes, please tell us what this is?

11. The County Council would like to offer you the opportunity to remain in touch by e-mail and from time to time send you links so you can take part in further consultation surveys.

Would you like to participate?



Yes

No

12. Please can you provide your email address?

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Demographic Questions

[Location, including district to be coded by interviewer, added to on-line version]

Q12. How do you describe your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

Q13. What is your age?

☐ 18-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44
☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65-84
☐ 85+

Q15. Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity that limits your activities in any way?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Q16. Do you have children of school age living in the household?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Q17. Are you a Carer?

Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either:

- they have long-term physical or mental ill-health or disability
- they have problems related to old age?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Q17. To which of these groups do you consider you belong to?

<input type="checkbox"/> White British	<input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British: Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Indian
<input type="checkbox"/> White: Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> Black or Black British: Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
<input type="checkbox"/> White: Gypsy and Traveller		<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
<input type="checkbox"/> White: Eastern European	<input type="checkbox"/> Mixed Raced	<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Chinese
<input type="checkbox"/> White: Other		<input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Asian British: Other
		<input type="checkbox"/> Any other ethnic background