

## Budget Consultation Feedback

The council's budget has been widely consulted on. The forms of consultation included the following

- 1) the postal and web based survey of citizen's priorities for budget growth and savings
- 2) Web-based survey amongst the council's business panel of c350 local businesses
- 3) meetings of partners, the voluntary sector and the business community where an in depth analysis of the situation and options were presented
- 4) EMAP meetings where budget proposals, options and details including Service Plans were presented

There was no significant consultation feedback to report from the EMAPs. In terms of the meeting involving partners, the voluntary sector, the business community etc the event was very well received and much positive feedback was given mainly about the opportunity it gave to gain greater understanding of the issues and the style and content and the clear presentation of the issues. The main consultation feedback issues were a general support for community focussed services, understanding and support for the need to raise Council Tax above inflation and support for ending travel tokens as part of the move to a national free bus pass.

The low number of responses from the business panel were not sufficient to have any quantitative validity. However, qualitatively they reflected the views expressed in the citizen's survey

The main form of consultation was the postal and online survey of citizen's views. The information in this report is based on a total of 7748 responses, around a 9% return. This is a good response rate for this type of survey, and up almost 20% on the 2008 consultation .

Members are in no way bound by the consultation as it is not a referendum, but is a process to gather opinion and aid informed decision making. Members are reminded that none of the consultation options are included in the budget proposals in this report and that the aim is for members to propose the ones they wish to approve, whilst ensuring that the overall budget still balances.

It should be noted when considering the results that the % represents the % of respondents who placed that issue in their top 3 for savings, for protecting services from cuts and for investment (and **not** the actual % in favour or against a particular option).

### Top priorities for making savings (highest first)

- 1) Reduce the amount the council spends on administration (**72.2%**)
- 2) Generate new income from relocating the Yorkshire Wheel to North Street (subject to planning permission) (**42.7%**)
- 3) Concessionary bus passes for the over 60s to be used from 9.30am instead of 9.00am (**40.0%**)

- 4) Increase the charges for adults on leisure/personal development courses **(36.3%)**
- 5) Reduce financial support to external organisations which support the council in the areas of economic development and tourist support **(32.4%)**

There was a significant gap between these five options and the next four:

- 6) Increase the costs of car parking **(20.1%)**
- 7) Target the provision of travel tokens to the most vulnerable, to make up for the shortfall in government grant **(16.6%)**
- 8) Increase the fees that the council charges for services like public toilets, pest control, trade waste disposal and cremation, by more than the rate of inflation **(11.4%)**
- 9) Reduction in swimming pool opening hours **(7.2%)**

The remaining four options were all selected by less than 5% of respondents: reduce frequency of street cleaning; reduce maintenance of parks and open spaces; reduce spend on road maintenance; reduce support to elderly for care services.

#### **Top priorities for protecting from cuts** (highest first)

Unsurprisingly, these tend to be a mirror image of the ranking for savings:

- 1) Reduce the level of council support available to elderly people for a range of care services such as respite care, day care and transport **(53.3%)**
- 2) Reduce the amount of money spent on repairing and maintaining roads and footpaths **(43.3%)**
- 3) Reduce the frequency of street cleaning **(35.1%)**
- 4) Reduce the maintenance of parks and open spaces **(29.4%)**
- 5) Increase the costs of car parking **(22.3%)**
- 6) Reduction in swimming pool opening hours **(21.4%)**
- 7) Increase the fees that the council charges for services like public toilets, pest control, trade waste disposal and cremation, by more than the rate of inflation **(19.6%)**
- 8) Concessionary bus passes for the over 60s to be used from 9.30am instead of 9.00am **(17.2%)**

All of the other five options were selected by 10% or less respondents: target travel tokens to most vulnerable; increase charges for adult courses; generate income by relocating Yorkshire Wheel; reduce support to external organisations; reduce spend on administration

#### **Top priorities for spending** (highest first)

- 1) Maintain highway and footpath maintenance at current levels, allowing for inflation **(45.8%)**
- 2) Increase payments to private elderly residential care providers to ensure there are enough places to meet demand **(34.9%)**

## Annex 9

- 3) Ensure that there is enough money to meet the increasing costs of children in care **(31.2%)**
- 4) Extend kerb-side recycling throughout the city **(29.4%)**
- 5) Continue to support current levels of subsidised bus services **(29.0%)**
- 6) Ensure that there is enough money to do repairs and maintenance in elderly people's homes **(27.7%)**
- 7) Invest more in improving highway drainage **(23.0%)**
- 8) Support for local businesses dealing with the impact of the 'credit crunch' **(19.5%)**
- 9) Continue to invest in weekend night time noise patrol services **(16.4%)**

The remaining four options were all selected by less than 10% of residents. These were: free parking for Minster Badge holders from 5.30pm; provide annual firework display; invest in education/advice on waste minimisation; free parking for environmentally-friendly vehicles.