



## APPENDIX A

### 2014/15 Budget Consultation

#### **Methodology**

The budget consultation aimed to collect opinions on a number of savings from a wide range of audience over a period of 10 weeks.

In the course of the consultation, four methods of gathering views on the budget proposals were used:

- Public meeting,
- Email,
- Letter,
- and Citizen Space.

The consultation was a major exercise, resulting in significant and wide-ranging feedback from a range of stakeholders. It will inform the budget process in 2014/15 and help shape decision-making and service redesign into the future as part of the Making Clackmannanshire Better transformation programme.

#### *Public Meetings*

Over the consultation period, four public meetings were held across Clackmannanshire to gather views of the public on the budget proposals. The events took place at:

- Sauchie Hall, 18<sup>th</sup> November - Third Sector Forum (and subsequent Third Sector Forum consultation event at Alloa Town Hall on 15<sup>th</sup> January)
- Alloa Town Hall, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2013
- Alloa Academy, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013 - Parent Councils
- Devonvale Hall, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2013.

Although attendance was variable, the overall number and nature of responses to the consultation was substantial. Feedback has been broad and diverse and is included in the full budget consultation analysis report.

#### *Email*

Between the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2013 and the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 2014, just under 100 emails were received regarding the budget proposals. While some of them expressed views of single individuals on either one or larger number of proposals, others consisted of opinions of larger groups and organisations.

## *Letter*

Much fewer responses to the budget consultation were received via post. In the space of over two months, the Council received 92 responses via email and letter to the consultation<sup>1</sup>. Similarly to the above discussed methods, views of the senders have been coded and included in the findings section.

## *Citizen Space*

While the above mentioned methods appealed to some residents from across the county, the vast majority of responses were received through Citizen Space, an on-line engagement tool.

Citizen Space included all relevant documents and publications on the budget proposals, including the Making Clackmannanshire Better Budget Booklet along with Officers Savings Proposals.

Alongside the supporting documents, a questionnaire was used to establish public attitudes to the proposed changes. The questionnaire sought basic demographic information, followed by questions exploring views on a number of proposals divided into four broad saving areas the Council has been considering:

- Stopping services,
- Reducing services,
- Charging services,
- and Changing services.

In the course of the consultation, five open-ended questions were added as per residents' request. Four questions followed the above broad areas, while the fifth was introduced at the end of the questionnaire to elicit further comments and suggestions aiming at reducing the Council's financial burden.

In the space of 10 weeks, 327 respondents took part in the on-line survey leaving over 500 comments.

## *Analysis*

The wealth of data gathered through public meetings, letters, emails and Citizen Space underwent qualitative and quantitative analysis. The exercise was divided into two stages.

The first stage involved establishing a demographic picture of the respondents from each area of Clackmannanshire<sup>2</sup>. Further, it utilised Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to perform exploratory data analysis and descriptive statistics. The analysis

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<sup>1</sup> 78 responses were from individuals and 14 from organisations, associations or groups.

<sup>2</sup> ArcGIS (geographical information system) was used to map out responses in each postcode sector in Clackmannanshire

focused on establishing measures of central tendency, frequency tables and data distribution per question and saving area.

The second, more prone to subjective interpretation stage utilised a thematic coding approach, whereby responses were subject to initial coding, followed by establishing broad topics before finally defining emerged themes.

## Findings

The public budget consultation ran for a period of 10 weeks and overall attracted over 450 responses.

Four methods were used to gather views on the budget proposals. These were public meetings (59 responses), an online survey on Clackmannanshire Citizen Space (327 responses), email and letter (92 responses).

In general, the budget proposals drew broad and mixed reactions.

In the section exploring what services the Council could **Stop** providing, public opinion was very mixed. There was some acknowledgement that the Council should stop funding voluntary organisations who cannot demonstrate alignment with local priorities and also a high proportion of views against stopping school crossing patrols as these are seen to be paramount to child safety. Several suggestions were made on other areas that the council could stop. In face to face meetings, the Third Sector Forum voiced the opinion that added value from projects not funded by the Council would be lost if proposed funding realignment proposals were to go ahead.

Similarly, the section exploring the proposals to **Reduce** provision of Council services resulted in mixed opinion. Over half of respondents were against reducing respite support to carers, reducing the frequency of bin collections and reducing gritting. The letter and email responses fed back opposition to reducing Learning Assistant posts, Home/School liaison worker posts, speech and language therapy in schools and primary school swimming lessons. The most palatable services to reduce seemed to be open space maintenance and opening hours of council facilities and offices. Again, numerous suggestions on reducing service provision were made by the public.

In the section looking at proposals for **Charging**, the results again were fairly mixed. In general, the public agreed with proposals to increase charges for the hire of Council facilities. There was also limited support for prioritising free access to services through the use of means testing, increased charging for school meals and increased social work charges. However, several parents of children with disabilities wrote into the Council explaining why free respite provision is so important for them. In face to face meetings, the theme of those who could pay more, should do so arose several times. For some, this was preferable to stopping or significantly reducing services, others expressed views that charging, may shift costs to other parts of the system. In some meetings, particularly those

held in Alloa, those with interests in business and the third sector, voiced strong opinions against the introduction of parking charges in Alloa town centre.

Finally, the section exploring proposals on **Changing** the way the Council provides services, resulted in clearer public opinion. The vast majority of respondents agreed that the Council should make more efficient and widespread use of Council buildings and merge school and community facilities. Likewise, there was overall consensus that the Council should make it easier to access Council services and should target funds to prevent problems occurring. These themes also came out in strongly in face to face consultation: respondents recognised the scale of the challenges faced and understood that big decisions would be required, including for example, to address issues such as school occupancy levels and the costs associated with numerous public service access facilities in many communities.

Overall, there was a sense of acknowledgement from the public that there were difficult decisions to be made and they welcomed the fact that the Council had asked for their opinion.

Full details on the budget consultation and can be found in the full 2014/15 budget consultation report.

## **Budget Consultation - Staff Terms and Conditions**

### **Methodology**

The budget consultation aimed to collect opinions on the proposals on pay, recruitment and flexible working as well as identify new and additional ways of saving money as suggested by staff.

Two methods of gathering views on the above mentioned changes were used: email and Citizen Space.

### **Emails**

Between the 11<sup>th</sup> of November and 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2013, 69 emails regarding the proposals to terms and conditions were received. While some emails included the employee form only, others proved a platform for feedback and suggestions.

Whilst the majority of emails included individual views, a handful presented joint opinions of groups consisting of up to 188 employees. A small number of emails included practical questions related to some of the proposed changes to terms and conditions.

### **Citizen Space**

Simultaneously to staff meetings and staff feedback forms, Citizen Space, a consultation tool, was utilised to reach out Clackmannanshire Council employees.

A questionnaire with a number of statements related to flexible working, recruitment and pay was used to establish employees' attitudes to the proposed changes. An open-ended question was introduced to elicit alternative cost-effective measures generating savings for the Council.

In the space of 4 weeks, 83 employees responded to the survey with 64 of them leaving comments.

## **Findings**

Over a period of 4 weeks, the consultation on changes to terms and conditions overall attracted more than 150 responses.

The proposals drew some mixed reactions. For instance an overwhelming number of staff expressed disapproval towards the idea of suspending increments in 2014/15. Others proposals were more welcome, however, for instance, access to voluntary severance and flexible retirement.

While the opinions on the proposals attracted mixed views, staff submitted numerous suggestions how the Council could reduce its spend.

The majority of staff noted that current sickness and absenteeism policies are ineffective and should be reviewed, while others would rather see the 1% national pay rise not being implemented.

Overall, there was a sense of acknowledgement that the Council needs to review the way it operates and should reduce spend without jeopardising the most significant services.

Full details of the consultation on terms and conditions can be found in the full 2014/15 budget consultation report.

