

UPDATED MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 TO 2018/19

(Cabinet 14/10/15)

Description	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m
Aggregate External Finance (AEF) -4.3%. -4.3%, -3%	(11.339)	(10.851)	(7.245)
Council Tax @ 3.90%	2.588	2.702	2.821
Total Funding	(8.751)	(8.149)	(4.424)
Pay 1.0%, 1.0%, 1.0%	1.165	1.177	1.189
Living Wage (assumes pledge funds schools)	0.109	0.111	0.114
Employer NI Increase (April 2016) - Excludes schools	1.815	0.000	0.000
Non-Pay Inflation 0%, 0%, 1.5%	0.000	0.000	1.668
Non-Pay Inflation (1.5% p.a.) - Fees and Charges	(0.218)	(0.221)	(0.224)
Sub-Total	2.871	1.067	2.747
Service Pressures/Additional Funding			
CTRS Additional Liability @ 3.90%	0.571	0.593	0.616
Schools Pledge	0.628	0.632	0.636
Social Services Cost Pressures Contingency	1.500	1.000	1.000
Sub-Total	2.699	2.225	2.252
Total Shortfall	14.321	11.441	9.423

UPDATED MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 TO 2020/21

(Provisional 2016/17 Local Government Settlement)

Description	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m
AEF (-0.9%, -1.4%, -1.4%, -1.4%, 0%)	(2.275)	(3.686)	(3.634)	(3.584)	0.000
Council Tax (1%, 1%, 2.35%, 2.35%, 2.35%)	0.846	0.886	1.721	1.770	1.820
Total Funding	(1.429)	(2.800)	(1.913)	(1.814)	1.820
Pay (weighted average increase of 1.2% per annum)	1.386	1.403	1.417	1.431	1.445
Living Wage (assumes pledge funds schools)	0.296	0.296	0.296	0.296	0.296
Employer NI Increase (April 2016) - Excludes schools	1.792	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Non-Pay Inflation (0%, 0.5% then 1.5%)	0.000	0.559	1.678	1.703	1.729
Non-Pay Inflation (Fees and Charges) - 0%, 0.5% then 1.5%	0.000	(0.074)	(0.222)	(0.225)	(0.229)
Fire Service Levy	0.043	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Other Passported Grants	(0.247)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Sub-Total	3.270	2.184	3.169	3.205	3.241
Service Pressures/Additional Funding					
CTRS Additional Liability (1%, 1%, 2.35%, 2.35%, 2.35%)	0.146	0.148	0.351	0.359	0.367
Education Workforce Council Registration Fees	0.019	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Schools Pledge (1.85%, 1.92%, 1.46%, 1.61%, 1.61%)	1.938	2.049	1.588	1.777	1.805
Social Services Cost Pressures Contingency	2.500	0.500	0.500	0.500	0.500
Sub-Total	4.603	2.697	2.439	2.636	2.672
Annual Shortfall	9.302	7.681	7.521	7.655	4.093
Cumulative Shortfall	9.302	16.983	24.504	32.159	36.252

SCHOOLS MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016/17 TO 2020/21

	<u>2016/17</u> <u>£m</u>	<u>2017/18</u> <u>£m</u>	<u>2018/19</u> <u>£m</u>	<u>2019/20</u> <u>£m</u>	<u>2020/21</u> <u>£m</u>
Funding to meet the "pledge"	1.938	2.049	1.588	1.777	1.805
Inflationary pressures					
Pay award – Teachers (EST 1%, 1%, 1%, 1%, 1%)	0.672	0.684	0.691	0.691	0.691
Pay award - APT&C (Weighted average of 1.2%)	0.145	0.146	0.147	0.148	0.149
Non-pay inflation (0%, 0.5%, then 1.5%)	0.000	0.094	0.283	0.283	0.283
Superannuation (2.3% increase from 01/09/15)	0.589	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Employer NI increase Contracted-out staff	1.680	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Service pressures					
Premises related changes (i.e. floor area) & FSM	0.220	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160
Demographic increase	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150
TOTAL PRESSURES	3.456	1.234	1.431	1.432	1.433
Less "pledge" monies	1.938	2.049	1.588	1.777	1.805
Projected (shortfall)/growth	(1.518)	0.815	0.157	0.345	0.372
Percentage (shortfall)/growth	(1.60%)	0.89%	0.17%	0.38%	0.41%

NET REVENUE BUDGET 2016/17

	£m	£m
Base Budget 2015/16	325.613	
Base adjustment for Outcome Agreement Grant	(1.876)	
Revised Base Budget 2015/16		323.737
2016/17 Transfers In		
Outcome Agreement Grant		1.876
Whole Authority Cost Pressures		
Pay excl. teachers and other school staff @ 1.2% (weighted average)	1.386	
Living Wage increase (adjusted for schools and HRA)	0.296	
Employer NI increase – April 2016 (adjusted for schools and HRA)	1.792	
Increase in Fire Service levy	0.043	
Passported grants in 2016/17 Provisional Settlement	(0.247)	
		3.270
Inescapable Service Pressures		
Council Tax Reduction Scheme additional liability	0.146	
Education Workforce Council registration fees	0.019	
Meeting the schools “pledge”	1.938	
Social Services cost pressures contingency	2.500	
		4.603
Draft Savings Proposals 2016/17		
Whole-Authority	3.049	
Corporate Services	2.320	
Social Services	1.980	
Communities	1.959	
Education & Lifelong Learning	1.609	
		(10.917)
Transfers to Earmarked Reserves		
Dry Recyclable Waste	1.600	
Carbon Management Initiatives	0.215	
		1.815
Proposed Expenditure		324.384
Funding - Final Settlement		
WG Support		(263.293)
Council Tax (1.0%)		(59.691)
Council Tax Surplus 2015/16		(1.400)
Total Funding		(324.384)

2016/17 SAVINGS PROPOSALS WITH A SERVICE USER AND/OR PUBLIC IMPACT

1. Council Tax/NNDR – Increase in Court Fees (Public Impact: Low)

Proposed to increase the fees charged by the Council to council tax payers and business rate payers when serving a magistrates' court summons and obtaining a liability order. A review of costs has recently been undertaken and this reveals that the costs incurred by Caerphilly CBC are £68.06 per case (this amount excludes the statutory £3.00 fee payable to the magistrates' court). Given that the fee charged per case is currently £57.30, there is a clear need to consider increasing the fees in order to recoup the actual costs incurred (subject to a £70 limit imposed by regulation).

At its meeting on the 7th December 2015, the Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee considered a proposal to increase the fees payable by 4% (£2.30) from the 1st April 2016. The Scrutiny Committee was also asked to consider the potential for further incremental annual increases from 2017/18 (subject to a further report at a later date setting out detailed proposals).

Having considered the proposal and after noting that 16 Local Authorities in Wales are already charging the maximum £70, the Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet that Caerphilly CBC's fee should be increased to £70 from the 1st April 2016. Based on the latest information available this will generate an additional contribution of £75k towards the actual costs incurred.

2. Customer Services – Further reduction in opening hours (Public Impact: Low)

A further reduction in the opening hours of Customer Service Centres to reflect the reducing public demand for this service will generate a saving of £52k, principally in staff-related costs. This proposal was supported by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 7th December 2015.

3. Customer Services – Cease Mobile Customer First Centre (Public Impact: Low)

The Mobile Customer Service Centre has had very limited uptake by residents. It is therefore proposed that this service is discontinued which will generate a saving of £70k per annum. This proposal was supported by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 7th December 2015.

4. Disposal of surplus buildings (Public Impact: Low)

Property Services contributes to the running costs/maintenance costs of some of the council buildings. The following buildings have been declared surplus and either have been or will be disposed of in accordance with the Council's Disposal Protocol: -

- Caerphilly Day Centre
- Risca Cash Office – Under Offer
- Trigfan, Rhymney - Sold
- The Chapel, Rhymney - Sold
- Caerphilly Retirement Project – Lease expired

The disposal of the above properties will realise a service saving of £15k in 2016/17 and a further £18k in 2017/18. This proposal was supported by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 7th December 2015.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2016/17 – 2018/19

Scheme	Indicative		
	2016-17 £000s	2017-18 £000s	2018-19 £000s
<u>Education & Lifelong Learning</u>			
Health & Safety Reg Works	0	300	300
Basic Needs Accommodation	225	225	225
School Security	0	100	100
Asset Management	1,150	600	600
School Boiler Replacement Programme	70	220	220
Total Education	1,445	1,445	1,445
Ystrad Mynach Library	48	0	0
Total Lifelong Learning	48	0	0
Total Education & Lifelong Learning	1,493	1,445	1,445
<u>Communities</u>			
Cemeteries	406	409	0
Sports Pitches (Drainage)	30	30	30
Total Community & Leisure Services	436	439	30
Countryside Schemes	217	230	232
Total Countryside	217	230	232
Voluntary Sector Capital Grants	170	0	0
Total Economic Development	170	0	0
Infrastructure Retaining Walls	317	317	317
Forward Programme Advance Design/Land	42	42	42
Major Highway Reconstruction	750	750	750
Bridge Strengthening	447	447	447
Land Drainage - Corporate	125	125	125
Land Drainage - Non Corporate	125	125	125
Vehicle Restraint Systems	150	150	150
Corporate Maintenance: Tips/Mines/Spoils	250	250	250
Street Lighting	50	50	50
Monmouth & Brecon Canal	212	212	212
Footway Reconstruction	150	150	150
Total Engineers	2,618	2,618	2,618

MOVEMENTS ON GENERAL FUND

	£000's	£000's
Opening Balance 01/04/2015		14,615
Winter Maintenance Reserve Adjustment		(52)
2014/15 Council Tax Surplus to Support 2015/16 Budget		(1,200)
Projected 'Take' from 2015/16 Underspends: -		
- Education and Lifelong Learning	210	
- Social Services	277	
- Environment	389	
- Corporate Services	560	
- Miscellaneous Finance	<u>2,137</u>	3,573
Council Tax Surplus 2015/16 (Estimated)		1,414
Contribution to Capital Earmarked Reserve		(5,845)
2015/16 Council Tax Surplus to Support 2016/17 Budget		(1,400)
Provision for Potential Increase in MMI Levy		(1,000)
Projected Balance 31/03/16		<u>10,105</u>

SUBJECT: BUDGET CONSULTATION FEEDBACK 2016/17

REPORT BY: COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with a detailed overview of the feedback gathered during the extensive budget consultation undertaken between 19th October 2015 and 8th January 2016.

The data will be used to help inform the decision-making process prior to the 2016/17 budget being set in February.

2. SUMMARY

CCBC wants to ensure that residents and other key stakeholders across the county borough have the opportunity to help shape the way the council delivers its services in the face of unprecedented budget cuts.

On Wednesday 14th October, Caerphilly county borough council's Cabinet agreed a list of draft savings for the next financial year. The proposals also included a 3.9% increase in Council Tax for 2016/17.

Effective consultation and community engagement is a key factor in informing the budget debate and the resulting feedback will assist members in their decision making process when agreeing the new budget for 2016/17 and beyond.

The budget consultation started on the 19th October 2015 with the launch of a survey. This was followed by a comprehensive programme of engagement activities seeking views both face to face and in writing.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

All consultation activity carried out by the council is done in line with the principles and standards as outlined in the CCBC Citizen Engagement Strategy and the Corporate Communications Strategy.

4. THE REPORT

On Wednesday 14th October 2015 Caerphilly county borough council's Cabinet agreed a list of draft savings for the next financial year. The proposals also included a 3.9% increase in Council Tax for 2016/17.

The council wants to ensure that stakeholders from all sections of the community are informed and get the opportunity to engage and have their say about the budget setting process and the ongoing savings agenda.

The focus of the engagement activity was: -

- To inform all residents and stakeholders of the detailed proposals.
- To seek their views about how we can work together to make alternative or additional ways to make savings.
- To manage the impact of the savings proposals on the wider community before the final budget is agreed by Council in February 2016.

CONSULTATION – SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON 2016/17 SAVINGS PROPOSALS WITH A SERVICE USER AND/OR PUBLIC IMPACT

Council Tax/NNDR – Increase in Court Fees

“Council tax - court fees increase. People already struggling to pay council tax - court fees increase even more worrying only just over the threshold.”

“Increasing Council Tax Court Fees; many defaults are because individuals can't afford to pay in the first instance, this will only lead to and increase more debt that would realistically not be recoverable, with less resources available to recover such debt - what a joke.”

Customer Services – Further reduction in opening hours

“Closing libraries and customer first centres is a counter-productive measure that saves very little yet causes disruption for many. This is one minor example.”

“Reducing the hours of all customer service centres is worse than closing one of them. In fact people who work are relying on the early or late opening hours and have been negated this option completely. There could be fewer customer services but accessible at normal opening times and provided they can be accessed easily with public transport, bearing in mind that most vulnerable residents categories would have a reduced if not free bus pass, would have been a fairer and possibly more efficient choice. Some fixed costs are there whether you operate a building/office for 7 or 5 hours.”

“I write on behalf of Bargod Town Council who have great concerns on the proposed reduction of hours in relation to the library service and cash offices / customer first centres. Members believe that any reduction in hours or days to either of these services will have a detrimental impact to footfall within towns.”

“Changes to customer services proposals appears to assume that 'everyone' is in the digital era, well, there are many of our citizens who are not (approx. 1/3rd).”

“Reducing face to face/physical opportunities will lead to poorer and less efficient services, increasing barriers, and increasing 'waste' in our service provision by reducing opportunities for 'getting things right first time' and 'enabling citizen engagement.’”

“Either open one night till 5pm and close all day one day a week or put more staff on duty on a Saturday morning.”

“Moving services online adversely affects the elderly and financially disadvantaged disproportionately. The rationalisation of council accommodation has had a similar impact. For example, my elderly mother and her friends have been complaining about the loss of the customer first office in Blackwood - these services have moved to the Library which although is nearby involves crossing a busy road with fast traffic which is a serious concern for them.”

Cease Mobile Customer Services Centre

“Customer first van - decommissioned - no need for it.”

“Dropping the customer first van at this point is NOT a saving. it is a realisation, FINALLY, that it was a waste of money in the first place. I am more interested in how much was wasted on the project from the start rather than how much is 'saved' from cancelling this folly.”

Corporate Property - Disposal of surplus buildings

“Yes, look for savings in admin costs, rationalise buildings.”

“Sell off parts of public land that are not already in the process of being sold. I don't mean fields or old buildings I mean grass verges, land between council houses, corners of car parks etc. Look to change the use of council buildings - create flats in shops, convert houses to flats, etc.”

“I do CCBC need to look at restructuring their staffing and their premises costs to run the buildings.”

“I seriously wonder if we need a building like Ty Penallta and question if the current facilities are too large for current usage?”

“I agree that council owned buildings should be rationalised but it would be sensible if services which had regular contact with the public were located in places which could be easily accessed by the public e.g. the Planning Division is moving from Ty Pontllanfraith to Tredomen. It is a service which has regular contact with the public but it is being relocated to an office which is difficult to access by public transport.”

“Can I suggest that the council looks to cut its own bills via the following Property and land sales.”

“I stated a number of years ago via online budget etc., about reducing buildings - that should have been the main objective when Ty Penallta conceived. A number of years down the line CCBC is still closing offices - how much could have been saved if this was done initially.”

“Review all departments to see if buildings/storage spaces are being rented from the private sector. Reallocate staff/materials/storage to council owned premises'.”

“Rationalise Council offices and asset portfolio, don't hold onto land and buildings we don't need as a Council.”

Transfer of lease to HRA (Market Place, Blackwood)

No comments received.

Pre-planning advice income

*“There is no mention of a charge for developers. A flat fee of £48 discriminates against ordinary members of the public if developers are to be charged the same. Surely **all those who want Pre-Planning Advice** should pay a fee which reflects the time taken to give that advice. It would be more equitable if the advice were charged on an hourly basis.”*

Phased withdrawal of Care & Repair Funding (Housing)

“Care and repair could go, as, although useful sometimes, are often more expensive than private handymen.”

"I believe that a (more) robust risk and needs assessment process should be introduced to ensure that the safety and security of individuals is protected and that cuts made in current council services do not result in increased costs elsewhere in the public purse, especially for the NHS - e.g. the decommissioning of care and repair, home adaptations, hospital discharge services could result in delayed discharges and bed blocking in hospitals."

"We may need help from Care and Repair or with equipment in the future and don't have independent means to fund this ourselves."

"If care and repair services are cut, communities should be given as much warning as possible, perhaps vocational courses students at local colleges could be involved in a reasonable scheme to provide them with experience and older individuals with a free or low cost service."

Withdrawal of funding for Family intervention project (Housing)

"Housing – cease payment for family intervention – strongly disagree – people need help with housing and the council."

Introduce charge to school for setting up Sandwich Places

"Sandwich places - will charge the schools. School will pass on costs - schools will not have money to spend on other things."

"Introducing school charges for sandwich places is ridiculous."

"Introduce charge to schools for setting up sandwich places – NO! Dinner ladies are paid to cover lunch time. Parents also do packed lunch as can't afford dinners."

"Introduce charge to schools for the setting up of sandwich places: I strongly disagree with this as table and chairs have to be set up for dinners anyway plus parents can't afford to pay for this that why they chose for their child to have packed lunch."

"I strongly disagree with all cuts to the education sector and social care sector such as: introduce charge to schools for the setting up of sandwich places."

"The introduction of a charge to schools to set up sandwich places will, I believe, impact on already stretched school budgets and thereby reduce the monies available for teaching and learning. I would oppose this proposal."

"Gelligaer Community Council disagree with Introduce charge to schools for the setting up of sandwich places."

"School meals/Sandwich places - the costs of administering these services could be outweighed exponentially if food services were to be funded through mainstream school budgets and not separate service provisions. The impact of these affects the opportunities for children to develop/be engaged properly in educational establishments and succeed, not to mention future health implications (this could widen the deprivation gap even more)?"

Reduce Breakfast Club staff cover by 1 hour per day

"Some children don't have breakfast at home it is essential to keep breakfast clubs in school, we must look after the next generation."

“Reduce operational Breakfast Clubs costs by 1 hour of staffing per day- Gelligaer community council object as this service is beneficial to a child’s day and learning.”

“I have never understood why we waste money on school breakfast clubs.”

“There are many services provided by Caerphilly Borough Council (CBC) which I do not use and a few whose validity I question. I am totally opposed to the notion of 'Breakfast Clubs' and have no idea what 'Adventure Services' provide. I think these should be privately financed services.”

“Some children don't have breakfast at home it is essential to keep breakfast clubs in school, we must look after the next generation.”

“Breakfast Clubs should be free for free meal pupils, a lot use as and early drop off, Charge parents who can afford it like the after school clubs.”

Our engagement activities are undertaken in the most inclusive way possible to ensure that as many people as possible get the chance to provide feedback on issues that are important to them.

Audiences

Our audiences were broadly split into the following categories: -

- All CCBC Residents
- Young People
- Older People
- Business Community
- Voluntary Sector
- Viewpoint Panel
- Partner Organisations (LSB etc.)
- Town and Community Councils

Methods

Various engagement methods were used to inform and capture as much feedback as possible from residents and stakeholders including: -

Social Media

In this increasingly digital world, social media is fast becoming the preferred channel of communication for large sections of society. Channels such as Facebook and Twitter were used to signpost residents to the online survey and encourage attendance at face to face sessions.

Survey Online Consultation

The CCBC Website Survey was launched on 19th October 2015 and ran until 8th January 2016. The survey and supporting documentation was made available with a prominent banner link from the home page of the Website to provide direct access to the relevant web pages. User-friendly 'SNAP' software was used for the survey template and this was laid out in a simple and easy to understand format.

Paper documentation

Printed versions of questionnaires and other supporting material were made available and widely circulated across the community. They were also available on request. Completed surveys could be returned by post, or to make this even easier, residents were able to drop them off (without the need for a stamp) at convenient community locations such as libraries, leisure centres, customer service centres and housing offices to encourage the return of completed responses.

Stakeholder survey

Copies of the supporting information and questionnaire were distributed to the following stakeholder groups either electronically or in paper format: -

- Business Forum
- Caerphilly 50+ Forum
- Voluntary sector including GAVO, Valleys Voices projects and the Parent Network
- Viewpoint Panel members (all 800+ were contacted)
- Partner Organisations (LSB)
- All Town/Community Councils
- Online Watch Link (OWL) network
- Equalities Network contacts
- All head teachers for parents

- Intergenerational clubs.

Newsline

This is a key consultation vehicle as Newsline is posted to every home in the county borough (80,000+ properties). A front page article explaining the budget cuts and the consultation process and a 4 page, centre spread 'pull-out' featuring a fully bilingual survey were included in the December 2015 edition of Newsline. Again, completed surveys could be returned at convenient community locations or via the post.

Face-to-face

Stakeholders had the chance to engage face-to-face with officers and members in a number of ways. A series of 10 **drop-in sessions** were organised at venues across the county borough to enable local people to call in for a chat with officers and members and provide feedback on savings proposals.

Date	Time	Venue
Tues 27 th Oct	2.00pm–6.00pm	Blackwood Library
Tues 3 rd Nov	2.00pm–6.00pm	Bargoed Library
Tues 10 th Nov	10.30am-2.30pm	Tabernacle Baptist Church, Newbridge
Thur 12 th Nov	10.30am-2.30pm	White Rose Resource Centre, New Tredegar
Tues 17 th Nov	2.00pm–6.00pm	Ystrad Mynach Library
Wed 18 th Nov	2.00pm–6.00pm	Caerphilly Library
Mon 23 rd Nov	2.00pm–6.00pm	Risca Library, The Palace
Thur 26 th Nov	10.30am-1.00pm	Hafod Deg, Rhymney
Tue 8 th Dec	2.00pm–5.00pm	Abertridwr Library
Wed 16 th Dec	2.00pm–5.00pm	Nelson Library

Viewpoint Panel

Viewpoint Panel members were also invited to attend a meeting in late November to consult members and gather feedback in a structured 'focus group' environment. The meeting was also attended by young people and representatives of the Welsh speaking community.

Additional face to face meetings

Additional face-to-face sessions were arranged for British Sign Language users, Caerphilly Parent Network, Caerphilly Youth and Junior Forums and the Caerphilly 50+ Forum.

Scrutiny meetings

In order to provide Elected Members with every opportunity to fully scrutinise and comment on the specific savings proposals, a series of Special Scrutiny Committee meetings were held in November and December and the views of Members were fed back.

Trade Unions

Trade Unions were engaged throughout the budget setting process.

Summary of Feedback

In total, over 500 people engaged directly across the variety of face-to-face sessions and over 400 surveys were completed online, via Newsline or in paper format. Of these only one was returned in the Welsh language.

A few comments about Senior Pay were submitted as part of the consultation feedback. These comments have been noted, but they are not included in this report due to the authority's ongoing internal investigations.

Generally speaking, respondents were aware of the financial pressures facing the local authority and that the proposals were measured, well thought out and achievable in light of the difficult financial restraints facing the council over the coming years.

"I accept the savings proposals outlined, but I am concerned that you might have to look for alternative cuts in other services should any of these cut backs prove to be unattainable."

"Mostly in agreement with your savings proposals but sad that these have to be addressed. Hopefully things will improve in years to come."

"Generally, well thought out and endeavour to be fair to all sections. Will be interesting to see it in practice."

"Overall the council is doing a good job because of all the cuts from this Tory government but there is a lot more you can do....."

"Llanbradach Council ...accepted the situation given the difficult task faced by Caerphilly County Borough Council."

There was overwhelming support for **protecting frontline services** and reducing management admin costs and **reducing office accommodation** costs through rationalisation. There was also a high degree of support for **reducing rather than removing** services, **focussing on priorities** and being prepared to reduce other things and looking at **alternative ways** of delivering services.

However, less than half of public/stakeholder respondents to the survey agreed with **increasing fees and charges**.

"... Do not increase charges such as Meals on Wheels by more than inflation."

"I cannot give carte blanche to increasing charges, although some fees for leisure activities may merit a small increase."

"I am in agreement with some fees & charges for certain things to be increased but not others i.e.: charge the going rate for registry office facilities but car parking charges are high enough as it is!"

There were mixed views in relation to the proposed Council Tax rise.

"The council cannot just keep cutting and cutting. I suggest you raise council tax if necessary."

"As a council tax payer I would support the Council's raising council tax to the maximum"

permitted level in order to protect services.”

“A near 4% rise in council tax is outrageous.”

“The continuing rises in council tax may well cause more defaulters on payments.”

The proposals of most concern to residents came under the remit of **Social Services**, in particular cuts in support for carers, respite care, day care services, learning disability services and stroke services

“I strongly disagree with the cuts to the social services budget, particularly those where there is an impact on Carers. Carers save the UK 119 billion pounds annually (Carers UK, 2014), and reducing access to respite, curtailing services like shopping, and limiting access to day care will impact on those who are the most vulnerable.”

“I am whole-heartedly against any sort of cut that affects social services, vulnerable children/adults.”

“I fear that many of the cost saving proposals, particularly in the Social Services and Public Protection arena, will impact on the most vulnerable people in our borough and impact on people at times of considerable stress/trauma.”

“I am greatly concerned at the proposal to withdraw the contract with the Stroke Association. ... Currently this contract funds a service to put stroke victims in touch with the Stroke Association and is the major source of new contacts. If this service is withdrawn an alternative system of referral to the Stroke Association must be found and put in place.”

Others areas of concern included: -

- Removal of the trading standards post

“I also don't agree with the removal of trading standards or EHO posts. It is important to ensure that these areas are monitored in a borough such as Caerphilly to keep on top of rogue traders and those who seek to run food business in ways which could threaten the health of those of us paying our council tax.”

- Reducing breakfast club costs and charging schools for sandwich placements:

“Some children don't have breakfast at home it is essential to keep breakfast clubs in school, we must look after the next generation.”

“Sandwich places - will charge the schools. School will pass on costs - schools will not have money to spend on other things.”

- Review Blackwood Miners and the Winding House

“I am writing to protest at the proposed cuts to Blackwood Miner's Institute - a most valued local asset. ... I can't help but feel that the figure has been plucked from the air and is in no way based upon any careful consideration of the likely impact to the wide-ranging service offered to Caerphilly residents”

“I am especially sad to see that two of the County Borough's leading cultural facilities (Blackwood Miners Institute and the Winding House) have been identified for cost savings and are now under threat of having their budgets substantially slashed”

- Cuts to road resurfacing budget

“I'm worried that the proposed £100k cut to roads could be a false economy. The roads will get worse and will need to be fixed eventually, by which time it could cost the council more”

“Reducing road maintenance is folly. It will increase the council's costs as roads will need more repair work”

A general theme was identified around the need to consider the **long-term impact** of the proposed savings and not just the short term benefits. In particular, the ‘knock-on’ effect on service users and other agencies should be taken into account. Investment in prevention saves money in the long term, particularly where savings are small and the impact can be potentially big e.g. carers support, pest control charges etc.

“The cuts being made will have huge impact on the elderly population of Caerphilly, at a time when the NHS is at breaking point and there is bed blocking and delayed discharges already taking place. The cuts being made to Third sector/voluntary organisations e.g. Age Cymru, Stroke Association will have a huge impact.”

Many of the issues raised in the survey responses reflect the views of the Youth Forum, Viewpoint Panel members and 50+ Forum members.

Details are set out in the appendices shown below and are available by visiting the Council website: <http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/involved/Consultations>

- Appendix 1 Overview and survey analysis and feedback
- Appendix 2 Drop in Session feedback
- Appendix 3 Youth and Junior Forum feedback
- Appendix 4 Viewpoint Panel feedback
- Appendix 5 Voluntary Sector Liaison Committee Report
- Appendix 6 Caerphilly 50+ Forum feedback

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

Due consideration was given to Equalities in the methodology used and in the construction of the relevant surveys.

Each survey included equalities monitoring questions and a question to seek views on how any of the proposed changes would impact differently on those covered protected characteristics under the Equalities Act (2010).

Equality Impact assessments for each saving proposal that affects the public and/or service users was undertaken alongside the consultation by service areas.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs associated with the consultation activities outlined within this report have been covered by a specific public engagement budget which falls within the overall Communications Unit budget.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

None

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the content of this report.

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Scheme	Indicative		
	2016-17 £000s	2017-18 £000s	2018-19 £000s
Disabled Facility Grants	1,150	1,150	1,150
Home Improvement Grants/Misc	250	250	250
Minor Works	800	800	800
Total Private Housing	2,200	2,200	2,200
Commercial and Industrial Grants	50	50	50
Town Centres	30	40	20
Navigation Colliery Site Regeneration	0	20	20
Total Urban Renewal	80	110	90
Total Communities	5,721	5,597	5,170
Social Services/Public Protection			
CCTV Replacement	75	75	75
Kitchen Refurbishments	425	425	425
Total Public Protection	500	500	500
Condition Surveys	350	350	350
Total Social Services	350	350	350
Total Social Services/Public Protection	850	850	850
Corporate Services			
IT Hardware & Software	235	295	235
Total ICT & Customer Services	235	295	235
Corporate Asset Management	700	700	700
Ystrad Mynach Centre of Sporting Excellence	200	0	0
Total Property	900	700	700
Total Corporate Services	1,135	995	935
Earmarked Capital Reserve	7,900	0	0
Total General Fund Capital Programme: -	17,099	8,887	8,400

5. Market Place, Blackwood – Transfer of lease to HRA (Public Impact: Low)

The Customer First Centre in the Market Place, Blackwood has moved to Blackwood Library. Their place in the Market Place will be occupied by the Area Housing Team as part of the proposals to maintain a council presence in Blackwood Town Centre following the closure of Ty Pontllanfraith. This relocation realises a service saving of £16.3k.

6. Pre-planning advice income (Public Impact: Low)

Fees for pre-planning advice were introduced as part of MTFP savings for the 2014/15 financial year with an estimated target of £20k. An increase in applications in 2014/15 meant that this target was slightly exceeded with the changes delivering an income of £22.5k. As application numbers remain more buoyant, it is proposed that increasing the target by a further £5k is realistic. Moreover, in tandem with other Authorities it is proposed to levy a modest charge of £48 on householder applications (not chargeable at present).

Most Planning Authorities in Wales and the UK now charge for advice, including from householders. Since Caerphilly introduced charges for other categories in April 2014 there have been very few complaints. Indeed, the charges are fairly modest as a percentage of the overall cost of a development and developers and agents are aware that obtaining advice and guidance at the early stages of a development can often decrease uncertainties. This enables applicants to obtain planning permission at the first attempt, thus saving money in the long run. It is important to note that at time of writing, Welsh Government are consulting on pre-application advice charges with the aim of introducing fixed and uniform charges throughout Wales as part of their planning reforms. Should this go ahead, Caerphilly CBC's charges will require modification in due course. However, should the tariffs suggested by WG be introduced rather than our own locally set charges, the overall income to the Planning Authority should remain much the same.

This proposal was supported by the Regeneration & Environment Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 26th November 2015.

7. Housing – Withdrawal of Care & Repair funding (Public Impact: Low)

The proposed phased withdrawal of funding support for Care & Repair Caerphilly will generate a saving of £10k in 2016/17 and a further saving of £5k in 2017/18. Care & Repair is a third sector organisation with agencies in every Local Authority in Wales whose main source of funding comes from the Welsh Government. Some agencies are located within Housing Associations, whilst others, as with Care & Repair Caerphilly, are independent agencies with their own management committees.

This Authority has supported Care & Repair Caerphilly since 1996. At that time they were based in private sector accommodation at Maesycwmmmer and the Authority's support was via an annual cash contribution of around £50k. Some years later, however, Members took the decision to relocate the agency into Ty Pontllanfraith and provide imputed support in relation to accommodation and day-to-day office costs of around £5k together with an annual cash contribution which currently stands at approximately £15k per annum. Care & Repair Caerphilly have an annual budget of some £185k.

The savings proposal is to withdraw cash funding of £10k in 2016/17 and £5k in 2017/18, which is expected to have a low impact on the public. Care & Repair provide a variety of services, one of which is a handyperson scheme. The Agency Director has indicated that it is this service which may be under threat as a result of the withdrawal of the Authority's funding. However, the decision on which areas of the service to review will be a matter for the Care & Repair Board of Management to determine.

The Care & Repair service nationally is currently undertaking a restructuring exercise which sees Care & Repair Caerphilly merging with Care & Repair Blaenau Gwent. Merger discussions

have already commenced, a Shadow Board is in place, and it is hoped that advance warning of the savings proposals can be addressed as part of their merger process with a view to a reshaped service being provided.

This proposal was supported by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 7th December 2015.

8. Housing – Withdrawal of funding for the Family Intervention Project (Public Impact: Low)

The proposed withdrawal of funding for the Family Intervention Project (FIP) has already been considered by the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee on 10th September 2015 and will generate a saving of £15k. The project was funded jointly by Housing (Homelessness Prevention Funding) and the Youth Crime Prevention Fund. The initiative has, however, only ever supported a small number of cases and for 2014/15 no referrals were received. Other benefactors from the service are not supporting the project financially.

The Authority does, however, continue to support the Valleys Inclusion Project (VIP) which is considered to be a very similar service to the FIP. This project is one which works with any vulnerable household and is thought to be far more cost effective than the FIP.

It is considered that this savings proposal will have a minimal effect on its service users as alternative support can be provided by both the Valleys Inclusion Project and by directly employed staff within the Council's Housing Advice Team as part of their homelessness prevention duties, which are now substantially greater as a result of the recent introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

This proposal was supported by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 7th December 2015.

9. Schools – Introduction of charge for sandwich places (Public Impact: Low)

The Catering Service provides a school meals service in 75 primary schools and in doing so currently sets out and clears away places for those pupils eating their own sandwiches; even disposing of any subsequent waste at the expense of Catering. It is proposed that a charge is introduced for this service which is currently provided free of charge to schools. The Catering Service has to cover this cost amounting to 1 hour of staff time per day at each school which is approximately £2.3k per school each year.

It is proposed that the charge will be introduced from September 2016 and if all schools buy in to the service the annual income generated will be £174k. There will be a part-year saving in 2016/17 of £102k with the balance of £72k being delivered in the 2017/18 financial year.

There is no direct impact upon the public although there is a financial impact upon schools. This impact will be funded from the additional growth in the schools "pledge" of £1.3m. Schools may choose to make their own arrangements for setting out and clearing away sandwich places, in which case the Catering Service will be able to reduce staffing hours and still realise the saving identified.

This proposal was not supported by the Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 23rd November 2015. However, the proposal was supported by the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee on the 15th December 2015. It should be noted that by the 15th December it was apparent that schools would be receiving an additional £1.3m of cash growth due to the better Financial Settlement.

10. Schools - Breakfast Club staff reductions (Public Impact: High)

The Catering Service operates 68 Breakfast Clubs in our primary schools. This is a proposal to reduce the staffing hours by 1 hour per day in each Breakfast Club. The operating times of the

Breakfast Clubs would be unchanged, but the level of supervision of pupils throughout the Breakfast Club provision would reduce.

It is proposed that the staffing reductions will be implemented from September 2016 and this will generate an annual saving of £120k. There will be a part-year saving in 2016/17 of £70k with the balance of £50k being delivered in the 2017/18 financial year.

This proposal was not supported by the Health, Social Care & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 23rd November 2015. However, the proposal was supported by the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee on the 15th December 2015.

11. Review of Community Centres (Public Impact: Medium)

At its meeting on the 20th January 2016, Cabinet considered a report on a Task & Finish Group review of community centres. Following consideration of the report Cabinet agreed the following proposed savings: -

- A cut in the budget for payment of water rates for community centres to achieve savings of £27k.
- A reduction in the Council's caretaking contribution from 12 hours per week to 11 hours per community centre with each centre being recharged one hour per week to achieve savings of £14k.
- A reduction in miscellaneous items of £5k.