

West Lancashire Meeting the Budget Challenge 2017 Consultation – Organisations



in:fusion

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1 Executive Summary

34 responses were received to the 2017 Meeting the Budget Challenge consultation from organisations.

The table below provides a summary of the level of agreement for each proposal in the consultation, ordered by those proposals with the highest agreement levels. Not all 34 respondents to the consultation answered every question. (Rounded numbers, presented in tables throughout this report, may not equal the total due to rounding differences).

The majority of organisations and stakeholders agree that they understand the challenges that the Council faces to find new ways of achieving savings and increasing income.

The savings proposal with the strongest level of disagreement amongst stakeholders is the proposal to review the range of options to reduce the role of the Mayor. From the comments received this appears to be because organisations feel that the Mayor's role is important for significant events such as Remembrance Sunday and is the visible face of local Government. However, some comments also suggest that one solution would be to conduct a review to '*slim down*' the role and reduce the expense.

Proposals	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
Increasing the charge for replacement wheelie bins from £23 to £25 to cover the actual cost of providing the bins	76%	12%	12%
Annual increases in line with inflation (currently around 2.9%) to a range of charges including pest control, some licensing fees, and charges for the Home Care Link and lifeline emergency alarm service for elderly and vulnerable residents	65%	26%	9%
Providing, for a fee, advice to parish councils on how to procure high-value contracts with external companies for projects in their areas e.g. environmental improvements, purchase of play equipment	42%	30%	27%
A 6% increase in charges for trade waste collections, from April 2018. Our trade waste service is available to business premises; the charge depends on the amount of waste that is	68%	15%	17%

collected. The increase would cover the rising costs of collection and disposal			
Charging for an additional catering van at Coronation Park, Ormskirk during peak visitor periods	64%	18%	18%
Increase departure fees to bus companies who use Ormskirk station from 7.5p to 50p	68%	18%	14%
End the provision of the civic car and Chauffeur/ Attendant	76%	15%	9%
Range of other options to reduce the role of the Mayor	34%	51%	15%
Review of the Home Care Link service to ensure that it breaks even	78%	11%	11%
Review of street cleaning and grounds maintenance services	53%	18%	29%
Understand the challenges the Council faces to achieve savings and increase income	81%	3%	16%*

**includes 'Neither agree nor disagree'*

2 Background and Methodology

2.1 Background

West Lancashire Borough Council needs to make savings, efficiencies and increase income in order to balance the budget for 2018/19.

The Council developed a range of proposals in 2017 which were approved for consultation with residents and organisations in the borough. Residents' views will be considered before any final decisions are made on the Council's budget for 2018/19.

The aim of the consultation is to understand whether residents and organisations agree or disagree with the proposals and what impact these would have if they are implemented. The findings of the consultation will inform the decision-making process on the Council's budget.

This report focuses on the feedback received from **organisations** in the borough.

2.2 Methodology

A targeted online consultation survey was developed for organisations in West Lancashire to give their views on proposals around the Council's budget. The six week consultation went live on Monday 24 July 2017 and closed on Sunday 3 September 2017, except for Parish Councils who were granted a short extension which closed on 13 September 2017.

The organisations' survey was hosted on the Council website.

In relation to each of the savings proposals, some facts and figures were provided giving further information including how much money would be saved. Respondents were also invited to give comments about each proposal and any impact it might have.

In total, **34 responses were received from organisations**, of which two were paper returns. By comparison, 38 responses were received from organisations to the 2016 budget consultation and 30 were received in 2015. Therefore this represents a broadly similar response rate when compared to previous years.

The purpose of the consultation was to give organisations the opportunity to give their views on the Council's budget proposals and provide insight into any impact these would have. Therefore it should not be considered a statistically representative piece of research which represents the views of all organisations in the borough.

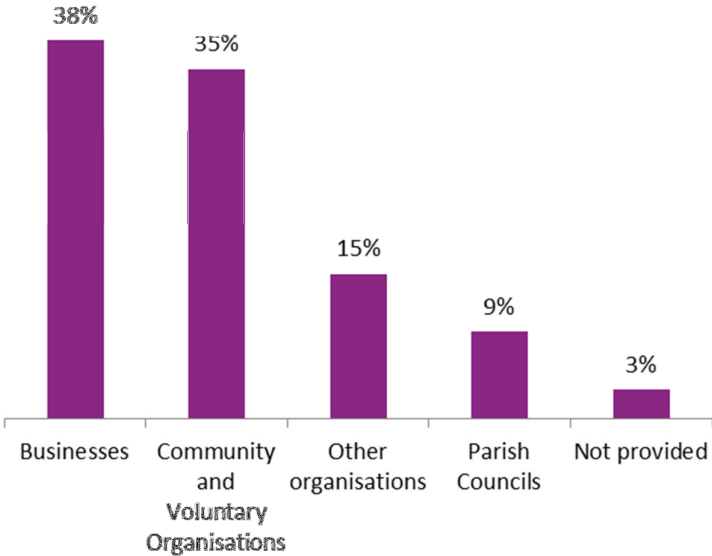
The ‘base’ totals included for each question within this report refer to the total number of responses to that particular question. Whilst 34 organisations completed the survey, some did not answer every question.

A number of open-ended questions were included in the survey to give people the opportunity to comment on the proposals. As part of the report, these comments have been independently reviewed and summarised into key themes during the analysis process.

2.3 Who responded?

Of the 34 organisations who responded, around half are community/ voluntary organisations and organisations with similar community aims. A third of respondents were businesses and three were Parish Councils. One respondent to the consultation did not indicate which organisation they were representing.

Figure 2.1: Type of organisations who responded (base – 34)



3 Main Findings

3.1 Raising Income by Increasing Fees and Charges

The Council proposes to generate an additional £80,000 of income each year by increasing, where appropriate, some fees and charges. The majority of organisations agree with most of the proposals, results of which are outlined below for individual proposals.

Figure 3.1: Increasing the charge for replacement wheelie bins from £23 to £25 to cover the actual cost of providing the bins? (base – 34)

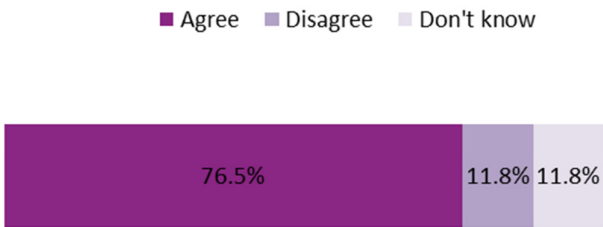


Figure 3.2: Annual increases in line with inflation (currently around 2.9%) to a range of charges including pest control, some licensing fees, and charges for the Home Care Link and lifeline emergency alarm service for elderly and vulnerable residents? (base – 34)

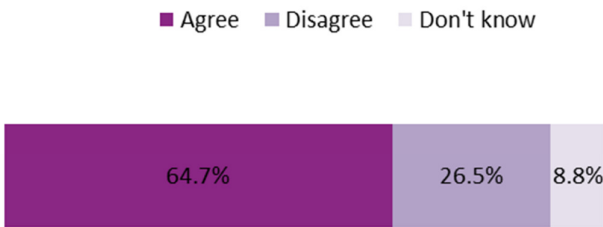


Figure 3.3: Providing, for a fee, advice to parish councils on how to procure high-value contracts with external companies for projects in their areas e.g. environmental improvements, purchase of play equipment. (base – 33)

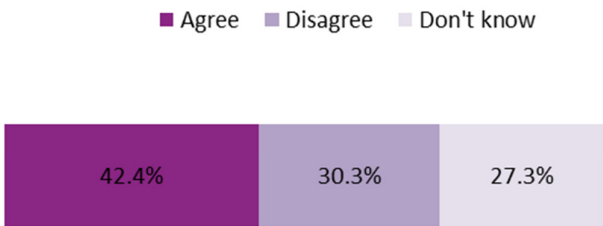


Figure 3.4: A 6% increase in charges for trade waste collections, from April 2018. Our trade waste service is available to business premises; the charge depends on the amount of waste that is collected. The increase would cover the rising costs of collection and disposal. (base – 34)

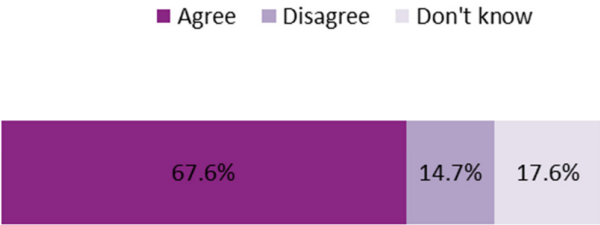
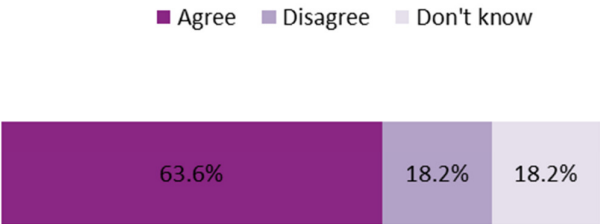
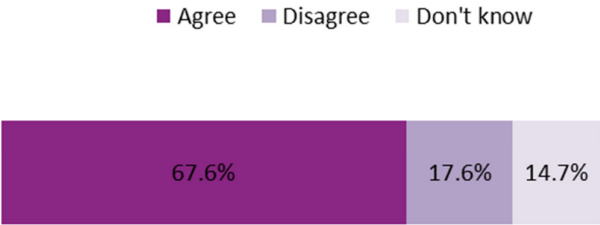


Figure 3.5: Charging for an additional catering van at Coronation Park, Ormskirk during peak visitor periods (base – 33)



Bus companies who use Ormskirk bus station pay a fee to the Council for each bus service that leaves the bus station. Currently, this fee is 7.5p per departure. It has not been increased since 1981. We propose to increase this to 50p per departure, bringing West Lancashire in line with other bus stations in the region, and generating £24,000 per year.

Figure 3.6: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal for the Council to increase the charge for each bus service that leaves the bus station? (base – 34)



Respondents were asked if they had any comments about these proposed increases and any impact they might have. The main concerns were around any impact on the potential of a reduction in services or increased fare prices. Whilst an increase in charges was seen as

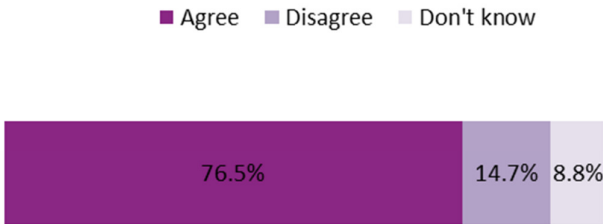
appropriate from several comments a couple did suggest that the increase could be completed in stages as opposed to all at once.

3.2 The Mayor

The Council is proposing to end provision of the civic car and Chauffeur/ Attendant. This means that the Mayor would drive him/herself to functions and claim mileage allowance for the distance travelled, or make other travel arrangements, e.g. hire a taxi. For some high profile special events, a special vehicle could be hired.

This would save approximately £31,000 per year for the provision of the Chauffeur/ Attendant. Attendance by the Mayor at some functions may not be possible under the revised arrangements.

Figure 3.7: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to end provision of the civic car and Chauffeur/ Attendant? (base – 34)

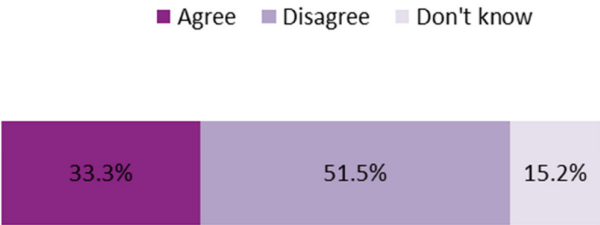


In addition to this, the Council proposed to look at a range of options to reduce the role of the Mayor, saving up to £32,000 per year. The reduction in the role could involve:

- Ceasing Mayor's Charity Committee and associated fundraising activities; and/ or
- Ceasing visits to local community and voluntary organisations, care homes, schools, businesses etc and representing the borough at various church services and events outside the area; and/or
- Ceasing the hosting of events to promote civic pride, such as honouring individuals or groups to recognise excellence or contribution to the community and engaging with schools and visitors to the area; or
- Chairing Council meetings only and ceasing all other functions, including attendance at events such as Remembrance Sunday and other ceremonial events such as Armed Forces Commemoration

This would lead to a loss of Mayoral presence throughout the borough and the wider area.

Figure 3.8: Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to look at a range of options to reduce the role of the Mayor, saving up to £32,000? (base – 33)

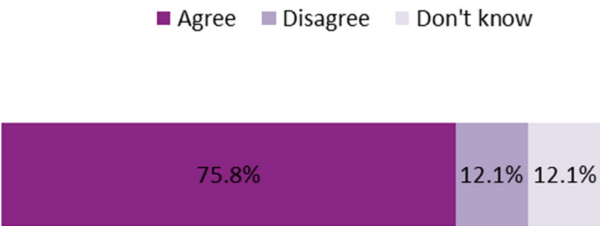


Respondents were asked if they had any comments about these proposals and any impact they might have. Comments generally reflected that the mayoral role was seen as important to and a valuable support for the borough whilst understanding that at a time of austerity it was sometimes a non-essential luxury. However, there appeared to be a reluctance to dispense entirely with the role of Mayor and comments were more focused on reducing costs by removal of the civic car or by a reduction in events that are attended.

3.3 Home Care Link

The Council proposes to review the Home Care Link emergency response system which provides help 24/7 to elderly and vulnerable residents in sheltered housing schemes. We propose to review the way this service is provided to ensure that it at least breaks even. This may involve trying to bring in more business from other organisations and operating more efficiently.

Figure 3.9: Do you agree or disagree with this proposed review? (base – 33)

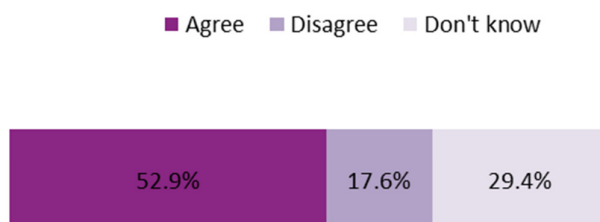


Respondents were asked if they had any ideas or suggestions for the proposed review, or any comments around the impact any potential change to the current service offer might have. Although there was a tentative agreement from some respondents that a review doesn't necessarily mean a negative outcome there was significant agreement that vulnerable groups should be a priority. A few comments suggested that they could not make an informed decision without further information.

3.4 Street Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance Services

The Council proposes to carry out a review of our street cleaning and grounds maintenance services.

Figure 3.10: Do you agree or disagree with this proposed review? (base – 34)



Respondents were asked to choose which of the following grounds maintenance services they thought were most important (Selection was up to 3).

Grounds maintenance services options	No of responses
Maintenance of parks and open spaces	29
Maintenance of cemeteries	18
Maintenance of sports pitches	14
Maintenance of trees, hedges and shrubbery	12
Floral bedding in summer months	7
Grass cutting within the Council's housing stock	7
Weed spraying of bedding areas	1
Winter bedding plants	0

Street cleansing services options	No of responses
Emptying of litter bins	24
Litter picking in town centres	13
Road sweeping	12
Collection of dumped rubbish	11
Pavement sweeping	9
Removal of dead animals	6
Clearing dog fouling	6
Removal of graffiti	6
Litter picking on housing estates	3

Removal of bonfires	1
Street cleaning inspections	1
Removal of leaves	0

3.5 Any further comments

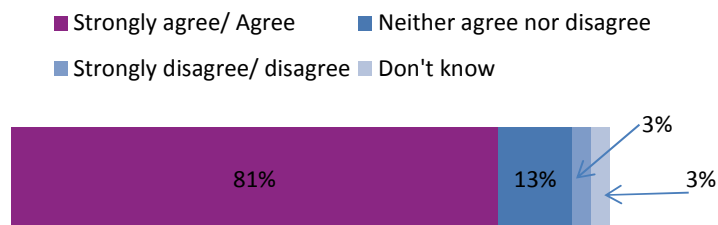
Organisations were given the opportunity to make any further comments or suggestions around the proposed review or to make any comments around the impact any potential change to current service offer might have. The main comments centred on encouraging the community to take responsibility for their local environments including encouraging communities and schools to contribute. Concerns were that green spaces should remain accessible and were important to various aspects of community living such as appearance and providing nice spaces for children.

3.6 Overall Measures

26 of 32 organisations who responded to this question strongly agree or agree that they understand the challenges the Council faces to find new ways of achieving savings and increasing income from the services it delivers.

Just one organisation strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 3.11: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement – ‘The organisation I represent understands the challenges the Council faces to find new ways of achieving savings and increasing income from the services it delivers’? (base – 32)



Organisations were given the opportunity to make any further comments or suggestions around how the Council could make savings or increase income. Savings could be made by empowering and supporting community initiatives (five comments), reviewing all services (two comments), reducing mayoral and Councillor expenses (two comments) and one comment suggested collaborating with other Councils to share services was a possible solution.