



Report to Cabinet

Subject: Budget Consultation 2008/09

Date: 6 December 2007

Author: Head of Strategy and Performance

1. Purpose of the Report

- To inform members of the results of the recently completed budget consultation exercise.

2. Background

Earlier this year, the Leader of the Council asked for a budget consultation exercise to be carried out to seek public views on a number of key issues, to inform future budget and service planning decisions.

The government and the Audit Commission encourage consultation on budget options as good practice.

A questionnaire design and format was agreed and distributed via a special edition of the Council's "Contacts" magazine in early October 2007. An on-line option for completion of the survey was also offered. A copy of the questionnaire is attached at **Appendix A**.

Survey input, analysis and reporting were contracted to QCL Market Research, who have carried out previous consultation activity on the Council's behalf to a high standard.

Results of the consultation have recently been received and are detailed below.

3. Results

Summary results are set out below.

Budget Consultation 2007 - Final Results

Q1 Paying for PCSOs

Continue to pay for 6 extra PCSOs	25%
Continue to pay for some extra PCSOs	16%
Stop paying for extra PCSOs	54%
Don't know/no opinion	3%

Q2 Grey bins

Empty grey bins every week all year round	8%
Empty weekly summer/ fortnight rest of the year	49%
Empty grey bins every fortnight all year round	42%
Don't know/no opinion	less than 1%

Q3 Acceptability of proposals	Very Acceptable	Fairly acceptable	Fairly unacceptable	Very unacceptable	No opinion
Introduce charging for car parking at shopping centres	22%	26%	11%	35%	3%
Introduce new or increase existing charges for other services	15%	32%	19%	27%	4%
Reduce spending on some other services	8%	21%	25%	32%	8%
Reduce spending on all other services	8%	18%	26%	36%	6%
Raise GBC part of the Council Tax by up to 3%	11%	31%	13%	37%	3%
Raise GBC part of the Council Tax by up to 5%	5%	11%	16%	57%	4%

A full report on results, including breakdown by age and gender and an overview of findings, is attached at **Appendix B**.

Members' attention is drawn to the very high response to the survey. 6,001 responses were received, described by QCL as "exceptional" for a survey of this

nature. The scale of the response means that the results are likely to be reliable, with a maximum margin of error of +/-1.3%.

Members will no doubt wish to have regard to the results when making future budget and service planning decisions.

4. Resource Implications

The total cost of the survey is £14,500. This is higher than originally expected (due to increased postage costs derived from the high response rates) but can be accommodated from within existing budgets.

The results have further potential strategic resource implications, in that they may influence decisions on future resource allocation and revenue raising across the Council.

5. Recommendation

Members are **recommended** to note the results of the 2008/09 Budget Consultation exercise.

Appendix A

Budget Consultation Questionnaire

Please

1. Tell us what you think about paying for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in future.

Should we: -

Continue to pay for 6 extra PCSOs in the Borough on top of the 12 government funded PCSOs?

EXTRA COST PER HOUSEHOLD - £3.02

Continue to pay for some extra PCSOs but not as many as 6 on top of the 12 government funded PCSOs??

EXTRA COST PER HOUSEHOLD OF 3 EXTRA PCSOs - £1.51

Stop paying for extra PCSOs in the Borough now that government funding has increased to a level to pay for 12 PCSOs in the Borough?

NO EXTRA COST

Don't know/no opinion

2. Tell us what you think about how often grey bins should be emptied.

Should we:

Empty grey bins every week all year round?

EXTRA COST PER HOUSEHOLD - £12.08

Empty grey bins every week in the summer months and every fortnight for the rest of the year?

EXTRA COST PER HOUSEHOLD - £3.13

Empty grey bins every fortnight all year round?

NO EXTRA COST

Don't know/no opinion

3. Please tell us how acceptable you would find each of the following ways to raise the money to pay for service improvements?

Very acceptable
Fairly acceptable
Fairly unacceptable
Very unacceptable
No opinion

- Introduce charging for car parking at the Borough's shopping centres
- Introduce new or increase existing charges for other services, such as leisure centres entrance
- Reduce spending on some other services (and therefore reduce level of service provided in these areas)
- Reduce spending on all other services (and therefore reduce level of service slightly in all areas)
- Raise the Gedling Borough Council part of the Council Tax by up to 3% (adding £3.15 per year to the average Gedling BC Band B Council Tax payment)
- Raise the Gedling Borough Council part of the Council Tax by up to 5% (adding £5.25 per year to the average Gedling BC Band B Council Tax payment)

4. Are there any other services which you think we should try to improve?

5. About You

To help us analyse responses, please complete the following brief details about yourself.

You can complete the survey anonymously, but you should include your name address and phone number if you want to be included in the free prize draw.

Name
Address

Phone number
Email

Are you male or female? Male/Female

What was your age on your last birthday? (Please write in) _____
years

Do you have any long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits your daily activities or the work that you do? Yes/No

What is your ethnic group?

Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background.

A White

British

Irish

Any other White background, please write in _____

B Mixed

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other Mixed background, please write in _____

C Asian or Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Any other Asian background, please write in _____

D Black or Black British

Caribbean

African

Any other Black background, please write in _____

E Chinese or other ethnic group

Chinese

Any other, please write in _____