

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL

CABINET

21 FEBRUARY 2008

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO LEADER: LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS 2008-09

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform Members of the results of the consultation on the 2008-09 to 2010-11 budget.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That Members in determining the budget for 2008-09 to 2010-11 take into account the results of the Consultation process.

3. Key Issues

3.1 The revised budget process for 2008-09 was outlined to Cabinet at its meeting on the 22 January 2008.

3.2 A consultation budget reflecting the issues that the Cabinet is currently considering in formulating its budget was submitted for consultation at that meeting. The consultation budget included a potential Council Tax level and proposals for growth and/or savings which balance over the three year budget period.

3.3 Details of the growth and policy options subject to consultation are attached as Appendices A and B and were based upon an assumed Council Tax increase of 5% per annum.

3.4 Consultation involved a full range of consultees. Press releases were announced on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> February; details were forwarded to Business Ratepayer representatives: a Citizens Panel budget meeting was arranged together with specific budget consultation meetings of the Council's Scrutiny Committee- Delivering Change Panel and the Council's Shadow Cabinet.

3.5 The closing date for submissions as part of the formal consultation was the 8 February although Cabinet can elect to receive any other submissions at today's meeting.

3.6 Separate reports/annexes detail the responses of the Citizens Panel (Agenda Item 9A); Delivering Change Panel (Agenda Item 9B); Shadow Cabinet (Agenda Item 9C); and individual responses (Agenda Item 9D); with key underlying issues summarised below.

3.7 The Citizens Panel and Delivering Change Panel undertook similar exercises with similar conclusions as follows :

a) **Growth Options – Essential**

Tacking Fuel Poverty – Decent Homes

Continuation of Xmas Lights Service

b) **Growth Options – not supported**

Appointment of Sustainability Officer

Implementation of equality and Diversity Action Plan

c) **Saving Options – Not Supported**

Reduction in Museum Visitors Services

Rationalisation of Grants to Voluntary Organisations – Major

Reduction in Discretionary Rate Relief

Closure of 2 Bowling Greens

d) **Saving Options – to be implemented**

Remove subsidy – Catering

Cease Production of State of Cannock Chase

Deletion Press Cutting service

Rationalisation of Bus Shelter provision

3.8 The recommended levels of Council Tax were 3.5% (Delivering Change panel) and 2.4% (Citizens Panel) respectively.

3.9 Details relating to Shadow Cabinet s response to the Consultation are attached as Agenda Item 9C.

3.10 In relation to responses from the public there were 11 individual responses received by 8 February 2007 deadline as detailed in Agenda Item 9D.

The responses relate to the reduction in Museum Visitor Services (three responses); Rationalisation of Grants to Voluntary Organisation- Major ( two responses); Hednesford Toilet (two responses) ;Bowling Green ( two responses);Rationalisation of Bus Shelter Provisionand the extension of Car Parking Charging at Station Car parks.

In relation to growth options a verbal request was received to continue maintain the Christmas free parking initiative whereas a number of other growth proposals ere not supported.

One request was received to keep Council Tax increases at inflation or below.

3.11 No responses have been received to date from the Business Ratepayer consultees or Trade Unions.

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**Section 1**

**Background**

The Council is required to prepare a revenue budget for the District Council, together with setting a Council Tax to meet not only its own needs but also those of the County Council, the Police Authority, the Fire Authority and the various Parish Councils within the District area.

In preparing a revenue budget for the district the Council is legally obliged to consult with its relevant stakeholders. Statutory budget consultees include trades unions, the voluntary sector and the business sector; however it is best practice to consult on its actual proposals with a wide range of consultees as possible.

**Section 2**

**Details of Matters to be Considered**

In previous years, the Council's budget process has included a consultation process which the Cabinet has used to inform its budget proposals. That consultation has, however, been on a wide set of options for policy change with no initial steer being given by the Cabinet as to its own priorities.

This year, the process has been changed to allow the Cabinet to put forward consultation proposals in the form of a balanced budget. The various budget consultees will thus have the opportunity to see the issues that the Cabinet is currently considering while formulating their responses to the consultation. The consultation budget will thus include a potential Council Tax level and proposals for growth and/or savings which balance over the three year budget period.

Cabinet at its meeting on the 22 January issued its consultation budget.

The consultation budget reflected issues that Cabinet were considering in formulating its budget proposals and in order to aid consultation a balanced budget was formulated reflecting a 5% Council Tax increase reflecting the growth and saving options submitted for consultation

Consultees for the process included business ratepayers, residents, trade unions, the Council's Scrutiny Committee and the Council's Shadow Cabinet.

Responses to the consultation report are detailed in separate Annexes to the report

**Section 3**

**Contributions to CHASE**

The revenue budget reflects the agreed priorities of the Council as determined by the Delivering Change process and hence directly contributes to CHASE. The standstill budget expresses the cost of continuing with the Council's current policies into the future whereas Delivering Change both determines and re-allocates resources in accordance with agreed priorities.

Section 4

Section 17 Implications

Not applicable

Section 5

Human Rights Act Implications

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

Section 6

Data Protection Act Implications

There are no identified implications in respect of the Data Protection Act arising from this report.

Section 7

Risk Management Implications

The consultation process enables the public and other consultees to be engaged in the budget setting process and in addition to fulfilling a statutory requirement contributes to ensuring the vision and aims and objectives of the council are effectively managed.

Section 8

Legal Implications

The Council is obliged by law to set a Balanced Budget for 2008-09.

In preparing a revenue budget for the district the Council is legally obliged to consult with its relevant stakeholders. Statutory budget consultees include trades unions, the voluntary sector and the business sector; however it is best practice to consult on its actual proposals with a wide range of consultees as possible.

Section 9

Financial Implications

Provision exists within the 2007-08 budget for the costs of the budget process including consultation.

The Financial implications of the budget process have been referred to through out the report.

Section 10

Human Resource Implications

In accordance with the Council's normal practice a series of employee and trade union briefings were undertaken at the same time as the Council's budget proposals were made available to the public.

Further targeted briefings and consultations will take place with both employees and trade unions once the Council's final budget proposals are determined

Section 11

Conclusions

That Members consider the results of the consultation process in determining its budget recommendations for 2008-09 to 2010-11 budget.

Background Papers

Budget Process 2008-09- Cabinet Report 22 January 2008

Resolution of Cabinet – 22 January 2008

Consultation – Press Releases

**Appendix A**

**Financial Plan 2008-09 to 2010-11**  
**Growth Options subject to Consultation**

		2008-09 Estimate £	2009-10 Estimate £	2010-11 Estimate £
C1-09	Tackling Anti - Social Behaviour	21,510	28,560	30,210
D1-01	Improved Planning Application Processing Timescales	25,620	32,630	34,560
E1-01	Health & Safety - Cemeteries	20,120	20,840	21,470
E1-02	Promotion and Education for Recycling and Waste Minimisation	13,300	25,800	27,650
E1-04	Continuation of existing Xmas Lights Service	23,570	24,040	24,520
E1-06	Provision of Streetscene Response Team	47,420	63,670	64,940
E1-09	Provide Recycling Facilities - Town Centres	7,200	7,200	0
P1-04	Tackling Fuel Poverty - Decent Homes	6,540	8,400	9,290
P1-06	Provision of In-house Advice Service - Housing Needs	9,660	11,960	12,290
S1-01	Business Continuity and Emergency Planning	16,480	22,360	18,560
H1-01	Licensing and Enforcement of Houses in Multi Occupation - Private Sector	20,000	16,090	16,970
E1-07	Enhanced Maintenance of Street Furniture	16,720	17,050	17,400
C1-05	Implementation of Equality and Diversity Action Plan	30,000	20,000	10,000
H1-03	Appointment of Sustainability Officer	16,150	34,180	35,160
C1-10	Staffs and Stoke on Trent 2012 Olympics Co-Ordinator	4,500	4,500	4,500
		<b><u>278,790</u></b>	<b><u>337,280</u></b>	<b><u>327,520</u></b>

Appendix BFinancial Plan 2008-09 to 2010-11  
Saving Options Taken From Budget

		2008-09 Estimate £	2009-10 Estimate £	2010-11 Estimate £
C2-02	Deletion - Press Cutting Collation Service	-6,500	-6,700	-6,900
C2-06	Cease Production of State of Cannock Chase	-7,100	-10,120	-10,380
C2-09	Amended Opening Hours - Contact Centre	-1,130	-1,190	-1,220
C2-10	Reduction in Grants to Voluntary Organisations - Other		-3,240	-3,300
C2-11	Rationalisation of Grants to Voluntary Organisations - Major		-13,290	-13,560
E2-01	Reduce Grounds Maintenance Closed Churchyards	-7,600	-7,750	-7,910
E2-02	Remove Subsidy - Allotments		-5,780	-5,900
E2-03	Closure of 2 Bowling Greens - Hednesford & Cannock Park	-22,300	-29,850	-30,420
E2-05	Hednesford Public Toilet	-13,620	-13,890	-14,160
E2-07	Rationalisation of Bus Shelter Provision	-5,810	-30,410	-31,020
E2-09	Removal of Subsidy - Shrub Beds	-11,920	-16,240	-16,560
E2-10	Reduce Maintenance - Non Pay and Display Car Parks	-14,060	-14,340	-14,630
E2-11-13	Extend Car Parking Charging - Station Car Parks	-4,730	-27,080	-27,620
H2-01	Rationalisation of Inspections Food Hygiene	-3,000	-4,080	-4,160
H2-02	Home Security Grants	-6,890	-9,580	-9,770
H2-05	Air Pollution	-2,930	-3,800	-3,880
H2-09	Private Sector Housing - Enforcement Action	-5,240	-6,870	-7,010
I2-01/I2-04	Remove Subsidy - Catering		-49,930	-50,930
L2-10	Reduction in Museum Visitors Services	-2,540	-8,120	-8,370
P2-01	Promotion of Local Economy	-20,000	-20,600	-21,220
P2-06	Reduction in Partnership Activities	-5,810	-5,980	-6,160
T2-01	Reduction in Discretionary Rate Relief		-8,000	-8,000
		<u>-141,180</u>	<u>-296,840</u>	<u>-303,080</u>