

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
15th FEBRUARY 2011**Results of Budget Consultation**

AN OPEN ITEM	
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	Economic Success Shared by All
CORPORATE PLAN AIM:	A Well Run and Responsive Council
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Nathan Desmond
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Director Of Resources
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APPENDICES 1 – 3 Appendix 1 Appendix 2 Appendix 3	Alternative Budget Proposals Labour Group The Independent Community and Health Concern Party Joint submission from the Liberal and the Liberal Democratic Parties

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the results of the budget consultation exercise launched following the presentation of the Financial Strategy 2011/2014 to Cabinet on 10th January 2011.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The CABINET is asked NOTE:

- 2.1 The results of the budget consultation exercise as detailed within this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following the approval of the Financial Strategy 2011/14 on 10th January 2011 there has been extensive consultation on the proposals. The purpose of this report is to feed back to the Cabinet the results of the consultation ahead of the final recommendations to Council. The four main groups which have been consulted are:

- Council Tax payers;
- Other Members of Council;
- Staff and Trade Unions;

- 3.2 This report will summarise the responses from each of the groups detailed shown above.

3.3 Council Taxpayers

- 3.3.1 In October 2010, the Council undertook a major consultation exercise in relation to the budget priorities for the Council. This exercise involved a questionnaire which was sent to 2,000 properties within the District. The Council received back valuable

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information from over 500 properties on the ranking of Council services. This is a 25% increase on the previous survey.

3.3.2 The information from the consultation exercise informed the prioritisation of the Cabinet Proposals which were presented to Cabinet on 10th January 2011.

3.3.3 In addition the Council has invited comment on the proposals presented to the Cabinet, however, there have been no specific points of concern have been received.

3.4 Other Members of the Council

3.4.1 Following the meeting of Cabinet the Budget Review Panel have met on two occasions to consider the budget in greater detail. On each occasion there was debate on specific proposals and further information provided to assist in the decision making process.

3.4.2 At the meeting of the Budget Review Panel on 3 February 2011, alternative proposals to the Cabinet's were presented from the following groups:

- The Labour Party (Appendix 1);
- The Independent Community and Health Concern Party (Appendix 2);
- Joint submission from the Liberal and the Liberal Democratic Parties (Appendix 3).

3.4.3 On all of the Appendices 1-3, those proposals which differ from the original Cabinet proposals are shaded. In addition wherever the proposals would result in additional expenditure for the Council the source of the relevant financing is shown. All of the proposed budgets were discussed by the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee on 10 February who made the following recommendation:

Having considered the Cabinet proposals, and amendments from the Independent Community & Health Concern, Labour and Liberal/Liberal Democrat Groups, the Corporate Resources Scrutiny Committee is satisfied that the proposals are all clear, achievable and financially sound.

3.5 Staff and Trade Unions

3.5.1 The Council has been in detailed discussion with both the staff and unions on the budget proposals. A special edition of the Wyred Weekly staff newsletter was distributed on 5 January 2011. This announced a period of consultation with staff on the budget, which came to an end on 10 February 2011.

3.5.2 Responses from staff have been received with concerns in relation to specific proposals, especially where the individuals concerned are proposed to be affected. However, generally there appears to be an acceptance that Local Authorities need to make reduction in budgets. The main areas raised in consultation include:

- Consideration that the Council review the current contractual arrangements for the provision of "superloos";
- Assurance that the in-house option for the future of Revenues and Benefits be seriously considered when the business plan is presented;

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- 3.5.3 In relation to the budget proposals which relate to further investigations and reviews there will be separate periods of consultation undertaken with the staff and unions at the appropriate time.
- 3.5.3 There were no specific comments received from Unison in relation to the budget proposals.
- 3.5.4 There were no specific comments received from GMB in relation to the budget proposals.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 In making the final recommendations to Council on the Financial Strategy 2011/2014 the Cabinet has considered the results of the budget consultation exercise.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct Financial Implications.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken and it is considered that there are no discernable impacts on the six equality strands.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 It is good practice to determine the views of Council tax payers in making determinations on budgets.

9. CONCLUSION/FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The Council continues to engage with the public, staff, other Members and various stakeholders in setting the direction of the Council. In these times of financial austerity difficult choices will be required on selective reductions in costs in line with the Council's stated aims and objectives.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Leader of the Council
- 10.2 Cabinet Member for Resources
- 10.3 CMT.